Section 1: Week 1: Business Case for Statistical Applications

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TIM-7101: Statistics for Technology Leaders

August 2, 2020

North Central University

# Business Case for Statistical Applications

NCU-CARES (NCU-C) is a politically neutral nonprofit organization that seeks to make the world a better place by lobbying for policy changes to social-economic challenges. The group begins each project by understanding the landscape of an issue through the lens of statical models. These models feed into every aspect of the decision process to maximize the impact while also minimizing resource expenses. NCU-C’s portfolio contains several high profile efforts such as reducing climate, improving access to clean water, and providing medical resources to underserved nations. After receiving a sizable donation, the institution can hire a dedicated staff and pursue one more initiative. Rarely does such an event occur, and NCU-C does not want to waste this opportunity.

## Selection Criteria

Inadequate planning, scope creep, and poor communication are three common reasons that projects fail (Jain, 2018). NCU-C addresses these concerns with acceptance criteria that new efforts must adhere too. For instance, the effort needs to be (SMART) Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-based (Indeed, 2020). When the goals are unrealistic or prohibitively expensive, then it leads to waste. Completing a social-economic development requires years of involvement, and this necessitates the ability to measure progress along the way.

# Section I: Problem Statement

## Background

The death of George Floyd has risen the debate of police violence and reform to the national stage (Crary & Morrison, 2020). While the topic rests on American’s hearts and minds, it has also become highly partisan with many efforts to undermind the conversation. On the one hand, an argument exists that defunding the police will force change (BLM, 2020). After cutting the law enforcement budget, the state department could repurpose those monies into civil and medical services. On the other hand, are concerns that these changes would enable a “symbol of hate (Trump, 2020)” and reducing the safety of all parties. It is unlikely that either side is entirely right or wrong. The situation requires an unbiased mediator to assess claims quantitively before the punitive rhetoric will abate (Smith, 2020). Working to restore public confidence and fill this gap represents a unique opportunity for NCU-C.

## Research Questions

The central idea of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement is that police violence disproportionally victimizes people of color (Pierce, 2019). Assuming this statement is true, to what extent is this true? Data collectors are quick to cite that “black people represent 24% of all police killings, despite being only 13% of the population (KilledByPolice, 2020).” However, can these two data points be uniformly compared? Alternatively, does a demographically adjusted accounting provide greater insight into racial injustice hotspots? Processes that can uncover such disparity could lead to laser-focused policies versus broad debate on the national stage. These policies would not represent the final stage, but do represent a path for measurable improvements in the short term.

Another central theme is that shifting funding from police departments to civil services will change the risk calculus. Assuming this statement is true to what extent? What portion of the population is going through a medical crisis during their time of demise? Until examining the data, it can be challenging to separate the norm from media machines selling advertising. Perhaps a more accurate perspective is that scenario-specific categories exist, and additional training programs can target those situations, improving the mortality rates.

# Section II: Measurements

## Statistical Applications

The purpose of statistical applications is to create a model that describes the interactions of a system (Denis, 2015). A model attempts to map input parameters to output results while taking into account the likelihood of those decisions. For instance, assume that a fair coin flip lands on heads fifty percent of the time. This distribution can feed into a model that derives the chances of getting heads three times in a row is 12.5% (= 0.53). George Box is famous for stating that “all models are wrong, but some are useful (Denis, 2015, p. 3).” The quote infers that it can be challenging to include all aspects of the environment, and these external factors can create a delta between expectations and reality.