Final Project Proposal-SPS 608 Spring, 2022

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**Investigating and Discovering Interaction Terms in Selected Data Sets**

Data visualization is an effective tool for displaying the results of an analysis. However, I would like to explore using it to discover insights into datasets prior to analysis. In particular, my project will develop a visualization framework for investigating, discovering, and evaluating interaction terms.

1. Background

As part of the data exploration process, a data analyst needs to consider the possibility that observations aren’t independent. There may be groupings or connections between observations that aren’t automatically evident or obvious. One such example of this are interactions – where the slope of an independent variable against the dependent variable may vary depending upon another variable.

R and python provide numerous ways to model and display interactions, but the sheer number of possibilities makes an open-ended exploration a daunting task. An interactive framework which can provide researchers insight into where interactions might be occurring, and a quick visual look at how interactions manifest throughout the database, could be very beneficial to this process.

1. Details

This exploration tool will facilitate the exploration of interactions through three steps:

* 1. Display histograms and box plots, as well as scatterplots against the dependent variable, for all variables in the data set. This will allow the researcher to use distributions or loess fits in scatterplots to develop hunches about good candidates for interaction terms.
  2. Show two-slope scatterplots for interactions between any chosen independent variable against all of the other variables on the dependent variable. Where interaction candidates are continuous, it will allow the researcher to interactively choose a split point in order to create a dummy variable to use for interaction.
  3. Allow the researcher to investigate more closely the effective chosen interactions, including getting more details about the interaction such as its effect on adjusted r-squared.

1. Technologies

I plan to use r with shiny. Inputs will include a chosen data set (I will include at least two), a dropdown for the step of the analysis (i.e. one of the three steps described above), a drop downs for dependent and independent variables, and an input box for choosing the dummy split described in detail B.