Final Project – CUNY 608 Spring, 2022

Eric Hirsch

**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. (If the dependent variable is binary, the algorithm will choose boxplots instead of scatterplots.) 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.
  3. Allow the researcher to investigate more closely chosen interactions, including getting more details about the interaction such as its effect on adjusted r-squared.

Instructions:

Navigate to https://ericonsi.shinyapps.io/Final3/

Step 1:

1. Enter a url for a csv in the “Dataset Location” field.
2. Click “refresh file.”
3. Enter the target variable in the “Target” field.
4. Under step, choose “Step 1 …”
5. Select a number of variables to show using the slider.

Step 2:

1. Examining the boxplots, histograms and scatterplots, choose an interaction term.
2. If the term is binary, put “0” in the “Cutoff” field. If the field is continuous, choose a reasonable cutoff – this will create a 0/1 dummy variable split on the cutoff.
3. Under step, choose “Step 2 …”
4. Examine the interaction plots.

Step 3

1. Select the interaction you want to examine by moving both sides of the slider to the appropriate position.
2. Under step, choose “Step 3 …”
3. Examine the regression.