

The Variability of the Belgian Business Survey Indicator and its Predictive Power

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Thanks my family and friends - the National Bank of Belgium Laurent, \dots -

"Statistics are the heart of democracy."

- Simeon Strunsky

Abstract

This Master Thesis explores the Variance of the Belgian Business Survey. Several finding concerning the nature and properties of the Variance are found as the bounds and relation with the mean.

In a second part, the predictive power of the variance is examined and it's found that

It's also the first time that à Markov Switching model is used in this context. It was showed that \dots

Keywords

Business Surveys - Business Barometer - Survey Variance - Markov Switching -

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Introduction

?

Business Survey Indicator / Business Barometer / Business Confidence Indicator A widespread method to predict the evolution of National Economies is the survey-based Business indicator. Belgium have been collecting this indicator for more than 60 years. This long evolution

- Talk about tradition of improving BSB

This Thesis is included in the continuity of a long tradition of papers proposing improvement and ways to add value to the Business Barometer (......) will propose ways to add information to the Belgian Business Barometer, that could also be applied to others Since 1968, the National Bank of Belgium publishes each month the national

The Business Survey Indicator

This first chapter is a more general description of the Belgian Business Survey Indicator, that we will also call the Business Barometer. We will present it different calculations, the weighting that are applied and

explain the two types of weightings

2.1 History

In 1954 started the Business Survey of the National Bank of Belgium.

- 1972 results are synthesised in an indicator; the business survey indicator In 1972, indicators and summary statistics where used to better interpret the data.

Since then

- Wall Street Journal article "Euroland Discovers A Surprise Indicator: Belgian Confidence" (?)
 - predictive power for the EU? changes in 2009 see later (section 2.3)

2.2 Sampling Method

2.3 Objective and Methodology

In 2009 was published "The National Bank of Belgium's new business survey indicator" (?)

- only take a limited amount of questions into account, the most relevant ones (3-4 questions)
- inclusion of the services in the global indicator
- lighten smoothing method

A Business Cycle

Quality Criterion

- high correlation with GDP
- fluctuation that's mostly explained by the conjuncture
- predictive power for the futur months more information can be found in ?

2.4 Questionnaire

.... questionnaire can be found in appendix Questions taken into account for RS975: originally question Q18, 27, 32 and 33, for simplicity numbered here as 1, 2, 3 and 4.

2.5 Calculation of the Indicator

This section ...

The calculation of the indicator for a specific question at a specific time can be written as follow;

2.5.1 Unweighted Indicator

$$E(X) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i}{n}$$
 (2.1)

where

 x_i is the answer of the respondent i and can each take value -1, 0 and 1 n is the total of respondents

Since x can only take three different values, we can decompose it into

$$E(X) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_{+i} + \sum_{i=1}^{n} x_{Ni} + \sum_{i=1}^{n} x_{-i}}{n}$$
 (2.2)

where x_{+i} , x_{Ni} and x_{-i} are the positive(+), neutral (N) and negative (-) answers of the respondent i

n is the total of respondents

We know that $\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_{Ni} = 0$ so we can write

$$E(X) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_{+i}}{n} + \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_{-i}}{n}$$
 (2.3)

 $\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_{+i}/n$ is the proportion of positive answers and $\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_{-i}/n$ is the negative proportion of negative answer so for simplicity we write it

$$E(X) = \pi_{+} - \pi_{-} \tag{2.4}$$

where π_+ and π_- are the proportion of respondents answering positive and negative. π is use here also in the probabilistic way as it can also be seen as the probability that a respondent answers positive, negative or neutral (π_0) with $\pi_+ + \pi_0 + \pi_- = 1$.

2.5.2 Weighted Indicator

$$E(X) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} (\omega_{i} p_{i} x_{i})}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} \omega_{i} p_{i}}$$
(2.5)

where

 x_i is the answer of the respondent i and can each take value -1, 0 and 1 p_i is the weight of the globalisation of the company i ω_i is the weight of the company i

Globalisation procedure

Weighting procedure

2.5.3 Properties

E(X) has -1 as lower bound and 1 as upper bound

2.5.4 Take different questions into account

The previous calculations where specific to each question. The published indicators are usually taking different survey questions into account. For example the Industry indicator that we will be interested in is composed of four questions that have all the same weight:

Industry Business Indicator =
$$\frac{E(X_{Q1}) + E(X_{Q2}) + E(X_{Q3}) + E(X_{Q4})}{4}$$
 (2.6)

where $E(X_{Q18})$, $E(X_{Q27})$, $E(X_{Q32})$ and $E(X_{Q33})$ are the different averages for question 18, 27, 32 and 33 (can be weighted or unweighted)

Variance of the Indicator

The variance is, with the mean, one of the first tool for Statisticians to study a certain variable.

In the context of the Business Survey, the variance haven't been used much.

difference sampling error and variance

here variance is a measure of the "dispersion" of the answers.

difference between nominal and continuous variable variance

As done for the Indicator, two different variances will be take into account here, the weighted and the unweighted variance of the indicator.

3.0.1 Variance of the Unweighted Indicator

The main variance cite

$$Var(X) = E\left[(X - E(X))^{2}\right]$$

$$= E\left(X^{2}\right) - E\left(X\right)^{2}$$

$$= \left(\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_{+i}^{2}}{n}\right) + \left(\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_{Ni}^{2}}{n}\right) + \left(\frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_{-i}^{2}}{n}\right) - E(X)^{2}$$

$$= \pi_{+} + \pi_{-} - (\pi_{+} - \pi_{-})^{2}$$

$$= \pi_{+} + \pi_{-} = x_{+i}, x_{-i}^{2} = x_{-i} \text{ and } E(X) = \pi_{+} - \pi_{-}$$
(3.1)

We then have several different ways to write the previous equation;

$$Var(X) = \pi_{+} + \pi_{-} - (\pi_{+} - \pi_{-})^{2}$$

$$= \pi_{+} + \pi_{-} - E(X)^{2}$$

$$= 1 - \pi_{n} - E(X)^{2}$$
(3.2)

Equation 3.1 is interesting

Equation 3.2

Equation 3.3

3.0.2 Generalization for Weighted Indicators / Variance of the Weighted Indicator

$$Var(X) = \frac{1}{\sum \omega_i p_i} \sum_{i=1}^{N} \omega_i p_i (X_i - \bar{X})^2$$
(3.4)

$$Var(X) = \pi_{+} + \pi_{-} - (\pi_{+} - \pi_{-})^{2}$$
(3.5)

$$= \pi_{+} + \pi_{-} - E(X)^{2} \tag{3.6}$$

$$= 1 - \pi_0 - E(X)^2 \tag{3.7}$$

3.0.3 Properties

Property 1: The variance of X is bounded between -1 and 1

Property 2: The variance = A5 and E(X)

Property 3:

3.1 Take different questions into account

3.2 Discussion regarding the 'true variance'

There is another way to calculate the variance that have been ignored for, that is calculating the variance for each lowest group of globalisation, and then combine those calculated variances.

Interestingly, it have been calculated for several Questions of the business barometer, and it is approximately 10 times smaller than the variance based on all the answer a ones.

The reasons why it will not be used here - losing information - weight of globalisation taken into account in the weighted variance

Indicator of the Evolution of Individual Responses

Why this new indicator

Also Called Z indicator

Can be better understood as the indicator of the Changes in individual answers between t-1 and t

An issue for this indicator was to find an optimal name for it so that it would be easily understand by the largest number.

Explain the new indicator

$$t - 1 \begin{vmatrix} t & & t \\ - & 0 & + \\ 0 & \pi_{--} & \pi_{-0} & \pi_{-+} \\ 0 & \pi_{0-} & \pi_{00} & \pi_{0+} \\ + & \pi_{+-} & \pi_{+0} & \pi_{++} \end{vmatrix}$$

The Indicator of the evolution of the individual responses can be obtained by

$$E(Z) = \pi_{0+} + \pi_{-0} - \pi_{+0} - \pi_{0-} + 2\pi_{-+} - 2\pi_{+-}$$

$$\tag{4.1}$$

where

 π is the proportion/probability of respondent answering (-,0,+) at t-1 and (-,0,+) at time t

$$E(Z) = \begin{array}{c|cccc} & - & \mathbf{0} & + \\ \hline - & 0 & +1 & +2 \\ \mathbf{0} & -1 & 0 & +1 \\ + & -2 & -1 & 0 \end{array}$$
 (4.2)

The Indicator of the Evolution of Individual Responses

$$\pi_{++} + \pi_{+0} + \pi_{+-} + \pi_{0+} + \pi_{00} + \pi_{0-} + \pi_{-+} + \pi_{-0} + \pi_{--} = 1$$
 (4.3)

Variance of the Evolution of Individual Responses / Volatility of Responses

That we will also call the **volatility of the indicator**, in the sens that the variance of the evolution of the indicator account for the dispersion of the difference in answers over a two times period.

In this case, the highers variance of Z, will be obtained when half of the companies went from a negative answer to a positive answer and the other half did the opposite and changed from a positive answer at t-1 to a negative answer at t.

waza see Chapter 5

The idea is that this variance of Z is complementary to the estimation of Z since they have two very interesting but different interpretations. Further interpretation will be

5.1 Presentation

$$\pi_{++} + \pi_{+0} + \pi_{+-} + \pi_{0+} + \pi_{00} + \pi_{0-} + \pi_{-+} + \pi_{-0} + \pi_{--} = 1 \tag{5.1}$$

$$Var(Z) = \pi_{0+} + \pi_{-0} + \pi_{+0} + \pi_{0-} + 4\pi_{-+} + 4\pi_{+-}$$

$$-(\pi_{0+} + \pi_{-0} - \pi_{+0} - \pi_{0-} + 2\pi_{-+} - 2\pi_{+-})^{2}$$

$$= \pi_{0+} + \pi_{-0} + \pi_{+0} + \pi_{0-} + 4\pi_{-+} + 4\pi_{+-} - E(Z)^{2}$$

$$= 1 - \pi_{++} - \pi_{00} - \pi_{--} + 3\pi_{+-} + 3\pi_{-+} - E(Z)^{2}$$
(5.2)

$$Var(Z) = \begin{pmatrix} - & 0 & + \\ - & 0 & +1 & +4 \\ 0 & +1 & 0 & +1 \\ + & +4 & +1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} - \begin{pmatrix} - & 0 & + \\ - & 0 & +1 & +2 \\ 0 & -1 & 0 & +1 \\ + & -2 & -1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}^{2}$$

$$= \begin{pmatrix} - & 0 & + \\ - & 0 & +1 & +4 \\ 0 & +1 & 0 & +1 \\ + & +4 & +1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} - (E(Z))^{2}$$

$$= 1 + \begin{pmatrix} - & 0 & + \\ - & -1 & 0 & +3 \\ 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 \\ + & +3 & 0 & -1 \end{pmatrix} - (E(Z))^{2}$$

5.1.1 Properties

Property 1: the variance of Z is bounded between -1 and 1

Property 2:

Seasonal Effects

The National Bank, before publishing the Business Survey Indicator, applies a X11 seasonal correction

The literature about seasonal effects is very rich and variate

- NBB developed JDemetra+ and has since been recommended by the ECB and Eurostat for all NSI in Europe.
- at the same time the department of Business Survey uses as a X11 adapted method to correct for seasonality because don't want to correct for previous publications.

Methodology

- test for seasonality
- run the analysis without corrections
- apply corrections and see if more accurate

6.1 JDemetra+

- 6.2 X11
- 6.2.1 Seasonal correction of the Indicator
- 6.2.2 Seasonal correction of the Variance
- 6.2.3 Seasonal correction of the Indicator of the Evolution
- 6.2.4 Seasonal correction of the Variance of Z
- 6.2.5 Seasonal correction of the Proportions

6.3 Limitations

explain the issue of seasonal correction on "future data"

Non-Response, Dropout and Attrition

Aside of Seasonal effect, there are three main biases that could arise in the context of the BSI; non-reponse, dropout and attrition

- cor(time, var) = 0.5

7.1 Non-Response

7.2 Dropout

Non parametric test ?

7.3 Attrition

Attrition / Panel Conditioning Master Thesis done about the Belgian Labor Force Survey, where attrition was studied ?

Non parametric test?

limitation: only some periods of

Exploratory Analysis

- 8.1 Data At hand
- 8.2 Small vs Large
- 8.3 By Sector
- 8.4 Correlations

There are three different correlations that need to be looked at

8.5 Correlation between questions

Table 8.1: Correlation Matrix

	$E_{-}1$	$E_{-}2$	E_3	E_{-4}
E_{-1}	1	0.262	0.412	0.416
E_2	0.262	1	0.939	0.876
E_{-3}	0.412	0.939	1	0.938
E_{-4}	0.416	0.876	0.938	1

8.6 Auto-Correlation

Table 8.2: Correlation Matrix

	E_{-4}	E_4_lag1	E_4_lag2	E_4_lag3	E_4_lag4
$\mathrm{E}_{-}4$	1	0.966	0.928	0.882	0.829
E_4 lag1	0.966	1	0.966	0.928	0.882
E_4_{lag2}	0.928	0.966	1	0.966	0.928
E_4 lag3	0.882	0.928	0.966	1	0.966
E_4 lag4	0.829	0.882	0.928	0.966	1

8.7 Correlation with GDP

Belgian industry claims 25% of the labour force in Belgium and have been shown as been the best indicator to predict the year to year GDP citeAlain Quartier and Isabelle

8.7.1 GDP vs GDP yoy

Table 8.3: Correlation Matrix

	GDP	GDP_year	$E_{-}1$	E_2	E_3	E_4
GDP	1	0.628	0.222	0.439	0.473	0.556
GDP_year	0.628	1	0.092	0.729	0.703	0.717
$\mathrm{E}_{-}1$	0.222	0.092	1	0.266	0.414	0.406
E_2	0.439	0.729	0.266	1	0.942	0.886
$E_{-}3$	0.473	0.703	0.414	0.942	1	0.938
$\mathrm{E}_{ extsf{-}4}$	0.556	0.717	0.406	0.886	0.938	1

8.7.2 Specificity of question 3 and 4, are people correct?

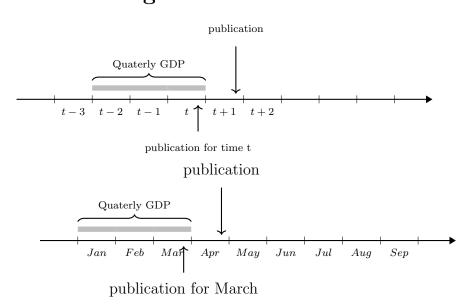
Linear (Auto-Regressive) Models

9.1 Models

9.1.1 Month vs Quarterly data

Error to aggregate everything to quarterly - lost of information

9.2 Timing of the Data



9.3 Linear Model

$$GDP_{t} = \mu + \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=0}^{q} \beta_{1,j} X_{i,t-j} + \epsilon_{t}$$
(9.1)

Auto-Regressive model

$$GDP_{t} = \mu + \sum_{j=1}^{p} \phi_{j}GDP_{t-j} + \sum_{i=1}^{n} \sum_{j=0}^{q} \beta_{1,j}X_{i,t-j} + \epsilon_{t}$$
(9.2)

where GDP_t GDP growth over the last semester

monthly predictors $X_{i,t}$

constant μ

 ϕ_j auto-regressive coefficients

 $\beta_{i,j}$ regression coefficients

9.4 Model

	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	$\Pr(> t)$
(Intercept)	4.2653	0.2138	19.95	0.0000
GDP_year_lag1	6.1137	3.0454	2.01	0.0470
$\mathrm{E}_{ ext{-}2}$	7.9182	4.0531	1.95	0.0531
E_2 lag1	-3.6618	5.6642	-0.65	0.5192

9.5 **Evaluation**

- 9.5.1 R-square
- 9.5.2 AIC and BIC
- Mean Square Prediction Error 9.5.3
- 9.5.4 Diebold-Mariano Test
- 9.5.5 Out-of-Sample performances

Table 9.1:

_	$D\epsilon$	ependent variable	<i>:</i>
		$\mathrm{GDP}_{ ext{-}}\mathrm{year}$	
	(1)	(2)	(3)
GDP_year_lag1	0.733***	0.775***	0.636***
	(0.058)	(0.062)	(0.076)
$\mathrm{E}_{-}2$	15.230***	14.888***	13.796***
	(2.950)	(2.926)	(2.917)
E_2_lag1	-12.226***	-6.290	-5.459
	(3.197)	(4.490)	(4.487)
E_2_lag2		-5.923^*	-4.200
<u> </u>		(3.178)	(3.210)
Var_2			8.168
			(5.959)
Var_2_lag1			-0.401
			(6.007)
Var_2_lag2			-0.043
<u> </u>			(6.793)
Constant	1.201***	1.047***	-1.193
	(0.281)	(0.291)	(0.784)
Observations	124	124	124
Log Likelihood	-139.492	-137.709	-132.539
Akaike Inf. Crit.	286.984	285.418	281.077

Note:

*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Markov Switching Models

Small Introduction + why are we using it

Since the pioneer work by ?, Markov Switching models have been largely used to model business cycles.

Markov Switching models have been very popular since? to model business cycles and predict Turning points (see?, ...).

Able to predict the 2008 financial crisis if used MS-VAR model?

10.1 Model(s) Specification

10.1.1 Notation

 $S_t = \{0,1\}$ states N=2 number of states (2) T=372 number of observations $x_{t=1...T}$ (hidden) state at time t $y_{t=1...T}$ Change of the Industrial production indices at time t $p_{i=1...n,j=1...n}$ probability of transition from state i to state j probability distribution of an observation, parametrized on θ

10.1.2 Model

Model

$$y_{t} = \begin{cases} \mu_{0} + \sum_{j=1}^{p} \phi_{j} GDP_{t-j} + \epsilon_{t} & \text{if } S_{t} = 0\\ \mu_{1} + \sum_{j=1}^{p} \phi_{j} GDP_{t-j} + \epsilon_{t} & \text{if } S_{t} = 1 \end{cases}$$
(10.1)

where ϵ is $N(0, \sigma_s)$ $\mu_s = \beta_0 = c_s = \alpha_s \quad \text{regime-specific mean}$ $\beta_s = \phi_s \quad \text{regime-specific auto-regressive parameter}$ $\sigma_s \quad \text{regime-specific variance}$

Transition equation/probability

$$P = P(S_t = s_t \mid S_{t-1} = s_{t-1}) = \begin{bmatrix} 1 - p_t & p_t \\ q_t & 1 - q_t \end{bmatrix}$$
 (10.2)

We have then,

$$P(S_t = 1 \mid S_{t-1} = 1) = p_t$$

$$P(S_t = 0 \mid S_{t-1} = 1) = 1 - p_t$$

$$P(S_t = 0 \mid S_{t-1} = 0) = q_t$$

$$P(S_t = 1 \mid S_{t-1} = 0) = 1 - q_t$$

$$P(S_t = 0 \mid S_{t-1} = 0) = a_t$$

$$P(S_t = 1 \mid S_{t-1} = 0) = 1 - q_t$$

or

$$P = P(S_t = s_t \mid S_{t-1} = s_{t-1}) = \begin{bmatrix} 1 - p_t & p_t \dots \\ q_t \dots & 1 - q_t \end{bmatrix}$$
 (10.3)

Conclusion

Discussion

Recruitment procedure and panel data

not real sampling theory

Z that takes more periods into account

Limitations

Further Research

More complex Nowcasting model with Space space models / MIDAS Combine mixed models and Markov Chain for Panel Data (?) State Space Model

List of Abbreviations

BSI Business Survey Indicator GDP

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Appendix

Further Explanation of the Evolution of the responses ...

Notation	x_{t-1}	x_t	$ z_t $
$\pi_{}$	-1	-1	0
π_{-0}	-1	0	1
π_{-+}	-1	1	2
π_{0-}	0	-1	-1
π_{00}	0	0	0
π_{0+}	0	1	1
π_{+-}	1	-1	-2
π_{+0}	1	0	-1
π_{++}	1	1	0

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Gelieve enkel voor het hierboven vermelde product te antwoorden. Vermeld alle schommelingen, zelfs indien ze van geringe omvang zijn. Antwoord elke maand op alle vragen. Indien u in de beschouwde maand het product niet heeft geproduceerd (of geen bestellingen heeft ontvangen), vermeldt u

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"verminderd". Antwoord "onveranderd" gedurende de maand(en) dat deze toestand voorduurt totdat de productie herneemt. Uw antwoorden worden strikt vertrouwelijk behandeld. Verloop en beoordeling Uw <u>huidige</u> gezamenlijke orderpositie voor dit product Uw productietempo voor dit product is in september 2018 t.o.v. augustus 2018: beschouwt u als: 27 1 hoger dan 5 normaal 9 lager dan 15 1 versneld 5 onveranderd 9 vertraagd Hou geen rekening met schommelingen als gevolg van het maandelijks veranderlijke aantal werkdagen of betaald verlof. Indien uw onderneming uitsluitend uit voorraad levert, dient u ragenlijst voorbehouden "orderpositie" op te vatten als "het peil van de vraag" naar dit Tijdens de <u>afgelopen 3 maanden</u> was de trend van uw productie voor dit product: Indien u het <u>huidige</u> fabricatietempo voor dit product handhaaft, is uw activiteit nog verzekerd voor ongeveer: 16 1 stiigend 5 onveranderd 9 dalend Hou evenwel geen rekening met louter seizoengebonden maand(en) en/of schommelingen. gedeelten van een maand. g Uw verkoopprijzen voor dit product zijn in september 2018 Te ramen op basis van uw orderpositie of, bij gebrek hieraan, op van t.o.v. augustus 2018: basis van uw productieplannen. gebruik 5 onveranderd 9 gedaald 17 1 gestegen Uw huidige positie inzake bestellingen uit het buitenland Geef de tendens van uw prijzen aan op basis van uw contracten of voor dit product beschouwt u als: ţ 31 1 hoger dan 5 normaal 9 lager dan rechten Uw huidige voorraad van dit product beschouwt u, voor het Indien uw onderneming uitsluitend uit voorraad levert, dient u uw buitenlandse orderpositie op te vatten als "het peil van de 18 1 hoger dan 5 normaal 9 lager dan Alle normaal (voldoende) buitenlandse vraag" naar dit product. (te hoog) (te laag) 2008 Kruis "niet van toepassing" aan indien u dit product nooit uitvoert. Kruis "niet van toepassing" aan niet van indien u nooit voorraad hebt van dit product. Vooruitzichten voor de volgende drie maanden Bij het beantwoorden van de volgende twee vragen (22 en 26), mag bij het bearitwoorden van de zuivere seizoenschommelingen die het verloop van de bestellingen gedurende de maand september 2018 kunnen hebben beïnvloed. De werkelijke tendens van de bestellingen moet dus tot uiting komen. van Het personeel (arbeiders en technici) tewerkgesteld voor de fabricatie van dit product zal volgens u: 5 onveranderd 32 1 worden 9 worden uitgebreid blijven verminderd Uw ontvangen bestellingen voor dit product vanwege de Het invoeren van gedeeltelijke werkloosheid dient als een vermindering van het personeel te worden beschouwd. binnenlandse markt zijn in september 2018 t.o.v. augustus 2018: 22 1 vermeerderd 5 onveranderd 9 verminderd De vraag van uw klanten naar dit product zal volgens u: Hou eveneens rekening met de van andere afdelingen van uw firma 9 minder 33 1 belangrijker 5 even ontvangen bestellingen en met loonwerk belangriik zijn dan gewoonlijk tijdens die periode van het jaar. Kruis "niet van toepassing" aan indien u dit product nooit op de binnenlandse markt levert. Geef enkel de tendens van de vraag van de klanten weer en laat derhalve de zuivere seizoenschommelingen buiten beschouwing. Uw ontvangen bestellingen voor dit product vanwege de Uw productie zal voor dit product volgens u: buitenlandse markt zijn in september 2018 t.o.v. 36 1 toenemen 5 gelijk blijven 9 afnemen augustus 2018: 26 1 vermeerderd 5 onveranderd 9 verminderd • Uw verkoopprijzen van dit product zullen volgens u: Hou eveneens rekening met loonwerk. 34 1 stijgen 5 onveranderd 9 dalen Kruis "niet van toepassing" aan indien u dit niet van bliiven product nooit op de buitenlandse markt levert. 4100N REFERENTIE:

Figure 1: WAZAZAZAZA

Enquête:

Code

R code for Seasonal Adjustment

R code for Creating Lags

R code for Linear (Auto-Regressive) Models

R code for Markov Switching Models

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