**COURSE\_NUME: Describing Wellbeing in the NZ General Social Survey (20%)**

***Due on XXX***

**Objective:** To examine data in Excel, calculating descriptive statistics, that you will present, interpret, and communicate through a policy memo to inform our understanding of an element of wellbeing in New Zealand.

**Grading:** This assignment is worth 20% of your final grade. The grading rubric is on the final page of this document.

**Assignment:** For Part 1, you will use a data matrix/dataset provided on Blackboard that contains data produced from the New Zealand General Social Survey (NZGSS), a biennial survey representative of New Zealanders aged 15 years and older. The NZGSS is our best data source for understanding and reporting on wellbeing in New Zealand.

You are using what is called a SURF version of the GSS. A SURF is a synthetic unit-record file that helps protect the anonymity of survey participants, while still allowing statistics produced from these files to broadly be representative of wellbeing in the population that would be produced by the actual confidential data. These representations, however, may not hold true when looking among smaller subgroups or subpopulations of certain sociodemographic characteristics.

Your dataset contains 997 representative people in New Zealand in 2018. There are several variables on key sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, household income, education, ethnicity) and a variety of wellbeing (e.g., health, material wellbeing, loneliness, social connectedness), experiences (e.g., of discrimination, being a victim of crime, access to amenities), and opinions (e.g., trust in institutions, whether the government should support use of Te Reo Māori) variables.

Part 1 of the assignment will ask you to conduct an analysis examining one of these elements (e.g., wellbeing, experiences, opinions), which includes examining differences or inequities in these elements across different sociodemographic groups.

Part 2 will involve presenting the information you’ve produced in Part 1 in the form of a short memo using both words and charts/figures/graphs.

You will upload your responses to Part 1 and your memo from Part 2 combined in one word document on Blackboard. You will also need to submit the excel document you’ve used to produce t-tests (if conducting t-tests as part of your assignment).

**Useful resources:**

* Module 1 lectures 2 and 3
* Module 1 workshop 1
* Module 1 textbook readings

**About the data:**

* The dataset is a SURF version of the 2018 NZ General Social Survey, and contains 997 “people” (or synthentic confidentialised units).
* The data were collected by StatsNZ through in-person interviews.
* Participants come from the StatsNZ physical sampling frame.
* *The data have been ‘cleaned’ and simplified for the purpose of this assignment, and shouldn’t be treated as providing accurate estimates of wellbeing in New Zealand.*

The data codebook can be found in the excel document which contains the data.

The questionnaire respondents received can be found here: <https://statsnz.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p20045coll2/id/800>

**Part 1: Creating descriptive statistics**

For Part 1, fill out the worksheet below. What you produce in Part 1 will be used to construct the memo in Part 2. Your memo will explore associations between variables of your choosing but should include one dependent (outcome) variable and two independent variables.

*Q1. Identify the outcome/dependent variable you will examine. Identify the two predictor/independent variables that you will examine.*

*Q2. Write out the research question/objective and the null and alternate hypotheses for each of the associations you will be testing.*

*Q3. Create two separate bivariate tables, showing the mean* ***or*** *percents for your predictor/independent variables cross-tabulated with the outcome variable.*

*Q4. Conduct a Chi2 test or a t-test (depending on how your outcome is measured) to test your null and alternate hypotheses.*

*If conducting a Chi2 test: Copy and paste from excel your Chi2 working and results for each association.*

*If conducting a t-test: Submit your excel sheet with the data used and set-up, along with results output for each association.*

*Q5. Using words, describe the key findings from testing the null and alternative hypothesis. This includes whether there appears to be an association between your independent variable and the dependent variable, and interpreting what the results of the significance test say about whether these associations are statistically significant.*

**Part 2: Presenting descriptive statistics**

Informed by the analyses you conducted in Part 1, write a policy memo. An example of the format is on the next page. You’re encouraged to follow this format, but you may also need to adapt this memo format for your particular analyses. The following criteria apply:

* 800 words maximum, not including text in graphs/charts;
* Formatted to be no more than three pages;
* Includes the main sections: summary paragraph (see below for more information), background, methods, key findings, implications/recommendations; and,
* Include two charts/figures/graphs.

You do not need to do any extra research for this memo, nor have citations/references. The objective of this memo is for you to show that can present and interpret a set of descriptive statistics in a way that can inform a set of recommendations.

Memo presentation is important. You are limited on the amount of text you can use, so it makes your charts or figures even more important for conveying key information and provided additional insight that you may not have space to discuss in the text.

**MEMO FORMAT EXAMPLE**

To: [public sector stakeholder: Ministry, Commission, etc.]

From: [your name]

Re: [title of memo: action or statement-orientated titles are best]

Date: [date of submission]

**Summary**

[Here you have a summary paragraph of what the reader should expect to find in your memo. Try to limit this to 4-6 sentences/one paragprah. State what you sought to find out, what data you used, what method you applied (e.g., ‘using descriptive statistics’ is fine), and what you found. Finish by stating briefly whether and what implications your findings might have for key stakeholder who you’ve address this memo to, or what type of response might be needed]

**Background**

This background section should briefly include your motivation for the study. For example, “Understanding inequities in [elements of] wellbeing is important for constructing policy that alleviates the wellbeing gap. Understanding these trends potentially has implications for....etc, etc, etc.”

**Methods**

3-4 sentences maximum here:

* State the sample size
* Where the data came from (i.e., StatsNZ New Zealand General Social Survey)
* Who do they represent (e.g., a nationally-representative sample of New Zealanders, sampled through the StatsNZ sampling frame).
* The analyses you conducted (e.g., a series of univariate and bivariate statistics) in order to examine the issue/association you were interested in.

**Key findings**

* Stick to two or three key findings from your descriptive analyses that support the main findings from your summary paragraph.
* ***Present two graphs that illustrate the key findings.***
* Report whether there are statistical differences (at *p <* .05) in your subgroup findings, based on the results of your Chi2 test(s) or t-test(s).
* Use subheaders in this section to point the readers towards the main takeaway or analyisis

**Implications/Recommendations**

* Briefly summarise in 1-2 sentences the key findings.
* Discuss the implication these findings have for the public sector stakeholder, New Zealand, etc., if any, or whether these findings provide any evidence for some recommended policy steps.
* This could be in paragraph form, but bullet-pointed implications/recommendations are also appropriate.

**Descriptive statistics assignment grading**

**Part 1: Creating descriptive statistics**

**Content**

\_\_\_ Identified two appropriate independent/predictor variables

\_\_\_ Able to identify key research questions/objectives, null and alternate hypotheses to describe the relationship of both independent variables to the dependent variable

\_\_\_ Created two bivariate tables showing the association between two independent variables and an outcome

\_\_\_ Conducted appropriate significance tests

\_\_\_ Described two associations, including the direction of the association and whether the findings were statistically significant and at what level

**Part 2: Presenting descriptive statistics - Memo**

**Content**

\_\_\_ Summary paragraph identifies key finding(s) from the memo and briefly states implications/recommendations based on that information

\_\_\_ Appropriate/most important descriptive statistics are selected and described appropriately to inform the policy implications/recommendations

\_\_\_ There is appropriate information to motivate the findings (e.g., why we did this/background) and to describe the methods (e.g., a brief description of the sample, how data were collected, and the analysis approach)

\_\_\_ Implications/recommendations are informed by the analysis findings presented in the memo

**Figure/Chart/Graph presentation**

\_\_\_ Used two figures/charts/graphs, selecting appropriate chart type

\_\_\_ Data selected for the charts have been summarised correctly and are appropriate summary statistics

\_\_\_ Charts have the appropriate information included (e.g., title, axis labels, legend) so that they can be standalone (although please reference any Figures/Charts in the text and note key takeaways/findings identified in the charts)

**Organisation and presentation**

\_\_\_ Memo is well-organised (e.g., white space, appropriate bullet-points or subtitles, memo header is formatted appropriately) and the appropriate length (e.g., no more than 800 words)

\_\_\_ Appropriate writing style for a memo (concise, self-contained sentences), free of grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors

**Grading feedback**

**Total marks** \_\_\_ / 20