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PSYCH 350- TR 11AM

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Project 2

The variables I decided to test were stress, hunger, and tiredness. These variables are closely related in my life and in the lives of many other college students so I felt that this data would be useful for deciphering how I, and possibly others, are affected by their these variables as it relates to school work and extracurricular activities. These variables are highly affected by how busy we are, which is often determined in part by the level of pressure to complete various assignments and other work in regards to students. For myself in particular, all of the variables I have chosen feel closely related to how I am feeling on any given day and how my responsibilities and commitments stack up for that day. I found collecting and deciphering this data to be an extremely difficult task because of the requirement of consistent data collection. I was able to collect data for the variables I wanted to test and the results of the data were very surprising to me.

Initially I chose these variables for the reasons explained in the previous paragraph. I wanted my data to reflect my stress in being a college student and how that stress affects other areas of my life. I felt that the data would clearly show poor appetite, tiredness, and weight gain because of the poor functioning of the body in times of stress. I thought that the data presented would be a decent representation of these facets. I still wholeheartedly believe in the same theoretical intuitions I had when entering this experiment. The reason for this is because of the low validity of the experiment. The way this is conducted is very well organized in some ways and very poorly organized in other ways.

The experiment is good because it calls for data collection over a longer period of time; this is a positive aspect of the project because it accounts for various mood changes over time. It also accounts for differences in days of the week.. The continuous collection of data increases the validity a lot, however, contrary to this positive aspect, the experimental set-up lacks validity in that there are no time constraints on when the modules being tested are taken. Is it in the morning when you first wake up? Is it after lunch? Is it late at night after you’ve gone through an entire day of classwork and extracurricular activities? In order to gain more consistent results, I attempted to take the modules around the same time of day each day.

The experiment also lacks widespread validity. If more students had collected data or there was an even longer period of time being studied, we would have more valid and clearer results. There are few trends to be found in my results of the modules, but this information is just as valuable as if there had been major trends.

I tested the variables at hand using a wide array of module types. I utilized a binary module and various continuous modules to conduct this study. The binary module posed the question “Are you tired?” to which the only possible responses are “Yes” or “No” thusly this module is binary in Nature. I represented this module in the data with numerical representations. “No” was represented by 1 and “Yes” by 2. These data points were plotted along with 2 of the continuous modules. The first continuous module I utilized was the module that asked about stressed. The scale ranged from “very stressed” “somewhat stressed” “a little stressed” to “not stressed.” Represented by numeric values 1-4. 1 being “not stressed” at all and 4 being “very stressed.” The next module I used measured numeric value. This module asked “How many meals have you eaten?” This numeric response was to see how much eating would affect the chosen variables of tiredness, stress, and hunger as well. This particular variable was the easiest to collect data for. This piece also felt the most valid portion of the data collected due to it being fact based rather than feeling or emotion based. This project has made me realize how difficult it is to truly decipher one’s own emotions and it is easy to record data that may not have been entirely consistent with that day in it’s entirety.

The last module asked another simple numeric value, weight. This value was the most difficult to collect data for because I had to both be by a scale and by my computer so I could only do this module from home, where I knew the proper tools would be present to aid in collecting the data accurately. This module was scaled with a simple numeric value in pounds.

The averages and standard deviation results are compatible with my intuitions about what I would find in conducting this major project. My ideas predicted more extreme correlations, but the consistency of my theoretical views in comparison to the actual results is a positive step toward creating an accurate experiment with a plausible hypothesis and valid testability. The data collected is hard to relate to each other because of the different values being used and tested for, but the averages and standard deviations of each of the categories of data is very helpful to see the progression over time.

The average for tiredness came to 1.41176471, which ultimately means that I was not tired more often than I was. However the values are still fairly close to half. The average of the values for stress were 2.29411765. This indicates that I was feeling stressed more often than not. The value of the average lies between “a little stressed” and “somewhat stressed” which indicates my stress level was not extremely high but definitely present throughout the data collection. The average of the number of meals eaten was 1.588235294. This value is aligned with my theories because from my recollections I was feeling pretty stressed some of the time that I collected data and that is reflected by the fact that on average I had only eaten about 1.6 meals at the time of data collection. I collected this data most often at night, indicating that I was done eating meals for the day at the time of completing the modules. The last module, weight had an average of 182.294118. This shows the trend of slight weight fluctuations.

The standard deviations of the values are also very important in analyzing data in general, but not as useful in an experiment where there is only one participant providing data. It is good for comparing that person on a day-to-day basis for their responses, but we cannot come to any over arching conclusions utilizing this tool. The standard deviation for tiredness was 0.50729966, for stress it was 1.07181572. The standard deviation for the number of meals consumed was 0.771463356 and the deviation for the weight was 0.82352941. The standard deviation values would be much more useful and helpful if there were other participants that had provided results. We would be able to compare person-to-person results and see where they fell along a standard bell curve of this information.

Overall, the results and consequently the standard deviations and averages are aligned with my expectations for the data. The data collected is definitely hard to decipher with the naked eye, putting the data in graphs and utilizing marking tools like the standard deviation, averages, and correlational coefficients is extremely helpful. The relationships are too difficult to analyze without these valuable tools.

The correlational coefficient was particularly helpful in examining the information and deciding whether or not it was compatible with my expectations for the experiment. There was a strong relationship between the level of tiredness and level of stress. This notion is the basic premise of the data I collected. The relationship between stress and weight also had a positive correlation, which supports my hypothesis, but I did not expect that particular aspect of the data to show so clearly. The number of meals eaten had a negative correlation coefficient with every category. This was [particularly unexpected and interesting. This piece went completely against my expectations for the data collected.

Personally I felt very confused by this data. I did not find it particularly affective in learning much about myself. I feel like I learned more about my own determination and perseverance to attempt to complete assignments I find challenging. I found this experiment to confirm most of what I expected to be true in this data. The data was only confounding in one regard. This was the aspect of eating and meals each day. The hunger aspect aligned wit hall of the other variables, but the amount of meals eaten had a negative relationship with all of the other variables tested.

There are many variable at play in these studies, which is a large part of why it is so difficult to obtain self reported data that is both accurate and valid. I have always understood that collecting data is a complex and meticulous process, but the completion of this project has further highlighted this feature of psychological research to and has enlightened me even more about some of the aspect of my own personality. I hope to utilize this data in order to broaden my ideological approach to others and become more eclectic in my evaluation of various behaviors and personality factors.