

Measures of central tendency and dispersion

Besides summarizing data by means of tables and/or graphs, it can also be useful to describe the center of a distribution. We can do that by means of so-called **measures of central tendency**: the **mode**, **median** and **mean**.

Yet to adequately describe a distribution we need more information. We also need information about the variability or dispersion of the data. We need, in other words, **measures of dispersion**. Well-known measures of dispersion are the **range**, the **interquartile range**, the **variance** and the **standard deviation**. A graph that nicely presents the variability of a distribution is the **box plot**.

In this section of the module we'll not only discuss how you should interpret these measures of central tendency and dispersion, we'll also show you how you can compute them yourself.

