

Discussion 2. Studying the World of Work

Sociologists depend upon research to verify a theory and to evaluate policy. As students, teachers, or practitioners, we need to be familiar with data sources and how to use and interpret them. The purpose of Discussion 2 is to introduce you to the Bureau of Labor statistics website and let you use the data in a simple research project.

As this is the second time you have used the grading form, I will be generous in my scoring - but not as generous as last week. (smile)

You will not have to do any arithmetic or solve any equations for this assignment. You will be asked to select variables, enter data, examine the results, and draw conclusions.

I realize that many of you will not be comfortable with numbers. I will be available by email and phone calls to answer your questions and guide you through the assignment. If your phone and I am not available, please leave your name, class (Sociology of Work), and a time when you would like me to phone you back.

Assignment

1. Watch the video

http://www.ted.com/talks/hans_rosling_shows_the_best_stats_you_ve_ever_seen.html

Hans Rosling is also the author of Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World - and Why Things Are Better than you think. I highly recommended this book as an antidote to false facts and propaganda prevalent on the web.

https://smile.amazon.com/HansRosling/e/B07BBKX3D6ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1&qid=1549735970&sr=8-1 (Links to an external site.)

2. Then review the tables in the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics website.

<http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsatabs.htm> (Links to an external site.)

3. Select any two tables you would like to compare over time. Then select one variable from each table. Choose tables and variables that have meaning for you.

IMPORTANT. The first person to post two variables has a copyright on that combination of variables. Each student will need to choose a unique combination of variables. The first to post has an advantage - just as in professional peer-mediated journals.

The following will show you possible ways to format your posting.

4. First, you are asked to select two variables that are of interest to you. Each of you will choose different variables. I will call my variable A and B. The table will show you the years. The years and values in my table are imaginary. Yours will be taken from the Bureau of Labor Statistics website

Year	A	B
1	10	70
2	20	60
3	30	50
4	40	40
5	50	30
6	60	20
7	70	10

You may now choose either 4a or 4b.

4a.

	A	B
Year 1	10	70
Year 7	70	10

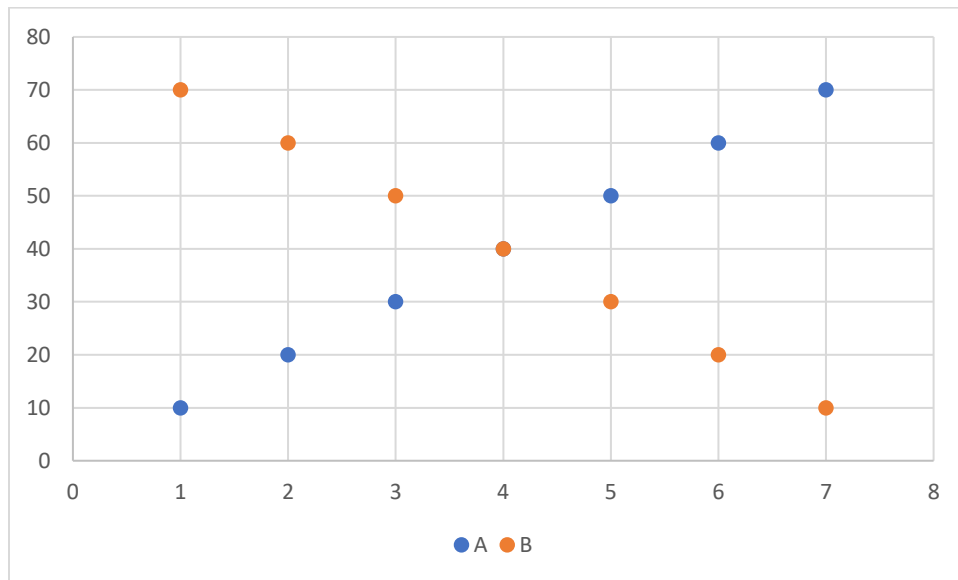
If you have studied statistics and wish to calculate a Chi-Square, you may use the link.

Remember that Chi-Square only works for numbers. If your table has percentages use the second link.

If you have not studied statistics, eyeball the table and see if there appears to be a relationship. Hint. In this example, when one variable goes up, the other goes down. This pattern might occur if the two variables were age and life expectancy. (As an old dinosaur, these variable might interest me).

OR,

4b. A scattergram simply plots the data points. It does not have to be fancy. You can draw it by hand and take a photograph.



Then simply answer the questions about what you see.

5a. Why did you choose to compare these variables?

5b. Describe the relationship in the variables over time?

5c. How does this relationship affect workers and the nation?

You do not need to complete a correlation or regression analysis - though those of you who can are encouraged to do so. You may attach a spreadsheet, but the discussion itself must be posted - not attached - to the discussion board. Be sure to include the URLs you referred to in preparing the posting.

6a. What you learn from this assignment?

6b. How could this assignment be improved?

Comments

Your substantive posting should be smaller than three double-spaced pages using a size 11 or 12 font, with one-inch margins. If you can answer the questions in less space, please do so. Your table followed by one to five sentences for each of the three questions should be sufficient.

The three-page limit is a MAXIMUM. If you can be more concise, you will make both me and your fellow students happy. (smile). Many of the topics we cover in this introductory course have been the subject of lifetime study. You are only expected to put in 6-9 hours total each week.

I would recommend you spend half your time reading the assigned texts, supplementary materials, and individual research and the remaining half of the time writing your substantive posting. You may use the discussion board to communicate with other students.

I realize that this may be your first research project. I am available to assist you. You may also phone me 24/7 with any questions, concerns or to chat. I can also schedule a Zoom conference if you wish.