QR

 Exercise Sociology 303

Research Methods

This project is designed for small groups in my research methods class.

At this point they have done a series of exercises where they have made bivariate tables and interpreted them. In a number of these they have already used gender and race as independent variables. They have also looked at a set of specific variables previously. These have the shorthand names of: Bible, wkstress, amenglsh, sexeduc. They use the SDA system to do the analysis.

QR goals

Knowledge:

Correctly construct bivariate tables for a given set of variables.

Conceptual understanding:

Accurately summarize the results in bivariate tables and accurately describe the similarities and differences among related tables.

Habits of mind:

Propose explanations for observed relationships and/or propose additional variables that it would make sense to incorporate.

Content goals are

Explain the potential influence that importance of social factors such as attitude towrd the interview, question order, and race of interviewer on the results of survey research.

For at least on factor, explain the kinds of questions that such factore would have the biggest impact on.

Propose ways to collect data to study this issue in more depth.

This class meets for 3.5 hours. The first part of class will be used to do this work, then the groups will present their results. I expect to have about 5 or 6 groups.

Each group has a different topic that they will research

Most of the instructions are in Blackboard. I've taken this opportunity to rewrite them in a more standardized format.

At the end of the class I'm going to ask everyone to write for 5 minutes about this:
Overall what did you learn from this work and the presentations?
Can this help you improve how you administer or organize your survey?

Some general thoughts:

Students will have done a number of analyses with detailed scaffolding up until this point. In this project I want them to work more independently. I also want to them to really think about what the results mean, not just read the results off of the table.

Overall Instructions

Working together, your group has the task of creating a presentation about the impact of the interview experience on the responses given.

You will have about two hours in which to get organized, do preliminary thinking and discussion, the data analysis and put it together into a presentation to share with the rest of the class. It is strongly recommended that you set up a presentation in Google Documents and share it with everyone in the group, along with your professor, so that you can collaborate easily.

Obviously this is not going to be as polished as it would be if you had more time, but you should bring together the important information and think sociologically about the topic. Make sure that you organize your data correctly (for example the independent and dependent variables are set up correctly).

Some suggestions:

In your slides you don't necessarily have to write full sentences, you can list key points that you will talk about in more detail in the presentation to the class.

You may want to take the SDA tables and retype them (and possibly reorganize them) to make the presentations of you results more clear.

You can use Google spreadsheets or SDA to make graphs that you can add to the presentation.

Don't feel you have to discuss or include every piece of data. Instead pick the ones you need to be able to make your points. Also you can include data that you do not necessarily talk about when giving the presentation to the class.

Group 1: The impact of Cooperation

In the past we have looked at whether question wording influences the answers that people give on surveys. There are a variety of other factors that can potentially influence survey responses. In this lab we will examine the potential influence of other factors using the General Social Survey.

The variable

After each interview, the interviewers are asked some questions about their impressions of the interview and the interview process.

The name (mneumonic) of the variable you will examine is coop .

What does the variable coop attempt to measure?

What do you think about the possible reliability and validity of asking the interviewer this question?

Your ideas

Do you think how a person feels about the interaction with the interviewer could influence the answers he or she gives? Why or why not?

Coop -2

Your predictions

To examine the possible impact of coop we will use the attitude variables that we looked at previously. You can go to the SDA (or GSS) websites to review the variable definitions.

BIBLE	WKSTRESS
AMENGLSH	SEXEDUC

Make your predictions about what you will find.

Do you think COOP will be related to the responses given for your specific variable? In what ways? Make at least one specific prediction for each of the variables.

If, after discussion, not everyone agrees on the prediction it is fine to say that in your presentation.

Data Analysis

Use the SDA system to create the tables to analyze this question. You can divide up the task however you like, but everyone in the group should take responsibility for making sure the tables are correctly set up.

Summarize the results and compare the results in each of the different tables.

Compare the tables to each other and look for any similarities and differences.

Interpretation

Now discuss your results.

What, if any, relationship was there between coop and the variables? Were your predictions accurate? Were you surprised by anything?

What does the data show about whether coop influences the answers people give?
What do you think explains which variables it does and does not relate to?
If you were creating a survey, what would you do to reduce the impact of these factors?

Extension

What is at least one other variable that might help us to understand the role of cooperation in producing survey responses. For example two things you might think about:

What variables might predict whether an interviewer rates an interviewee as cooperative?

What are other variables you predict would or would not be related to coop?

Report

Making sure you provide the audience with all the information they need, put together the presentation.

Do not feel you have to include every single detail. Pick the most important results.

Don't forget to make a title slide with the names of everyone in your group.

Group 2: The impact of Comprehension

In the past we have looked at whether question wording influences the answers that people give on surveys. There are a variety of other factors that can potentially influence survey responses. In this lab we will examine the potential influence of other factors using the General Social Survey.

The variable

After each interview, the interviewers are asked some questions about their impressions of the interview and the interview process.

The name (mneumonic) of the variable you will examine is comprend.

What does the variable comprend attempt to measure?

What do you think about the possible reliability and validity of asking the interviewer this questions?

Your ideas

Do you think how a person feels about the interaction with the interviewer could influence the answers he or she gives? Why or why not?

Comprend -2

Your predictions

To examine the possible impact of comprend we will use the attitude variables that we looked at previously. You can go to the SDA (or GSS) websites to review the variable definitions.

BIBLE	WKSTRESS
AMENGLSH	SEXEDUC

Make your predictions about what you will find.

Do you think COMPREND will be related to the responses given for your specific variable? In what ways? Make at least one specific prediction for each of the variables.

If, after discussion, not everyone agrees on the prediction it is fine to say that in your presentation.

Data Analysis

Use the SDA system to create the tables to analyze this question. You can divide up the task however you like, but everyone in the group should take responsibility for making sure the tables are correctly set up.

Summarize the results and compare the results in each of the different tables.

Compare the tables to each other and look for any similarities and differences.

Interpretation

Now discuss your results.

What, if any, relationship was there between comprend and the variables? Were your predictions accurate? Were you surprised by anything?

What does the data show about whether comprend influences the answers people give? What do you think explains which variables it does and does not relate to?

If you were creating a survey, what would you do to reduce the impact of these factors?

Extension

What is at least one other variable that might help us to understand the role of comprehension in producing survey responses. For example two things you might think about:

What variables might predict whether an interviewer rates an interviewee as not comprehending the questions?

What are other variables you predict would or would not be related to comprend?

Do at least one additional analysis based on these ideas.

If you were creating a survey, what would you do to reduce the impact of these factors?

Report

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Group 3: The impact of Race of Interviewer

In the past we have looked at whether question wording influences the answers that people give on surveys. There are a variety of other factors that can potentially influence survey responses. In this lab we will examine the potential influence of other factors using the General Social Survey. Specifically you will examine the impact of the *race of the interviewer* on the responses that people give to questions.

The variable

In 2004, the General Social Survey started to record the race of the interviewer. For this analysis we will compare the responses given to Black interviewers with the responses given to White interviewers. There were not enough interviewers from other backgrounds to analyze.

The mneumonic for the variable you will use is: intrace1. Go to the SDA or GSS site and read the actual question interviewers were asked.

What do you think about the reliability and validity of this question? (Think about previous discussions we have had about the way the GSS asks about race.)

Your ideas

Why might a sociologist think that the responses someone gives to a question might differ depending on the race of the interviewer?
Do you think this would impact all variables equally?

Your predictions

To examine the possible impact of interviewer race we will use the attitude variables that we looked at previously. You can go to the SDA or GSS websites to review the variable definitions.

BIBLE	WKSTRESS
AMENGLSH	SEXEDUC

For each of these do you predict there will be a relationship between race of interviewer and the answers given? If so what do you predict? Why?

Data Analysis

Use the SDA system to create the tables to analyze this question. You can divide up the task however you like, but everyone in the group should take responsibility for making sure the tables are correctly set up.

To make the table only display people who were interviewed by either Black or White interviewers, put this in the filter field: intrace1(1,2).

Summarize the results and compare the results in each of the different tables.

Compare the tables to each other and look for any similarities and differences.

Interpretation

Now discuss your results.

What, if any, relationship was there between race of interviewer and each of the variables? Were your predictions accurate? Were you surprised by anything?

What does the data show about whether the race of the person they are talking to influences the answers people give? What do you think explains which variables it does and does not relate to?
Do we know which answers are more accurate?

Do your results give us any information about how honest people are when talking to someone of the same or a different race? Potentially, what implications could the finding that race does or does not have for the validity of your question?

Race of interviewer-3

Do your results tell us anything about whether black and white interviewers ask questions differently? Regardless of this, POTENTIALLY, what implications could your results have for the reliability of your question?

How could you learn more about the potential impact of race of interviewer on responses to your questions? What additional research or data analysis would you want to do?

What other interviewer characteristics do you think might have an impact on the responses people give? What kinds of questions do you think might be most strongly influences by interviewer characteristics?

Extension

What is another variable you would want to include in your analysis in order to understand how the interviewer's race influences responses?

Do an analysis where you incorporate that variable as a control variable in the same analyses you did before.   Remember that with a control variable you will get several separate tables for each analsysis.

Report

Making sure you provide the audience with all the information they need, put together the presentation.

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Don't forget to make a title slide with the names of everyone in your group.

Group 4: Question ordering

In the past we have looked at whether question wording influences the answers that people give on surveys. There are a variety of other factors that can potentially influence survey responses. In this lab we will examine the potential influence of other factors using the General Social Survey. Specifically you will examine the impact of the *question ordering* on the responses that people give to questions.

The variable

In 1987 the GSS tried an experiment. They split their sample into three groups. They then tried three different orderings of questions about happiness and satisfaction.

Each version was called a "form" and form is the mneumonic for the independent variable you will use.

The attributes of Form represent the order the questions were asked in.
STANDARD <X>
STANDARD <Y>
STANDARD <Z>
Are the names used for the three different question orderings.

Now look up the following variable definitions in SDA or GSS:

Satfam, Hapmar, Happy

These represent the questions that will be asked in different orders.

Your ideas

Why might a sociologist think that the responses someone gives to a question might differ depending on the order questions are asked?
Do you think this would impact all variables equally?

What do you predict for each variable? Do you think that the order of the questions will have an impact? What impact do you think it will have?

Ordering-2

Your predictions

Here are the three orderings used:

STANDARD <X> Satfam, Hapmar, Happy
STANDARD <Y> Hapmar, Happy, Satfam
STANDARD <Z> Happy, Hapmar, Satfam

What predictions do you make about differences in results based on the three different orderings?

How do you expect the results to differ?

Notice, since the questions involve marital happiness we should only study the married people.

Data Analysis

Use the SDA system to create the tables to analyze this question. You can divide up the task however you like, but everyone in the group should take responsibility for making sure the tables are correctly set up.

Remember:
To get only the married people

To get only married people who participated in the survey in 1987 put:

marital(1),year(1987)

in the filter field.

Keep in mind: the version of the form is the independent variable. You need to compare the results for each of the three questions when different versions of the form are used.

Summarize the results and compare the results in each of the different tables.

Compare the tables to each other and look for any similarities and differences.

Interpretation

Now discuss your results.

Look over your results. For each of the three variables, describe whether or not the results changed as a result of question ordering. Be specific and use the results of your analysis in supporting your descriptions.

Why do you think in this particular example question order had an impact on the variable(s) that it did? Why do you think question order did it not have an impact on particular variable(s)?

If you had to pick one ordering, which one would you pick? Why?

Extension

What is another variable you would want to include in your analysis in order to understand how the interviewer's race influences responses?

Do an analysis where you incorporate that variable as a control variable in the same analyses you did before.   Remember that with a control variable you will get several separate tables for each analysis.

Report

Making sure you provide the audience with all the information they need, put together the presentation.

Do not feel you have to include every single detail. Pick the most important results.

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Group 3: The impact of Sex of Interviewer

In the past we have looked at whether question wording influences the answers that people give on surveys. There are a variety of other factors that can potentially influence survey responses. In this lab we will examine the potential influence of other factors using the General Social Survey. Specifically you will examine the impact of the *sex of the interviewer* on the responses that people give to questions.

The variable

In 2004, the General Social Survey started to record the sex of the interviewer. For this analysis we will compare the responses given to male interviewers with the responses given to female interviewers.

The mneumonic for the variable you will use is: intsex. Go to the SDA or GSS site and read the actual question interviewers were asked.

What do you think about the reliability and validity of this question?

Your ideas

Why might a sociologist think that the responses someone gives to a question might differ depending on the sex of the interviewer?
Do you think this would impact all variables equally?

Your predictions

Previously we have looked at the GSS variables related to attitude about abortion.

ABANY, ABPOOR, ABRAPE
ABHLTH, ABDEFECT, ABSINGLE

First look again at the definitions of each of these. Make sure you understand the questions being asked.

For each of these do you predict there will be a relationship between sex of interviewer and the answers given? If so what do you predict? Why?

Do you think sex of interviewer might be more important for some versions than others?

Data Analysis

Use the SDA system to create the tables to analyze this question. You can divide up the task however you like, but everyone in the group should take responsibility for making sure the tables are correctly set up.

Summarize the results and compare the results in each of the different tables.

Compare the tables to each other and look for any similarities and differences.

Interpretation

Now discuss your results.

What, if any, relationship was there between sex of interviewer and each of the variables? Were your predictions accurate? Were you surprised by anything?

What does the data show about whether the sex of the person they are talking to influences the answers people give? What do you think explains which variables it does and does not relate to?
Do we know which answers are more accurate?

Do your results give us any information about how honest people are when talking to someone of the same or a different sex? Potentially, what implications could the finding that race does or does not have for the validity of your question?

Do your results tell us anything about whether male and female interviewers ask questions differently? Regardless of this, POTENTIALLY, what implications could your results have for the reliability of your question?

How could you learn more about the potential impact of sex of interviewer on responses to your questions? What additional research or data analysis would you want to do?

What other interviewer characteristics do you think might have an impact on the responses people give? What kinds of questions do you think might be most strongly influences by interviewer characteristics?

Extension

What is another variable you would want to include in your analysis in order to understand how the interviewer's sex influences responses?

Do an analysis where you incorporate that variable as a control variable in the same analyses you did before.   Remember that with a control variable you will get several separate tables for each analysis.

Report

Making sure you provide the audience with all the information they need, put together the presentation.

Do not feel you have to include every single detail. Pick the most important results.

Don't forget to make a title slide with the names of everyone in your group.