2 | DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Figure 2.1 When you have large amounts of data, you will need to organize it in a way that makes sense. These ballots from an election are rolled together with similar ballots to keep them organized. (credit: William Greeson)

Introduction

Once you have collected data, what will you do with it? Data can be described and presented in many different formats. For example, suppose you are interested in buying a house in a particular area. You may have no clue about the house prices, so you might ask your real estate agent to give you a sample data set of prices. Looking at all the prices in the sample often is overwhelming. A better way might be to look at the median price and the variation of prices. The median and variation are just two ways that you will learn to describe data. Your agent might also provide you with a graph of the data.

In this chapter, you will study numerical and graphical ways to describe and display your data. This area of statistics is called **"Descriptive Statistics."** You will learn how to calculate, and even more importantly, how to interpret these measurements and graphs.

A statistical graph is a tool that helps you learn about the shape or distribution of a sample or a population. A graph can be a more effective way of presenting data than a mass of numbers because we can see where data clusters and where there are only a few data values. Newspapers and the Internet use graphs to show trends and to enable readers to compare facts and figures quickly. Statisticians often graph data first to get a picture of the data. Then, more formal tools may be applied.

Solution 2.22

- Thirty percent of students are enrolled in seven or fewer credit units.
- Seventy percent of students are enrolled in seven or more credit units.
- In this example, there is no "good" or "bad" value judgment associated with a higher or lower percentile. Students attend community college for varied reasons and needs, and their course load varies according to their needs.

Example 2.23

Sharpe Middle School is applying for a grant that will be used to add fitness equipment to the gym. The principal surveyed 15 anonymous students to determine how many minutes a day the students spend exercising. The results from the 15 anonymous students are shown.

0 minutes; 40 minutes; 60 minutes; 30 minutes; 60 minutes

10 minutes; 45 minutes; 30 minutes; 300 minutes; 90 minutes;

30 minutes; 120 minutes; 60 minutes; 0 minutes; 20 minutes

Determine the following five values.

Min = 0
Q_1 = 20
Med = 40
Q_3 = 60
Max = 300

If you were the principal, would you be justified in purchasing new fitness equipment? Since 75% of the students exercise for 60 minutes or less daily, and since the *IQR* is 40 minutes (60 – 20 = 40), we know that half of the students surveyed exercise between 20 minutes and 60 minutes daily. This seems a reasonable amount of time spent exercising, so the principal would be justified in purchasing the new equipment.

However, the principal needs to be careful. The value 300 appears to be a potential outlier.

$Q_3 + 1.5(IQR) = 60 + (1.5)(40) = 120$.

The value 300 is greater than 120 so it is a potential outlier. If we delete it and calculate the five values, we get the following values:

Min = 0
Q_1 = 20
Q_3 = 60
Max = 120

We still have 75% of the students exercising for 60 minutes or less daily and half of the students exercising between 20 and 60 minutes a day. However, 15 students is a small sample and the principal should survey more students to be sure of his survey results.

2.3 | Measures of the Center of the Data

The "center" of a data set is also a way of describing location. The two most widely used measures of the "center" of the data are the **mean** (average) and the **median**. To calculate the **mean weight** of 50 people, add the 50 weights together and divide by 50. Technically this is the arithmetic mean. We will discuss the geometric mean later. To find the **median weight** of the 50 people, order the data and find the number that splits the data into two equal parts meaning an equal number of observations on each side. The weight of 25 people are below this weight and 25 people are heavier than this weight. The median is generally a better measure of the center when there are extreme values or outliers because it is not affected by the precise numerical values of the outliers. The mean is the most common measure of the center.

NOTE

The words “mean” and “average” are often used interchangeably. The substitution of one word for the other is common practice. The technical term is “arithmetic mean” and “average” is technically a center location. Formally, the arithmetic mean is called the first moment of the distribution by mathematicians. However, in practice among non-statisticians, “average" is commonly accepted for “arithmetic mean.”

When each value in the data set is not unique, the mean can be calculated by multiplying each distinct value by its frequency and then dividing the sum by the total number of data values. The letter used to represent the **sample mean** is an x with a bar over it (pronounced “x bar”): $\bar{x}$.

The Greek letter μ (pronounced "mew") represents the **population mean**. One of the requirements for the **sample mean** to be a good estimate of the **population mean** is for the sample taken to be truly random.

To see that both ways of calculating the mean are the same, consider the sample:
1; 1; 1; 2; 2; 3; 4; 4; 4; 4; 4

$$\bar{x} = \frac{1+1+1+2+2+3+4+4+4+4+4}{11} = 2.7$$

$$\bar{x} = \frac{3(1)+2(2)+1(3)+5(4)}{11} = 2.7$$

In the second calculation, the frequencies are 3, 2, 1, and 5.

You can quickly find the location of the median by using the expression $\frac{n+1}{2}$.

The letter n is the total number of data values in the sample. If n is an odd number, the median is the middle value of the ordered data (ordered smallest to largest). If n is an even number, the median is equal to the two middle values added together and divided by two after the data has been ordered. For example, if the total number of data values is 97, then $\frac{n+1}{2} = \frac{97+1}{2} = 49$. The median is the 49^{th} value in the ordered data. If the total number of data values is 100, then $\frac{n+1}{2} = \frac{100+1}{2} = 50.5$. The median occurs midway between the 50^{th} and 51^{st} values. The location of the median and the value of the median are **not** the same. The upper case letter M is often used to represent the median. The next example illustrates the location of the median and the value of the median.

Example 2.24

AIDS data indicating the number of months a patient with AIDS lives after taking a new antibody drug are as follows (smallest to largest):
3; 4; 8; 8; 10; 11; 12; 13; 14; 15; 15; 16; 16; 17; 17; 18; 21; 22; 22; 24; 24; 25; 26; 26; 27; 27; 29; 29; 31; 32; 33; 33; 34; 34; 35; 37; 40; 44; 44; 47;
Calculate the mean and the median.

Solution 2.24

The calculation for the mean is:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{[3+4+(8)(2)+10+11+12+13+14+(15)(2)+(16)(2)+...+35+37+40+(44)(2)+47]}{40} = 23.6$$

To find the median, M, first use the formula for the location. The location is:

$$\frac{n+1}{2} = \frac{40+1}{2} = 20.5$$

Starting at the smallest value, the median is located between the 20^{th} and 21^{st} values (the two 24s):
3; 4; 8; 8; 10; 11; 12; 13; 14; 15; 15; 16; 16; 17; 17; 18; 21; 22; 22; 24; 24; 25; 26; 26; 27; 27; 29; 29; 31; 32; 33; 33; 34; 34; 35; 37; 40; 44; 44; 47;

$$M = \frac{24 + 24}{2} = 24$$

Example 2.25

Suppose that in a small town of 50 people, one person earns $5,000,000 per year and the other 49 each earn $30,000. Which is the better measure of the "center": the mean or the median?

Solution 2.25

$$\bar{x} = \frac{5,\ 000,\ 000 + 49(30,\ 000)}{50} = 129{,}400$$

M = 30,000

(There are 49 people who earn $30,000 and one person who earns $5,000,000.)

The median is a better measure of the "center" than the mean because 49 of the values are 30,000 and one is 5,000,000. The 5,000,000 is an outlier. The 30,000 gives us a better sense of the middle of the data.

Another measure of the center is the mode. The **mode** is the most frequent value. There can be more than one mode in a data set as long as those values have the same frequency and that frequency is the highest. A data set with two modes is called bimodal.

Example 2.26

Statistics exam scores for 20 students are as follows:

50; 53; 59; 59; 63; 63; 72; 72; 72; 72; 72; 76; 78; 81; 83; 84; 84; 84; 90; 93

Find the mode.

Solution 2.26

The most frequent score is 72, which occurs five times. Mode = 72.

Example 2.27

Five real estate exam scores are 430, 430, 480, 480, 495. The data set is bimodal because the scores 430 and 480 each occur twice.

When is the mode the best measure of the "center"? Consider a weight loss program that advertises a mean weight loss of six pounds the first week of the program. The mode might indicate that most people lose two pounds the first week, making the program less appealing.

NOTE

The mode can be calculated for qualitative data as well as for quantitative data. For example, if the data set is: red, red, red, green, green, yellow, purple, black, blue, the mode is red.

Calculating the Arithmetic Mean of Grouped Frequency Tables

When only grouped data is available, you do not know the individual data values (we only know intervals and interval

frequencies); therefore, you cannot compute an exact mean for the data set. What we must do is estimate the actual mean by calculating the mean of a frequency table. A frequency table is a data representation in which grouped data is displayed along with the corresponding frequencies. To calculate the mean from a grouped frequency table we can apply the basic definition of mean: $mean = \frac{data\ sum}{number\ of\ data\ values}$ We simply need to modify the definition to fit within the restrictions of a frequency table.

Since we do not know the individual data values we can instead find the midpoint of each interval. The midpoint is $\frac{lower\ boundary + upper\ boundary}{2}$. We can now modify the mean definition to be $Mean\ of\ Frequency\ Table = \frac{\sum fm}{\sum f}$ where f = the frequency of the interval and m = the midpoint of the interval.

Example 2.28

A frequency table displaying professor Blount's last statistic test is shown. Find the best estimate of the class mean.

Grade Interval	Number of Students
50–56.5	1
56.5–62.5	0
62.5–68.5	4
68.5–74.5	4
74.5–80.5	2
80.5–86.5	3
86.5–92.5	4
92.5–98.5	1

Table 2.24

Solution 2.28

- Find the midpoints for all intervals

Grade Interval	Midpoint
50–56.5	53.25
56.5–62.5	59.5
62.5–68.5	65.5
68.5–74.5	71.5
74.5–80.5	77.5
80.5–86.5	83.5
86.5–92.5	89.5
92.5–98.5	95.5

Table 2.25

- Calculate the sum of the product of each interval frequency and midpoint. $\sum fm$

  $53.25(1) + 59.5(0) + 65.5(4) + 71.5(4) + 77.5(2) + 83.5(3) + 89.5(4) + 95.5(1) = 1460.25$

- $\mu = \frac{\sum fm}{\sum f} = \frac{1460.25}{19} = 76.86$

Try It Σ

2.28 Maris conducted a study on the effect that playing video games has on memory recall. As part of her study, she compiled the following data:

Hours Teenagers Spend on Video Games	Number of Teenagers
0–3.5	3
3.5–7.5	7
7.5–11.5	12
11.5–15.5	7
15.5–19.5	9

Table 2.26

What is the best estimate for the mean number of hours spent playing video games?

2.4 | Sigma Notation and Calculating the Arithmetic Mean

Formula for Population Mean

$$\mu = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N} x_i$$

Formula for Sample Mean

$$\bar{x} = \frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n} x_i$$

This unit is here to remind you of material that you once studied and said at the time "I am sure that I will never need this!"

Here are the formulas for a population mean and the sample mean. The Greek letter μ is the symbol for the population mean and $\bar{x}$ is the symbol for the sample mean. Both formulas have a mathematical symbol that tells us how to make the calculations. It is called Sigma notation because the symbol is the Greek capital letter sigma: Σ. Like all mathematical symbols it tells us what to do: just as the plus sign tells us to add and the x tells us to multiply. These are called mathematical operators. The Σ symbol tells us to add a specific list of numbers.

Let's say we have a sample of animals from the local animal shelter and we are interested in their average age. If we list each value, or observation, in a column, you can give each one an index number. The first number will be number 1 and the second number 2 and so on.