Statistics: descriptive statistics, describing the data

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Introduction

• Suppose that there are data at our disposal.

It is very important that such data are presented clearly and concisely and in a manner such that their important features can be immediately seen.

This is particularly useful when we have a lot of data.

Data are presented by means of frequency tables or graphical representations of frequency tables.

We always assume that the data are an *n*−tuple

$$
\boldsymbol{x}=(x_1,x_2,\ldots,x_n)
$$

with components x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n . Although we could say that x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n are the data, from now on, we say that **x** is the data, *n* is the size of the data and x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n are the components of the data.

Example. Consider, a classroom of 25 students.

The data x could be a n−*tuple with n* = 25*, where the component xi is the height, the weight or the favorite type of ice-cream for the i*−*th student, i* ∈ {1, . . . , 25}*.*

It is assumed that the students are ordered in some manner, for example in alphabetic order.

Frequency tables

• Assume that the components x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n of **x** belong to a set $\{v_1, \ldots, v_l\}$, where v_1, \ldots, v_l are distinct elements called the **data values**.

Example. For

$$
\bm{x} = (-1, 0, 1, -1, -1, 0, -1)
$$

we have the data values −1, 0, 1*.*

Not necessarily the data values have to be numbers as in the example of the favorite type of ice-cream for the students.

The **frequency table** for the data *x* associates to each data value $v_j, j \in \{1, \ldots, l\}$, its **frequency** f_j in \boldsymbol{x} , i.e. the number of times that *v^j* appears as a component of *x*: we have

$$
f_j=\left|\{i\in\{1,\ldots,n\}:x_i=v_j\}\right|.
$$

Example. For

$$
\bm{x}=(-1,0,1,-1,-1,0,-1)
$$

we have the frequency table

A frequency table is useful when *l n* and *l* is not a large number.

In fact, in this case, in few lines (*l* lines) we can describe the long data *x* (of size *n*): we describe the data *x* by giving 2*l* numbers (the data values and their frequencies) rather than *n* numbers (the components).

Note that

$$
\sum_{j=1}^l f_j=n.
$$

In fact, the components of the data *x* can be partitioned by their values: we count f_1 components with value v_1 , f_2 components with value v_2 and so on, for a total of n components.

Example. Let

 \boldsymbol{x} = (2, 2, 0, 0, 5, 8, 3, 4, 1, 0, 0, 7, 1, 7, 1, 5, 4, 0, 4, 0, 1, 8, 9, 7, 0, 1, 7, 2, 5, 5, 4, 3, 3, 0, 0, 2, 5, 1, 3, 0, 1, 0, 2, 4, 5, 0, 5, 7, 5, 1)

where x_i , $i \in \{1, \ldots, 50\}$, is the number of sick days over the last *six weeks of the i*−*th worker in a certain company.*

A set of data values is {0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9} *and the frequency table is*

Observe that the data value 6 *does not appear in the components of x. Its frequency is* 0*.*

- • A frequency table can be graphically pictured by:
	- ► a **line graph**;
	- **a** bar graph;
	- **Exercise 2 a frequency polygon.**

These graphs have the data values in abscissas and the frequencies in ordinates.

Example of the sick days.

Line graph:

Bar graph:

Frequency polygon:

• Suppose that the data values v_1, \ldots, v_l are numbers.

The data *x* is called **symmetric** about a number *c* if, for any data value $\mathsf{v}_{j_1},\,j_1\in\{1,\ldots,l\},$ there exists a data value $\mathsf{v}_{j_2},$ $j_2 \in \{1, \ldots, l\}$, such that

$$
v_{j_2}-c=-\left(v_{j_1}-c\right) \text{ and } f_{j_2}=f_{j_1},
$$

i.e. v_{j_2} and v_{j_1} are at the same distance from c on the opposite side and have the same frequency.

is symmetric about 3*.*

Examples of bar graphs related to the notion of a symmetric data:

The **relative frequency** of the data value *v^j* , *j* ∈ {1, . . . , *l*}, in the data *x* of size *n* is

$$
\widehat{f}_j:=\frac{f_j}{n},\ j\in\{1,\ldots,l\}\,.
$$

Note that

$$
\widehat{f}_j \in [0,1], j \in \{1,\ldots,l\},\
$$

(this follows by $0 \leq f_i \leq n$) and

$$
\sum_{j=1}^{l} \widehat{f}_{j} = \sum_{j=1}^{l} \frac{f_{j}}{n} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{j=1}^{l} f_{j} = \frac{1}{n} \cdot n = 1.
$$

The **relative frequency table** for the data *x* associates to each data value $\mathsf{v}_j, j \in \{1, \dots, l\},$ its relative frequency $f_j.$

A relative frequency table can be graphically pictured by a line graph, a bar graph or a relative frequency poligon.

Example of the sick days.

Relative frequency table

Relative frequency polygon

• In MATLAB, a frequency table is obtained by the function tabulate: $table = tabulate(x)$

gives, for the data in the vector x, the matrix table whose first column contains the data values, the second column the frequencies and the third column the relative frequencies (in percentage). For a better display use the format short g.

Exercise. Use the function tabulate on the example of the sick days. The frequency table does not contain the data value 6 with frequency 0. By using the command help for the function tabulate, find how to include such value.

Let

$$
v = table(:, 1), f = table(:, 2), fhat = table(:, 3).
$$

The bar graph and the relative bar graph are obtained by

```
bar(v, f) and bar(v, f).
```
Exercise. By using the command help for the function bar, find how to modify the width of the bars.

The line graph and the relative line graph are obtained by

 $bar(v, f, 0)$, hold on, plot (v, f, o')

and

```
bar(v, fhat, 0), hold on, plot(v, fhat,'o')
```
The frequency polygon and the relative frequency polygon are obtained by

 $plot(v, f, ' -o')$

and

$$
\text{plot}(v, \text{fhat}, ' - o')
$$

Exercise. Construct by MATLAB the line graph, the bar graph and the frequency polygon, as well as their relative counterparts, for the sick days example.

- Exercise. When there were two points for the win in football matches, it was important, beside the number of points obtained in a championship, also the so called "english average". The english average is constructed in the following way: in each match a team obtains
	- \blacktriangleright 1 point for an away win;
	- \triangleright 0 point for a home win or an away tie;
	- \blacktriangleright -1 point for a home tie or an away defeat;
	- \blacktriangleright -2 point for a home defeat.

Maintaining a zero english average during the tournament was considered a good manner for win the championship.

- Explain why nowadays, with three points for the win, the english average is less important.
- **Prove that, in a going and return tournament with** n **teams, the final** english average is given by $s - 3(n - 1)$, where *s* is the final number of points obtained in the tournament (with two points for the win).
- \triangleright Collect in Wikipedia the english average of the Serie A winners for the seasons from 1946-47 to 1993-1994 (seasons with two points for the win);
- \triangleright Construct the relative frequency table for the data and the relative frequency bar graph.

Pie charts

A **pie chart** is another graphical picture of a relative frequency table: we partition a circle in sectors by associating at each data value *v^j* , *j* ∈ {1, . . . , *l*}, a sector of area

b*fj* · Area of the circle

or, equivalently, of angle

 $\widehat{f}_j \cdot 360^\circ$.

Pie charts are often used to plot relative frequencies when the data values are nonnumeric.

Example. Consider the frequency table of types of murders in Italy during 2010 (n = 487*)*

Exercise. Describe the data x relevant to this frequency table.

Pie chart:

• In MATLAB, a pie chart is obtained by the function pie:

pie(f)

produces, for a frequencies vector f, the corresponding pie chart.

Exercise. Construct by MATLAB the previous pie chart for the types of murders. For the labels, consult the command help for the function pie. Moreover, find how to insert the percentages of each data values in the labels.

Class intervals and histograms

Using a frequency table is effective when the set of the data values is not large.

But the set of data values can be large, or even infinite. Indeed, there are situation where we can consider as set of the data values an interval of real numbers.

An example of this last situation is given by a data containing heights of individuals. We can consider as set of data values the interval of real numbers from 100 cm to 250 cm.

When the set of data values is large or infinite, it is better to partition the set of data values into subsets, called **classes** or **bins**, and then consider the number of components of the data *x* falling in each class.

Now, we assume that the set of data values is an interval *I* of real numbers and use subintervals of *I* as classes. These subintervals are called **class intervals**.

Since the class intervals have to be a partition of *I*, they have to be adjacent without no gaps between them.

It is common to choose class intervals of the same length.

The endpoints of the class intervals are called the **class boundaries**.

We adopt the **left-end inclusion convention**: the class intervals are intervals of type $[a, b)$. We write $a - b$ for $[a, b)$.

How many class intervals have we to choose?

The number of chosen class intervals should be a trade-off between:

- \triangleright choosing too few intervals at a cost of losing too much information about the data: the extreme case is when all the components are in a unique interval;
- \triangleright choosing too many intervals, which will result in small frequencies of the components of the data in each class and the impossibility to see a pattern in the data: the extreme case is when each interval contains zero or one component.

From 5 to 10 class intervals are typical.

The **frequency table of the class intervals** for the data *x* associates to each class interval its frequency, i.e. the number of components of *x* falling in that class interval.

Example. Level of blood cholesterol for n = 40 *first year universitary students.*

We use the six adjacent class intervals of length 10

170−180, 180−190, 190−200, 200−210, 210−220, 220−230.

The frequency table of the class intervals

A bar graph for the (absolute or relative) frequencies of the class intervals is called an **histogram**.

The histogram for blood cholesterol levels:

Observe that in an histogram the bars are touching one another, this is because the class intervals are adjacent.

Example. Birth rate (for 1K *population in* 1 *year) in each of 50 states in US*

Source: Department of Health and Human Services.

Data values range from 12.4 *in West Virginia to* 21.9 *in Alaska.*

We use class intervals of length 1.5*, starting with* 12 − 13.5 *and finishing with* 21 − 22.5*, with a total of* 7 *classes.*

The frequency table:

The histogram:

• The frequency table of the class intervals, or the histogram based on this table, does not contain all the information about the data that the frequency table has.

In fact, the single values of the components in each class are lost: only their total number is reported in the histogram.

However, an histogram can uncover important features of the data.

For example:

 \blacktriangleright How much symmetric the data is

 \blacktriangleright How much spread out the data is

 \triangleright Whether there are intervals with high levels of data concentration

 \triangleright Whether there are gaps in the data values

 \triangleright Whether some data values are far apart from others

In MATLAB a frequency table of class intervals is obtained by the function histcounts:

 $N =$ histcounts(x, boundaries)

gives, for the data in the vector x and the class boundaries

$$
a_0
$$

in the vector boundaries, the frequency table vector N.

The vector N has length *m*, where *m* is the number of class intervals, and it is such that, for any $k \in \{1, \ldots, m-1\}$, N(k) is the number of components of x falling in the *k*-th class interval $a_{k-1} - a_k = [a_{k-1}, a_k]$ and N(*m*) is the number of components of x falling in the last class interval $a_{m-1} - a_m = [a_{m-1}, a_m]$ or equal to *am*.

Exercise. By using the MATLAB instruction $x = \text{rand}(100, 1)$, construct a random vector with components in [0, 1]. Then, construct the frequency table of the class intervals $0 - 0.1, 0.1 - 0.2, \ldots, 0.9 - 1$ for the data x.

The relative frequency table is then given by

 $Nhat = N/sum(N)$.

The hystogram is then obtained by

bar(middlepoints, N,'hist') or bar(middlepoints, Nhat,'hist')

where

middlepoints = $1/2$ \ast (boundaries(1 : end – 1) + boundaries(2 : end))

is the vector of the middle points of the class intervals.

Exercise. Construct by MATLAB the histogram of the frequency table of the previous exercise as well as the histograms of the two previous examples.

• An histogram is a bar graph for representing the frequency table of the class intervals.

Alternatively, we could use a line graph or a frequency polygon. In this case, on the horizontal axis, each class interval is represented by its middle point.

Representation of a frequency table of class intervals by a frequency polygon is important when we want to compare two data.

Example. Systolic blood pressure (the maximum blood pressure) of two groups of male workers: one group is 30 − 40 *years old and the other is* 50 − 60 *years old.*

Absolute and relative frequency tables for class intervals

Table 2.9 Class Frequencies of Systolic Blood Pressure of Two Groups of Male Workers

Table 2.10 Relative Class Frequencies of Blood Pressures

Relative frequency polygons for the two groups

• In MATLAB, the line graph and the relative line graph for the frequency table of class intervals are obtained by

 $bar(mid dlepoints, N, 0)$, hold on, plot(middlepoints, $N, 'o'$)

and

bar(middlepoints, Nhat, 0), hold on, plot(middlepoints, Nhat,'o').

The frequency polygon and the relative frequency polygon are obtained by

plot(middlepoints, N' , -o')

and

plot(middlepoints, Nhat, $' -o'$).

Exercise. Construct by MATLAB the two frequency polygons for the previous example of the workers blood pressure.

Stem-and-leaf plots

We can describe a data *x*, of size *n* non-large, by a **stem-and-leaf plot**, where we divide the value of each component of *x* into two parts: its **stem,** more significant, and its **leaf**, less significant.

Example. Consider

x = (11, 14, 18, 23, 27, 32, 36, 37, 44, 52, 58, 60, 65).

By using the tens digit as stem and the ones digit as leaf, we obtain the stem-and-leaf plot

$$
\begin{array}{c|cc}\n1 & 1,4,8 \\
2 & 3,7 \\
3 & 2,6,7 \\
4 & 4 \\
5 & 2,8 \\
6 & 0,5\n\end{array}
$$

Example. Pro capita personal income in each state in US.

The stem-and-leaf plot: the thousands digits as stem and the other as leaf

The choice of the stem and the leaf has to be done in order to have not too many stems and not too many leaves.

Example. Percentage of foreigner new births with respect to all births in the various municipalities in the province of Pordenone during the year 2010.

Continuation:

The stem-and-leaf plot: the stem is the tens digit, the leaf is the remainder

The numbers in parentheses on the right represent the number of components of the data (i. e. the number of leaves) in each stem class.

If the stem was the integer part, not the tens digit, then there would be too many stems.

In MATLAB, stem-and-leaf plots for a data in the vector *x* are obtained by

stemleafplot (x, p) .

The stems are the 10^{p+1} digits of the components of x.

Exercise. Construct by MATLAB the stem-and-leaf plots of the two previous examples.

Exercise. Collect in http://www.alltime-athletics.com/ the best performance of sprinters who have broken the 9.90 seconds barrier in the 100 m men run. Construct a stem-and-leaf plot. A stem-and-leaf plot looks like a histogram turned on its side, with the advantage that it presents the components of the data falling in the class intervals. So, it contains all the information that the frequency table for the data can give.

It is most helpful for data of moderate size: if the size of the data is very large, then the the leaves might be too many and the stem-and-leaf plot might be not more informative than a histogram.

Exercise. Assume that in a stem-and-leaf plot, we are using as stems the 10*p*+¹ digits. Describe the class intervals of the histogram relevant to the stem-and-leaf plot.

Paired data

Now, we consider **paired data** given by two *n*−tuple *x* and *y*: in other terms, the paired data is given by *n* pairs

 $(x_i, y_i), i \in \{1, \ldots, n\}.$

Example. Consider n = 30 *workers of a given company and their IQ score and salary: for* $i \in \{1, \ldots, 30\}$

- \blacktriangleright x_i is the IQ score of the worker i_i
- \blacktriangleright y_i is the salary of the worker i.

Table 2.12 Salaries versus IQ

Stem-and-leaf plot for x

12
$$
\begin{vmatrix} 4 & (1) \\ 11 & 0,0,2,3,3,5,6,6,7,8 \\ 10 & 1,4,4,7 \\ 9 & 0,1,1,3,3,4,4,5 \\ 8 & 0,3,3,4,7 \\ 7 & 6,9 \end{vmatrix}
$$
 (1)

Stem-and-leaf plot for y

We want to learn whether higher IQ scores tend to go along with higher income, at this company.

Stem-and-leaf plots for x and y, which separately consider x and y, are not useful for this aim: it is necessary to consider the pairs (*xi* , *yi*)*, i* ∈ {1, . . . , 30}*.*

A useful way for representing paired data *x* and *y* is to plot each pair (*xⁱ* , *yi*), *i* ∈ {1, . . . , *n*}, as a point in the cartesian plane *xy*.

Such a plot is called a **scatter diagram**.

The scatter diagram for the paired data IQ and salary:

 \bullet In MATLAB the scatter diagram for data in the vectors x and y is obtained by

 $plot(x, y, 'x')$

Exercise. By using MATLAB, construct the scatter diagram for the paired data IQ and salary.

• It is clear from the scatter diagram of the example that higher IQ scores appear to go along with higher incomes.

The general trend can be captured by the line shown below

called the regression line.

The **regression line** of a paired data *x* and *y* is the nonvertical line

$$
y=mx+q
$$

that minimizes the **residual sum of the squares**

$$
rss = \sum_{i=1}^n (y_i - mx_i - q)^2
$$

among all the possible nonvertical lines in the plane (among all $(m, q) \in \mathbb{R}^2$).

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rss is the sum of the squares of the distances between the point (x_i, y_i) and the point $(x_i, mx_i + q)$ on the line $y = mx + q$, for $i \in \{1, \ldots, n\}.$

We will show later how to determine the regression line.

A scatter diagram is also useful in detecting **outliers**, which are components (*xⁱ* , *yi*) of the paired data that do not appear to follow the trend of the other components.

Having noted the outliers, we have to decide whether they are caused by an error in the collection of the data or they are genuine.