Data validation

LPO 9951 | Fall 2015

Data validation refers to the process of ensuring that the characteristics of your data match the known characteristics of the population as measured by other analysts. If you have large discrepancies between your estimates and the estimates compiled by others, this is a clear "red flag" that something has gone wrong. Usually this is a problem that can be solved by going back to cleaning the data, but sometimes your sample may diverge in important ways from the samples collected by others. You will need to state why this is the case in your write-up of the data.

Data validation can be done in several ways:

- You can compare the estimates from your dataset with the estimates from another analysis of the same dataset. This is what we will do with the datasets used in this class.
- Sometimes you will be the first one to analyze your dataset. In this case, you need to look for others who have collected similar samples and compare with them.
- Sometimes you won't have any other samples to work with. In this case, you'll need to see if there are population data that might be useful. Many people use the Census as a "check" on the data they have collected.
- Last, you need to use common sense. If you have data on private elite institutions of higher education, and you calculate an average tuition of $2,000, you can rest assured that you have not found a hidden bargain but rather a flaw in your data.

Adding new subdirectory: `./tables/`

First things first, you need to add a new subdirectory `./tables/` to your class folder. It should be of the same level as the other subdirectories you've already created: `data`, `do`, `plots`, `aux`.

Calculating estimates and comparing them with known results

Today, we'll use the `plans` dataset. We're going to compare our results with several tables published by NCES. Let's start with educational expectations of high school sophomores. We start by survey setting the data:

```
. global datadir "../data/"

. global tabsdir "../tables/"

. // load plans data
. use ${datadir}plans.dta

. // set up data for survey commands
. svyset psu [pw = bystuwt], str(strat_id) singleunit(scaled)

      pweight: bystuwt
          VCE: linearized
  Single unit: scaled
     Strata 1: strat_id
         SU 1: psu
        FPC 1: <zero>
```

Account for missing data

The next step is to account for missing data properly:

```
. local allvar bystexp bysex byrace byses1 f1psepln

. // change values for vars in local that in (-4,-8,-9) to missing
. foreach myvar in `allvar' {
  2.     replace `myvar' = . if `myvar' == -4
  3.     replace `myvar' = . if `myvar' == -8
  4.     replace `myvar' = . if `myvar' == -9
  5. }
(648 real changes made, 648 to missing)
(276 real changes made, 276 to missing)
(0 real changes made)
(648 real changes made, 648 to missing)
(171 real changes made, 171 to missing)
(0 real changes made)
(648 real changes made, 648 to missing)
(276 real changes made, 276 to missing)
(0 real changes made)
(648 real changes made, 648 to missing)
(276 real changes made, 276 to missing)
(0 real changes made)
(1,131 real changes made, 1,131 to missing)
(781 real changes made, 781 to missing)
(46 real changes made, 46 to missing)
```

Get estimates

Next, we tabulate expectations for college and compare it to a known estimate.

```
. tab bystexp

  how far in school student thinks will |
                          get-composite |      Freq.     Percent        Cum.
----------------------------------------+-----------------------------------
                           {don^t know} |      1,450        9.52        9.52
       less than high school graduation |        128        0.84       10.36
     high school graduation or ged only |        983        6.45       16.81
attend or complete 2-year college/schoo |        879        5.77       22.58
attend college, 4-year degree incomplet |        561        3.68       26.26
                  graduate from college |      5,416       35.55       61.81
   obtain master^s degree or equivalent |      3,153       20.69       82.50
obtain phd, md, or other advanced degre |      2,666       17.50      100.00
----------------------------------------+-----------------------------------
                                  Total |     15,236      100.00

. svy: proportion bystexp
(running proportion on estimation sample)

Survey: Proportion estimation
```

```
Number of strata =     361        Number of obs   =     16,160
Number of PSUs   =     751        Population size =  3,408,319
                                  Design df       =        390

      _prop_1: bystexp = {don^t know}
      _prop_2: bystexp = less than high school graduation
      _prop_3: bystexp = high school graduation or ged on
      _prop_4: bystexp = attend or complete 2-year colleg
      _prop_5: bystexp = attend college, 4-year degree in
      _prop_6: bystexp = graduate from college
      _prop_7: bystexp = obtain master^s degree or equiva
      _prop_8: bystexp = obtain phd, md, or other advance

--------------------------------------------------------------
             |             Linearized
             | Proportion   Std. Err.     [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+------------------------------------------------
bystexp      |
     _prop_1 |   .0987875   .0030196      .0930076    .1048851
     _prop_2 |   .0094831     .00098       .007738    .0116172
     _prop_3 |   .0724693   .0030538      .0666899    .0787074
     _prop_4 |   .0643949   .0028925      .0589365    .0703211
     _prop_5 |   .0389852   .0018459      .0355139    .0427808
     _prop_6 |   .3578959   .0046507      .3488048    .3670902
     _prop_7 |   .1971035    .004424      .1885502    .2059464
     _prop_8 |   .1608805   .0039873      .1531947    .1688749
--------------------------------------------------------------
```

Nicer tables

We get output in the console, but let's use the `eststo` and `esttab` commands to store our estimates and produce nicer tables. Using `esttab` alone, we'll get a nicely formatted table in the console. By adding ... `using <file>` we save an `.rtf` version of the same table. We can easily paste this table in a paper. If you are feeling bold, you could output the table in LaTeX format and incorporate into your LaTeX-formatted document.

```
. estimates store expect_tab

. // save as table using esttab
. esttab expect_tab using ${tabsdir}expect_tab.rtf, b(3) se(4) ///
>     varlabels(_prop_1 "Unsure" ///
>               _prop_2 "Less than HS" ///
>               _prop_3 "HS or GED" ///
>               _prop_4 "AA/AS" ///
>               _prop_5 "Some college" ///
>               _prop_6 "BA/BS" ///
>               _prop_7 "MA/MS" ///
>               _prop_8 "PhD or Prof") ///
>     replace
(output written to ../tables/expect_tab.rtf)

. // post clean table to output window
. esttab expect_tab, b(3) se(4) ///
```

```
>     varlabels(_prop_1 "Unsure" ///
>               _prop_2 "Less than HS" ///
>               _prop_3 "HS or GED" ///
>               _prop_4 "AA/AS" ///
>               _prop_5 "Some college" ///
>               _prop_6 "BA/BS" ///
>               _prop_7 "MA/MS" ///
>               _prop_8 "PhD or Prof")

----------------------------
                      (1)
               Proportion
----------------------------
bystexp
Unsure              0.099***
                 (0.0030)
Less than HS        0.009***
                 (0.0010)
HS or GED           0.072***
                 (0.0031)
AA/AS               0.064***
                 (0.0029)
Some college        0.039***
                 (0.0018)
BA/BS               0.358***
                 (0.0047)
MA/MS               0.197***
                 (0.0044)
PhD or Prof         0.161***
                 (0.0040)
----------------------------
N                   16160
----------------------------
Standard errors in parentheses
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001
```

NB: The `///` at the end of each line in the `esttab` commands tells Stata to move to the next line but that the command isn't yet finished. Without this, the options would stretch far on one line: bad coding practice. I could have also changed the delimiter to `;` like we did when reading in NCES datasets in the earlier lecture.

Validate with published data

Now that we have a clean table to look at, is this the same as Table 2 on page 22 of the report? Yes. Checking the standard errors reveals that there were also correctly done. Now we need to check this for all of the other variables in our dataset.

Not-so-quick Exercise

> I want you to replicate Table 34 on page 128 of NCES 2005-338. We'll split this up, but I want the class to come up with a single table that has exactly the same results as the NCES document.

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