QL Example

Course: SOC 117 Quantitative Research Methods

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Example: In-Class Lab Assignment #10—Write-up five variable (survey question)

results.

This assignment is completed after students have conducted a series of previous assignments, which include: Development of a quantitative social survey, dissemination of surveys to a pre-identified population, collection of results from sample of population, creation of a SPSS data set by inputting responses for each case obtained, and printout of response frequencies.

Once these steps have been completed, Lab Submission #10 asks students to translate the descriptive statistics obtained into accurate and meaningful written statements. This task teaches student to read and understand how and what quantitative data as shown in tables and graphs tell them in terms of attitudes on their research topic.

This lab assignment serves as a beginning of the Results section of the student's final research manuscript, which all are to complete by the end of the semester. Most surveys developed contain between 20-30 questions.

The challenge of this assignment is not only the translation of numbers into sentences, but also the necessary disciplined omission of bias, opinion and editorializing while doing so. This requirement emphasizes the importance of reading and interpreting statistics in as objective and clear manner as possible. After this lab assignment, students go on to interpret their results in their Discussion sections of their manuscripts.

Possible correlations between variables are explored, using SPSS, though this is conducted within the context of another lab assignment.

Student example of assignment (partial): "A total of 56 questionnaires were disseminated among participants of a senior center in Los Angeles. All respondents in the sample were 65 years of age or older and were primarily working class to middle class Caucasians. Attitudes on aging were explored, ranging from quality of health care."

"Interestingly, forty-three respondents (77%) stated that as a senior, loneliness was not very much of a problem. Only ten respondents (18%) felt that loneliness was a moderate problem, with just three respondents (6%) indicating loneliness was a serious problem in their lives."