STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

for Students in PSYCHOLOGY and EDUCATION

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PSYCHOLOGY and **EDUCATION**

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PREFACE

Despite the recognition accorded statistical methods by active workers in psychology, education, and the social sciences, the average undergraduate major in these fields often regards the customary course in statistics as dull and uninteresting. And there is no denying the fact that his actual experience in the course may serve to bolster rather than to change his original opinions. This is apt to be true, I believe, when the instructor assumes a degree of mathematical training, however elementary, which the undergraduate major in the social sciences fails to have. Even when the student has had such training, its value may be largely nullified by the time interval which separates it from the course in statistics.

Another factor producing lack of interest, I believe, is the stress which is often placed upon long and involved problems which are essentially exercises in multiplication, subtraction, division, and addition. The student often regards these problems—and perhaps rightfully so—as so much "busywork." Such problems subtract from the time which the student feels could be more profitably spent in learning to appreciate the use and value of statistical techniques in his chosen field.

Under these conditions the student's memories of statistics are memories of laborious computations and mysterious formulas, and it is these memories which he passes on to next semester's class.

This text attempts to break the vicious circle. Little stress is placed upon calculative ability. I have tried in most cases to minimize the labor of computations by the use of illustrations and problems constructed with that end in view. In

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addition, coding techniques for reducing the size of numbers are introduced early and stressed throughout. I would not change this emphasis in the *introductory* course even if a sufficient number of calculating machines were on hand to make one available to each student. In my opinion, it is not the function of this first course in statistics to train computers and machine operators. Let the beginning student get a picture of the use to which statistical techniques can be put in answering questions in his field of specialization. Let him see that statistical techniques are tools, instruments. Let him understand the simple formulas and the meaning of various statistics. He can then learn machine techniques of calculation if he ever needs to handle large masses of data.

To avoid assumptions concerning the student's mathematical training, a review of elementary principles has been included. An understanding of these should enable the student to follow subsequent developments. Stress on this section of the text will assist greatly in minimizing a major source of confusion for most students. Some theory and derivations are introduced throughout the text, but nothing is presented, I feel, which is beyond the comprehension of the nonmathematically trained student, if he is assisted by the instructor. In the last analysis, I am convinced that statistics, unlike many other college courses, must be taught, not lectured.

The content of the book follows what I hope is a pedagogical as well as a logical order. Correlation is introduced earlier than in most texts because it has been my experience that students follow this development quite easily and that interest and motivation are increased because they see in correlation a technique of practical use. A good case could be made for introducing correlation by way of regression. But since regression is most often used in psychology and education for prediction, it is reserved for a later chapter on this topic.

Tests of significance have been stressed. One chapter has been devoted to the "t test," two to the "F test," and one

to the " χ^2 test." It has been my experience again that students are able to relate these tests to problems in their own fields and are consequently interested in them. It is not uncommon to hear students exclaim with some degree of elation that for the first time they have some idea of what is meant by the frequent references to "critical ratios" and "significant differences" that they have encountered in their textbooks in other courses.

In discussing tests of significance, I have emphasized small sample theory since, whether the traditional attitude approves or not, more and more research as published in psychological and educational journals is being evaluated by small sample techniques. This does not mean, however, that there is a rigid division between large and small sample theory, but rather, as Kenney has said, that the "continuity between large and small sample theory is an essential part of the newer attitude" (53, II, 123).

There are omissions as well as additions in this text. The reader will look in vain for the customary treatments of partial and multiple correlation. They have been omitted because I have searched without much success to find many applications of these statistical techniques in the literature. That they have their uses as well as their limitations is fully recognized, but I feel that they may be developed more profitably. as far as the student is concerned, in advanced courses, where time spent on these topics will not be at the expense of statistical techniques which are more commonly in use. I have no excuse to offer for certain other omissions -for example, the customary chapter on the reliability and validity of tests, and the usual extended treatment of centiles and scaling techniques—other than the fact that I do not feel that they fall within the general orientation of the rest of the book and that these are problems which might well be taken up in a course in tests and measurements.

I have, as any student must, a desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to various individuals. Professor Harold Edgerton of Ohio State University first impressed upon me the desirability of knowing more about statistical methods and theory. Professor Lloyd G. Humphreys of Northwestern University aroused my interest in small sample theory in 1939 and gave freely of his time in discussions of the subject. It is a pleasure also to acknowledge that I owe much to the various publications of Professor George W. Snedecor, Professor Helen M. Walker, Professor R. A. Fisher, and Professor C. C. Peters. In addition, Professor Walker and Professor Peters were kind enough to clarify, in personal communications, certain points of interpretation.

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Preface

Phyllis Covington and Jacqueline Charlton shared the major responsibility of typing the manuscript. Sidney S. Culbert assisted in the reading and proofing of the typed copy and Grace French in the checking of various computations. I am grateful to all of them for their assistance.

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A. L. E.

Seattle, Washington April, 1946

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