Final Project

Assignment

Construct and estimate a regression model for the relationship between one dependent variable and at least two independent variables. Write a report that (1) anchors your model theoretically, (2) presents your empirical findings, and (3) states your conclusions.

Guidelines

- Your analysis should be divided into three sections:

  1. The Argument and Hypotheses section should present the hypotheses to be tested. It should also clearly delineate the causal mechanisms that you suspect operate behind the hypothesized relationships. That is, why do you expect to observe these relationships in the data? You are not being asked to do a literature review, but you may cite relevant theoretical or empirical work if you wish.

  2. The Data Analysis section should begin with your research design. Briefly describe the data used in the analysis. What exactly do your variables measure? If you constructed indexes, provide the details and rationale. If you logged your variables, say why. The remainder of this section will be the empirical tests of your hypotheses, based on multiple regression analysis. All statistical and graphical information presented in this section should be clearly interpreted – don’t include information that you do not intend to discuss.

  3. In the Conclusion, reflect back on your original hypotheses in the context of your statistical findings. How do they fare? Also comment on additional research that may be appropriate in light of your results. Might there be a better way to test your arguments (e.g., using different data, if they could be gathered)?

- The length of your report should be 5-6 double-spaced pages – not counting tables and graphs. Your discussion will need to be concise.

- Produce a professional looking report. Tables and graphs should be appropriately titled and incorporated directly into the document. Construct your own tables consisting of relevant statistical estimates; do not include unedited SPSS output. Import SPSS graphics into your word processor, if you know how. Otherwise, (literally) cut and paste them into the document.
Further Suggestions

- Not every element of your inquiry needs to be presented in the final report. For example, some graphical procedures for examining the raw data or relationships in the data (e.g., exploratory scatterplots) are best treated as preliminary analyses and should not clutter the final presentation.

- You will not be evaluated on the degree of support that your hypotheses receive from the regression analysis, assuming that you have constructed valid tests. If your hypotheses are convincingly argued and operationalized, and if exploratory analysis suggests that they are plausible, then test results that disconfirm those relationships are a valuable addition to our knowledge. Indeed, they are more valuable than confirmatory evidence for trivial hypotheses or conventional wisdom. Therefore, your *Argument and Hypotheses* section, as well as the research design portion of the *Data Analysis* section (e.g., on variable construction), deserve serious thought before you start crunching numbers in SPSS.

*Your analysis is due on Monday, 20 March, at 9:30 a.m. Late papers will not be accepted.*