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1 Simple Linear Regression I – Least Squares Estimation

Textbook Sections: 18.1–18.3

Previously, we have worked with a random variable x that comes from a population that is normally distributed with mean μ and variance σ^2 . We have seen that we can write x in terms of μ and a random error component ε , that is, $x = \mu + \varepsilon$. For the time being, we are going to change our notation for our random variable from x to y . So, we now write $y = \mu + \varepsilon$. We will now find it useful to call the random variable y a **dependent** or **response variable**. Many times, the response variable of interest may be related to the value(s) of one or more known or controllable **independent** or **predictor variables**. Consider the following situations:

LR1 A college recruiter would like to be able to **predict** a potential incoming student's first-year GPA (y) based on known information concerning high school GPA (x_1) and college entrance examination score (x_2). She feels that the student's first-year GPA will be related to the values of these two known variables.

LR2 A marketer is interested in the **effect** of changing shelf height (x_1) and shelf width (x_2) on the weekly sales (y) of her brand of laundry detergent in a grocery store.

LR3 A psychologist is interested in testing whether the amount of time to become proficient in a foreign language (y) is related to the child's age (x).

In each case we have at least one variable that is known (in some cases it is controllable), and a response variable that is a random variable. We would like to fit a model that relates the response to the known or controllable variable(s). The main reasons that scientists and social researchers use linear regression are the following:

1. **Prediction** – To predict a future response based on known values of the predictor variables and past data related to the process.
2. **Description** – To measure the effect of changing a controllable variable on the mean value of the response variable.
3. **Control** – To confirm that a process is providing responses (results) that we 'expect' under the present operating conditions (measured by the level(s) of the predictor variable(s)).

1.1 A Linear Deterministic Model

Suppose you are a vendor who sells a product that is in high demand (e.g. cold beer on the beach, cable television in Gainesville, or life jackets on the *Titanic*, to name a few). If you begin your day with 100 items, have a profit of \$10 per item, and an overhead of \$30 per day, you know exactly how much profit you will make that day, namely $100(10) - 30 = \$970$. Similarly, if you begin the day with 50 items, you can also state your profits with certainty. In fact for any number of items you begin the day with (x), you can state what the day's profits (y) will be. That is,

$$y = 10 \cdot x - 30.$$

This is called a **deterministic** model. In general, we can write the equation for a straight line as

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x,$$

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