# Assignment 1 - Data analysis proposal

**Due date:** March 25th 2021 by 11.55 pm

**Submission requirements:** Submit through the link titled "Assignment 1 Data Analysis Proposal" in Wattle

**Assignment value:** *10%* **Word limit:** *800 words with 10% leeway*

**Assignment guidelines:**

Propose your own data analysis, an elementary version of the type of data analysis you read about in the reading for Tutorial 1. You must base your analysis on one of the datasets available in Wattle in DATA FOR RESEARCH ASSIGNMENTS. Assignment 1 is **a plan** for Assignment 2 in which you will present your complete analysis. In response to your Assignment 1, your instructor will provide tailored formative feedback to help you with Assignment 2.

Imagine that you are a member of a research team, and you are writing a concise proposal to gain the approval of your team and its supervisor. Choose between two and twelve variables from your Wattle dataset. You cannot use other datasets unless you have received written permission from the course convener. You are to achieve the following goals:

1. Describe what research question or questions you will consider in your data analysis, i.e. Assignment 2.
2. In one sentence, explain why your research question is (questions are) essential or interesting.
3. List the main concepts of interest in your study.
4. Name the dataset that will be used in your analysis.
5. List operational definitions of your key concepts and variables. In other words, you must show survey questions wording in your proposal. Explain which survey questions measure which concepts. Correctly format and present descriptive statistics for these variables (e.g., frequency distributions or means, medians, standard deviations etc.). Note how descriptive statistics are presented in the paper you read for Tutorial 1. In class, we will also discuss nominal, ordinal and interval variables so you need to know what they are to make the correct tables. Use a document titled *Templates for edited frequency and descriptives table.docx* in ASSIGNMENT RESOURCES in Wattle to help you format your table(s) of descriptive statistics.
6. Present your analytical diagram, as taught in class, and state your central hypothesis or hypotheses. You must list **Stata variable names** in your diagram.
7. **Marking criteria:**

Assignments will be assessed on the following criteria:

1. Well-conceived and described research question. Good match between the research question(s) and the chosen data.
2. Informative conceptual / analytical diagram with Stata variable names
3. Tables of descriptive statistics correctly presented.
4. Good description of dependent and independent variables plus logical hypotheses.
5. Presentation of the proposal (title, structure, expression, grammar, punctuation, layout, pagination).

**Further guidance and instructions:**

The proposal should be lucid and edited for style. Your key objective is to enable your imaginary team of co-workers to decide if the research you propose is sound and feasible. You must provide enough information for making such a decision. Your team have access to your data, and they will need to be able to tabulate your variables in Stata so make sure they know, by looking at your diagram, what variables to tabulate. If you doubt whether your research questions fit the survey data, you hope to analyze, please discuss this with your lab instructor or course convener during an individual consultation by appointment. If you include an appendix, it will not count towards the word limit.

Use subheadings to make the structure of your proposal clear. The recommended structure involves the following subheadings: *Introduction, Research Questions, Data, Measurement* and *Hypotheses*. In Assignment 1, we do not require you to state what analytical techniques you will use. Please bear in mind that in SOCY2038 you will receive credit only for demonstrating the skills taught in this course, not other skills.

Please avoid using extensive quotations from published sources. Try to rely on your own narrative. Write in the first person beginning from: "For my research report I propose to examine if……. I am interested in…. because….."

**Format:**

All proposals must be typed, **double-spaced**; with at least 2.5 cm top, left, right, and bottom margins and typed using 12-point Times New Roman or Arial. Please note that we will not mark single-spaced papers or smaller font. Pages must be numbered. All proposals must be titled. The title must be informative (refer to the published articles you read for Tutorial 1 for an example). Your conceptual diagram should be captioned and titled as Figure 1.

*After you get back your Assignment 1:* We assume that your research question and the report's format will evolve after we have given you our feedback and as you learn more in the course, so do not worry now that your Assignment 2 might turn out to be a little different from what you propose in Assignment 1. However, if you later decide that you need to change your research question(s) completely, please contact your lab instructor or course convener to confirm that this is okay. Do not go ahead and change your research question after you receive your Assignment 1 back, without consultation.

**How many references should I include?**

No references are required for Assignment 1 but keep notes for your sources as you will need references for Assignment 2 later in the semester.

**Checklist**

1. Have I included the diagram of my proposed model with variable names that I see in Stata when I open my chosen survey dataset?
2. Are my independent and my dependent variable(s) identified in the proposal?
3. Have I used one-sided arrows to illustrate the direction of causality in my model?
4. Have I included the full wording of the survey questions, I propose to use, including answer categories and their numeric codes?
5. Have I included descriptive statistics for all my variables? Are missing data excluded from the totals in my descriptives statistics tables, as taught in class? Apart from excluding missing data, are my variables precisely as they appear in the original dataset?
6. Do my tables fit Edward Tufte's principle of presenting the relevant information with "the least ink in the smallest space"?
7. Have I rounded my statistical estimates not to show unnecessary decimals?

Please note: If you have not used the Stata program to prepare Assignment 1 you have not done what is required. Consulting just the questionnaire is not enough. You must work with your dataset in Stata.

In the past students asked us to provide them with some examples of previously submitted papers to help them deal with the anxiety some felt when facing a new type of assessment task. We have provided two such examples in Wattle. They are meant to orient you rather than to be copied. Remember that the students' guidelines in previous years were not identical to this year's guidelines, so **do not** strive to replicate these example papers. Plagiarizing or paraphrasing any part of these papers will be penalized. Your research project must be of your original design.