

30280 APPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT (BIEM)

2021/2022

Applied Research Project and Report

TASK

You are required to design an applied research project that can be completed using secondary data, use one or more of the techniques introduced in this course to complete the data analysis for the project, interpret the results and draw conclusions. As stated in class, you should spend effort in forming reasonable research questions, possibly derive some testable hypotheses and also try to link it with a theoretical concept.

The project is an applied research project that may be conducted by students working alone or in groups of up to 4. You may choose your group and you can form groups across classes. You can also form groups currently on exchange (We suggest you try to form a group with other students interested in similar topics to you, e.g. marketing, population, etc.).

The maximum length of the project report is 10 pages, 12 points Times or Arial, single-spaced, with 2.5 cm margins all round. The page limit includes tables, charts and appendixes, but excludes the cover page and references. You will be marked down if the assignment exceeds 10 pages.

The project is worth 30% of your grade. All students in the group will receive the same grade, so choose and manage your group carefully.

OBJECTIVE

The goals of the project are:

- a) to learn how to do applied research
- b) to develop your ability to use some of the techniques introduced in this course
- c) prepare yourself for the dissertation that you must do as part of the BIEM degree

GROUP FORMATION

Form a group as early as possible in the semester and before the deadline reported below. The idea of working in a group is to help one another to learn, so we expect you all to contribute to each part of the project, rather than to break the project up into activities or sections.

THE DATASET

You have to use the European Social Survey for this project. (<http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org>). You can choose any of the ESS rounds or several of them (useful if your research questions is about how things change over time. Downloading the data is straightforward all you need to do is to register on the European Social Survey Website (see link above), after which you will be able to download any of the rounds – and you can download it in STATA format. In any case, you do need to access this site in any case in order to consult the documentation (e.g. questionnaire).

WARNING: With the ESS dataset, analyses should always be conducted using weights. Inside the dataset there will be the two weights that you can use and you have to decide which one is appropriated on the basis of the analysis that you want to run.

1. The first weight (called design weight, **pspwght**) corrects for the stratification sampling design at the country level. You will need this if you would like to make conclusions about the populations within countries.

2. The second weight (called population weight, **pweight**) is used when describing the entire European population and accounts for the over-sampling of some countries.

The product of the two weights has to be used when performing analyses at the European level (ie.; create a new weight called overallwght that is equal to pspwght*pwght).

The dataset will be posted as zipped file on blackboard

REPORT STRUCTURE

The report should be formed as a research paper. We have suggested a template below, which you may want to follow. We have also included a guide to the relative length of each section. This is approximate. Different reports will have a slightly different emphasis on different sections. Remember that the maximum length is of 10 pages (see above for details), so you will have to select the most important information to include in your report.

Section	Task	Guide to length (apprx.)
Cover page	Includes the title of the paper and its word length, group members' names and student numbers, and a declaration that the report is the original work of the members of the group, in the form provided below.	1 page
Summary	A single paragraph should briefly describe the purpose of your analysis, and the conclusions you reached. This section is often easier to write last. Please note this is not an introduction to your report but a snapshot summary.	One short paragraph
Introduction	Begin your report by describing the research problem or question and why it is important or interesting. The introduction is critically important for any kind of report you write. It needs to be focused and define what is being done in the report/research paper. You need to explain why your research is interesting and ideally refer briefly to existing literature, thereby informing the reader how your report fits the established literature.	Ca 1 page
Background	In this section you need to build up your arguments leading to the	1 -2 pages

	research question you are focusing on. The research question is typically narrow and well defined, whereas the background section describes the context in which research questions is placed. This is the place to make references to the literature, to theory and policy debate. Needless to say, you need to obtain a certain level of knowledge of the topic you are dealing with in order to make this section successful and you need to demonstrate that in this section.	
Data	Name the source of your data and, if appropriate, how the data were collected, including any sampling method that you used.	1 - 2 pages
Data Description	Devote a brief subsection to your key variables. Some variables are more important than others (given your research question), whereas others are merely control variables. You should keep this in mind whilst devoting time in explaining the variables. Issues to bear in mind here include its measurement scale and level of measurement. Provide a succinct description of the data, using appropriate descriptive statistics and charts. Describe any decisions you made as a result of preliminary screening of the data.	
Multivariate Analysis	Use an appropriate technique (or set of techniques) to analyze the data so that you can address your problem(s) or question(s) Present the results, including necessary statistical summaries. Interpret your results; we cannot assume that the reader(s) of your report is familiar with formal aspects of data analysis, so the interpretations should be explained in clear, concise terms. If you complete any hypothesis tests, state the result(s).	3- 4 pages
Conclusions	End your report with a few paragraphs in which you use the results of your analysis to answer your research question and address the research problem. Draw conclusions as the result of your analysis. The conclusions might concern implications for policy, business, further research that might build on what you have done, or a combination of these.	1 - 3 paragraphs
References	Remember to give full details of any sources that you have used. Make sure all quotations from your sources are indented or in inverted commas.	

Things to remember when writing a dissertation or report

1. Page numbers
2. A report requires references as they bring credibility to your analysis. References embedded in the text needs to be included at the end in a list.
3. Do not include page after page with computer output. You are supposed to deliver a message with this report, and one cannot do that with simply pasting in a lot of output
4. Data screening is critically important. Include details in an appendix in case you do not have space for it in the main part of the project.

5. Every figure and table needs to have a purpose. Never include figures and tables if you do not actually discuss them in your text or analysis.
6. Sections, figures and tables - all need to be numbered.
7. The style has to be consistent throughout the dissertation
8. Remember - it should be possible for anyone to pick up your dissertation and clearly understand what the research is about and they need to be convinced that your job is done properly. It needs to be credible. In other words, the aim of the dissertation is not about demonstrating to your professor that you are able to do multivariate analysis with STATA.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

- By **Saturday the 31st of October**, all students of the Applications course will have to send their Group composition to the following email address: applications30280@unibocconi.it. Only one email per group has to be sent. On the Subject please specify **name and surname of the person in charge of the group (reference student)**.
- By **Wednesday the 21st of December**, that is the date of the second mid-term and general exam, the project should be sent to applications30280@unibocconi.it and submitted in paper format immediately before or after the exam if at least one person of your group is attending this specific exam session.

SUBMISSION

For the project to be considered in your grade, it must be submitted on first exam date or, alternatively, at the first exam session attended by a member of the group. If different members of your group take the exam on different days, the project must be submitted by the first session attended. The project needs to be submitted via the Bboard platform. More details about this later on in the course. Please submit it as PDF only.

One (1) mark will be subtracted from the assigned grade for each day that the project is submitted after the deadline date up to two days after. Projects not received within two days after the deadline will not be graded.

SUBMISSION FOR EXCHANGE STUDENTS OR STUDENTS ON INTERNSHIPS

This note is for students who are away for an exchange program at a different university during the Fall semester and are planning to sit the exam for 30280 when coming back.

First, it is strongly recommended that you do the project as part of the overall exam. The project counts 30% of the overall grade in this course. Further information about the assignment and the available data sources will be available on Bboard. This will include some hints about writing the project and I will also give a template that you might want to follow in writing the project. You can write the project together with other students of the BIEM classes. It is your responsibility to find or form a group with other students. It does not matter if these other students are either currently at Bocconi following 30280 this semester – or whether they are also on an exchange program. It is of course more challenging to work in groups whilst you are away on an exchange, so you always have the option of writing the project on your own. The max number of group members is in any case four (4) students.

Also for exchange students, the project needs to be uploaded via the Bboard platform. Moreover,

You can use any kind of software to undertake the analysis for your project, but you might be better off if you are able to use STATA. The helpdesk will be able to install STATA on your computer.

It is very likely that your exchange institution provides statistical softwares in their computer labs. Some softwares are freely available on the web. One such software is called Kstat and is an Excel macro that makes linear regression in Excel much easier. However, it does not give support for factor analysis or cluster analysis and Excel is not very suitable for analysis of very large data sets (i.e. with thousands of observation and hundreds of variables - an example being the European Social Survey (ESS)).

If your exchange institution does not provide STATA in their computer labs, you might instead look for other softwares such as SPSS or SAS – both of which are able to do regression, CA and FA. Unfortunately, we do not have resources to give online (i.e. via email) support for the use of statistical softwares. STATA is very user-friendly, and easier to use than Excel when doing regression analysis for instance. There is a lot of online tutorials available for STATA. The best place to look for them is www.youtube.com, where you will find a large number of tutorials for how to use STATA. For instance, try searching for STATA and Linear Regression.

ORIGINAL WORK

All work submitted for this assignment must be the original work of the students named on the cover page. You must include the following declaration on the cover page. Every member of your group must sign it:

In submitting this assignment:

1. We declare that this written assignment is our own work and does not include (i) material from published sources used without proper acknowledgment or (ii) material copied from the work of other students.
2. We declare that this assignment has not been submitted for assessment in any other course at any university.
3. We have a photocopy and electronic version of this assignment in our possession.

If you do not include and sign the declaration, you will be awarded 0 for the assignment.

Penalties for plagiarism

Copying of work without acknowledgement is known as plagiarism. Plagiarism is considered a serious breach of academic practice and may be subject to sanction from the Rector and the Faculty Council. Any assignments found to be copied in whole or in part from any source (including other students) will be awarded 0. In this case, you will not be permitted to resubmit the assignment meaning that the maximum grade available is 21.

In the case that we receive two or more identical or very similar (e.g., paraphrased) assignments, all individuals or groups who have submitted the assignment will be awarded 0, and the students involved will not be permitted to resubmit.

In addition to being awarded 0 marks for the project, students who submit copied work will be referred to the university's Disciplinary Board for further action.