

5. *Creating Effective Tables*

SUGGESTED COURSE EXTENSIONS

A. Reviewing

1. Find a simple table in a newspaper or magazine article. Evaluate whether it can stand alone without the text. Suggest ways to improve labeling and layout, using the guidelines in chapter 5 of *Writing about Multivariate Analysis, 2nd Edition*.
2. In a journal article from your field, find a table that presents the relationship between a nominal independent variable with more than two categories, and a dependent variable.
 - a. Identify the principle used to organize the categories of the nominal variable in the rows or columns of the table, referring to the criteria in chapters 5 and 6.
 - b. Critique whether that organization coordinates with the associated narrative.
 - c. Sketch a revised version of the table that addresses any shortcomings you identified in part b.
3. In a journal article from your field, find a table of regression results.
 - a. Evaluate whether you can interpret all the numbers in the table without reference to the text. Suggest ways to improve labeling and layout.
 - b. Using information in the article, revise the table to correct those errors.
 - c. Consider whether a different table layout would work more effectively.
 - d. Assess whether additional tables are needed in the paper, to present net effects of an interaction, convey nonlinear specifications, or illustrate effects of multiunit changes in an independent variable, for example (see chapters 9, 10, and 16 of *Writing about Multivariate Analysis, 2nd Edition*).
 - e. Pick a chart from the article. Draw a rough draft of a table to present the same information. Show what would go into the rows and columns, whether the table would have spanners or panels, and write complete title, labels, and notes.

B. Applying Statistics

1. Create a table to display univariate statistics for your main dependent variable and three or more independent variables that you later use in your multivariate model (see question B.3).
2. Create a table to show bivariate associations (e.g., correlations, cross-tabulations, or a difference in means) between each of the independent variables and the dependent variables you selected for question B.1.
3. Create a table to show coefficients, standard errors, and model goodness-of-fit statistics from three nested models of the association between the variables you selected for question B.1.
4. Make a list of two or three simple tables to show two-way or three-way associations that pertain to your research question. Write individualized titles for each table.
5. Obtain a copy of the instructions for authors for a leading journal in your field. Revise the tables you created in questions B.1 through B.3 to satisfy their criteria.

C. Writing and Revising

1. Design a table to report results of a bivariate analysis involving a nominal independent variable with more than two categories. Specify which organizing principle(s) you would use to display values of the independent variable in the rows, referring to the criteria in chapters 5 and 6 of *Writing about Multivariate Analysis, 2nd Edition*. Justify your choice, with reference to the specific objectives of your analysis.
2. Design a table to report the results of a multivariate analysis. Specify which organizing principle(s) you would use to organize those items in the rows of the table. Explain your choice.
3. Evaluate a table of bivariate statistics that you created previously for a paper, using the checklist in chapter 5, the criteria for organizing data in charts (chapter 6), and the instructions for authors for a leading journal in your field.
4. Evaluate a table of regression results that you created previously for that paper, again using the checklist from chapter 5 and the instructions for authors for your selected journal.
5. Exchange drafts of the bivariate and multivariate tables from questions C.1 through C.4 with a peer. Evaluate them, using the checklist in chapter 5 and the instructions for authors for their selected journal. Revise according to the feedback you receive.

6. Read through the results section of a paper you have written previously. Identify topics or statistics for which to create additional tables to present net effects of interactions, nonlinear specifications, or multiunit changes related to your multivariate model. Draft them with pencil and paper, including complete title, labels, and notes.