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Correlation coefficient problems and solutions pdf

A correlation is a statistical measure of the relationship between two variables. The measure is best used in variables that demonstrate a linear relationship between each other. The fit of the data can be visually represented in a scatterplot. Using a scatterplot, we can generally assess the relationship between the variables and determine whether they are correlated or not.The correlation coefficient is a value that indicates the strength of the relationship between variables. The coefficient can take any values from -1 to 1. The interpretations of the values are:-1: Perfect negative correlation. The variables tend to move in opposite directions (i.e., when one variable increases, the other variable decreases).0: No correlation. The variables do not have a relationship with each other.1: Perfect positive correlation. The variables tend to move in the same direction (i.e., when one variable increases, the other variable also increases).One of the primary applications of the concept in finance is in portfolio managementPortfolio Management Career ProfilePortfolio management is managing investments and assets for clients, which include pension funds, banks, hedge funds, family offices. The portfolio manager is responsible for maintaining the proper asset mix and investment strategy that suits the client's needs. Salary, skills, A thorough understanding of this statistical concept is essential to successful portfolio optimization.Correlation and CausationCorrelation must not be confused with causality. The famous expression "correlation does not mean causation" is crucial to the understanding of the two statistical concepts.If two variables are correlated, it does not imply that one variable causes the changes in another variable. Correlation only assesses relationships between variables, and there may be different factors that lead to the relationships. Causation may be a reason for the correlation, but it is not the only possible explanation.CFI's Math for Corporate Finance Course explores the financial mathematics concepts required for financial modeling.What is Financial ModelingFinancial modeling is performed in Excel to forecast a company's financial performance. Overview of what is financial modeling, how & why to build a model.How to Find the Correlation?The correlation coefficient that indicates the strength of the relationship between two variables can be found using the following formula:Where:xy – the correlation coefficient of the linear relationship between the variables x and yxi – the values of the x-variable in a sampley – the mean of the values of the x-variablei – the values of the y-variableIn order to calculate the correlation coefficient using the formula above, you must undertake the following steps:Obtain a data sample with the values of x-variable and y-variable.Calculate the means (averages) \bar{x} for the x-variable and \bar{y} for the y-variable.For the x-variable, subtract the mean from each value of the x-variable (let's call this new variable "a"). Do the same for the y-variable (let's call this variable "b"). Multiply each a-value by the corresponding b-value and find the sum of these multiplications (the final value is the numerator in the formula).Square each a-value and calculate the sum of the result.Find the square root of the value obtained in the previous step (this is the denominator in the formula).Divide the value obtained in step 4 by the value obtained in step 7.You can see that the manual calculation of the correlation coefficient is an extremely tedious process, especially if the data sample is large. However, there are many software tools that can help you save time when calculating the coefficient. The CORREL function CORREL FunctionThe CORREL function is categorized under Excel Statistical functions. It will calculate the correlation coefficient between two variables. As a financial analyst, the CORREL function is very useful when we want to find the correlation between two variables, e.g., the correlation between an Excel is one of the easiest ways to quickly calculate the correlation between two variables for a large data set.Example of CorrelationJohn is an investor. His portfolio primarily tracks the performance of the S&P 500 and John wants to add the stock of Apple Inc. Before adding Apple to his portfolio, he wants to assess the correlation between the stock and the S&P 500S&P – Standard and Poor'sStandard & Poor's is an American financial intelligence company that operates as a division of S&P Global. S&P is a market leader in the to ensure that adding the stock won't increase the systematic risk of his portfolio. To find the coefficient, John gathers the following prices for the last five years (Step 1).Using the formula above, John can determine the correlation between the prices of the S&P 500 Index and Apple Inc.First, John calculates the average prices of each security for the given periods (Step 2).After the calculation of the average prices, we can find the other values. A summary of the calculations is given in the table below.Using the obtained numbers, John can calculate the correlation coefficient.The coefficient indicates that the prices of the S&P 500 and Apple Inc. have a high positive correlation. This means that their respective prices tend to move in the same direction. Therefore, adding Apple to his portfolio would, in fact, increase the level of systematic risk.Related ReadingsThank you for reading CFI's explanation of Correlation. CFI is the official provider of the Financial Modeling and Valuation Analyst (FMVA)™ Become a Certified Financial Modeling & Valuation Analyst (FMVA)® certification program, designed to transform anyone into a world-class financial analyst.To keep learning and developing your knowledge of financial analysis, we highly recommend the additional CFI resources below.Anchoring BiasAnchoring BiasAnchoring bias occurs when people rely too much on pre-existing information or the first information they find when making decisions. Anchors are an important concept in behavioral finance.Dynamic Financial AnalysisDynamic Financial AnalysisThis guide will teach you how to perform dynamic financial analysis in Excel using advanced formulas and functions. INDEX, MATCH, and INDEX MATCH MATCH Functions, Combining CELL, COUNTA, MID and OFFSET in a Formula. When used, these Excel functions make your financial statement analysis more dynamic.Hypothesis TestingHypothesis TestingHypothesis Testing is a method of statistical inference. It is used to test if a statement regarding a population parameter is correct. Hypothesis testingPoisson DistributionPoisson DistributionThe Poisson Distribution is a tool used in probability theory statistics to predict the amount of variation from a known average rate of occurrence, within The natural trajectory of learning statistics begins with measures of central tendency followed by correlation, regression to other advanced concepts. Amongst these initial concepts, I found correlation easy to understand, yet, got puzzled up when it got linked with other statistical concepts & metrics like causation, regression, distribution, pearson correlation coefficient etc. It took me sometime to succeed and get a firm hold on this concept. I succeeded because I kept on trying and tried harder, every time I failed. Hence, don't settle, keep trying! To begin with, if you are still struggling to understand the difference between correlation and causation, you should refer to my previous article where I've explained these concepts in the simplest possible manner. Let's proceed further and learn about the most commonly asked questions asked on correlation. If you are learning statistical concepts, you are bound to face these questions which mostly people try to avoid. For people like me, it should be a good refresher. And if you're looking to learn these questions for your data science interview, we are delighted to point you towards the 'Ace Data Science Interviews' course! The course has tons of videos and hundreds of questions like these to make sure you're well prepared for your next data science interview. What you'll learn? Does correlation and dependency mean the same thing? In simple words if two events have correlation of zero, does this convey they are not dependent and vice-versa? If two variables have a high correlation with a third variable, does this convey they will also be highly correlated? Is it even possible that A and B are positively correlated to another variable C? Is it possible that A and B are negatively correlated with each other? Can single outlier decrease or increase the correlation with a big magnitude? Is Pearson coefficient very sensitive to outliers? Does causation imply correlation? What's the difference between correlation and simple linear regression? How to choose between Pearson and Spearman correlation? How would you explain the difference between correlation and covariance? Answers to many of the above questions might seem intuitive, however you can find a few surprise factors in this article about correlation. Let's begin! Understanding the Mathematical formulation of Correlation coefficient The most widely used correlation coefficient is Pearson Coefficient. Here is the mathematical formula to derive Pearson Coefficient. Explanation: It simply is the ratio of co-variance of two variables to a product of variance (of the variables). It takes a value between +1 and -1. An extreme value on both the side means they are strongly correlated with each other. A value of zero indicates a NIL correlation but not a non-dependence. You'll understand this clearly in one of the following answers. Answer – 1: Correlation vs. Dependency A non-dependency between two variable means a zero correlation. However the inverse is not true. A zero correlation can even have a perfect dependency. Here is an example : In this scenario, where the square of x is linearly dependent on y (the dependent variable), everything to the right of y axis is negative correlated and to left is positively correlated. So what will be the Pearson Correlation coefficient? If you do the math, you will see a zero correlation between these two variables. What does that mean? For a pair of variables which are perfectly dependent on each other, can also give you a zero correlation. Must remember tip: Correlation quantifies the linear dependence of two variables. It cannot capture non-linear relationship between two variables. Good Read: Must Read Books in Analytics / Data Science Answer – 2: Is Correlation Transitive? Suppose that X, Y, and Z are random variables. X and Y are positively correlated and Y and Z are likewise positively correlated. Does it follow that X and Z must be positively correlated? As we shall see by example, the answer is (perhaps surprisingly) "No." We may prove that if the correlations are sufficiently close to 1, then X and Z must be positively correlated. Let's assume C(x,y) is the correlation coefficient between x and y. Like wise we have C(x,z) and C(y,z). Here is an equation which comes from solving correlation equation mathematically : C(x,y) = C(y,z) * C(z,x) - Square Root ((1 - C(y,z)^2) * (1 - C(z,x)^2)) Now if we want C(x,y) to be more than zero , we basically want the RHS of above equation to be positive. Hence, you need to solve for : C(y,z) * C(z,x) > Square Root ((1 - C(y,z)^2) * (1 - C(z,x)^2)) We can actually solve the above equation for both C(y,z) > 0 and C(y,z) < 0 together by squaring both sides. This will finally give the result as C(x,y) is a non zero number if following equation holds true: C(y,z) ^ 2 + C(z,x) ^ 2 > 1 Wow, this is an equation for a circle. Hence the following plot will explain everything : If the two known correlation are in the A zone, the third correlation will be positive. If they lie in the B zone, the third correlation will be negative. Inside the circle, we cannot say anything about the relationship. A very interesting insight here is that even if C(y,z) and C(z,x) are 0.5, C(x,y) can actually also be negative. Answer – 3: Is Pearson coefficient sensitive to outliers? The answer is Yes. Even a single outlier can change the direction of the coefficient. Here are a few cases, all of which have the same correlation coefficient of 0.81 : Consider the last two graphs(X 3Y3 and X 4Y4). X3Y3 is clearly a case of perfect correlation where a single outlier brings down the coefficient significantly. The last graph is complete opposite, the correlation coefficient becomes a high positive number because of a single outlier. Conclusively, this turns out to be the biggest concern with correlation coefficient, it is highly influenced by the outliers. Check your potential: Should I become a Data Scientist? Answer – 4: Does causation imply correlation? If you have read our above three answers, I am sure you will be able to answer this one. The answer is No, because causation can also lead to a non-linear relationship. Let's understand how! Below is the graph showing density of water from 0 to 12 degree Celsius. We know that density is an effect of changing temperature. But, density can reach its maximum value at 4 degree Celsius. Therefore, it will not be linearly correlated to the temperature. Answer – 5: Difference between Correlation and Simple Linear Regression These two are really close. So let's start with a few things which are common for both. The square of Pearson's correlation coefficient is the same as the one in simple linear regression Neither simple linear regression nor correlation answer questions of causality directly. This point is important, because I've met people thinking that simple regression can magically allow an inference that X causes. That's preposterous belief. What's the difference between correlation and simple linear regression? Now let's think of few differences between the two. Simple linear regression gives much more information about the relationship than Pearson Correlation. Here are a few things which regression will give but correlation coefficient will not. The slope in a linear regression gives the marginal change in output/target variable by changing the independent variable by unit distance. Correlation has no slope. The intercept in a linear regression gives the value of target variable if one of the input/independent variable is set zero. Correlation does not have this information. Linear regression can give you a prediction given all the input variables. Correlation analysis does not predict anything. Answer – 6: Pearson vs. Spearman The simplest answer here is Pearson captures how linearly dependent are the two variables whereas Spearman captures the monotonic behavior of the relation between the variables. For instance consider following relationship : y = exp (x) Here you will find Pearson coefficient to be 0.25 but the Spearman coefficient to be 1. As a thumb rule, you should only begin with Spearman when you have some initial hypothesis of the relation being non-linear. Otherwise, we generally try Pearson first and if that is low, try Spearman. This way you know whether the variables are linearly related or just have a monotonic behavior. Answer – 7: Correlation vs. co-variance if you skipped the mathematical formula of correlation at the start of this article, now is the time to revisit the same. Correlation is simply the normalized co-variance with the standard deviation of both the factors. This is done to ensure we get a number between +1 and -1. Co-variance is very difficult to compare as it depends on the units of the two variable. It might come out to be the case that marks of student is more correlated to his toe nail in milli-meters than it is to his attendance rate. This is just because of the difference in units of the second variable. Hence, we see a need to normalize this co-variance with some spread to make sure we compare apples with apples. This normalized number is known as the correlation. End Notes Questions on correlation are very common in interviews. The key is to know that correlation is an estimate of linear dependence of the two variables. Correlation is transitive for a limited range of correlation pairs. It is also highly influenced by outliers. We learnt that neither Correlation imply Causation nor vice-versa. Were you able to answer all questions in the beginning of this article? Did this article help you with any of your doubts on correlation? If you have any more questions on Correlation, we will be happy to answer them on our discussion portal. If you like what you just read & want to continue your analytics learning, subscribe to our emails, follow us on twitter or like our facebook page. 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