

British Social Attitudes survey, 2019, Poverty and Welfare: Open access teaching dataset

Instructor notes

This short guide is designed to help those planning teaching and other learning activities using the [British Social Attitudes Survey, 2019, Poverty and Welfare: Open Access Teaching Dataset](#). It discusses the contents of the dataset and ways it could be used for teaching quantitative research methods.

The questions on government and differences in income were only asked in some of the interviews but the results are still representative of the population.

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Research topics in the dataset

The dataset contains variables covering attitudes to poverty, experiences of poverty, government spending, political views and news access together with demographic characteristics of the survey respondents. The main area for exploration is the factors associated with attitudes towards poverty and experiences of poverty as measured by the frequency of missing a meal.

Interval / continuous variables

The interval / continuous variables in the dataset are:

- Attitudes to welfare (*welfare2*)
- Left-right attitudes (*leftrigh*)
- Liberal-authoritarian values (*libauth*)

An Interval / continuous variable can also be generated from the questions on attitudes to poverty (see below for further details).

You can see the variables in [the documentation here](#)

Ideas for teaching key quantitative methods topics

Associations between categorical variables (χ^2 , Phi and Cramer's V)

There are many associations between categorical variables in the dataset. Appendix I shows those that are statistically significant and that might be interesting to explore.

There are associations between demographic variables such as age and education, which means there is potential for confounding if one or more are omitted, for example differences by education vary when age is also considered.

Comparing means

You can test for differences in attitudes to welfare and poverty, and left-right and liberal-authoritarian values between variables by comparing the means for each category. To see if the results are statistically significant, you would need to use an individual samples t-test for variables with 2 categories or a one-way ANOVA for those with more than two categories.

Correlation

You can test for the correlation between the interval / continuous variables: attitudes to welfare, left-right and liberal authoritarian scales.

Dimension reduction

An interval / continuous variable can be generated from the questions on attitudes to poverty through a theoretical process. Students could discuss whether some of the questions are more important than others and develop a single index from them. This would provide another interval / continuous variable. Factor analysis in SPSS identifies only one factor.

Model building (Linear regression)

The dataset has interval / continuous variables that can be used as the dependent variable in a linear regression. Students could explore the associations with these variables and individual and household characteristics of the respondents. For example, we might expect age, social class, income, and having children in the household to influence attitudes towards welfare. The other interval / continuous variables may also have a statistically significant association.

Weights

The weighting variable is 'WtFactor'. This variable is the overall weight for the total sample (including the boost samples of younger people).

Appendix I - significant associations between categorical variables

The four tables show the statistically significant associations between demographic characteristics; media, political and trust attitudes; and poverty held in the dataset.

Table 1 – statistically significant associations between demographic factors

Variable	Demographic factors						
	Sex	Age	Income	Social class	Education	Marital status	Children
Sex			✓	✓		✓	✓
Age			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Income	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Social Class	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Education		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Marital status	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Having children	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	

Table 2 – statistically significant associations between demographic factors and media, politics and trust

Variable	Media, politics and trust in others				
	Newspaper	Social Media News	Party ID	Politics	Trust
Sex		✓	✓	✓	✓
Age	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Income	✓		✓	✓	✓
Social Class	✓		✓	✓	✓
Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marital status	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Having children	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 3 – statistically significant associations between demographic factors and poverty

Variable	Poverty factors								
	Skip meal	Govt. Spend	Benefits	Tax	Level of poverty	Measure 1	Measure 2	Fraud	Inequality
Sex				✓	✓			✓	
Age	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Income	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Social Class	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓
Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Marital status	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Having children			✓	✓	✓	✓			

Table 4 – statistically significant associations between media, politics, trust and poverty

Variable	Poverty factors								
	Skip meal	Govt. Spend	Benefits	Tax	Level of poverty	Measure 1	Measure 2	Fraud	Inequality
Newspaper					✓			✓	
Social media news	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Party ID	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Politics	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Trust		✓	✓			✓		✓	✓