

1. A company wants to understand what proportion (p) of customer's opt to give their change to a local charity. The plan is to take a random sample of the customers and record whether or not the customer gave their change to the charity. Define the random variable X_i for the response of the i th customer where a 0 represents that they did not give and a 1 represents that they did.

Answer:

The probability a random customer does donates to charity is p and the probability they do not give is $1 - p$. Thus, the random variable X_i that is an indicator that the i th customer donates is a Bernoulli random variable with probability of success p where success is defined as the customer donating. Since we have a random sample of customers it is reasonable to assume that they are independent. Thus, we have $X_i \stackrel{ind}{\sim} Ber(p)$.

- (a) What is $E[X_i]$?

Answer:

By properties of the Bernoulli distribution, $E[X_i] = p$.

- (b) What is $E[\bar{X}]$?

Answer:

The sample mean always has the same expectation as an individual observation (when the individual observations have the same expectation) and thus $E[\bar{X}] = E[X_i] = p$.

- (c) Is $E[\bar{X}]$ unbiased for the proportion p ?

Answer:

Yes. By part b) $E[\bar{X}] = p$ and thus \bar{X} is unbiased for p .

- (d) What is the variance of X_i ?

Answer:

By properties of the Bernoulli distribution, $Var[X_i] = p(1 - p)$.

- (e) What is the standard deviation of X_i ?

Answer:

$$SD[X_i] = \sqrt{Var[X_i]} = \sqrt{p(1 - p)}.$$

- (f) What is the standard error of \bar{X} ?

Answer:

$$SE[\bar{X}] = SD[X_i]/\sqrt{n} = \sqrt{p(1 - p)}/\sqrt{n} = \sqrt{\frac{p(1 - p)}{n}}$$

2. Continue the previous example and suppose $p = 0.5$.

- (a) What sample size is needed so that with (approximately) 68% probability we are within 0.1 of the true population proportion?

Answer:

If we assume $p = 0.5$, then the standard error is $\sqrt{0.5(1 - 0.5)/n} = 0.5/\sqrt{n}$. By the Empirical Rule, 68% is within 1 standard deviation of the truth and we are saying that 1 standard deviation is 0.1. Thus $0.5/\sqrt{n} = 0.1$ and thus $n = 25$.

- (b) What sample size is needed so that with (approximately) 95% probability we are within 0.1 of the true population proportion?

Answer:

By the Empirical Rule, 95% is within 2 standard deviation of the truth and we are saying that 2 standard deviations is 0.1. Thus $2 \times 0.5/\sqrt{n} = 0.1$ and thus $n = 100$.

- (c) What sample size is needed so that with (approximately) 99.7% probability we are within 0.1 of the true population proportion?

Answer:

By the Empirical Rule, 99.7% is within 3 standard deviation of the truth and we are saying that 3 standard deviations is 0.1. Thus $3 \times 0.5/\sqrt{n} = 0.1$ and thus $n = 225$.

- (d) How will these sample sizes change if p is closer to 0 or 1?

Answer:

If p is closer to 0 or 1, then $\sqrt{p(1 - p)} < 0.5$. Thus a smaller sample size will be needed. For example, if $p = 0.1$ (or $p = 0.9$), then $\sqrt{p(1 - p)} = 0.3$ and the sample sizes that are needed are 9, 36, and 81 respectively. Thus $p = 0.5$ can be used as a conservative estimate of the sample size that is needed.