

P Chapter 1 Projects

Project A: Analyzing a Given Study

Space Tourism?

According to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, more US adults say they would not want to orbit the Earth than say they would. Among the 2,541 respondents from March 27–April 9, 2018, 42% say they would definitely or probably be interested in orbiting the Earth in a spacecraft in the future, while roughly 58% say they would not be interested. Among the many different viewpoints explored by the researchers, about one-half of men (51%) say they would be interested in orbiting the Earth in a spacecraft, compared with one-third of women (33%). Interest in being a space tourist is higher among younger generations and men overall. Also, 63% of Millennials (born 1981 to 1996) say they would definitely or probably be interested in space tourism. Only 39% of Gen Xers (born 1965 to 1980) and 27% of those in the Baby Boomer or older generations would be interested. The 58% of US adults who say they wouldn't want to orbit the Earth aboard a spacecraft believe that such a trip would be either “too expensive” (28% of those asked) or “too scary” (28%), or that their age or health wouldn't allow it (28%). Some 16% of those not interested in space travel offered reasons other than the three options in the survey. The survey was part of the American Trends Panel (ATP), a nationally representative panel of randomly selected US adults living in households recruited from landline and cell phone random-digit-dial (RDD) surveys. Panelists participate monthly via self-administered web surveys. Panelists who do not have internet access were provided with a tablet and wireless internet connection.

Source: Strauss, Mark and Kennedy, Brian. “Space tourism? Majority of Americans say they wouldn't be interested.” Pew Research Center. 7 June 2018. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/06/07/space-tourism-majority-of-americans-say-they-wouldnt-be-interested/> (9 Dec. 2018).

Analyze the surveys described above using the following exercises as a guide.

1. Identify the population being studied.
2. Identify the sample and the sample size. Is the sample representative of the population? Explain your answer.
3. Describe how the sample was chosen. Is there any potential bias in the sampling method? Explain your answer.
4. List the descriptive statistics given in the article.
5. What inferences does the article make from the descriptive statistics?
6. Who conducted the studies? Is there any potential researcher bias? Explain your answer.

Project B: Analyzing a Study You Find

Find a study of interest on the internet, in a newspaper or magazine, or in an educational journal. If you are reading studies in another course, an excellent choice is to use an assignment from that class. This would also be a good opportunity to begin reading journal articles from your major field of study. The periodical section of the library or library internet resources are wonderful starting places. Once you have found an article, make a copy to include with your analysis.

Note: Though it may be tempting to choose a very short article, if the article is too short, it might not contain all of the necessary elements.

Once you have found a study of interest, analyze it using the following exercises as a guide. Write a formal summary of your analysis.

1. Who conducted the study, when and where?
2. What question(s) does the study seek to answer?
3. Identify the population and variables being studied.
4. Identify the sample and the approximate sample size. Is the sample representative of the population? Explain your answer.
5. How do the researchers deal with the issues of confidentiality and informed consent?
6. Describe how the sample was chosen. Is there any potential bias in the sampling method? Explain your answer.
7. List the descriptive statistics given in the article.
8. Are there any confounding variables?
9. What inferences do the researchers draw from the descriptive statistics?
10. Is there any potential researcher bias?
11. Do you feel comfortable believing the results of the study based on your analysis? Explain your answer.