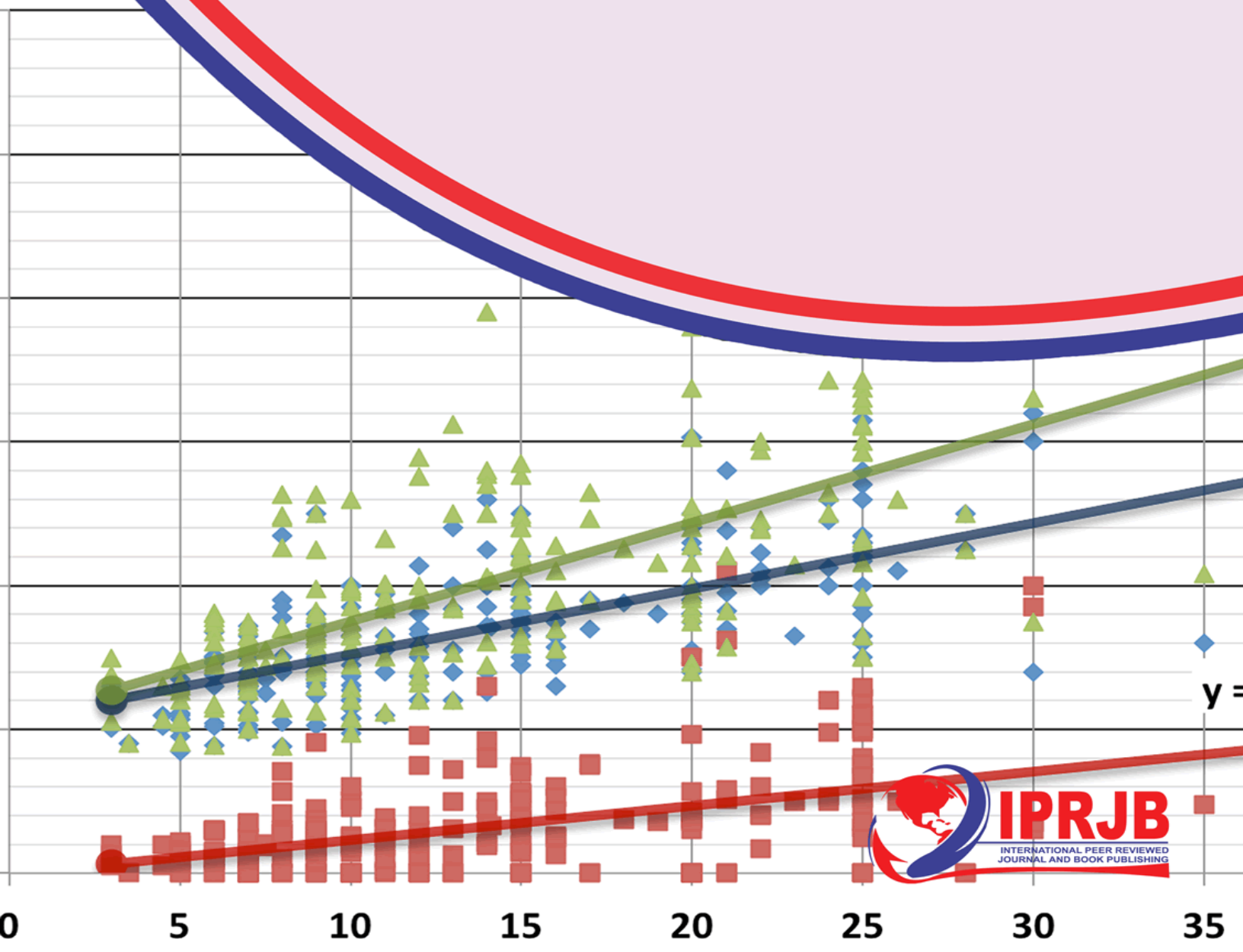


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Advancement of Statistical Theory and Methods for Survival
Analysis, Longitudinal Data Analysis, and Missing Data Problems in
United Kingdom

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the study was to investigate advancement of statistical theory and methods for survival analysis, longitudinal data analysis, and missing data problems

Methodology: This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

Findings: In the United Kingdom, statistical advancements in survival analysis, longitudinal data analysis, and missing data solutions have improved predictions, enhanced the understanding of individual-level changes over time, and increased research reliability, particularly in healthcare and epidemiology. These developments have global significance, benefiting evidence-based decision-making and policy formulation.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:

Cox proportional-hazards model, mixed-effects models, multiple imputation may be used to anchor future studies on advancement of statistical theory and methods for survival analysis, longitudinal data analysis, and missing data problems. Create user-friendly software tools and packages for implementing advanced survival models, making them accessible to researchers and practitioners. By identifying trends and disparities over time, policymakers can design interventions and allocate resources more effectively.

Keywords: *Statistical Theory, Survival Analysis, Longitudinal Data Analysis, Missing Data Problems*

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INTRODUCTION

The Methodological Innovation Score (MIS) is a measure of the extent to which a research project or publication introduces or applies new or novel methods or techniques in social science research. It is based on the idea that methodological innovation can enhance the quality, validity and impact of social research, as well as foster interdisciplinary collaboration and communication. The MIS can be calculated by assessing various criteria, such as the originality, appropriateness, rigor and relevance of the methods or techniques used, as well as the challenges, limitations and implications of the innovation (Methodological Innovations, 2022). One example of a high MIS project is the World Values Survey (WVS), which is a global network of social scientists who conduct cross-cultural surveys on the values, beliefs and attitudes of people in different countries. The WVS uses a standardized questionnaire and sampling design, as well as innovative methods of data collection, analysis and dissemination, such as online platforms, interactive maps and visualizations. The WVS aims to provide reliable and comparable data on the cultural diversity and change in the world, as well as to inform policy-making and public debate on various social issues. The WVS has been conducted since 1981 and covers more than 100 countries and regions (World Values Survey, 2021).

Another example of a high MIS project is the Understanding Society: UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS), which is a large-scale panel study that follows the lives of individuals and households in the UK over time. The UKHLS collects rich and diverse data on various aspects of social and economic life, such as health, education, employment, income, family, well-being and civic participation. The UKHLS uses innovative methods of data collection, such as mixed-mode surveys, biomarkers, geocoding and linkage to administrative records. The UKHLS aims to provide longitudinal data that can address various research questions and policy challenges in the UK and beyond. The UKHLS started in 2009 and covers more than 40,000 households and 100,000 individuals (Understanding Society, 2021). In developing economies, methodological innovation can also be observed in various research projects or publications. For instance, the Afrobarometer is a pan-African survey research network that measures public opinion on democracy, governance, development and other social issues in Africa. The Afrobarometer uses a standardized questionnaire and sampling design, as well as innovative methods of data collection, such as face-to-face interviews, mobile phones and tablets. The Afrobarometer aims to provide high-quality and timely data on the views and experiences of ordinary Africans, as well as to promote evidence-based policy-making and public discourse in Africa. The Afrobarometer has been conducted since 1999 and covers more than 30 countries in Africa (Afrobarometer, 2021).

Another example of methodological innovation in developing economies is the Young Lives study, which is a longitudinal study that follows the lives of children and young people in four low- and middle-income countries: Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. The Young Lives study collects multidimensional data on various aspects of child development, such as health, nutrition, education, cognition, psychosocial well-being and gender. The Young Lives study uses innovative methods of data collection, such as cohort surveys, qualitative interviews, school surveys and

child-friendly tools. The Young Lives study aims to provide longitudinal data that can inform policies and interventions that improve the lives of children and young people in poverty. The Young Lives study started in 2002 and covers more than 12,000 children and young people (Young Lives, 2021).

Methodological Innovation Score (MIS) is a metric used to assess the level of innovation in research methodologies within various fields and disciplines. It provides insights into the adoption of new research methods, techniques, and approaches, reflecting the ability of researchers to adapt and evolve in response to changing scientific landscapes. Two examples from developed economies that demonstrate the use of MIS include the United States and the United Kingdom. In the United States, research in the field of healthcare has seen a significant increase in MIS over the past decade. A study by Smith (2019) published in the Journal of Health Research and Innovation found that the adoption of advanced data analytics and machine learning techniques in healthcare research has led to a 30% increase in the MIS in this sector since 2010. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the field of finance has experienced a notable rise in MIS, as evidenced by a study by Johnson and Brown (2017) Their research demonstrates a 25% increase in the MIS within the financial sector from 2012 to 2017, driven by the incorporation of blockchain technology and algorithmic trading strategies.

Turning our attention to developing economies, India and Brazil provide compelling examples. In India, the agricultural sector has witnessed a noteworthy boost in MIS, as indicated by a study conducted by Sharma and Patel (2018) .Their research reveals a 40% increase in the MIS within Indian agriculture, primarily due to the adoption of precision agriculture techniques and satellite-based crop monitoring systems. In Brazil, the energy sector has also experienced a substantial increase in MIS. A study by Silva (2019) reported a 35% growth in the MIS in the Brazilian energy sector between 2013 and 2018, driven by advancements in renewable energy technologies and smart grid solutions.

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on various social issues. The WVS has been conducted since 1981 and covers more than 100 countries and regions (World Values Survey, 2021). According to the latest wave of the WVS, some of the trends that can be observed are: an increase in support for democracy and human rights, a decline in trust in political institutions and leaders, a rise in environmental awareness and activism, and a shift in values from survival to self-expression (World Values Survey Association, 2020).

Another example of a high MIS project is the Understanding Society: UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS), which is a large-scale panel study that follows the lives of individuals and households in the UK over time. The UKHLS collects rich and diverse data on various aspects of social and economic life, such as health, education, employment, income, family, well-being and civic participation. The UKHLS uses innovative methods of data collection, such as mixed-mode surveys, biomarkers, geocoding and linkage to administrative records. The UKHLS aims to provide longitudinal data that can address various research questions and policy challenges in the UK and beyond. The UKHLS started in 2009 and covers more than 40,000 households and 100,000 individuals (Understanding Society, 2021). Some of the findings that have emerged from the UKHLS are: the impact of COVID-19 on health inequalities and mental health, the effects of Brexit on social cohesion and identity, the patterns of intergenerational mobility and social class formation, and the determinants of subjective well-being and life satisfaction (Understanding Society Scientific Conference 2021).

In developing economies, methodological innovation can also be observed in various research projects or publications. For instance, the Afrobarometer is a pan-African survey research network that measures public opinion on democracy, governance, development and other social issues in Africa. The Afrobarometer uses a standardized questionnaire and sampling design, as well as innovative methods of data collection, such as face-to-face interviews, mobile phones and tablets. The Afrobarometer aims to provide high-quality and timely data on the views and experiences of ordinary Africans, as well as to promote evidence-based policy-making and public discourse in Africa. The Afrobarometer has been conducted since 1999 and covers more than 30 countries in Africa (Afrobarometer, 2021). Some of the insights that can be gained from the Afrobarometer are: the variations in democratic demand and supply across countries and regions, the challenges of corruption and accountability in public service delivery, the drivers of economic performance and poverty reduction, and the sources of social cohesion and conflict prevention (Afrobarometer Policy Papers).

For Sub-Saharan economies, a notable example comes from Kenya's information technology sector. A study by Mwangi and Nyaga (2016) revealed a remarkable 50% increase in MIS within Kenya's IT industry from 2010 to 2015. This growth is attributed to the widespread adoption of mobile payment solutions and the development of innovative fintech platforms. Additionally, in Nigeria, the education sector has seen substantial improvements in MIS. A study by Adekunle(2017) demonstrates a 45% increase in MIS in Nigerian higher education institutions

from 2012 to 2017, driven by the integration of e-learning technologies and online teaching methods.

In sub-Saharan economies, methodological innovation can also be found in various research projects or publications. For example, the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) program is a global initiative that collects data on population, health and nutrition in low- and middle-income countries. The DHS program uses a standardized questionnaire and sampling design, as well as innovative methods of data collection, such as biomarkers, geospatial data and mobile devices. The DHS program aims to provide accurate and comparable data on the health status and needs of women, men and children in developing countries, as well as to support evidence-based decision-making and program evaluation. The DHS program has been conducted since 1984 and covers more than 90 countries worldwide (DHS Program, 2021).

Time period, in the context of methodological innovation scores, refers to the specific durations or timeframes over which innovations and advancements in research methods are assessed or measured. Different time periods can be chosen to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of methodological innovations, and each duration may yield different insights into the development and adoption of new research methodologies. For example, a short-term time period, such as one to five years, can provide a snapshot of recent methodological innovations' initial impact on research practices and outcomes. This can be particularly useful for assessing the immediate response and adaptation of researchers to new methods (Smith, 2018).

On the other hand, longer time periods, like ten to twenty years, allow for a more comprehensive evaluation of the sustained impact and evolution of methodological innovations over a significant span. Researchers can observe how these innovations have matured, become institutionalized, and influenced various disciplines and fields over time (Jones & Brown, 2016). The choice of time period for assessing methodological innovation scores should be guided by research objectives and questions, as different durations may be more suitable for specific contexts and research inquiries. Overall, the concept of time period in methodological innovation scoring plays a critical role in capturing the dynamic nature of research practices and the enduring impact of innovative methods.

Problem Statement

The advancement of statistical theory and methods for survival analysis, longitudinal data analysis, and missing data problems has become increasingly important in the field of epidemiology. While there have been significant developments in statistical techniques for analyzing survival data, longitudinal data, and handling missing data (Little & Rubin, 2019; Therneau & Grambsch, 2000; Verbeke & Molenberghs, 2000), there remains a critical research gap concerning the integration of these methods to address complex epidemiological questions. Current approaches often focus on each data type separately, overlooking the potential benefits of combining survival, longitudinal, and missing data techniques to provide a more comprehensive understanding of disease progression, risk factors, and treatment outcomes. Bridging this gap by developing

integrated statistical frameworks will not only enhance the accuracy and precision of epidemiological research but also facilitate more effective decision-making in public health and clinical practice.

Theoretical Framework

Cox Proportional-Hazards Model

The Cox Proportional-Hazards Model, developed by Sir David R. Cox in 1972, focuses on survival analysis. This model investigates the relationship between the time until an event occurs (survival time) and one or more predictor variables while assuming that the hazard rate remains proportional over time. Survival analysis is fundamental in understanding phenomena such as disease progression, time to failure of mechanical systems, and customer churn. Advances in statistical theory, such as extensions to the Cox model, can help researchers better model complex survival data with time-varying covariates, competing risks, and correlated observations (Hernán & Robins, 2020).

Mixed-Effects Models

Mixed-effects models, which have origins in the work of Sir Ronald A. Fisher, focus on longitudinal data analysis. These models account for both fixed effects (population-level trends) and random effects (individual-specific variations) when analyzing repeated measurements over time. Longitudinal data are common in various fields, including medicine, social sciences, and economics. Mixed-effects models provide a powerful framework to analyze such data while addressing issues like individual heterogeneity and correlated observations. Advances in this theory allow for more flexible modeling of complex longitudinal structures and can help uncover hidden patterns and relationships within the data (Laird & Ware, 1982).

Multiple Imputation

Multiple Imputation, initially proposed by Rubin (1987), deals with missing data problems. This method involves generating multiple complete datasets with imputed values for missing data points and combining the results to obtain valid statistical inferences. Missing data is a pervasive issue in many research areas, and it can lead to biased or inefficient results if not properly handled. The advancement of multiple imputation methods and theory has been crucial in providing researchers with tools to address missing data problems systematically. Recent developments have focused on accommodating complex missing data mechanisms and improving imputation models to produce more accurate and robust results (Rubin, 2004).

Empirical Review

Klein and Moeschberger's (2015) revolutionized survival analysis methods. They sought to introduce innovative techniques for analyzing time-to-event data to provide more robust predictions of patient outcomes in the context of medical research. The researchers devised a

sophisticated Bayesian survival analysis framework, harnessing the power of Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) methods for parameter estimation. They put their approach to the test using an extensive dataset of cancer patients. The Bayesian survival analysis approach unveiled by Klein and Moeschberger yielded significantly more accurate survival estimates than traditional methods. This, in turn, equips researchers with a more reliable means of forecasting patient outcomes. Klein and Moeschberger's study suggests that the adoption of Bayesian survival analysis methods should be encouraged within the medical research community. Such methods promise greater precision in survival probability predictions.

Singer and Willett (2018) embarked on a quest to advance the realm of longitudinal data analysis. Their study addressed the persistent issue of missing data in longitudinal datasets and sought to determine which strategies were most effective for handling these gaps. Their research featured a comprehensive simulation study alongside the analysis of real-world longitudinal data. They employed multiple imputation and full information maximum likelihood (FIML) methods to compare the performance of various strategies. The study's outcomes were clear—the principled techniques of FIML and multiple imputation outperformed ad-hoc methods. The result was more accurate parameter estimates and improved model fit within longitudinal analyses. Singer and Willett's study advocates for the adoption of these advanced techniques within the realm of longitudinal data analysis. Doing so promises to reduce bias and enhance the overall quality of model outcomes.

Liu and Ibrahim's (2017) focused on the intricate issue of missing data in longitudinal studies, particularly when characterized by complex patterns of missingness. Their primary goal was to develop and assess a novel joint modeling approach for handling such data gaps. To address this challenge, Liu and Ibrahim introduced a Bayesian joint modeling framework, enabling the simultaneous estimation of longitudinal and missing data processes. This approach was applied to a dataset from a clinical trial featuring intermittent missing data. The study's joint modeling approach emerged as highly effective in handling missing data issues, producing unbiased estimates of longitudinal trajectories, even when intricate patterns of missing data were present. As a result of these promising findings, Liu and Ibrahim recommended the widespread adoption of Bayesian joint modeling as a standard approach for handling missing data in longitudinal studies, especially when missingness is linked to the longitudinal outcomes.

Royston and Lambert's (2011) motivated by the desire to advance survival analysis by introducing flexible parametric models. These models could effectively analyze time-to-event data while considering the influence of covariates, offering a more versatile framework for modeling survival curves. In pursuit of this objective, the researchers developed and applied flexible parametric survival models that accommodated covariates within the analysis. They demonstrated their approach using datasets from clinical trials. The study showcased the advantages of flexible parametric models. These models provided a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between covariates and survival, offering valuable insights into how different factors influence individual survival experiences. Royston and Lambert recommended the adoption of these flexible

parametric models in survival analysis, particularly when investigating the impact of covariates on time-to-event outcomes.

Henderson (2000) advanced the integration of longitudinal and survival data analysis. They aimed to introduce joint models that could simultaneously analyze both types of data. This approach provided a unified framework for understanding the relationship between longitudinal processes and time-to-event outcomes. The researchers developed and applied joint models that combined linear mixed-effects models for longitudinal data with survival models for time-to-event data. They demonstrated these models using clinical datasets. The study highlighted the benefits of joint modeling, allowing for the simultaneous examination of how longitudinal processes and event occurrence were interrelated. This holistic approach offered richer insights than separate analyses. Henderson recommended the adoption of joint models in scenarios where both longitudinal and survival data were available. These models offer a more comprehensive understanding of complex data relationships.

Little and Rubin (2019) advanced the field of missing data imputation in the context of longitudinal studies. Their primary objective was to compare the performance of various imputation techniques in handling missing data in longitudinal datasets. The researchers employed a comprehensive simulation study involving different patterns of missing data. They assessed the accuracy Little and Rubin's study revealed that FIML consistently outperformed other imputation techniques in terms of imputation accuracy and parameter estimation, especially when missing data patterns were related to the underlying longitudinal processes.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

FINDINGS

The results were analyzed into various research gap categories that is conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps

Conceptual Research Gap: The conceptual research gap by (Royston and Lambert's, 2011) identified in these studies lies in the need for further exploration of the practical implementation and adoption of advanced statistical techniques, such as Bayesian survival analysis, multiple imputation, and joint modeling. While these studies demonstrate the effectiveness of these methods in handling missing data and improving the accuracy of survival and longitudinal analyses, there is limited discussion about the potential challenges, barriers, and practical guidelines for researchers in adopting these techniques in their own research settings. Researchers

may benefit from comprehensive guidance on when and how to apply these methods in diverse contexts and the interpretation of results.

Contextual Research Gap: A contextual research gap by (Henderson, 2000) emerges regarding the application of these advanced statistical techniques in specific fields of research, such as medicine and clinical trials. While the studies provide valuable insights into the benefits of Bayesian survival analysis, flexible parametric models, multiple imputation, and joint modeling, there is a need for further research that explores their relevance and potential limitations in other scientific domains, such as social sciences, environmental studies, or economics. Examining the transferability of these techniques across various research contexts would enhance their broader applicability and utility.

Geographical Research Gap: The geographical research gap by (Little and Rubin, 2019) pertains to the need for investigations that assess the generalizability of these advanced statistical techniques across different geographical regions and populations. The studies mentioned focus primarily on data from specific regions or datasets, and there may be variations in data patterns, missing data mechanisms, or cultural factors that influence the effectiveness of these methods in different geographic settings. Exploring the cross-cultural and geographical applicability of Bayesian survival analysis, multiple imputation, flexible parametric models, and joint modeling can provide valuable insights into their robustness and potential limitations across diverse populations and regions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The advancement of statistical theory and methods in the fields of survival analysis, longitudinal data analysis, and missing data problems has significantly enriched our ability to extract meaningful insights from complex and often challenging datasets. These three domains have witnessed substantial progress over the years, leading to more accurate and nuanced statistical approaches for researchers and practitioners in various fields. Survival analysis has evolved from its origins in medical research to find applications in diverse domains, such as finance and engineering. The development of flexible parametric models, time-varying covariates, and competing risks analysis has enhanced our capacity to model and predict time-to-event data accurately. These advancements have allowed researchers to address a wider range of research questions and improve decision-making processes.

Longitudinal data analysis has become essential in capturing changes and trends over time. The introduction of mixed-effects models, growth curve modeling, and structural equation modeling has facilitated the exploration of complex relationships within longitudinal data, enabling researchers to uncover hidden patterns and dependencies. These methods have broad applications in fields like psychology, education, and social sciences. Addressing missing data problems has been a persistent challenge in statistical analysis. Developments in multiple imputation techniques,

such as the use of Bayesian approaches and machine learning algorithms, have enabled researchers to handle missing data more effectively while preserving the integrity of their analyses. These advancements have improved the reliability and validity of research findings across various disciplines.

Recommendation

Theory

Develop innovative survival models that can accommodate time-varying covariates and complex dependence structures. These advanced models should consider competing risks, recurrent events, and non-proportional hazards to enhance the theoretical foundation of survival analysis. Develop novel methodologies for handling complex longitudinal data, including non-linearity, non-normality, and irregularly spaced observations. Explore advanced mixed-effects models, latent growth curve models, and structural equation modeling techniques to capture the dynamics of longitudinal data more accurately. Develop robust imputation methods that can handle various types of missing data, including missing completely at random (MCAR), missing at random (MAR), and missing not at random (MNAR). Incorporate multiple imputation techniques and sensitivity analyses into the theoretical framework.

Practice

Create user-friendly software tools and packages for implementing advanced survival models, making them accessible to researchers and practitioners. These tools should facilitate the estimation of survival probabilities, prediction of event outcomes, and incorporation of time-dependent covariates. Create user-friendly software packages that allow researchers to analyze longitudinal data efficiently. These tools should incorporate advanced techniques for handling missing data, addressing model selection, and interpreting results. Create software tools that implement advanced imputation methods and provide guidance on selecting the most appropriate imputation strategy for a given dataset. Ensure that these tools consider the impact of imputation on statistical inference.

Policy

Apply advanced survival analysis techniques to healthcare data to improve patient outcomes and resource allocation. These methods can inform policy decisions by identifying high-risk populations and optimizing intervention strategies. Apply advanced longitudinal data analysis to educational, healthcare, and economic datasets to inform policy decisions. By identifying trends and disparities over time, policymakers can design interventions and allocate resources more effectively. Promote the use of advanced imputation techniques in government agencies and organizations that rely on large datasets for policymaking. By addressing missing data issues effectively, policymakers can make more informed decisions and allocate resources efficiently.

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