likert: An R Package for Visualizing and Analyzing Likert-Based Items

Kimberly K. Speerschneider¹,²,*
Jason M. Bryer¹,²

1. University at Albany
2. Excelsior College
*Contact author: kimkspeer@gmail.com

Keywords: likert, questionnaire data, visualization, grammar of graphics

The Likert (Likert, 1932) item format has become the de facto standard in survey research. In the most common format of Likert-items, respondents rate their agreement with a statement from strongly disagree to strongly agree, usually with four to seven levels. Rensis Likert assumed that the distance between each response category are equal, and as such, analysis has typically treated the responses to Likert-items as continuous variables. However, this assumption often does not hold (see e.g. Wakita et al., 2012), although can often easily be verified with the use of visualizations. This talk introduces the likert package that provides a set of functions for analyzing Likert-items, visualizing results using the ggplot2 (Wickham, 2009) package, and reporting results with the xtable (Dahl, 2012) package. Figure 1 represents one such graphic analyzing reading attitudes from the Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA; OECD, 2010).

Figure 1: Attitudes Towards Reading

References

Dahl, D. B. (2012). xtable: Export tables to \LaTeX{} or HTML. R package version 1.7-0.


