

Sample Size In Astrological Research

There has been some discussion in the astrological research community recently on sample size. The very first topics discussed in 2002 when The Astro Investigators (The Gators)¹ met for the first few meetings included that topic. The Gators met with individuals involved in academic research and also gathered information on that subject prior to beginning their work. They have since followed up with experiments to see if that information holds true and if sample size really does matter.

Rather than making assumptions about sample size the Gators consulted with a statistician at the University of Connecticut, with a Russian scientist, and also collected information on ideal sample size in psychological and educational testing. It was determined that a very reasonable sample size would be 1,000. Several sources suggested that any number below that would increase the margin of error to the point of unreliability. Six Sigma² provides the following information:

Survey Sample Size	Margin of Error Percent*
2,000	2
1,500	3
1,000	3
900	3
800	3
700	4
600	4
500	4
400	5
300	6
200	7
100	10
50	14
*Assumes a 95% level of confidence	

The Gators wanted to test how a 100 sample size research would compare against a different 100 sample size research using the same criteria with the same tools. To that end, The Gators used a file of 1,268 scientists. First they ran every available test in AIR Software's Investigator Program (3,794 items) against all 1,268 charts, then against the first 100 charts in the file, the last 100 charts in the file, and the 100 charts in the middle. There were no items that showed up as significantly often or significantly seldom in all four tests. There was one item that showed up as significantly often for the 1,268 test and 2 of the 100 sample size tests.

The point here is that no correlation could be found between any of the 100 sample size test results with either of the other two 100 sample size tests or the

larger 1,268 sample. If any of the smaller sample results were presented as quantitative research³, the results probably could not be replicated in a second or third research – which is essential.

It is important to state that there is nothing inherently wrong with a sample size of any number for a number of types of qualitative research⁴, or as a prototype for a quantitative research.

For example, one astrologer⁵ presented information on a research that he had done on substance abusers in a book that he wrote.⁶ His group had 13 members. This 13 member sample can be considered a case study⁷.

Another astrologer presented a research⁸ she did on 100 substance abusers to attempt to replicate and comment on that first study. The second researcher's sample of 100 can be considered a good next step. However, because it contained a mixed population, i.e., both alcohol and drug abusers and because of the fairly small sample size, it would provide an inadequate margin of error for quantitative research.

Each of these studies is valid qualitative research that can provide both food for thought as well as a depth of analysis perhaps not available in larger number samples. But neither is quantitative research.

The Gators perform quantitative research and the distinction between that type of research and small sample size studies that are more qualitative needs to be clearly defined. Qualitative research cannot be extrapolated to the population at large. Replicated quantitative research can, and to that end the Gators strive for a sample size of as close to 1,000 charts as possible.

References:

¹ The AstroInvestigators: <http://www.astroinvestigators.com>

² Six Sigma: <http://www.isixsigma.com/library/content/c040607a.asp>

³ Quantitative definition: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quantitative_method

⁴ Qualitative definition: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qualitative_method

⁵ Dr. Mitchell Gibson: <http://www.mitchellegibsonmd.com>

⁶ Signs of Mental Illness: <http://www.amazon.com/Signs-Mental-Illness-Astrological-Breakthrough/dp/1567183026>

⁷ Case Study Definition: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/case+study>

⁸ Advancing an AstroSignature for Alcohol Abuse by Terri McCartney: <http://www.astrodatabank.com/AS/AlcoholSignature.htm>