INCORPORATING TABLEAU FOR DATA VISUALIZATION IN AN UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS ANALYTICS COURSE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this presentation is to describe how Tableau has been incorporated in an undergraduate Business Analytics course to enhance coverage of topics related to Descriptive Analytics.

In keeping with recent trends integrating Business Analytics in business school curricula, the Technology and Operations Management Department in the College of Business at a large public university offers an elective course in Business Analytics at the undergraduate level. The course primarily covers Descriptive and Predictive Analytics, with a brief overview of Prescriptive Analytics (Prescriptive Analytics coverage is provided in a separate course in Management Science, which is required for students majoring in Technology and Operations Management).

The Descriptive Analytics sections include data visualization, exploration, and descriptive statistics. Predictive Analytics topics include forecasting techniques and an introduction to data mining (Evans, 2016). Spreadsheet tools and models are integrated throughout the course. Microsoft Excel has been the software of choice due to its widespread prevalence in business environments, its ease of use, and its ability to facilitate what-if analyses.

During Fall 2017, I introduced Tableau to enhance the coverage of Descriptive Analytics in the course. Tableau is known for its powerful data exploration and visualization capabilities. It is positioned as a leader in the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Business Intelligence and Analytics Platforms (Gartner, 2017). The department has used Tableau over the past two years for a big data analytics project with an industry partner; however, this was the first use of Tableau in the classroom for the department.

The presentation will describe my experience with Tableau, particularly as it relates to the undergraduate Business Analytics course, and how it compares with Microsoft Excel for pedagogical purposes.

Keywords: Business Education, Business Analytics, Descriptive Analytics, Tableau

REFERENCES

[1] Evans, J.R. *Business Analytics: Methods, Models, and Decisions*, Second Edition, Pearson Education Inc., 2016.

[2] Gartner, *Magic Quadrant for Business Intelligence and Analytics Platforms*, Rita Sallam, Cindi Howson, et al, February 16, 2017.