

Cultural Consensus Theory (CCT)

Culture

- Culture is the set of learned and shared beliefs and behaviors, and cultural beliefs are the normative beliefs of a group.

CCT

- A collection of analytical techniques and models that can be used to estimate cultural beliefs and the degree to which individuals know or report those beliefs.
- estimates the culturally correct answers to a series of questions (group beliefs) and simultaneously estimates each respondent's knowledge or degree of sharing of the answers.

How?

- Group beliefs can be estimated from responses to a series of related questions.
- The simplest way is to aggregate responses and use the majority responses (for categorical type or qualitative responses) or the average responses (for ranked or quantitative responses) to estimate the answers.
- Agreement between the responses of individuals and the aggregate responses of the group can be used to estimate how well each individual corresponds to the group.

CCT Builds on such Analyses

- estimates of individual knowledge or competency can be gauged from the agreement between people.
- Then, the culturally correct answers are estimated by weighting the responses of each person by their competency and aggregating responses across people.

To Use CCT

- When culturally correct answers are unknown, as in the ethnographic context, the purpose of CCT is:
 - to estimate the culturally correct answers
 - to estimate the cultural knowledge or accuracy of informants.

Steps to Using CCT

- Informants must be asked a series of questions all on the same topic.
- Responses to questions are not corrected, recoded, transformed, or reflected because the purpose is to use the original responses to estimate culturally correct answers.
- Informant reliability or competency can be estimated from the pattern of agreement between individuals; the observed agreement is a function of shared knowledge.
- Answers are estimated by weighting individual responses by their competency and aggregating those responses across individuals.

Three Assumptions to Use CCT

- First, each informant should provide answers independently of all other informants.
 - The consensus methods are not appropriate for group interviews.
- the questions should all be on a single topic and at the same level of difficulty.
 - competency should be consistent across items
- CCT is applicable only if there is a single set of answers to the questions.
 - there must be a high level of consistency (agreement) in responses among informants.

Note:

- Consensus analysis does not create consensus
- It assesses the degree of agreement that is present.