

## 3.2: Scatter Plots

Before we take up the discussion of linear regression and correlation, we need to examine a way to display the relation between two variables  $x$  and  $y$ . The most common and easiest way is a *scatter plot*. The following example illustrates a scatter plot.

### Example 3.2.1

In Europe and Asia, m-commerce is popular. M-commerce users have special mobile phones that work like electronic wallets as well as provide phone and Internet services. Users can do everything from paying for parking to buying a TV set or soda from a machine to banking to checking sports scores on the Internet. For the years 2000 through 2004, was there a relationship between the year and the number of m-commerce users? Construct a scatter plot. Let  $x$  = the year and let  $y$  = the number of m-commerce users, in millions.

Table 3.2.1: Table showing the number of m-commerce users (in millions) by year.

$x$ (year)	$y$ (# of users)
2000	0.5
2002	20.0
2003	33.0
2004	47.0

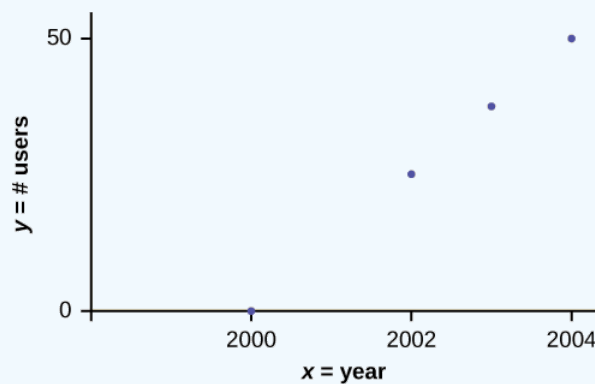


Figure 3.2.1: Scatter plot showing the number of m-commerce users (in millions) by year.

### Exercise 3.2.1

Amelia plays basketball for her high school. She wants to improve to play at the college level. She notices that the number of points she scores in a game goes up in response to the number of hours she practices her jump shot each week. She records the following data:

$X$ (hours practicing jump shot)	$Y$ (points scored in a game)
5	15
7	22
9	28
10	31
11	33
12	36

Construct a scatter plot and state if what Amelia thinks appears to be true.

## Answer

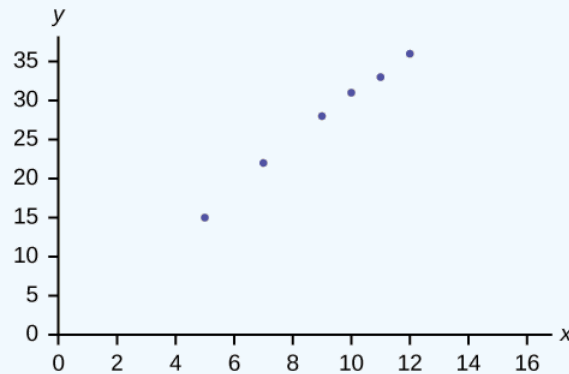


Figure 3.2.2

Yes, Amelia's assumption appears to be correct. The number of points Amelia scores per game goes up when she practices her jump shot more.

A scatter plot shows the *direction of a relationship* between the variables. A clear direction happens when there is either:

- High values of one variable occurring with high values of the other variable or low values of one variable occurring with low values of the other variable.
- High values of one variable occurring with low values of the other variable.

You can determine the *strength of the relationship* by looking at the scatter plot and seeing how close the points are to a line, a power function, an exponential function, or to some other type of function. For a linear relationship there is an exception. Consider a scatter plot where all the points fall on a horizontal line providing a "perfect fit." The horizontal line would in fact show no relationship.

When you look at a scatter plot, you want to notice the *overall pattern* and any *deviations* from the pattern. The following scatterplot examples illustrate these concepts.

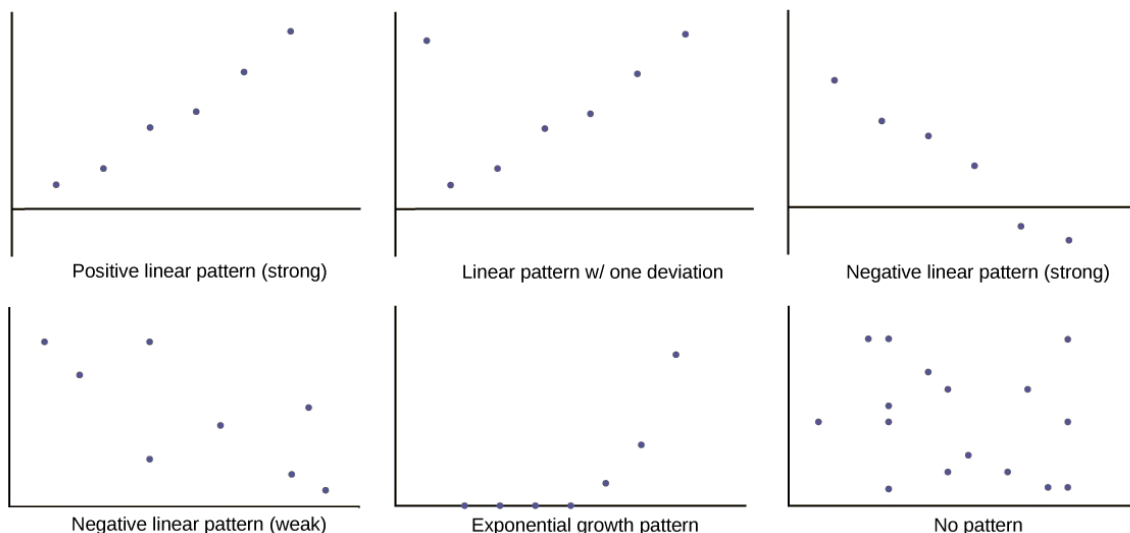


Figure 3.2.3:

In this chapter, we are interested in scatter plots that show a linear pattern. Linear patterns are quite common. The linear relationship is strong if the points are close to a straight line, except in the case of a horizontal line where there is no relationship. If we think that the points show a linear relationship, we would like to draw a line on the scatter plot. This line can be calculated through a process called linear regression. However, we only calculate a regression line if one of the variables helps to explain or

predict the other variable. If  $x$  is the independent variable and  $y$  the dependent variable, then we can use a regression line to predict  $y$  for a given value of  $x$

## Summary

Scatter plots are particularly helpful graphs when we want to see if there is a linear relationship among data points. They indicate both the direction of the relationship between the  $x$  variables and the  $y$  variables, and the strength of the relationship. We calculate the strength of the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable using linear regression.

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