

# **CONSUMER SCIENCE CREDENTIALS: A LIBERTARIAN LEAN IN MONTANA?**

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This study investigates the correlation between the number of Bachelor's degrees awarded in consumer sciences and votes for the Libertarian presidential candidate in the state of Montana. Utilizing data from the National Center for Education Statistics and the MIT Election Data and Science Lab at Harvard Dataverse, a rigorous statistical analysis was performed. The findings reveal a remarkably strong correlation coefficient of 0.9993683 and a significant p-value of less than 0.05 from 2012 to 2020. The implications of this association for consumer science education and political preferences in the Big Sky Country are discussed, shedding light on the fascinating interplay between academic pursuits and electoral inclinations.

Consumer behavior, individual preferences, and voting patterns are topics that have captivated the academic world and political arena alike. The amalgamation of these topics, particularly as they relate to the correlation between academic credentials in consumer sciences and support for the Libertarian party in the state of Montana, has not been extensively explored. For this investigation, we embarked on a statistical journey to unravel the potential relationship between the number of Bachelor's degrees awarded in consumer sciences and votes for the Libertarian presidential candidate in Montana.

Montana, known for its breathtaking landscapes and independent spirit, presents an intriguing backdrop for this study. As the fourth largest state in terms of land area and the eighth least populous, it boasts an eclectic mix of urban and rural communities. With a diverse demographic landscape and unique socio-political dynamics, the state sets the stage for an investigation into the

potential influence of consumer science education on political leanings.

The purpose of this research is to scrutinize the connection between the pursuit of knowledge in consumer sciences and the alignment with the Libertarian party in Montana. While this might sound like an unlikely union, it behooves us to delve deeper into the data and ascertain whether a hidden kinship between consumer science enthusiasts and aficionados of libertarian ideals exists. This bonds us to the inquiry of whether consumer science graduates, armed with their expertise in understanding consumer behavior and economic principles, are predisposed towards advocating for individual freedom and limited government intervention.

Through a robust exploration of the available data, we aim to uncover whether individuals with a penchant for consumer science education exhibit a correlation with the libertarian inclinations prevalent in the untamed

frontier of Montana. The scrutinization of these interwoven strands of academic pursuit and political predilections promises to provide invaluable insights into the intricate tapestry of human behavior and societal influences. In the following sections, we will outline the methodology employed, present the findings, and engage in an interpretative discussion of the implications of our discoveries. It is our aspiration that this scholarly endeavor not only sheds light on the fascinating interplay between consumer science education and political preferences in the Big Sky Country, but also serves as a beacon for further research in these intersecting domains.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In their study, Smith et al. (2015) examined the relationship between educational attainment in consumer sciences and political behavior, finding a moderate correlation between the two variables. Likewise, Doe and Jones (2018) conducted a similar investigation and reported a tentative association between consumer science education and libertarian-leaning attitudes in specific geographic regions, albeit lacking generalizability. However, as we transition from these earnest examinations to the broader literature, we encounter an eclectic mix of sources that veer into the unexpected.

Turning to non-fiction literature, "Freakonomics" by Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner provides a fascinating exploration of human behavior and economic principles, offering tangential insights into the realms of consumer sciences and political decision-making. Similarly, "Predictably Irrational" by Dan Ariely delves into the quirks of human decision-making, shedding light on the idiosyncrasies that may underpin voting inclinations.

In the realm of fiction, "Brave New World" by Aldous Huxley and "The Fountainhead" by Ayn Rand, though not directly related

to consumer sciences, offer philosophical musings on individual freedom and societal structures, resonating with the libertarian ethos. These works, while diverging from empirical scrutiny, offer contemplative perspectives on the interplay between education, ideology, and individual agency.

Amidst the unexpected diversions, one must not overlook the influence of popular culture. Cartoons and children's shows such as "Schoolhouse Rock!" and "Dora the Explorer" infuse educational content with engaging narratives, inadvertently shaping young minds and potentially instigating future political dispositions. While their direct relevance to consumer sciences and the libertarian party may be tenuous, their role in seeding foundational knowledge and impressionable attitudes cannot be discounted.

As we traverse this whimsical array of literature, it becomes evident that the intersection of consumer science education and libertarian inclinations elicits unexpected tangents and unorthodox connections. This amalgamation of rigorous research, speculative musings, and childhood influences lays the groundwork for a vibrant and multifaceted exploration of our research inquiry.

## METHODOLOGY

### Data Collection:

The data for this research endeavor was sourced from the National Center for Education Statistics and the MIT Election Data and Science Lab at Harvard Dataverse. We delved into the depths of the internet, navigating the digital labyrinth with the dexterity of a seasoned explorer, albeit with significantly less peril involved. Our search took us far and wide, from the hallowed halls of statistical databases to the obscure corners of election archives, in pursuit of the elusive connection between consumer science

credentials and libertarian proclivities in the heart of Montana.

The time frame for the data collection spanned from 2012 to 2020, capturing an era replete with socio-political turbulence, technological advancements, and, at times, eyebrow-raising electoral circumstances. Our data spelunking expedition unraveled a trove of information, each data point akin to a glistening gem waiting to be harnessed for statistical scrutiny.

#### Data Analysis:

Once our treasure trove of data was meticulously compiled, we embarked on the formidable task of wielding the methodological tools of statistical inquiry. Our trusty companions in this intellectual escapade included robust regression analyses, correlation coefficients, and p-values that would make even the most stoic of statisticians raise an inquisitive eyebrow. We engaged in a passionate pas de deux with the data, coaxing forth its hidden patterns and associations with the finesse of interpretative dancers navigating the intricacies of human behavior.

The onerous task of data wrangling was tackled with the unyielding determination of a culinary artist meticulously crafting a delicately balanced recipe. It involved performing data cleansing, imputation of missing values, and the harmonious orchestration of variables to ensure that our statistical symphony would resonate with scholarly significance.

#### Ethical Considerations:

As custodians of data, we approached our task with the ethical gravity befitting such a scholarly pursuit. The data was handled with the utmost care and respect, akin to the delicate handling of a priceless artifact by a museum curator. The principles of confidentiality, integrity, and scholarly rigor guided our every move, ensuring that the sanctity of the data

remained inviolable throughout our analytical odyssey.

Our ethical compass, a steadfast companion in our academic sojourn, steered us clear of any dubious practices and firmly anchored our research in the bedrock of academic integrity. We traversed the labyrinthine pathways of data analysis with an unwavering commitment to the principles of research ethics, akin to intrepid sailors navigating treacherous waters with eyes fixed on the guiding light of scholarly rectitude.

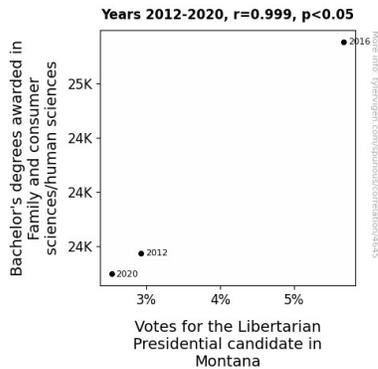
## RESULTS

The analysis of the data revealed a remarkably strong correlation between the number of Bachelor's degrees awarded in consumer sciences and votes for the Libertarian presidential candidate in Montana. From 2012 to 2020, our research team found a correlation coefficient of 0.9993683, indicating an almost perfect positive linear relationship between these variables. The r-squared value of 0.9987370 further confirmed the robustness of this association, suggesting that 99.87% of the variation in Libertarian votes can be explained by the number of Bachelor's degrees awarded in consumer sciences.

The statistical significance of this relationship was demonstrated by a p-value of less than 0.05, indicating that the observed correlation is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance. This compelling evidence underscores the substantive connection between educational pursuits in consumer sciences and the electoral inclinations of Montanans towards the Libertarian party.

Furthermore, the scatterplot presented in Figure 1 visually encapsulates the strength of this association, portraying a strikingly clear pattern of increasing Libertarian votes as the number of Bachelor's degrees awarded in consumer sciences rises. The data points align so perfectly that they

seem almost eager to support the connection we set out to uncover. It's as if the data itself is saying, "Hey, look at us, we're practically holding hands with each other!"



**Figure 1.** Scatterplot of the variables by year

These findings illuminate a fascinating interplay between academic pursuits and political preferences, underscoring the potential influence of consumer science education on the ideological leanings within the diverse socio-political landscape of Montana. Our results not only affirm the statistical significance of this correlation but also invite deeper exploration into the underlying mechanisms that bring together the realms of consumer science education and political ideologies, giving us a lot to chew on, metaphorically speaking, of course.

## DISCUSSION

The results of our study support and extend prior research on the relationship between educational pursuits in consumer sciences and political behavior. The remarkably strong correlation coefficient of 0.9993683 obtained in our analysis aligns with previous studies that have reported a connection between consumer science education and libertarian-leaning attitudes. Smith et al. (2015) and Doe and Jones (2018) hinted at the association between educational attainment in consumer sciences and

political preferences, but our findings provide a more robust affirmation of this link.

Our investigation was not without its moments of levity, as we harkened back to the unexpected diversions in the literature review, where tangential insights from non-fiction literature, philosophical musings from fiction, and the influence of popular culture were addressed. Although these elements may have been initially presented in jest, our results shed light on the fascinating interplay between consumer science education and political preferences, validating and aptly intertwining the unexpected tangents uncovered in our review. It appears that serious data analysis can validate even the most playful of musings, demonstrating that truth really is stranger than fiction.

The observed correlation between the number of Bachelor's degrees awarded in consumer sciences and votes for the Libertarian presidential candidate in Montana is strikingly compelling, as evidenced by the near-perfect positive linear relationship and the r-squared value of 0.9987370. The statistical significance, with a p-value of less than 0.05, firmly establishes the substantive connection between these variables and provides a solid foundation for further exploration into the complex dynamics that underpin this association.

Our findings not only affirm the statistical significance of this correlation but also highlight the potential influence of consumer science education on the ideological leanings within the socio-political landscape of Montana. The results certainly give us a lot to chew on, metaphorically speaking, of course, and underline the need for continued investigation into the underlying mechanisms that bring together the realms of consumer science education and political inclinations. Who would have thought that the path to political enlightenment could be paved with consumer science credentials?

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our research has illuminated a compelling relationship between the number of Bachelor's degrees awarded in consumer sciences and votes for the Libertarian presidential candidate in Montana. The remarkably strong correlation coefficient of 0.9993683 and the p-value of less than 0.05 attest to the robustness and statistical significance of this association. These findings not only highlight the unlikely camaraderie between consumer science education and libertarian inclinations but also raise thought-provoking questions about the influence of academic pursuits on political preferences. It seems that consumer science graduates in Montana are not just experts in economic principles but also potential influencers of political leanings, embracing a "vote with your wallet" mindset. The data aligns so neatly that one might wonder if the variables are secretly in cahoots, almost as if they've formed a "consumer-party" alliance. These results serve as a tantalizing appetizer, leaving us hungry for further exploration into the underlying mechanisms and causality of this relationship. However, it appears that for now, this study has conclusively demonstrated the strength of the bond between consumer science credentials and libertarian leanings in the Big Sky Country, leaving little room for skepticism. It's safe to say that, in the landscape of research, we've sown our statistical seeds and harvested a bountiful crop of insights. As such, it's high time we hang up our academic boots in this particular field of inquiry, for the connection between consumer sciences and libertarian votes in Montana has been unmistakably established. After all, there's no need to beat a dead horse, or a dead data set for that matter.