## Package 'causalQual'

February 24, 2025

Title Causal Inference for Qualitative Outcomes

Version 1.0.0

Description Implements the framework introduced in Di Francesco and Mel-

lace (2025) <doi:10.48550/arXiv.2502.11691>, shifting the focus to well-defined and interpretable

estimands that quantify how treatment affects the probability distribution over outcome categories. It supports selection-on-observables, instrumental variables, regression discontinuity, and difference-in-differences designs.

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causalQual\_did Causal Inference for Qualitative Outcomes under Difference-in-Differences

#### Description

Fit two-group/two-period models for qualitative outcomes to estimate the probabilities of shift on the treated.

#### Usage

```
causalQual_did(Y_pre, Y_post, D)
```

## Arguments

Y_pre	Qualitative outcome before treatment. Must be labeled as $\{1, 2, \}$ .
Y_post	Qualitative outcome after treatment. Must be labeled as $\{1, 2, \dots\}$ .
D	Binary treatment indicator.

#### Details

Under a difference-in-difference design, identification requires that the probabilities time shift for  $Y_{is}(0)$  for class m evolve similarly for the treated and control groups (parallel trends on the probability mass functions of  $Y_{is}(0)$ ). If this assumption holds, we can recover the probability of shift on the treated for class m:

$$\delta_{m,T} := P(Y_{it}(1) = m | D_i = 1) - P(Y_{it}(0) = m | D_i = 1).$$

causalQual\_did applies, for each class m, the canonical two-group/two-period method to the binary variable  $1(Y_{is} = m)$ . Specifically, consider the following linear model:

$$1(Y_{is} = m) = D_i\beta_{m1} + 1(s = t)\beta_{m2} + D_i1(s = t)\beta_{m3} + \epsilon_{mis}.$$

The OLS estimate  $\hat{\beta}_{m3}$  of  $\beta_{m3}$  is our estimate of the probability shift on the treated for class m. Standard errors are clustered at the unit level and used to construct conventional confidence intervals.

#### Value

An object of class causalQual.

## causalQual\_iv

## Author(s)

Riccardo Di Francesco

#### References

Di Francesco, R., and Mellace, G. (2025). Causal Inference for Qualitative Outcomes. arXiv preprint arXiv:2502.11691. doi:10.48550/arXiv.2502.11691.

## See Also

causalQual\_soo causalQual\_iv causalQual\_rd

#### Examples

causalQual\_iv Causal Inference for Qualitative Outcomes under Instrumental Variables

#### Description

Fit two-stage least squares models for qualitative outcomes to estimate the local probabilities of shift.

#### Usage

causalQual\_iv(Y, D, Z)

#### Arguments

Y	Qualitative outcome before treatment. Must be labeled as $\{1, 2,\}$ .
D	Binary treatment indicator.
Z	Binary instrument.

## Details

Under an instrumental-variables design, identification requires the instrument to be independent of potential outcomes and potential treatments (exogeneity), that the instrument influences the outcome solely through its effect on treatment (exclusion restriction), that the instrument has a nonzero effect on treatment probability (relevance), and that the instrument can only increase/decrease the treatment probability (monotonicity). If these assumptions hold, we can recover the local probabilities of shift for all classes:

$$\delta_{m,L} := P(Y_i(1) = m | i \, is \, complier) - P(Y_i(0) = m | i \, is \, complier), \, m = 1, \dots, M.$$

causalQual\_iv applies, for each class m, the standard two-stage least squares method to the binary variable  $1(Y_i = m)$ . Specifically, the routine first estimates the following first-stage regression model via OLS:

$$D_i = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 Z_i + \nu_i,$$

and constructs the predicted values  $\hat{D}_i$ . It then uses these predicted values in the second-stage regressions:

$$1(Y_i = m) = \alpha_{m0} + \alpha_{m1}\hat{D}_i + \epsilon_{mi}, \quad m = 1, ..., M.$$

The OLS estimate  $\hat{\alpha}_{m1}$  of  $\alpha_{m1}$  is then our estimate of  $\delta_{m,L}$ . Standard errors are computed using conventional procedures and used to construct conventional confidence intervals. All of this is done by calling the ivreg function.

#### Value

An object of class causalQual.

## Author(s)

Riccardo Di Francesco

## References

• Di Francesco, R., and Mellace, G. (2025). Causal Inference for Qualitative Outcomes. arXiv preprint arXiv:2502.11691. doi:10.48550/arXiv.2502.11691.

#### See Also

causalQual\_soo causalQual\_rd causalQual\_did

#### causalQual\_rd

## Examples

```
## Generate synthetic data.
set.seed(1986)
data <- generate_qualitative_data_iv(100, outcome_type = "ordered")
Y <- data$Y
D <- data$D
Z <- data$D
Z <- data$Z
## Estimate local probabilities of shift.
fit <- causalQual_iv(Y, D, Z)
summary(fit)
plot(fit)
```

```
causalQual_rd
```

Causal Inference for Qualitative Outcomes under Regression Discontinuity

#### Description

Fit local polynomial regression models for qualitative outcomes to estimate the probabilities of shift at the cutoff.

## Usage

causalQual\_rd(Y, running\_variable, cutoff)

## Arguments

Y	Qualitative outcome. Must be labeled as $\{1, 2,\}$ .
running_variabl	e
	Running variable determining treatment assignment.
cutoff	Cutoff or threshold. Units with running_variable < cutoff are considered controls, while units with running_variable >= cutoff are considered treated.

#### Details

Under a regression discontinuity design, identification requires that the probability mass functions for class m of potential outcomes are continuous in the running variable (continuity). If this assumption holds, we can recover the probability shift at the cutoff for class m:

$$\delta_{m,C} := P(Y_i(1) = m | Running_i = cutoff) - P(Y_i(0) = m | Running_i = cutoff).$$

causalQual\_rd applies, for each class m, standard local polynomial estimators to the binary variable  $1(Y_i = m)$ . Specifically, the ruotine implements the robust bias-corrected inference procedure of Calonico et al. (2014) (see the rdrobust function).

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## Value

An object of class causalQual.

## Author(s)

Riccardo Di Francesco

## References

• Di Francesco, R., and Mellace, G. (2025). Causal Inference for Qualitative Outcomes. arXiv preprint arXiv:2502.11691. doi:10.48550/arXiv.2502.11691.

## See Also

causalQual\_soo causalQual\_iv causalQual\_did

## Examples

```
## Generate synthetic data.
set.seed(1986)
data <- generate_qualitative_data_rd(100, outcome_type = "ordered")
Y <- data$Y
running_variable <- data$running_variable
cutoff <- data$cutoff
## Estimate probabilities of shift at the cutoff.
fit <- causalQual_rd(Y, running_variable, cutoff)
summary(fit)
plot(fit)
```

causalQual_soo	Causal	Inference	for	Qualitative	Outcomes	under	Selection-on-
	Observa	ables					

## Description

Construct and average doubly robust scores for qualitative outcomes to estimate the probabilities of shift.

#### Usage

```
causalQual_soo(Y, D, X, outcome_type, K = 5)
```

#### Arguments

Υ	Qualitative outcome. Must be labeled as $\{1, 2,\}$ .
D	Binary treatment indicator.
Х	Covariate matrix (no intercept).
outcome_type	String controlling the outcome type. Must be either "multinomial" or "ordered". Affects estimation of conditional class probabilities.
К	Number of folds for nuisance functions estimation.

## Details

Under a selection-on-observables design, identification requires the treatment indicator to be (conditionally) independent of potential outcomes (unconfoundedness), and that each unit has a nonzero probability of being treated (common support). If these assumptions hold, we can recover the probabilities of shift of all classes:

$$\delta_m := P(Y_i(1) = m) - P(Y_i(0) = m), \ m = 1, \dots, M.$$

causalQual\_soo constructs and averages doubly robust scores for qualitative outcomes to estimate  $\delta_m$ . For each class *m*, the doubly robust score for unit *i* is defined as:

$$\hat{\Gamma}_{m,i} = \hat{P}(Y_i = m \mid D_i = 1, X_i) - \hat{P}(Y_i = m \mid D_i = 0, X_i) + D_i \frac{1\{Y_i = m\} - \hat{P}(Y_i = m \mid D_i = 1, X_i)}{\hat{P}(D_i = 1 \mid X_i)} - (1 - D_i) \frac{1\{Y_i = m\} - \hat{P}(Y_i = m \mid D_i = 0, X_i)}{1 - \hat{P}(D_i = 1 \mid X_i)}.$$

The estimator for  $\delta_m$  is then the average of the scores:

$$\hat{\delta}_m = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n \hat{\Gamma}_{m,i},$$

with its variance estimated as:

$$\widehat{\operatorname{Var}}(\widehat{\delta}_m) = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n (\widehat{\Gamma}_{m,i} - \widehat{\delta}_m)^2$$

causalQual\_soo uses these estimates to construct confidence intervals based on conventional normal approximations.

If outcome\_type == "multinomial",  $\hat{P}(Y_i = m \mid D_i = 1, X_i)$  and  $\hat{P}(Y_i = m \mid D_i = 0, X_i)$  are estimated using a multinomial\_ml strategy with regression forests as base learners. Else, if outcome\_type == "ordered",  $\hat{P}(Y_i = m \mid D_i = 1, X_i)$  and  $\hat{P}(Y_i = m \mid D_i = 0, X_i)$  are estimated using the honest version of the ocf estimator.  $\hat{P}(D_i = 1|X_i)$  is always estimated via a honest regression\_forest. K-fold cross-fitting is employed for the estimation of all these functions.

Folds are created by random split. If some class of Y is not observed in one or more folds for one or both treatment groups, a new random partition is performed. This process is repeat until when all classes are observed in all folds and for all treatment groups up to 1000 times, after which the routine raises an error.

An object of class causalQual.

#### Author(s)

Riccardo Di Francesco

## References

Di Francesco, R., and Mellace, G. (2025). Causal Inference for Qualitative Outcomes. arXiv preprint arXiv:2502.11691. doi:10.48550/arXiv.2502.11691.

## See Also

causalQual\_iv causalQual\_rd causalQual\_did

#### Examples

generate\_qualitative\_data\_did

Generate Qualitative Data (Difference-in-Differences)

## Description

Generate a synthetic data set with qualitative outcomes under a difference-in-differences design. The data include two time periods, a binary treatment indicator (applied only in the second period), and a matrix of covariates. Probabilities time shift among the treated and control groups evolve similarly across the two time periods (parallel trends on the probability mass functions).

#### Usage

```
generate_qualitative_data_did(n, assignment, outcome_type)
```

#### Arguments

n	Sample size.
assignment	String controlling treatment assignment. Must be either "randomized" (random assignment) or "observational" (assignment based on covariates).
outcome_type	String controlling the outcome type. Must be either "multinomial" or "ordered".

#### Details

#### **Outcome type:**

Potential outcomes are generated differently according to outcome\_type. If outcome\_type == "multinomial", generate\_qualitative\_data\_did computes linear predictors for each class using the covariates:

$$\eta_{mi}(d,s) = \beta_{m1}^d X_{i1} + \beta_{m2}^d X_{i2} + \beta_{m3}^d X_{i3}, \quad d = 0, 1, \quad s = t - 1, t,$$

and then transforms  $\eta_{mi}(d, s)$  into valid probability distributions using the softmax function:

$$P(Y_{is}(d) = m | X_i) = \frac{\exp(\eta_{mi}(d, s))}{\sum_{m'} \exp(\eta_{m'i}(d, s))}, \quad d = 0, 1, \quad s = t - 1, t.$$

It then generates potential outcomes  $Y_{it-1}(1)$ ,  $Y_{it}(1)$ ,  $Y_{it-1}(0)$ , and  $Y_{it}(0)$  by sampling from {1, 2, 3} using P(Y(d, s) = m | X), d = 0, 1, s = t - 1, t.

If instead outcome\_type == "ordered", generate\_qualitative\_data\_did first generates latent potential outcomes:

$$Y_i^*(d,s) = \tau d + X_{i1} + X_{i2} + X_{i3} + N(0,1), \quad d = 0,1, \quad s = t - 1, t,$$

with  $\tau = 2$ . It then constructs  $Y_i(d, s)$  by discretizing  $Y_i^*(d, s)$  using threshold parameters  $\zeta_1 = 2$ and  $\zeta_2 = 4$ . Then,

$$P(Y_i(d,s) = m | X_i) = P(\zeta_{m-1} < Y_i^*(d,s) \le \zeta_m | X_i) = \Phi(\zeta_m - \sum_j X_{ij} - \tau d) - \Phi(\zeta_{m-1} - \sum_j X_{ij} - \tau d), \quad d = 0, 1,$$

which allows us to analytically compute the probabilities of shift on the treated.

#### **Treatment assignment:**

Treatment is always assigned as  $D_i \sim \text{Bernoulli}(\pi(X_i))$ . If assignment == "randomized", then the propensity score is specified as  $\pi(X_i) = P(D_i = 1|X_i) = 0.5$ . If instead assignment == "observational", then  $\pi(X_i) = (X_{i1} + X_{i3})/2$ .

## Other details:

The function always generates three independent covariates from U(0,1). Observed outcomes  $Y_{is}$  are always constructed using the usual observational rule.

#### Value

A list storing a data frame with the observed data, the true propensity score, and the true probabilities of shift on the treated.

#### Author(s)

Riccardo Di Francesco

## See Also

generate\_qualitative\_data\_soo generate\_qualitative\_data\_iv generate\_qualitative\_data\_rd

## Examples

```
## Generate synthetic data.
set.seed(1986)
```

```
data <- generate_qualitative_data_did(100,</pre>
```

assignment = "observational", outcome\_type = "ordered")

data\$pshifts\_treated

generate\_qualitative\_data\_iv

Generate Qualitative Data (Instrumental Variables)

#### Description

Generate a synthetic data set with qualitative outcomes under an instrumental variables design. The data include a binary treatment indicator and a binary instrument. Potential outcomes and potential treatments are independent of the instrument. Moreover, the instrument does not directly impact potential outcomes, has an impact on treatment probability, and can only increase the probability of treatment.

## Usage

```
generate_qualitative_data_iv(n, outcome_type)
```

## Arguments

n	Sample size.
outcome_type	String controlling the outcome type. Must be either "multinomial" or "ordered". Affects how potential outcomes are generated.

#### Details

## **Outcome type:**

Potential outcomes are generated differently according to outcome\_type. If outcome\_type == "multinomial", generate\_qualitative\_data\_iv computes linear predictors for each class using the covariates:

$$\eta_{mi}(d) = \beta_{m1}^d X_{i1} + \beta_{m2}^d X_{i2} + \beta_{m3}^d X_{i3}, \quad d = 0, 1,$$

and then transforms  $\eta_{mi}(d)$  into valid probability distributions using the softmax function:

$$P(Y_i(d) = m | X_i) = \frac{\exp(\eta_{mi}(d))}{\sum_{m'} \exp(\eta_{m'i}(d))}, \quad d = 0, 1.$$

It then generates potential outcomes  $Y_i(1)$  and  $Y_i(0)$  by sampling from  $\{1, 2, 3\}$  using  $P_i(Y(d) = m|X)$ , d = 0, 1.

If instead outcome\_type == "ordered", generate\_qualitative\_data\_iv first generates latent potential outcomes:

$$Y_i^*(d) = \tau d + X_{i1} + X_{i2} + X_{i3} + N(0,1), \quad d = 0, 1,$$

with  $\tau = 2$ . It then constructs  $Y_i(d)$  by discretizing  $Y_i^*(d)$  using threshold parameters  $\zeta_1 = 2$  and  $\zeta_2 = 4$ . Then,

$$P(Y_i(d) = m | X_i) = P(\zeta_{m-1} < Y_i^*(d) \le \zeta_m | X_i) = \Phi(\zeta_m - \sum_j X_{ij} - \tau d) - \Phi(\zeta_{m-1} - \sum_j X_{ij} - \tau d), \quad d = 0, 1,$$

which allows us to analytically compute the local probabilities of shift.

#### Treatment assignment and instrument:

The instrument is always generated as  $Z_i \sim \text{Bernoulli}(0.5)$ . Treatment is always modeled as  $D_i \sim \text{Bernoulli}(\pi(X_i, Z_i))$ , with  $\pi(X_i, Z_i) = P(D_i = 1|X_i, Z_i) = (X_{i1} + X_{i3} + Z_i)/3$ . Thus,  $Z_i$  can increase the probability of treatment intake but cannot decrease it.

## Other details:

The function always generates three independent covariates from U(0, 1). Observed outcomes  $Y_i$  are always constructed using the usual observational rule.

#### Value

A list storing a data frame with the observed data, the true propensity score, the true instrument propensity score, and the true local probabilities of shift.

## Author(s)

Riccardo Di Francesco

#### See Also

#### Examples

generate\_qualitative\_data\_rd

Generate Qualitative Data (Regression Discontinuity)

#### Description

Generate a synthetic data set with qualitative outcomes under a regression discontinuity design. The data include a binary treatment indicator and a single covariate (the running variable). The conditional probability mass fuctions of potential outcomes are continuous in the running variable.

## Usage

generate\_qualitative\_data\_rd(n, outcome\_type)

#### Arguments

n	Sample size.
outcome_type	String controlling the outcome type. Must be either "multinomial" or "ordered". Affects how potential outcomes are generated.

#### Details

## **Outcome type:**

Potential outcomes are generated differently according to outcome\_type. If outcome\_type == "multinomial", generate\_qualitative\_data\_rd computes linear predictors for each class using the covariates:

$$\eta_{mi}(d) = \beta_{m1}^d X_{i1} + \beta_{m2}^d X_{i2} + \beta_{m3}^d X_{i3}, \quad d = 0, 1,$$

and then transforms  $\eta_{mi}(d)$  into valid probability distributions using the softmax function:

$$P(Y_i(d) = m | X_i) = \frac{\exp(\eta_{mi}(d))}{\sum_{m'} \exp(\eta_{m'i}(d))}.$$

It then generates potential outcomes  $Y_i(1)$  and  $Y_i(0)$  by sampling from  $\{1, 2, 3\}$  using  $P(Y_i(d) = m|X_i)$ , d = 0, 1.

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If instead outcome\_type == "ordered", generate\_qualitative\_data\_rd first generates latent potential outcomes:

$$Y_i^*(d) = \tau d + X_{i1} + X_{i2} + X_{i3} + N(0,1), \quad d = 0, 1,$$

with  $\tau = 2$ . It then constructs  $Y_i(d)$  by discretizing  $Y_i^*(d)$  using threshold parameters  $\zeta_1 = 2$  and  $\zeta_2 = 4$ . Then,

$$P(Y_i(d) = m) = P(\zeta_{m-1} < Y_i^*(d) \le \zeta_m) = \Phi(\zeta_m - \sum_j X_{ij} - \tau d) - \Phi(\zeta_{m-1} - \sum_j X_{ij} - \tau d), \quad d = 0, 1,$$

which allows us to analytically compute the probabilities of shift at the cutoff.

## **Treatment assignment:**

Treatment is always assigned as  $D_i = 1(X_i \ge 0.5)$ .

#### Other details:

The function always generates three independent covariates from U(0, 1). Observed outcomes  $Y_i$  are always constructed using the usual observational rule.

## Value

A list storing a data frame with the observed data, and the true probabilities of shift at the cutoff.

#### Author(s)

Riccardo Di Francesco

#### See Also

generate\_qualitative\_data\_soo generate\_qualitative\_data\_iv generate\_qualitative\_data\_did

## Examples

```
## Generate synthetic data.
set.seed(1986)
```

data <- generate\_qualitative\_data\_rd(100,</pre>

outcome\_type = "ordered")

data\$pshifts\_cutoff

Generate Qualitative Data (Selection-on-Observables)

## Description

Generate a synthetic data set with qualitative outcomes under a selection-on-observables design. The data include a binary treatment indicator and a matrix of covariates. The treatment is either independent or conditionally (on the covariates) independent of potential outcomes, depending on users' choices.

#### Usage

```
generate_qualitative_data_soo(n, assignment, outcome_type)
```

## Arguments

n	Sample size.
assignment	String controlling treatment assignment. Must be either "randomized" (ran- dom assignment) or "observational" (random assignment conditional on the generated covariates).
outcome_type	String controlling the outcome type. Must be either "multinomial" or "ordered". Affects how potential outcomes are generated.

## Details

#### **Outcome type:**

Potential outcomes are generated differently according to outcome\_type. If outcome\_type == "multinomial", generate\_qualitative\_data\_soo computes linear predictors for each class using the covariates:

$$\eta_{mi}(d) = \beta_{m1}^d X_{i1} + \beta_{m2}^d X_{i2} + \beta_{m3}^d X_{i3}, \quad d = 0, 1$$

and then transforms  $\eta_{mi}(d)$  into valid probability distributions using the softmax function:

$$P(Y_i(d) = m | X_i) = \frac{\exp(\eta_{mi}(d))}{\sum_{m'} \exp(\eta_{m'i}(d))}, \quad d = 0, 1$$

It then generates potential outcomes  $Y_i(1)$  and  $Y_i(0)$  by sampling from  $\{1, 2, 3\}$  using  $P(Y_i(d) = m|X_i), d = 0, 1$ .

If instead outcome\_type == "ordered", generate\_qualitative\_data\_soo first generates latent potential outcomes:

$$Y_i^*(d) = \tau d + X_{i1} + X_{i2} + X_{i3} + N(0,1), \quad d = 0, 1,$$

with  $\tau = 2$ . It then constructs  $Y_i(d)$  by discretizing  $Y_i^*(d)$  using threshold parameters  $\zeta_1 = 2$  and  $\zeta_2 = 4$ . Then,

$$P(Y_i(d) = m | X_i) = P(\zeta_{m-1} < Y_i^*(d) \le \zeta_m | X_i) = \Phi(\zeta_m - \sum_j X_{ij} - \tau d) - \Phi(\zeta_{m-1} - \sum_j X_{ij} - \tau d), \quad d = 0, 1, \dots, n \ge 1, \dots, n$$

which allows us to analytically compute the probabilities of shift.

## **Treatment assignment:**

Treatment is always assigned as  $D_i \sim \text{Bernoulli}(\pi(X_i))$ . If assignment == "randomized", then the propensity score is specified as  $\pi(X_i) = P(D_i = 1|X_i) = 0.5$ . If instead assignment == "observational", then  $\pi(X_i) = (X_{i1} + X_{i3})/2$ .

## Other details:

The function always generates three independent covariates from U(0, 1). Observed outcomes  $Y_i$  are always constructed using the usual observational rule.

## Value

A list storing a data frame with the observed data, the true propensity score, and the true probabilities of shift.

## Author(s)

Riccardo Di Francesco

## See Also

generate\_qualitative\_data\_iv generate\_qualitative\_data\_rd generate\_qualitative\_data\_did

## Examples

data\$pshifts

plot.causalQual

## Description

Plots an causalQual object.

#### Usage

## S3 method for class 'causalQual'
plot(x, hline = TRUE, ...)

#### Arguments

х	An causalQual object.
hline	Logical, whether to display an horizontal line at zero in the plot.
	Further arguments passed to or from other methods.

## Value

Plots an causalQual object.

## Author(s)

Riccardo Di Francesco

## See Also

causalQual

## Examples

## Generate synthetic data.
set.seed(1986)

```
Y <- data$Y
D <- data$D
X <- data$X
## Estimate probabilities of shifts.
```

fit <- causalQual\_soo(Y = Y, D = D, X = X, outcome\_type = "ordered")
plot(fit)</pre>

print.causalQual Print Method for causalQual Objects

## Description

Prints an causalQual object.

## Usage

## S3 method for class 'causalQual'
print(x, ...)

## Arguments

х	An causalQual object.
	Further arguments passed to or from other methods.

## Value

Prints an causalQual object.

#### Author(s)

Riccardo Di Francesco

## See Also

causalQual

## Examples

summary.causalQual Summary Method for causalQual Objects

## Description

Summarizes an causalQual object.

## Usage

```
## S3 method for class 'causalQual'
summary(object, ...)
```

## Arguments

object	An causalQual object.
	Further arguments passed to or from other methods.

## Value

Summarizes an causalQual object.

## Author(s)

Riccardo Di Francesco

## See Also

causalQual

## Examples

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