

## Book Reviews

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**David Matsumoto and Fons J.R. Van de Vijver (eds).** *Cross-Cultural Research Methods in Psychology*. 2011 New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-75842-0, \$36.99<sup>1</sup>.

In their book, *Cross-Cultural Research Methods in Psychology*, Matsumoto and Van de Vijver (eds) and their colleagues present a practical guide on how to employ and improve methods commonly used in cross-cultural psychology. As a survey researcher with a background in sociology, who works with cross-cultural survey methods, I found a great deal of useful information in this book that I can apply to my field as well.

The authors of the various chapters devote considerable attention to the complications and difficulties of cross-cultural psychological research. They also give details about possible solutions along with examples of methodology currently employed in many cross-cultural studies. The book should prove useful both to researchers who would like to embark on cross-cultural research for the first time and those who are already involved in this type of work. The book is divided into two parts: Part I looks at conceptual and methodological issues and Part II examines data analysis themes.

Chapter 2 focuses on the issues of bias and equivalence in psychological testing and discusses ways to handle bias in order to ensure equivalence. Van de Vijver and Leung provide a good discussion of a priori procedures that can be applied to minimize bias; however, there are a few aspects of the chapter which could have benefited from a bit more detail and discussion. For example, in their discussion of minimizing bias they include the idea of cultural decentering or joint development of materials across cultures. This is an idea that is not revisited a great deal in this book as a whole but that I think should have been mentioned and discussed a bit more as an alternative. Obviously there are many constraints to doing this, not the least of which is the fact that much cross-cultural research is done using data that has already been collected for different purposes. It would be nice to have seen more development of this idea and how it might best be accomplished at different points throughout the book.

<sup>1</sup> **Disclaimer:** This review is released to inform interested parties of opinions and to encourage discussion. The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau.

This chapter also contains a discussion of translation methods. It would be nice to see a little more extensive discussion of a broader range of translation methods, as translation method and quality are really key factors in doing cross-cultural research that crosses linguistic boundaries. The survey research literature among others has an increasing depth of contributions on this topic (for example, Harkness et al. 2004; Potaka and Cochrane 2004; U.S. Census Bureau 2004). In sum this chapter contains several useful typologies that will assist the researcher in organizing and conceptualizing issues of bias and equivalence in cross-cultural research.

Chapter 3 focuses on recent efforts by Hambleton and Zenisky to produce a validated review form to standardize the checking of translated and adapted items on educational and psychological tests. While translation differential item functioning (DIF) studies are heavily cited in the chapter, the authors do not explain what they are in detail, although they do provide references for further reading. A minimal explanation included here would have been helpful. Nonetheless, on the whole, the review form is an important contribution that will help other researchers in a very practical way.

The chapter focuses strictly on psychological tests but it would be nice if in the review of the literature there was some reference to translation of more general survey questions as well. There are similar check lists or processes in the survey methodology literature for use in the evaluation of survey translations. These may be a helpful reference for researchers who are translating psychological tests and other types of instruments (see, for example Harkness 2003; Willis et al. 2010). This chapter contains another point where the idea of parallel development of different language survey instruments might come into play and could have been mentioned.

Boehnke et al. provide a textbook-type summary of different types of sampling in Chapter 5. It is very clear and easy to understand and would be of great use to students and researchers embarking on cross-cultural research for the first time. The chapter also incorporates an empirical analysis of the types of sampling typically used in cross-cultural research in a leading journal. The chapter concludes with recommendations regarding diversifying the types of sampling typically employed in cross-cultural research.

Chapter 6 focuses on survey response styles across cultures. Johnson et al. examine several common response styles along with differences both within one country and across countries. They also examine strategies for dealing with cultural variability in response styles, such as questionnaire design strategies, data collection strategies, and statistical adjustment strategies. One thing missing is much discussion of translation and whether the within- and cross-national studies they discuss used translated instruments and the implications therein. This is an issue of key importance since inaccurate or different translations can have a strong impact on measurement of response styles.

Part II looks at diverse issues related to data analysis and interpretation. Fischer and Fontaine focus on structural equivalence between internal structures of measurement instruments across cultural groups in Chapter 7. The chapter gives a good overview of the concepts as well as specific instructions related to software use. It also provides good references regarding where to get more information on many topics.

In Chapter 8, Sireci goes into detail about measurement of different types of bias, and the chapter contains a lengthy discussion of DIF and how it can be calculated using different methods. Chapter 9 focuses on effect sizes in cross-cultural research.

Matsumoto et al. talk about the reliance of many cross-cultural researchers on measures of statistical significance and the fact that this is often inappropriate. The chapter gives hands-on instruction on how to calculate and report magnitude of difference through effect size.

In Chapter 10, Fontaine and Fischer examine the issue of internal structure at both the individual and cultural levels and they lay out sample research designs to investigate this topic. The chapter goes through internal structure isomorphism and equivalence and lack thereof and shows a detailed step-by-step approach with regard to how to examine each type of situation. It goes through a number of data-analytic methods and shows concrete examples of the methods from the research literature.

Chapter 11 focuses on the less common multilevel modeling technique of Multilevel Random Coefficient Models (MRCM). Nezlek provides a textbook-like explanation and offers solid step-by-step instruction along with considerations with regard to whether the method fits specific types of research questions. The chapter is replete with references for those who wish to look up more detailed information. Nezlek also provides recommendations as to which software to use for researchers with different ability levels, and advice on how to present results to readers who may not be very familiar with the method.

The final chapter in the book talks about cross-cultural meta-analysis, which can be used to compare findings from empirical studies that were conducted independently. Van Hemert goes into detail about how this method can be applied to cross-cultural studies and gives concrete examples of how this has been done.

On the whole this book serves as a detailed introduction to the broad issues surrounding cross-cultural research in psychology. It would serve well as a textbook for teaching graduate students or for researchers looking to expand their cross-cultural work. Even though accessible, it is detailed enough that more experienced researchers will be interested in reading individual chapters to learn about a particular research method or issue. The book provides many vivid examples and references where the reader can find more information about various topics. In addition to being primarily geared towards psychologists, the book contains some useful information for researchers from other fields, such as cross-cultural survey methodology and other social sciences.

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**Jelke Bethlehem, Fannie Cobben and Barry Schouten.** *Handbook of Nonresponse in Household Surveys*. New York: Wiley. 2011. ISBN 978-0-470-54279-8, 474 pps, \$149.95.

Nonresponse bias has been a topic of great interest to survey methodologists and statisticians for quite some time. Declining response rates in much of the industrialized world have spurred this interest. Although it may not always seem so, it does appear that the field has accomplished much in this area. In the preface to their 1998 book on nonresponse, Groves and Couper say that “[t]his book was written out of frustration. Its genesis came in 1986–1988 when a review of the then extant literature of survey nonresponse yielded few answers to the question, ‘How important is nonresponse to surveys?’” (p. ix). It has been more than ten years since their important book attempted to systematically explore the phenomenon of nonresponse, its consequences, and design options aimed at limiting its impact. Reading the new book *Handbook of Nonresponse in Household Surveys* can serve as a useful summary of just how far we have come in the interim time period. In addition, the book is written in such a way as to be useful for practitioners, thereby helping to bridge the gap between these theoretical developments and practice.

The book is organized into 15 chapters on topics including methods for reducing nonresponse, indicators for the risk of nonresponse bias, methods for developing nonresponse weighting adjustments, and adaptive survey design aimed at reducing nonresponse. The topics are diverse, and are covered in varying levels of detail.

A key strength of the book is its emphasis on practical examples. In this sense, it is a true “handbook.” Each of the chapters provides numerous, brief examples relevant for the topic. For example, Chapter 3 discusses methods for “Reducing Nonresponse,” including

methods for improving contact rates. The authors describe in a few paragraphs an example of an attempt to reduce noncontact rates on a real survey – the 2004 Integrated Survey on Household Living Conditions. The survey changed its calling protocol midway through the field period. The original protocol required a minimum of three contact attempts on each household. The result of this protocol was that many cases had three attempts and a few had a larger number. The new protocol was to allow a maximum of six contact attempts. The example includes an evaluation of the contact rates under the two protocols. In Chapter 8, “Weighting Adjustment Techniques,” each of the weighting adjustment strategies described in the chapter is applied to the same (fictitious) data. A number of the examples and problems in the book use a real dataset (which has been anonymized) from a survey conducted by Statistics Netherlands. The dataset includes both respondents and nonrespondents and has sampling frame data and paradata for all records, and it is available on the book’s companion website. This allows the reader to replicate the results presented in the book.

The practical approach is also emphasized in the structure of the chapters, which typically start with theoretical background and end with an application. Chapter 9, “Selection of Auxiliary Variables,” and Chapter 12, “Analysis and Adjustment Accounting for the Cause of Nonresponse,” include the most detailed examples I have seen showing the process of systematically developing nonresponse weighting adjustments. Chapter 7, “Nonresponse and Representativity,” provides very detailed examples on implementing R-Indicators (Schouten et al. 2009).

Finally, at the end of each chapter, there are a set of exercises. Some of these exercises are multiple choice questions that give readers the chance to check whether they have understood the chapter. Others are quite practical problems. For example, the problems for Chapter 9, “Selection of Auxiliary Variables,” make use of the dataset available on the book’s companion website. The problems ask the readers to build logistic regression models predicting the response indicator on the file at different time points in the field period, compute the selection criterion  $q^2$  (Särndal and Lundström 2008; described in the book) for all the available auxiliary variables, and build regression models predicting one of the survey outcome variables.

Although the book is designed to be practical, its summaries of the field are aptly described as cutting edge. The book includes discussions of recently developed approaches to nonresponse weighting, especially methods for selecting auxiliary variables. There is a chapter on R-Indicators, a recent development. Moreover, there are descriptions of “adaptive designs” aimed at tailoring the survey design to the characteristics of the sampled unit.

The practical utility of the book could have been increased with the inclusion of example programs for completing each of the applications in the book. Some of the problems include instructions on how to use the SPSS GUI to do parts of the problem. For practitioners, including programs on the website would be extremely helpful. These programs could allow practitioners to see if they can replicate the applications and then adapt the code to new problems. Although this might entail choosing one of the available statistical packages, it still seems that this would be valuable.

There may also be some redundancy between the chapters. For instance, there are separate chapters on “nonresponse weighting adjustments” and “analysis and adjustment.”

The latter is more focused on modeling strategies, but the two chapters are strongly linked. There are also some ordering problems, which may be impossible to avoid given the expanse of the topic. For instance, Chapters 8, 9, 11, and 12 include discussion of methods for nonresponse weighting adjustments while Chapter 14 discusses imputation. In Chapter 15, “Miscellaneous Topics,” there is a discussion of how imputation and weighting can be conceptually linked. This discussion may have been a useful preface to the chapters discussing weighting and imputation.

On the whole, practitioners and students will find this to be an extremely useful book. Students will value the concise summaries of key topics. The bibliographies included with each chapter should be helpful guides to further reading. Practitioners will appreciate the care taken in developing the applications. These will provide useful “walkthroughs” for those situations where reading the theory leaves one asking “what do I do now?” In short, *Handbook of Nonresponse in Household Surveys* will be a useful reference for many current and aspiring survey methodologists and statisticians.

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