

Book Reviews

Books for review are to be sent to the Book Review Editor Jaki Stanley, USDA/NASS, Research Division, Room 305, 3251 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22030, U.S.A.

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Stouthamer-Loeber, Magda and van Kammen, Welmoet Bok, Data Collection and Management: A Practical Guide. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, U.S.A. 1995. ISBN 0-8039-5657-6, viii + 135pp. USD 18.95 plus USD 2 for shipping.

This book is one of the Sage Applied Social Research Method Series. Its purpose is to describe potential research, management, and logistical problems in a research project and offer useful suggestions for those new to managing a data collection project. This book, along with others in the series, is aimed towards providing accessible information about social science research procedures. The Sage series of relatively low-cost books is an important resource for social researchers. There are strengths and weaknesses to the book that make it more suited for some researchers than others.

From my perspective, I think the book is best suited for researchers who are conducting a small, local research project, who are not part of a larger ongoing professional research organization, but who are part of a larger institution (such as a research university). The book might be best utilized by a new researcher who is assigned responsibilities for data collection in a new research organization and who has little prior project management experience. The book would also be very helpful for someone who is writing a research proposal for the first time. For example, the book would help graduate students prepare research proposals and anticipate problems that might arise during data collection. The reader can use the chapters as a checklist for the cost and management components of a research proposal. The book would not help the researcher formulate a research problem or determine the best research design. I see the book as a supplement but not the basis for project design. The book is not as useful for those who are or have been employed in a large data collection organization. Ongoing organizations have procedures to manage all steps described in the book, and the procedures of most organizations are more detailed than the book describes.

The subtitle “A Practical Guide” accurately describes the book. I consider it a strength

of the book that it is very practical and useful. The chapter headings planning, budgeting, hiring, training, managing people, and data analysis reflect important steps in any project, and the authors cover them effectively for the intended audience. The book does not present much of the intellectual history of survey procedures. Many citations are to other Sage publications that also have an applied focus. The reliance on citations from other Sage publications has both good and bad features: good because the books are accessible and generally easy to read; bad because more sophisticated information is sometimes needed to accomplish difficult survey procedures.

Most introductory research methods textbooks cover many of the same issues as this book, but the textbooks do not always offer an applied perspective or present materials based on experiences in a project. For example, the book contains advice on office space requirements and layout which is probably forgotten by some who plan research. It is the addition of details not covered in methods textbooks that makes this book valuable to the novice researcher.

The authors draw their experiences from a panel study they managed in the Pittsburgh Youth Study, so the focus is on primary data collection and the organization of a project from beginning to end. A substantial portion of the book describes issues related to retention in panel studies. Their advice is appropriate and accurate, but based on one study. As a result, the reader learns about many problems and solutions related to conducting a panel study of youth and similar panel studies, but the book does not provide information based on experience in a broad range of data collection efforts.

The authors have a thorough understanding of and describe well the procedures needed to conduct a solid research project. They recognize and continually emphasize the importance of thorough planning. In contrast to many books on planning research, they offer substantial guidance regarding budgeting before and during a project. They describe carefully and fully the responsibilities of the data collection and management staff. They might, however, have devoted some space to the issues of other support staff, since many are critical for a large project. For example, most projects of the scope they managed need clerical, budget, and computer support staff. They recognize the importance of hiring good people and provide good suggestions on how to do it. Their chapters on hiring and training data collection staff are quite detailed and are appropriate for their organization and the project they managed.

The book has some weak points generally related to the authors' limiting their advice to their experience of managing one project. For example, the authors could suggest that novice researchers visit other organizations doing similar work to observe training, staffing, scheduling, and other procedures. Some recommendations they make are not always possible; e.g., reviewing administrative records that will be used in sample selection before the project begins. There may be some mistakes in their recommendations, too. For example, they recommend Saturday as a good day for interviewing. From my experience and discussions with other organizations, Saturday is one of the least productive days for interviewing.

I also found some unevenness in the presentation of issues. For example, the chapters on hiring and training field staff were detailed and accurate. The chapter on training describes well how to prepare for training, but there is not enough information on how to train interviewers or on what to train them. To be fair, it is beyond the scope of the book to describe

training procedures in more depth, but new researchers could underestimate the topics and materials required for training new interviewers if they were to read this book alone.

The discussion of budget issues needs more detail because a novice researcher would need more advice on budgeting specifics. Some parts of the book contain basically the same information that is available in research methods texts, and in these instances, the information tended to be less practical than most of the information in the book.

I was dismayed that the authors said that contracting for survey research from survey research organizations was a potential problem because of the lack of quality control. Most survey organizations have quality control procedures that are more demanding than the procedures described in the book. It also concerned me that quality control and research ethics are covered in four pages at the end of the book. From the location in the book, I had a sense that the authors felt an obligation to cover them but did not think they were as important as other issues. Even practical books need to explore these issues more fully.

In summary, this is a good book for novice researchers who are writing proposals or conducting their first projects. It contains many details not covered in textbooks, and it covers many of them well. It is easy to read and apply the information in the book. Nevertheless, experienced researchers or those employed in large survey organizations will not benefit much from reading this book.

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Forthofer, R.N., and Lee, E.S., *Introduction to Biostatistics: A Guide to Design, Analysis, and Discovery.* Academic Press, San Diego, CA, U.S.A., 1995. ISBN 0-12-262270-7, xvi + 567pp. USD 59.95.

Introduction to Biostatistics is written for beginner or advanced level professionals, including statisticians, in the field of biological and life sciences with applications in medicine, public health, and epidemiology. This book is unique by combining an introduction to biostatistical methods with widely used basic statistical methods. As is evident from the title, this book can be used as a reference by researchers or as an introductory text by graduate or senior undergraduate students. Throughout this book, each topic is introduced with examples and the underlying concept or theory before introducing a mathematical formula. The emphasis is more on application of a mathematical formula rather than its derivation.

The field of biostatistics has grown amazingly in the last two decades. However, introductory textbooks written so far are limited in emphasizing the relevance of biostatistics to people's lives and well being. The authors of this textbook have done a remarkable job of linking them. They also emphasize the importance of research design with analyses. Throughout this book, examples and exercises which use real data from recent sample surveys or designed experiments are provided.

This book has 15 chapters and four appendices. The contents of each chapter are well organized; starting with an introduction or purpose for the chapter and ending with a

summary and concluding remarks along with a link to the next chapter. Several exercises using recent real data are listed at the end of each chapter. References to published studies, text books, methods, and recent data sources are also listed in each chapter. Programming statements for data analyses and for quick calculations are provided using MINITAB in the chapter; SAS, and STATA statements are included in Appendix A. These programming statements will give a head start to new or experienced data analysts. Similar to other texts, standard statistical tables are included in Appendix B. Appendix C provides sources for selected recent government biostatistical data such as population census data, vital statistics, sample surveys, and life tables. It also includes references to the most recent health survey, the third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES III, 1988–94). Forthofer has extensive experience with design and analysis of complex surveys such as NHANES and has included several examples from NHANES in this book. Appendix D has solutions to selected exercises from each chapter.

In Chapter 1 (Introduction) the authors provide definitions of “biostatistics,” “statistical methods,” “data,” and concepts of replication and reproducibility. Chapter 2 (Data and Numbers) explores various types of data and assignment of numerical values to variables. Reliability and validity of measures are also discussed. Here, the authors carefully mention common problems with collected data and caution that data should never be used blindly. The key to a good study is to understand the design, sources of data, data collection process, and use of appropriate analytic methods for inference.

Chapter 3 (Sampling) introduces two basic methods of data collection: survey sampling and designed experiments. The section on survey sampling includes a description of simple random sample and complex sample designs, selection bias, nonresponse bias, and compensation methods for missing data. However, there is no reference to other sampling textbooks covering topics not included in this chapter, such as systematic and cluster sample designs. Complex sample designs are common in population based surveys and only few sampling books cover this topic. Designed experiments are presented in Chapter 8.

Chapter 4 (Descriptive Tools) describes methods that can be used to summarize data, both numerically and graphically. The text does an excellent job of describing graphical methods and pointing out differences in methods for new users, e.g., difference between bar charts, histograms and stem-and-leaf graphs. As mentioned earlier, the chapter includes relevant examples and computer programming statements for numerical and graphical analyses. After graphical methods, numerical methods including measures of central tendency, dispersion, various ways to calculate rates, and correlation coefficients are covered.

In Chapter 5 (Probability and Life Tables), the authors introduce the concept of probability, rules of calculating probabilities, and relation to various types of random variables. They also include definitions and examples of epidemiologic measures such as sensitivity, specificity, prevalence, incidence, and predictive values in terms of probability, Bayes’ theorem, and usage of probability in life tables. After presenting the concept of probability in Chapter 6 (Probability Distributions), the three most frequently used probability distributions (Normal, Binomial, and Poisson) and their properties are described.

Chapter 7 (Interval Estimation) is dedicated to hypothesis testing and interval

estimation. Sample estimates vary considerably from sample to sample and are usually different from the population values. In this chapter, the authors present methods to test various hypotheses, tests to compare sample estimates with population values, and their interpretation. They also include methods for interval estimation to compute upper and lower limits that are likely to contain true population value and future values with some variation. Tolerance intervals though usually not included in introductory biostatistics books are included in this chapter.

In Chapter 8 (Designed Experiments), the focus changes from survey sampling to designed experiments. In biostatistics, designed experiments are used in clinical trial studies to evaluate efficacy and safety of drugs or medical procedures, to assess effect and exposure to a carcinogen, or to measure and compare effectiveness of various health delivery systems. Requirements for good experimental designs, limitations of experiments, and ethical issues related to experiments are all discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 9 (Test of Hypotheses) presents methods used for hypothesis testing, which is a way of using sample estimates and presenting evidence that help in drawing inference. The authors very nicely define and describe null and alternative hypotheses, type I and type II errors, level of significance, confidence intervals, and power of the test. In the next few chapters they introduce different tests of hypotheses and appropriate test statistics to test various hypotheses.

Chapter 10 describes nonparametric tests for comparing probability distributions of continuous variables. In nonparametric methods, parameters are assumed to be distribution-free, i.e., no assumptions are made about probability distributions of the parameters of interest.

In Chapter 11 (Analysis of Categorical Data), categorical data analyses of grouped data are introduced where data are generally presented in the form of contingency tables. Several books have been published just on categorical data analysis. Topics such as goodness-of-fit tests, odds ratios, test statistics related to proportions, test of association, confidence intervals for odds ratios and proportions, and tests of linear trends in categories of ordinal variables are introduced in this chapter with appropriate examples from recent epidemiologic/health studies.

In Chapter 12, the authors have done an excellent job of summarizing methods of analysis of survival data. In this chapter, methods to analyze data collected from longitudinal studies are covered, where subjects or cases are followed over a long time until some prespecified event, such as end of study or death or disease, occurs.

Chapter 13 describes tests of hypotheses based on the normal distribution. Similar to other statistical textbooks, the most frequently used methods of hypothesis testing are presented for parameters from normally distributed data with or without a known variance.

In Chapter 14 (Analysis of Variance) basic models of analysis of variance to compare two or more means, and to evaluate difference between two means or proportions, and interactions are discussed. Linear and logistic regression analyses are included in Chapter 15. Linear and logistic regression models, which examine the relationship between a response variable and several continuous or categorical variables, are included in this chapter. Recent references are included for further details and the authors have done an excellent job of describing regression diagnostics to select the best fitted model. They also nicely show the mechanics of computing odds ratios using logistic regression.

As an introductory textbook, the authors have introduced topics concisely and provided

references for further details. Occasionally after presenting basic information, they jump to more complex topics. For example, in Chapter 3, after introducing simple random sampling, they jump to complex multistage sampling. For completeness, the authors could have included a summary of other sample designs, such as systematic, stratified random and cluster sampling before introducing the complex sample design or added references to standard sampling textbooks written by authors such as Cochran (1977) and Kish (1965).

In conclusion this is an excellent reference introductory textbook for statisticians, biostatisticians, epidemiologists, medical or other public health professionals. This is a unique book that combines basic statistical methods and advanced level methods from biostatistics. Examples and exercises are very wisely selected from recent health surveys or other health studies. Computer programs for analyses using three widely used software packages give a head start to new and experienced analysts.

References

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Mangione, T.W., *Mail Surveys: Improving the Quality*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, U.S.A., 1995. ISBN 0-8039-4662-7, xii + 129pp., USD 39.95 (h), USD 17.95 (p).

In a survey research world of ever-shrinking budgets, a book about conducting surveys by mail would be a welcome addition to the library of many a survey research practitioner. Although mail surveys, during the boom of the 1970s and 1980s, were discarded as being unreliable and prone to low response rates, they have enjoyed something of a comeback in the last few years as techniques have improved and as the need for low-cost survey research has burgeoned. In fact, a mail survey, done well, can produce high-quality results at considerably less expense than the alternatives.

Mangione forthrightly points out that a book solely about mail surveys – and, especially, how to conduct a high-quality mail survey – is apparently necessary for the simple fact that there are so many examples of shoddy and clearly substandard work based on mail surveys. The author notes that many “quick-and-dirty” surveys are actually more expensive in terms of their cost effectiveness; that is, if the data collected result in misleading or erroneous conclusions, the cost to the researcher (and the client) can be quite high indeed. Mangione employs two very good examples to help make the point: the infamous Literary Digest poll of 1936 (a mail survey primarily of addresses gained from automobile registrations and which had an abysmally low response rate of 23%), which predicted a landslide victory for Alf Landon over Franklin Roosevelt; and, the equally-infamous Shere

Hite sexual behavior study (1976) with its 3% response rate. So, to help avoid the perils and pitfalls of mail-based survey research, this short book is intended to be a handbook or cookbook for conducting mail surveys and is written in a pedagogic and easy to read style.

The first chapter includes a short section on problems to avoid, followed by the advantages of mail surveys, and an extremely brief overview of the mail survey process. The outline of the rest of the book is based on this overview. Mangione's recipe for a successful mail survey begins with questionnaire design (Chapter 2: The Basics of Question Design and Chapter 3: Question Design: The Advanced Course), and follows with a dash of sampling (Chapter 4). Chapter 5 covers "Pitfalls in Sampling"; Chapter 6 presents the "Basics of Avoiding Nonresponse Errors," while Chapter 7 ladles in "Additional Ways to Reduce Nonresponse Errors." Chapter 8 is entitled, "The Benefits of Aesthetics and Good Management," Chapter 9 is "Preparing the Data for Analysis," and, finally, Chapter 10 closes the book with "A Summary from a Total Survey Design Perspective." One must give credit to the author for attempting to cover all the basics in one location; however, my fear is that, very often, those using this book will be relatively unpracticed in survey research, i.e., some organization or association official who wants to conduct a survey of his/her membership. Even two chapters about question and questionnaire design are not enough to eliminate most problems or overcome a certain amount of naïveté. This is not to say that there is not useful information in these two chapters; on the contrary, Mangione provides a well-ordered primer on question design and does, in fact, cover all the basics. Given, however, that there are literally libraries full of tomes on questionnaire design and construction, it would be nigh impossible to convey all the nuances.

I realize, of course, that Mangione does not consider this his purpose. My only worry is that the book makes it all seem too easy and does not provide enough references to other works on these sub-topics. There are no references to Bradburn, Cannell, Groves, or Sudman. For example, the "advanced course" in question design is a mere ten pages and includes separate sub-sections – one paragraph each – on question order and response order effects. I was happy to see, though, that the author exhorts mail survey questionnaire designers to avoid open-ended questions, to pay attention to "flow," and to do multiple pretests. The sampling chapters are well-written and easy-to-read, even from the layman's point of view, and include step-by-step instructions for the design and conduct of simple random and systematic random samples, stratified random sampling, and even multistage sampling. These are followed, in Chapter 5, by some examples of problems related to sample design, including out-of-date lists, coverage biases, weighting, and sampling households vs. persons.

The meat of the book is in the "avoiding nonresponse," Chapters 6 and 7. Both chapters include well-documented techniques for the survey researcher or project director to use in enhancing response rates, all as a means of reducing nonresponse error. These chapters include many examples and references for writing effective respondent letters, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, the use of reminder letters, postcards, and other follow-ups, subsampling for follow-ups, and length of the questionnaire. Chapter 7 includes a treatment of incentives, both monetary and nonmonetary, as well as several other techniques, such as postage, personalization, color of the questionnaire, and deadlines. Mangione makes excellent use of prior research while discussing the merits of the various

techniques and presents concise conclusions about each. These two chapters alone may well merit the price of admission. Chapter 8, “The Benefits of Aesthetics and Good Management,” seems an odd combination, but aesthetic choices are management decisions, to some degree. It is nonetheless gratifying to see the section on management – this topic is altogether too often missing in survey research texts. While this piece does justice to the issue of quality control, including a lengthy example of the operation-alization of a complicated mailout, it does not touch on the issue of budget or financial monitoring at all. That would seem a glaring omission. On the subject of aesthetics, the author does consider the “look and feel” of a questionnaire/mailling from all angles and includes two full-page examples. Solid, but very basic, information about editing, coding, data entry, and cleaning is provided in Chapter 9, “Preparing the Data for Analysis.” Chapter 10, “A Summary from the Total Survey Design Perspective”, reviews each of the steps in designing and conducting a mail survey and, in that review, calls up again the issues about which the project director needs to make decisions. Included at the end of this chapter are several sample timelines (although Figure 10.3, purportedly “Time Line for Sampling” is a misprinted repeat of Figure 10.4, “Time Line for Materials Development”).

It is obvious that Mangione has voluminous experience with mail surveys and I wish that there had been more examples from his work experience – the few that are presented are enriching and elucidating. In sum, this book certainly achieves its stated goal: a practical guide to the conduct of mail surveys; as such, many beginning, and even practiced, survey researchers can benefit from the concisely presented ideas herein. Using the step-by-step approach outlined within, a novice could easily pick up the book today and embark on a mail survey tomorrow. I’m not sure that’s fully a good thing, though.

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Fink, Arlene. Series editor, *The Survey Kit*. (Thousand Oaks: Sage publications, 1995). 1052 pp., set USD 132.55 paper. ISBN 0-8039-7388-8 (set). Please note these nine volumes are available separately or as a collection. ISBN numbers for individual books are listed in the nine separate volume sections of this review.

The Survey Kit is a collection of nine volumes that deals with key areas in research methodology. The overall objectives of the various authors of these instructional books include the skillful preparation, management and reporting of survey results by students and survey research professionals alike. The complete set focuses on the collection of information from telephone, face to face, and mail surveys. Additionally, this series addresses vital issues such as how to ask survey questions, proper sampling strategies, good research design, questionnaire reliability/validity issues, data analysis of survey results, budgeting for your survey, and various methods of reporting information/results from surveys.

In this review I focus on each volume separately and conclude with some remarks on the

ecumenical appeal of the complete presentation therein. In addition, the effective user base of such materials will be addressed and suggestions for the use of these volumes by students and professionals alike will be proposed.

Volume 1: *The Survey Handbook* by Arlene Fink – 1995, 144 pp., ISBN 0-8039-5934-6, USD 16.95 (paper). The first volume of *The Survey Kit* contains basic information and material on specific types of surveys, describes typical survey activities, and confronts related issues of cost estimation, organization and pilot testing. The author begins the presentation on these subjects by defining what a survey is and discusses four specific types of instruments: self-administered, interviews, structured record reviews, and structured observations.

This volume also discusses survey sampling issues (eligibility, probability/non-probability samples, sample size, response rates, and response error), improving reliability/validity and does an exceptional job explaining the task of balancing resources and conducting competent research. Throughout the text Fink offers checklists and other organizational devices that should prove invaluable to the reader.

In fact, each of the texts in this series offers considerably more than just topics for consideration. Each volume suggests additional relevant readings and contains exercises designed to enhance the retention of the topics. In particular, the exercises reinforce the material presented by compelling one to intellectually engage the material. The suggested readings are well annotated and add a depth of knowledge to the topics under discussion. In conclusion, the first volume is a fine introduction for the complete set, offers the reader a structure that is followed by the other volumes and creates the belief that a thorough presentation of topics will be maintained throughout the remaining eight volumes.

Volume 2: *How to Ask Questions* by Arlene Fink – 1995, 120 pp., ISBN 0-8039-5745-9, USD 14.95 (paper). This book offers readers guidance in their choice of what constitutes a reasonable number of questions and how one may appropriately word those questions. These are important topics in helping the researcher regulate the respondent's answer choices. This book reminds us that well phrased questions facilitate reliable and valid answers. Additional topics covered in this volume include the contexts that bound questions (political, cultural, economic, and psychological) and how one should ask questions about knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Negative phrases and biased questions are also discussed. Finally, Fink offers an overview of nominal, ordinal, and numerical levels of measurement as they relate to questioning. Taken together this is an excellent review of how one should ask questions and what factors to consider if you want good useful answers.

Volume 3: *How to Conduct Self-Administered and Mail Surveys* by Linda B. Bourque and Eve P. Fielder – 1995, 240 pp., ISBN 0-8039-7168-0, USD 20.95 (paper). This text helps answer the question "How can we stimulate respondent interest in our self-administered and mail questionnaires?" The authors of this volume offer advice on developing interesting and engaging questions that help maintain the respondent's attention. The steps involved in ensuring respondent interest include pretesting, pilot-testing, and revising questionnaires until they command the attention of the respondent and offer improved data quality.

Bourque and Fielder also offer advice on advance letters, follow-up procedures for non-respondents, and the proper timing of follow-ups. In addition to these vital topics, the authors also cover estimation of costs and staff requirements. Lastly, the processing,

coding, and administration of responses are discussed as part of the overall administration of the instrument and data collection process.

Volume 4: *How to Conduct Interviews By Telephone and in Person* by James H. Frey and Sabine Mertens Oishi – 1995, 184 pp., ISBN 0-8039-5719-X, USD 17.95 (paper). This particularly well done volume offers the reader a comprehensive guide on how to conduct both telephone and in-person interviews. Instrument instructions, question writing, effective types of questions for the phone and instructions on following interview scripts are a few of the many topics covered. Administrative tasks like job descriptions for interviewers, training manuals, and advice on how to conduct the training sessions are expertly covered in this excellent addition to the series.

Volume 5: *How to Design Surveys* by Arlene Fink – 1995, 88 pp., ISBN 0-8039-7387-X, USD 11.95 (paper). Many factors must be addressed in creating a well designed survey. The author says this task first involves considering the purpose the survey serves: should it describe, compare, or explain?

By using a series of lists, and other cross-checking devices, Fink provides guidelines for the successful completion of design goals. Nevertheless, it is not just design goals that are the focus of this text. Fink offers advice on cohort, cross-sectional, and case control varieties of surveys as well. The author also discusses the risk factors to consider in helping to maintain internal and external validity during the design process.

Volume 6: *How to Sample in Surveys* by Arlene Fink – 1995, 88 pp., ISBN 0-8039-5754-8, USD 11.95 (paper). Survey professionals recognize that sampling is one of the most important topics one should consider in survey design. Basic sampling techniques like simple random samples, systematic, cluster, quota, and various convenience varieties are included in this text.

Aside from expertly covering these areas, this volume also includes an in-depth discussion on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Lastly, important topics like estimating standard errors, sample size, error in sampling and calculating response rates are discussed in detail. In short, this volume covers a wide range of topics, each having a direct application to the art of sampling in survey work.

Volume 7: *How to Measure Survey Reliability and Validity* by Mark S. Litwin – 1995, 88 pp., ISBN 0-8039-5704-1, USD 11.95 (paper). Two vital topics, reliability and validity, are the focus of this book in the series. The author tries to educate the reader on the importance of focusing on the survey instrument as a positive source of both reliability and validity. In addition to details on scaling, scoring, and cross-cultural analysis, we find in-depth discussions on divergent types of reliability and validity. For example, under the general discussion of reliability, Litwin addresses issues related to testing-retesting, alternative-form reliability, internal consistency and inter/intra observer reliability. The author also discusses three types of validity (content, criterion, and construct) and how to measure these.

Volume 8: *How to Analyze Survey Data* by Arlene Fink – 1995, 112 pp., ISBN 0-8039-7386-1, USD 11.95 (paper). Many times survey professionals, or clients, find themselves asking the question – “Now that I have my data what do I do with them?” In this book Fink offers a series of exercises demonstrating a systematic method of data analysis. There are several interesting insights into what statistics can do for surveys, measurement scale uses, and how to choose an analytical methodology to fit your needs. While not a statistics

text, this book does offer some basics on regression, hypothesis testing, and issues closely related to the production of good statistical analysis. There is also a nice deliberation on the effects and consequences of screening/transforming data.

Volume 9: *How to Report on Surveys* by Arlene-Fink 1995. 112 pp., ISBN 0-8039-7385-3, USD 11.95 (paper). This volume was one of the most enjoyable and enlightening to read for this reviewer. It is based on the idea that once the survey work is done you must communicate the information to the public, your clients, and other professionals. This volume gives detailed instructions on how to prepare, interpret, and explain charts, tables, slides, and transparencies. It does so by defining what constitutes a professional oral and written presentation.

Fink shows the reader how to tailor the material for a target audience (technical, academic, or general) and convey the meaning of that material in clear concise ways. As such this volume conveys vital information that is not normally found in methods texts. This information enhances the professional socialization of new staff, students, and existing professionals by addressing the written and oral presentation of materials in a variety of contexts. Thus, a broad range of activities are illustrated and organized under a professional presentation structure. Considering the level of presentation at many conferences, that lesson alone is worth the price of this set.

Conclusion: The Survey Kit set allows the research professional, research organizations, and the student of research methodology three distinct advantages. First, the kit allows working professionals to have a concise desk reference library of relevant materials on the subject of research methodology. By furnishing a rapid reintroduction to these materials the set provides a wonderful refresher and handy reference for any survey professional. Thus, one primary reason for purchasing and using this set may well be its accessibility and ease of use as a reference tool.

Secondly, the kit can be used by survey centers and university departments to augment and facilitate the introduction of survey methodology for incoming personnel or graduate students. In an established research environment, a new hire could be given these materials as a training tool. The breadth of knowledge contained in this set would constitute a structured training device and act as a basic orientation to the methodological processes behind various research projects. One additional suggestion is that university departments should order these materials as references for dissertation or thesis projects. In either case, neophytes to survey research would find an extensive introduction to the many topics in survey methodology in one readily accessible kit.

Furthermore, these volumes may also be used in a classroom environment. Taken as a whole they cover a great deal of material, and with the proper structure, would greatly enhance advanced undergraduate and graduate studies. However, this advantage also reveals one of the kit's main disadvantages, its cost. At one hundred thirty-two dollars (U.S.), it may be priced outside of the normal student's budget. While the complete set is best kept intact, one could design a class around combinations of several different texts and thus reduce the financial hardship of the entire purchase.

In conclusion, The Survey Kit is an excellent resource for new professionals, graduate students and as a reference guide. The nine volumes form a complete introductory guide to the methods of research and offer connections to a world of in-depth information by way of their suggested readings. Anyone teaching advanced applied research methodology

should review these texts to see whether they can strengthen their current instructional materials and better organize the teaching of research methods classes.

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