BOOK REVIEW

Eelko Huizingh. *Applied Statistics with SPSS*, London, SAGE. 2007. Softcover, 356 pp, 187 figures. Price £21.99.

In many research projects statistical analyses are needed for extracting information, presenting results compactly and conducting hypothesis testing. Developing expertise in this area requires exposure to analyses with different types of data in various research settings. Learning to use the SPSS software is one good choice for a beginner. It offers a fairly simple point-and-click interface to performing many kinds of analyses. The author, Associate Professor Eelko Huizingh, a fellow of the Graduate School and Research Institute SOM (Systems Organisation and Management) in the faculties of Management and Organization and Economic, University of Groningen, has compiled a useful book that can be used as course material or to supplement classroom activities in any statistical course introducing statistics with the SPSS software.

*Applied Statistics with SPSS* is a general-purpose introductory book for persons who are familiar with only very simple use of the computer (e.g. opening programs in the Windows operating system) and have little experience in statistical analyses. The material is organised into two parts: the first part guides the reader through the quantitative analysis process and the second part goes in more detail in describing basic analysis methods. The book is carefully written and extremely detailed guidance is given on the design of electronic or paper questionnaires, creating, editing and managing data sets, and performing basic analyses using the software. It is based on actual course material and the presentation is very logical. It covers the basics in parametric models including regression analysis and mean comparison methods and their non-parametric counterparts using clear and simple examples with only the necessary mathematics. Analysis options are also covered in detail.

Fundamental understanding of statistical analyses requires more than just familiarity with a specific statistical program, but familiarity is nevertheless important. It is often a distraction in the learning process, when one focuses more on *how* the analysis is performed than *why* it is done, and in this respect the book is very useful as part of classroom activities. The book focuses on the how-question, but also gives broad principles that are helpful in selecting proper statistical analyses for different circumstances. Especially useful are charts provided for analysis and graph types for various kinds of outcome variables.

The SPSS software is also useful, because it can be used for syntax-based analyses, which is how many other statistical software operate. In the book there are references to a few data transformations and analyses that can only be carried out using the syntax (e.g. extensions of the count command and the transpose command). It would have been useful to give an example code for all cases, where syntax is needed, as now some of these are barely mentioned.

The book suffers from poor editing in some places. In addition to a few spelling mistakes, such as using the Latin letter ‘a’ in referring to type I error level instead of alpha, there are a few more serious mistakes. For example, footnotes 4 and 5 in chapter 18 are completely missing. Also on page 307, the linear regression equation for two explanatory variables is printed twice, which may be confusing for a novice in the field of statistical analysis.

Overall the book is an extremely useful and concrete introduction to issues of statistical analyses in SPSS and is to be recommended for anyone with little previous knowledge of statistical analyses in SPSS.

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