

Quantitative Research in Education

Intermediate & Advanced Methods

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PREFACE

This book offers a comprehensive presentation of quantitative research design and statistical methods in the context of education and related fields. The text is intended primarily for use by students who take intermediate and advanced quantitative research courses as a part of their graduate degree program, but it can be a useful resource for researchers in education, counseling, rehabilitation, psychology, sociology, social work, and human development as well.

The main purpose of this book is to provide the readers with an in-depth conceptual and methodological understanding of intermediate and advanced quantitative research methods, as well as the skills necessary to apply such methods using SPSS and to interpret the results. This is achieved by building layers of context-based understanding of research concepts and methods, their statistical translation, methodological principles, computer-based data analysis, presentation of the results in APA style format, and contextual interpretations. The text allows people who experience difficulties with analytic representations of statistical concepts to capitalize on conceptual understanding and still be able to master the research tools necessary for their work on theses, dissertations, and professional research.

While there are many excellent introductory books on research design and statistics in education and the social sciences, most books at the intermediate and advanced levels tend to be either too technical and mathematical or too simplistic. Typically, claiming to have an "applied orientation," such books are dominated by presentations of SPSS dialog boxes and printouts at the expense of theoretical and methodological rigor. To bridge the gap between these extremes, this book attempts to provide a balance between conceptual meaning and its statistical translation by developing understanding and application skills in a spiral exposure to quantitative concepts and methods. For example, the comparison of groups on variables of interest is addressed in a sequence from univariate cases of *t*-tests, nonparametric methods, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to scenarios illustrating the use of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and structural equation modeling (SEM). As another example, the concept of validity is addressed in the framework of measurement, research design, and structural equation modeling. Particular attention is devoted to potential problems associated with violation of assumptions, common misconceptions (e.g., conducting MANOVA versus separate ANOVAs), effect sizes, confidence intervals, and sample size. The book is organized in four parts comprising 24 chapters. Each chapter ends with a summary and study questions.

Part I [*Measurement in Educational Research*] consists of three chapters. Chapter 1 presents variables and measurement scales in the context of education. The focus is on the nature of measurement in education, types of variables, types of scales and their transformations, permissible arithmetic operations with scale values, summation symbols, and basic rules of summation. Chapter 2 introduces the classical model of reliability of scores, types of reliability, and reliability of composite scores. Chapter 3 deals with the concept of validity for measurement instruments (e.g., tests, questionnaires, or inventories) and types of validity (content-related validity, criterion-related validity, and construct-related validity).

Part II [*Research Design*] consists of two chapters. Chapter 4 deals with research problems, hypotheses, and types of quantitative research: nonexperimental research, experimental research, and threats to internal and external validity. Chapter 5 presents pre-experimental and true experimental research designs that involve quantitative methods of data analysis. The focus is primarily on conceptual understanding and methodological principles underlying the application of such designs in educational research.

Part III [*Univariate Statistics in Educational Research*] consists of fourteen chapters. The first five of these chapters (6, 7, 8, 9, and 10) cover introductory statistics and prepare the ground for understanding and practical applications of intermediate statistics in educational research. The next six chapters (11 through 16) provide intermediate treatment of correlation, regression, and analysis of variance (ANOVA) including some nonparametric methods. The last three chapters in this section (17, 18, and 19) provide more advanced treatment of multiple regression, analysis of variance, and the relations between them.

Part IV [*Multivariate Statistics in Educational Research*] consists of five chapters. This part covers the topics of logistic regression, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and elements of structural equation modeling (SEM). The analytic framework of these topics is simplified and tailored to conceptual understanding, computer-aided applications, and interpretations in the context of educational research.

Supplements

Data sets for computer-based applications in examples using SPSS can be downloaded from the online supplement to this book [<http://cehd.gmu.edu/book/dimitrov>]. This supplement provides also (a) answers to the study questions for each chapter, (b) addendum to some topics discussed in the book, (c) syntax for confirmatory factor analysis, path analysis, and group comparison on latent variables in the framework of major computer programs — LISREL, AMOS, EQS, and *Mplus* [used for illustrations in Chapters 23 and 24], and (d) additional references (books, articles, and online products) related to the content of this book.

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Dimiter M. Dimitrov

Contents

Preface xv

PART I MEASUREMENT IN EDUCATION 1

Chapter 1

VARIABLES AND MEASUREMENT SCALES 3

- 1.1 Variables in Educational Research 3
 - 1.1.1 Observable versus Latent Variables 4
 - 1.1.2 Continuous versus Discrete Variables 4
- 1.2 Scales of Measurement 5
 - 1.2.1 What is Measurement? 5
 - 1.2.2 Nominal Scale 6
 - 1.2.3 Ordinal Scale 6
 - 1.2.4 Interval Scale 6
 - 1.2.5 Ratio Scale 7
 - 1.2.6 Scale Transformations and Operations 7
 - 1.2.7 Scaling of Individual Items 9
- 1.3 Symbols and Rules for Summation of Variables 9
 - 1.3.1 Symbolic Notations 9
 - 1.3.2 Summation Operator 10
- 1.4 Summary 11
- 1.5 Study Questions 13

Chapter 2

RELIABILITY 15

- 2.1 What is Reliability? 15
- 2.2 Classical Concept of Reliability 16
 - 2.2.1 True Score 16
 - 2.2.2 Definition of Reliability 16
 - 2.2.3 Standard Error of Measurement 17
- 2.3 Types of Reliability 18
 - 2.3.1 Internal Consistency Reliability 18
 - 2.3.2 Test-retest Reliability 19
 - 2.3.3 Alternate Forms Reliability 20
 - 2.3.4 Criterion-referenced Reliability 20
 - 2.3.5 Interrater Reliability 22
- 2.4 Reliability of Composite Scores 23
 - 2.4.1 Reliability of Sum of Scores 23
 - 2.4.2 Reliability of Difference of Scores 24

2.5	Reliability Estimation with SPSS	25
2.5.1	Calculation of Cronbach's alpha	25
2.5.2	Calculation of Cohen's <i>kappa</i>	26
2.6	Summary	27
2.7	Study Questions	28

Chapter 3

	VALIDITY	29
3.1	What is Validity?	29
3.2	Aspects of Construct Validity	30
3.2.1	Content Aspect of Validity	30
3.2.2	Substantive Aspect of Validity	31
3.2.3	Structural Aspect of Validity	31
3.2.4	Generalizability Aspect of Validity	32
3.2.5	External Aspect of Validity	33
3.2.6	Consequential Aspect of Validity	34
3.3	Summary	35
3.4	Study Questions	35

PART II RESEARCH DESIGN 37

Chapter 4

	QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH	39
4.1	Research Questions and Hypotheses	39
4.2	Types of Quantitative Research	41
4.2.1	Nonexperimental Research	41
4.2.1.1	Descriptive research	41
4.2.1.2	Correlational research	42
4.2.1.3	Ex post facto research	43
4.2.1.4	Meta-analysis research	43
4.2.2	Experimental Research	45
4.2.2.1	True experimental research	45
4.2.2.2	Quasi-experimental research	46
4.2.2.3	Single-case research	46
4.2.3	Internal and External Validity in Experimental Research	47
4.2.3.1	Threats to internal validity	47
4.2.3.2	Threats to external validity	48
4.3	Summary	50
4.4	Study Questions	51

Chapter 5

BASIC RESEARCH DESIGNS 53

- 5.1 Pre-experimental Designs 53
 - 5.1.1 One Group Posttest-Only Design 53
 - 5.1.2 One Group Pretest-Posttest Design 54
 - 5.1.3 Nonrandomized Control Group Posttest-Only Design 54
- 5.2 True Experimental Designs 55
 - 5.2.1 Randomized Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design 55
 - 5.2.2 Randomized Solomon Four-Group Design 56
 - 5.2.3 Randomized Control-Group Posttest Only Design 57
- 5.3 Quasi-Experimental Designs 58
 - 5.3.1 Nonrandomized Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design 58
 - 5.3.2 One Group Time-Series Design 59
 - 5.3.3 Control Group Time-Series Design 60
- 5.4 Summary 61
- 5.5 Study Questions 63

PART III UNIVARIATE DATA ANALYSIS 65

Chapter 6

REVIEW OF INTRODUCTORY STATISTICS 67

- 6.1 Organizing and Graphing Data 67
 - 6.1.1 Frequency Table 67
 - 6.1.2 Basic Distribution Graphs 68
- 6.2 Describing Distributions 72
 - 6.2.1 Percentiles 72
 - 6.2.2 Measures of Central Tendency 74
 - 6.2.2.1 Mode 74
 - 6.2.2.2 Median 74
 - 6.2.2.3 Mean 74
 - 6.2.2.4 Properties of the mode, median, and mean 75
 - 6.2.3 Measures of Variation 75
 - 6.2.3.1 Variance 76
 - 6.2.3.2 Standard deviation 76
 - 6.2.3.3 Pooled variance 77
 - 6.2.3.4 Some basic rules 77
 - 6.2.4 Standard Scores 78
 - 6.2.5 Scale Transformation 79
- 6.3 Summary 80
- 6.4 Study Questions 82

Chapter 7**BASIC DISTRIBUTIONS 83**

7.1	Normal Distribution	83
7.1.1	What is a Normal Distribution?	83
7.1.2	Basic Properties of the Normal Distribution	85
7.1.3	Determining Percentiles and Percentile Ranks	86
7.1.4	Sampling Distribution of the Mean	87
7.1.5	Normal Q-Q Plot	89
7.2	Student's t -Distribution	91
7.3	F -Distribution	92
7.4	Chi-square Distribution	93
7.5	Summary	94
7.6	Study Questions	95

Chapter 8**HYPOTHESIS TESTING 97**

8.1	What is Hypothesis Testing?	97
8.2	When To Reject (or Not) the Null Hypothesis?	98
8.3	Testing Hypotheses about the Mean	100
8.3.1	One-sample Case for the Mean	100
8.3.2	Two-sample Case for the Mean: Independent Samples	106
8.3.3	Two-sample Case for the Mean: Dependent Samples	111
8.4	Summary	113
8.5	Study Questions	114

Chapter 9**HYPOTHESIS TESTING FOR PROPORTIONS 117**

9.1	One-Sample Case for Proportion	117
9.2	Testing $H_0: P_1 = P_2$ for Independent Samples	122
9.3	Testing $H_0: P_1 = P_2$ for Dependent Samples	127
9.4	Summary	131
9.5	Study Questions	132

Chapter 10**CORRELATION AND SIMPLE REGRESSION 135**

10.1	Correlation between Two Variables	135
10.1.1	What is Linear Relationship (Correlation) between Two Variables?	135
10.1.2	The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient	138
10.2	Simple Linear Regression	144
10.2.1	Correlation, Prediction, and Causation	144
10.2.2	The Regression Line	144

10.2.3	Interpretation of the Slope	147
10.2.4	Conditional Distributions of Y-scores	149
10.2.5	Assumptions with Simple Linear Regression	152
10.3	Summary	154
10.4	Study Questions	155

Chapter 11

PARTIAL AND PART CORRELATION 159

11.1	Partial Correlation	159
11.2	Part Correlation	163
11.3	Summary	165
11.4	Study Questions	166

Chapter 12

NONPARAMETRIC TESTS 167

12.1	The Man-Whitney U Test	167
12.2	The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test for Dependent Samples	170
12.3	Chi-Square Goodness-of-fit Test	172
12.4	Chi-Square Test for Association	177
12.5	Summary	182
12.6	Study Questions	183

Chapter 13

MULTIPLE REGRESSION 185

13.1	The Concept of Multiple Regression	185
13.2	Comparison of Full and Restricted Regression Models	191
13.3	Multicollinearity	194
13.4	Cross-validation	197
13.5	Statistical Power, Effect Size, and Sample Size	197
13.6	Outliers and Influential Data Points	199
13.7	Categorical Predictors in Multiple Regression	201
13.8	Interaction between Predictors in Multiple Regression	203
	13.8.1 What is Interaction between Predictors?	203
	13.8.2 Testing for Interaction between Predictors	206
	13.8.3 Centering Predictors	207
13.9	Selection of Predictors in Multiple Regression	209
13.10	APA Style for Multiple Regression Results	210
13.11	Summary	211
13.12	Study Questions	214

Chapter 14

ONE-FACTOR ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 217

14.1	The Concept of One-Factor Analysis of Variance	218
14.2	Assumptions in ANOVA	219
14.3	Effects in One-factor ANOVA	220
14.4	Within-groups and Between-groups Variance	221
14.5	Linear Model for One-factor ANOVA	223
14.6	Testing the ANOVA Null Hypothesis	223
14.7	Multiple Comparisons	225
	14.7.1 Post Hoc Comparisons	225
	14.7.1.1 The Tukey method of multiple comparisons	225
	14.7.1.2 Bonferroni method of multiple comparisons	226
	14.7.2 Planned Comparisons	227
	14.7.2.1 Contrasts for planned multiple comparisons	227
	14.7.2.2 Dunnett method of multiple comparisons	228
14.8	Determining Effect Size	230
	14.8.1 Effect Size of Mean Differences	230
	14.8.2 Omnibus Effect Size	230
14.9	Determining the Sample Size	234
14.10	Consequences of Violating the ANOVA Assumptions	234
14.11	Interpretation of SPSS Output for One-factor ANOVA	236
14.12	Summary	238
14.13	Study Questions	239

Chapter 15

TWO- AND THREE-FACTOR ANOVA 241

15.1	Two-factor ANOVA	241
	15.1.1 Null Hypotheses in Two-factor ANOVA	241
	15.1.2 Assumptions in Two-factor ANOVA	242
	15.1.3 Effects in Two-factor ANOVA	243
	15.1.4 Linear Model for the Data in Two-factor ANOVA	245
	15.1.5 Sum of Squares in Two-factor ANOVA	246
	15.1.6 Mean Squares in Two-factor ANOVA	247
	15.1.7 Testing the Null Hypotheses in Two-factor ANOVA	248
	15.1.8 Omnibus Effect Size in Two-factor ANOVA	249
	15.1.9 Types of Interaction in Two-factor ANOVA	251
	15.1.10 Testing for Simple Main Effects	252
	15.1.11 Using SPSS for Two-factor ANOVA	252
15.2	Three-factor ANOVA	257
15.3	Summary	264
15.4	Study Questions	265

Chapter 16**ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE** 267

- 16.1 The Logic Behind ANCOVA 267
 - 16.1.1 Basic Concepts in ANCOVA 267
 - 16.1.2 Adjusted Group Means in ANCOVA 268
 - 16.1.3 Increased Test Power with ANCOVA 270
 - 16.1.4 Assumptions in ANCOVA 271
- 16.2 Performing ANCOVA and Interpreting the Results 271
- 16.3 ANCOVA versus ANOVA on Gain Score 277
- 16.4 Summary 279
- 16.5 Study Questions 280

Chapter 17**MULTIPLE REGRESSION AND ANOVA** 281

- 17.1 One-Factor ANOVA via Multiple Regression 281
 - 17.1.1 Contrast Coding for ANOVA with Two Groups 281
 - 17.1.2 Contrast Coding for One-factor ANOVA with Three Groups 282
 - 17.1.3 Orthogonal Contrasts 284
- 17.2 Two-Factor ANOVA via Multiple Regression 286
- 17.3 Summary 293
- 17.4 Study Questions 293

Chapter 18**ANOVA WITH RANDOM FACTORS** 295

- 18.1 ANOVA with One Random Factor 295
 - 18.1.1 Random Effects 295
 - 18.1.2 Assumptions of the Random-factor ANOVA 296
 - 18.1.3 Expected Mean Square in the Random-factor ANOVA 296
 - 18.1.4 The Primary Question in a Random-factor ANOVA 297
- 18.2 Two-factor Mixed-Effects ANOVA Model 299
 - 18.2.1 The Concept of a Mixed-effects Model 299
 - 18.2.2 Assumptions of the Two-factor Mixed ANOVA Model 300
 - 18.2.3 Expected Mean Square in the Two-factor Mixed ANOVA 301
 - 18.2.4 Effect Size of Mean Differences among Levels of the Fixed Factor 304
 - 18.2.5 Generalizations with the Two-factor Mixed ANOVA 305
- 18.3 Summary 306
- 18.4 Study Questions 307

Chapter 19**REPEATED-MEASURES ANOVA** 309

- 19.1 A Simple Repeated-Measures ANOVA 309

19.1.1	Univariate Repeated-measures Analysis	309
19.1.2	Assumptions in Repeated-measures ANOVA	312
19.1.3	The Multivariate Test for Repeated-measures ANOVA	313
19.1.4	Univariate or Multivariate Approach to Repeated-measures ANOVA?	314
19.1.5	SPSS for the Simple Repeated-measures ANOVA	314
19.2	Repeated-Measures ANOVA with One Between-Subjects Factor	318
19.3	Caution with Repeated-Measures ANOVA for Pretest-Posttest Data	323
19.4	Summary	325
19.5	Study Questions	326

PART IV MULTIVARIATE DATA ANALYSIS 329

Chapter 20

LOGISTIC REGRESSION 331

20.1	The Concept of Logistic Regression	331
20.1.1	Probability, Odds, and Odds Ratio	331
20.1.2	The Logistic Model	333
20.1.3	Logit Form of the Logistic Regression Model	334
20.1.4	Interpretation of the Regression Coefficients	334
20.2	Tests and Interpretations of Logistic Regression Results	336
20.2.1	Goodness-of-fit Tests	336
20.2.2	Hosmer-Lemeshow Goodness-of-fit Test	337
20.2.3	Test for Significance of Predictor Variables	338
20.2.4	Effect Size Information with Logistic Regression	339
20.2.5	Classification Table	341
20.3	Coding Categorical Predictors	342
20.4	Using SPSS for Binary Logistic Regression	343
20.5	Comparison of Full and Restricted Models	347
20.6	Selection of Predictors in Logistic Regression	348
20.7	Assumptions in Logistic Regression	349
20.8	Summary	349
20.9	Study Questions	351

Chapter 21

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE 353

21.1	The Concept of MANOVA	353
21.2	MANOVA versus Separate ANOVAs	354
21.3	When to Use Separate ANOVAs?	354
21.4	When to Use MANOVA?	355
21.5	Assumptions in MANOVA	355
21.6	MANOVA with Discriminant Analysis	356
21.7	MANOVA with Planned Comparisons	361
21.8	Sample Size in MANOVA	366

21.9	Summary	367
21.10	Study Questions	368

Chapter 22

	EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS	369
22.1	Correlated Variables and Underlying Factors	369
22.2	Basic Concepts in Exploratory Factor Analysis	370
22.3	Communalities and Eigenvalues	372
22.4	The Principle Factor Method of Extracting Factors	373
22.5	Rotation of Factors	374
22.6	Determining the Number of Factors	376
	22.6.1 “Eigenvalues of one or higher” Criterion	376
	22.6.2 Scree Test	377
	22.6.3 Parallel Analysis	378
22.7	Using SPSS for Exploratory Factor Analysis	379
22.8	Summary	383
22.9	Study Questions	384

Chapter 23

	CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS	387
23.1	Differences between EFA and CFA Models	387
23.2	Basic Steps for CFA	389
	23.2.1 Specification of the CFA Model	389
	23.2.2 Evaluation of the CFA Model Adequacy	390
23.3	Summary	397
23.4	Study Questions	398

Chapter 24

	ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING	401
24.1	Path Analysis	401
	24.1.1 Path Coefficients	402
	24.1.2 Exogenous and Endogenous Variables	403
	24.1.3 Assumptions	404
	24.1.4 Decomposition of Correlation Coefficients	404
	24.1.5 Testing the Causal Model for Data Fit	406
	24.1.5.1 Just-identified models	406
	24.1.5.2 Overidentified models	407
24.2	Elements of Structural Equation Modeling	412
	24.2.1 Upgrading Models for Path Analysis to Typical SEM Models	412
	24.2.2 Comparing Groups on Latent Variables (Constructs)	413
	24.2.2.1 SEM versus MANOVA	413
	24.2.2.2 Factorial invariance across groups	414

24.2.2.3	Partial measurement invariance	415
24.2.2.4	Structured means modeling	416
24.2.2.5	Group-code (MIMIC) modeling	419
24.3	Summary	425
24.4	Study Questions	427
REFERENCES		429
Statistical Tables		434
Table A-1	<i>Standard normal distribution: z-scores and upper-tail probabilities</i>	434
Table A-2	<i>Critical values of the Student's t-distribution</i>	435
Table A-3	<i>Critical values of the chi-square distribution</i>	436
Table A-4	<i>Critical values of the F-distribution</i>	437
Table A-5	<i>Critical U-values of the Mann-Whitney distribution</i>	442
Table A-6	<i>Critical T-values of the Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test</i>	443
Author Index		444
Subject Index		446

Research methods in education (and the other social sciences) are often divided into two main types: quantitative and qualitative methods. This book will discuss one of these two main strands: "quantitative methods", and what distinguishes quantitative from qualitative methods. When you think of quantitative methods, you will probably have specific things in mind. You will probably be thinking of statistics, numbers, and many of you may be feeling somewhat apprehensive because you think quantitative methods are difficult. Apart from the last one, all these thoughts capture some of the essence of Quantitative research is empirical research where the data are in the form of numbers. Qualitative research is empirical research where the data are not in the form of numbers. (Punch, 1998: 4). 5. Qualitative and quantitative approaches. Christina Hughes (University of Warwick). p Quantitative research: key characteristics. p CONTROL: This is the most important element because it enables the scientist. causes. Control is necessary in order to provide unambiguous answers to such questions. To answer questions in education and social science we have to eliminate the simultaneous influence of many variables to isolate the cause of an effect. Research in science education is to discover the truth which involves the combination of reasoning and experiences. In order to find out appropriate teaching methods that are necessary for teaching science students problem-solving skills, different research approaches are used by educational researchers based on the data collection and analysis used at a given time. Though qualitative and quantitative research methods lies on separate continuum, they all aimed at identifying educational problems using different approach. This study critically examined the usefulness of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Researchers often have issues choosing which research method to go with: quantitative or qualitative research methods? Many incorrectly think the two terms can be used interchangeably. Qualitative research is regarded as exploratory and is used to uncover trends in thoughts and opinions, while quantitative research is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. We shall look at five types of qualitative research that are widely used in business, education and government organizational models. Narrative Research. This method occurs over extended periods of time and gathers information as it happens.