Stats Methods For Behavioral Researchers

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Researchers young and old who are interested in an introduction to structural equations models and the Lisrel software package are encouraged to attend. We'll start with CFA and path models and move onto the larger SEM model. We'll discuss just what IS that CFI thing we're expected to report, and honestly, does N have to be THAT big? We'll discuss several SEM modeling variants (moderation, mediation, multi-group, etc.). Bring your SEM questions if you wish--I'll stay afterward to take questions. Come! It'll be nerdvana.

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THE CONNECTION BETWEEN FOCAL RESEARCH TOPICS AND ACADEMIC LIFE

This year’s conference includes three plenary sessions, one for each of the three major sub-fields within consumer research as identified by Simonson et al. (2001). The goal of these sessions is to provide a forum for researchers within a given theoretical paradigm to raise contentious theoretical and methodological issues pertinent to their paradigm, and to debate and perhaps move towards a resolution of these issues. Given the broad aims of synthesizing and advancing scholarly knowledge, these sessions are referred to as “epistemic sessions”. The title and core issues of each of the epistemic sessions are shown Table 1.

Traits and Motives of Academicians

Let’s consider how these topics relate to the lives and motives of academics (see, for example, Brown 1984; Cavan 1970; Snodgrass 2002). I will identify four principal academic traits, and show how each is connected to the topics listed in Table 1. First and foremost, academicians value autonomy, both personally and professionally. We don’t like to be told what to do. I see that many of you can relate to that. We become academics so that we can control how we spend our time, choosing our work hours (“any 80 hours you want, each week” one of my professors once told my econometrics class) and what we do in those hours. We are a strikingly independent group of people. This trait appears to be reflected in the topics we choose to research. As you look over Table 1, you can see an autonomy theme represented in the central issues we study in all three sub-fields: individuals’ preferences, individual differences, and agency and freedom.

Second, academicians value status among peers. We spend many hours at work hoping to be rewarded with recognition from our peers and prestige for our own personal “brandname” (Snodgrass and Brucks 2004). The financial rewards of dedicated scholarship are few. Perversely, the honors accorded to the top scholars typically require even more unpaid work (e.g., editorial review boards, conference program committees, and promotion and tenure evaluations). In Table 1, you might see the study of “power structures” as related to this academic value. Third, a related value common to academicians is the desire to have an influence on others, to leave a legacy of ideas. This motive may make topics such as persuasion, choice outcomes, and power structures particularly salient to academicians.

Finally, a fourth trait of the academician is to approach the world from a detached, analytical perspective. We thrive in a world that centers on learning, reasoning, analysis, and thinking. As teachers, we try to develop these skills in our students. Thus, it is not surprising that many of the topics in Table 1 relate to cognitive processes and outcomes. In summary, all of the core issues listed in Table 1, with the notable exception of affect, are directly related to core values and motives of academicians.

Agentic Versus Communal Goals in Academic Life

The structure of academic life also exerts an influence on what is salient to academicians. Almost all of us work in universities or aspire to do so. The academic tenure system rewards the pursuit of agentic goals, typically at the cost of achieving communal goals. Three issues I will discuss are the 24/7 workweek, academic entrepreneurship, and geographic mobility.

Working hours. Prestige in research requires a prodigious level of scholarly output, while simultaneously meeting the short term demands of teaching and service. In combination with the academician’s competitive nature, a rather compulsive work ethic has evolved. For example, Joe Alba quoted the biologist Edward O. Wilson’s advice to new Ph.D.s in biology in one of his presidential columns (Alba 1999): “If you choose an academic career you will need 40 hours a week to perform teaching and administrative duties, another 20 hours on top of that to conduct respectable research and still another 20 hours to accomplish really important research” (Wilson 1998), which brings us back to that 80 hour workweek I learned about in my first semester of graduate school. This obsessive work behavior may be admirable in some circles, and might indeed speed scientific discoveries in some fields. But there is a drawback to the glorification of obsessive work behavior in consumer research, if not the social sciences in general (not to mention the obvious implications for individuals and their families). The work-obsessed scholar lives in a world where family, community, and spiritual issues are background rather than foreground issues.

In this way, the professor-scholar is encouraged to lead a life that is fundamentally different from the lives of typical consumers that are the intended focus of our research.

Entrepreneurial research style. The ultimate success for an academic scholar requires breaking new ground, creating new conceptual frameworks, discovering new phenomena, and being recognized for doing so. There is no glory and few perceived rewards to be gained from working cooperatively as part of a team, as may be the case in a corporate research laboratory. We are expected to discover and innovate on our own, and to inspire others to follow us.

Geographic mobility. Geographic mobility is an accepted way of life for most academicians. Doctoral students are expected to seek employment at another university, which necessitates a move in all but the largest cities. After acquiring that first teaching position, one begins the six (or eight or ten) year job interview known as being an assistant professor. Young scholars are typically advised that the best course of action is to maximize their mobility. During this period, the possibility of having to relocate constantly looms on the horizon. From a financial point of view, this enforced rootlessness continues over one’s entire career. Most universities allocate the biggest salary raises to professors who pose the highest risk of relocating to another university. Professors who put down roots in the local community lose their perceived mobility to some extent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EPISTEMIC SESSION</th>
<th>CENTRAL ISSUES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judgment and Decision Making</td>
<td>Individuals’ preferences and choice outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Information Processing</td>
<td>Individual differences in learning, memory, attitudes, persuasion, and affect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Culture Theory</td>
<td>Power structures, agency, and freedom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 1
FOCAL RESEARCH TOPICS OF ACR 2007

[Note: Table 1 is presented in the text as a list of core issues related to the topics listed in the epistemic sessions.]

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degree (except, perhaps, in cities with multiple universities), and thus forfeit their opportunity to receive equal financial compensation for their work. Thus the independent orientation that draws people into the academic life is further accentuated by disconnection from the local community. Taken together, (1) the work-focused lifestyle, (2) the incentive to produce work that can be uniquely identified with the individual researcher, and (3) the disincentive to affiliate with citizens of the local community, can only intensify the salience of agentic goals at the cost of communal goals.

Culling the Field through the Journal Review Process
Morris Holbrook once described authors’ experiences with submitting articles to journals for peer review as a form of masochism (Holbrook 1986). It takes a tremendous amount of persistence, even obsession, to keep rewriting, answering (pandering to?) reviewers who probably devote less than one percent as much effort in reviewing the paper as the authors do in creating it. Once authors have experienced this process with their first paper, they undertake every new research project with the knowledge of what will happen once they complete the project and submit it for peer review. Given the noted difficulties with the process (see also John Lynch’s (1998) presidential address on reviewing), there must be a marked self-selection bias on who is willing to repeatedly subject themselves to such a process. In his ACR presidential address, Don Lehman said, “I was fortunate to get into this business when tenure was easier to obtain but I still think I would rather be a roofer or run a chain saw than endure a seven-year mental and social makeover” (Lehmann 1996). Out of the universe of people who have the ability and motivation to do high quality scholarly research, only a fraction of them are attracted to the idea of spending the bulk of their lives enduring the seemingly endless rounds of attempted intellectual makeovers. And yet, clearly, some people do successfully endure this process. And they become the gatekeepers for the creative work of everyone else, locking in their perspectives as part of the journal’s screening process.

The result is apparent when you compare the content of our top journals with the subject matter of the presentations you see here at the conference. The papers presented at ACR conferences are much more diverse, more creative, and explore many more aspects of consumer life than those you see published in our top journals. One potential explanation is that more creative, more diverse topics are associated with lower quality scholarship. Another explanation is that more creative scholars have lower tolerance for the review process and its hegemonic application of intellectual criticism.

CONSEQUENCES FOR CHOICE OF RESEARCH TOPICS
Previous ACR Presidents have commented on our choice of research topics. In his 1977 presidential address, Hal Kaszarian described consumer research of the time as an exercise in “anthropomorphism”, in which we see a reflection of ourselves in the behavior of the consumers we study: “[Given the] countless thousands of insignificant decisions... made by the consumer, to assume a thinking, reasoned, attitudinally influenced decision may well be a classic example of anthropomorphism” (Kaszarian 1978). Valerie Folkes made a similar observation in a presidential column in the ACR Newsletter: “The body of consumer knowledge that we call consumer research reflects our own idiosyncrasies...To the extent that we are a homogeneous group, the field reflects what that segment of the population deems important, useful, and interesting” (Folkes 2002).

In fact, the bulk of ACR’s presidential addresses indirectly deal with this issue. Table 2 summarizes the key points of several of these addresses. Each one of these addresses is quite thought-provoking and I refer you to the original sources for deeper insight than I can provide here. I would like to point out the overall picture that emerges from looking at the right column in the table: the depiction of consumers as high involvement, conforming to existing theories, American, isolated from the rest of life, explained through dispassionate discourse, behaving in their own self interests, adult, thoughtful, capable, and non-social. The overall picture that emerges describes the stereotype of a professor!

At the aggregate level, the concerns of Hal Kaszarian and Valerie Folkes appear to be right on target. The body of consumer research does not reach the goal of “representativeness” as set out by Terry Shimp (1994) in his presidential address. As stated by Shimp, the fundamental and abiding purpose of consumer research is to acquire understanding and knowledge of consumer behavior. But much of consumer behavior is outside the everyday life experience of academics, what Jerry Zaltman characterized as “hidden events” in his presidential address (Zaltman 1983). Zaltman defined hidden events as phenomena whose existence we either doubt or deny, or do not know about at all. Hidden events are distinguished from neglected topics, which are purposefully ignored. The literature in social cognition and judgment and decision making provide many theoretical explanations for why everyday phenomena may be hidden from the view of the work-focused academician: for example, selective exposure and selective attention, perceptual biases and schematic biases in assessing meanings, goal priming, memory accessibility, and false consensus bias, to name a few. When you factor in the tendency of researchers to intentionally choose topics of self-relevance, the problem of achieving representativeness in consumer research as a discipline becomes even of greater concern.

As I was reflecting on hidden events, I was reminded of the influential paper by Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), which highlighted consumer “fantasies, feelings, and fun” as neglected topics in consumer research. I began to wonder if these topics are in fact hidden events. Perhaps consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun are on the margins of personal experience for the trend-setters in academic life, and are thus “hidden” from academic view? Maybe we overlooked these topics because, as academics, we are not having that much fun. With this in mind, I began to think how the Holbrook and Hirschman paper might be extended. What other areas of life might be “hidden events” to us, academics living in our isolated ivory mobile homes? In Table 3, I suggest additional hidden events, as possible outcomes of faculty priorities and lifestyle. Although each of these topics has received some attention in the literature, my reading of the literature suggests that the body of research that we consider “consumer behavior” systematically under-represents these issues, both conceptually and empirically.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
A multitude of forces lead us to focus on a narrowed set of theoretical issues and behavioral phenomena: disciplinary institutions and culture, university structures, and individual psychology. Thus I organize my thoughts on specific actions accordingly. Some of these suggestions have been made by others in service of different goals. Other suggestions run counter to conventional wisdom.

ACR and Its Sponsored Conferences and Publication Outlets
I agree with Richard Bagozzi (1992) that we do not want to over-manage the field from the top-down, which puts too much power in the hands of too few gatekeepers. Instead, it makes sense to create countervailing incentives to expand the vision and resources of individual scholars by facilitating networking and direct-
ing research funds to sponsor research in under-represented areas. Examples of such existing efforts are the Sheth dissertation proposal grants to fund research on public purpose and international topics and David Mick’s recent presidential initiative on Transformational Consumer Research.

As an organization, I’d like to see us find ways to support non-traditional doctoral students so that we get a wider representation of traits and lifestyles participating in consumer research. The call for increased representation of various demographic minorities is not new. What I am suggesting goes beyond demographic issues such as ethnicity and gender. We should strive for psychographic diversity as well, e.g., lifestyle, personality, family roles, and subcultures.

We also need to think about the institutional obstacles that hinder the transfer of the creative, diverse content typically included in the ACR conference to our top journals. One possibility is to seek more diversity (demographic and especially psychographic) among the people who serve in gatekeeper roles. We need to implement and formalize the suggestions made by John Lynch in his presidential address (1998). We might also brainstorm ideas for mentoring newer scholars who have trouble articulating how their ideas and perspectives fit into established bodies of literature. Perhaps we might consider a “pre-inquiries” section to supplement the existing “re-inquiries” section of JCR.

**Colleges and Universities**

Academic freedom must remain a high priority, since it is at the very heart of what attracts bright and creative minds to the world of academia. I am not suggesting that we discourage anyone from studying conventional topics. Personally, I enjoy and highly value the freedom to study individual information processing in choice, even though it is probably over-studied. My concern is that we somehow turn off or exclude people who might naturally be inclined to study mainstream yet “hidden events” such as consumer

### TABLE 2

**VIEWS FROM SELECTED PAST ACR PRESIDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESIDENT (YEAR PUBLISHED)</th>
<th>MORE ATTENTION NEEDED ON:</th>
<th>CONSUMERS OVERLY REPRESENTED AS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hal Kassarjian (1978)</td>
<td>Low involvement, mundane behavior</td>
<td>High involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Zaltman (1983)</td>
<td>“Hidden events”</td>
<td>Conforming to existing theories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jag Sheth (1985)</td>
<td>Global perspectives</td>
<td>American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morris Holbrook (1990)</td>
<td>“Lyricism” in communication</td>
<td>Explainable by dispassionate discourse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Hirschman (1991)</td>
<td>Dark side of consumption</td>
<td>Behaving in their self-interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debbie John (1997)</td>
<td>Perspectives from children</td>
<td>Adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Alba (2000)</td>
<td>Mindless, thoughtless behaviors</td>
<td>Thoughtful and capable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marsha Richins (2001)</td>
<td>Big picture, social influences</td>
<td>Non-social</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 3

**FACULTY PRIORITIES AND HIDDEN EVENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACULTY PRIORITY</th>
<th>HIDDEN EVENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analytical thought</td>
<td>Fantasies, Feelings, and Fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>Foolishness, Futility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obsessiveness, Compulsiveness</td>
<td>Fickleness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Control</td>
<td>Freud-ish notions (sub-, non-, pre- conscious)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence, autonomy</td>
<td>Family, Friendship, Fellowship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Frailty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skepticism</td>
<td>Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>Free time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
fun, family, frailty, or faith. Perhaps we need to reconsider the screening process for potential doctoral students and junior professors. Do we inadvertently admire candidates who mirror ourselves?

We need to make an effort to understand and value our colleagues who conduct research on “hidden events.” Just because the event or behavior is invisible to you does not mean the topic is not viable or meaningful. I recall one conversation about research on non-conscious affect in which my friend claimed that non-conscious influences do not exist: “I never make choices that have any unconscious or subconscious influences, so I don’t think that exists. That is, not that I am aware of.” Yes, indeed. We need to realize that our colleagues who conduct research on hidden events are likely to encounter such resistance, and thus have to overcome extra obstacles on the path to success. I argue that we need to be more flexible in how we provide rewards and support for people who pursue difficult and controversial topics. At the minimum, we should recognize that the resistance encountered will likely slow down the publication process.

We need to be more flexible with our doctoral student admissions and faculty recruiting. In most doctoral programs, we try to recruit students with work experience and an MBA. Thus the pool of attractive applicants is reduced to a pool of people who are in their mid-twenties or older, who have a record of high achievement, and who are in a position to drop everything they are doing for five years to work 24/7 for a minimal stipend. Obviously, this is not a typical group of people. One might argue that they are not even the smartest people in the room. Why not accomplish the same clock-stopping result (no tenure) while still maintaining tenure-track (or tenured) status? Why not revisit the typical policy of stopping the tenure clock when one spends a visiting year at another university (fire up that Ivy motor home)? Why not accomplish the same clock-stopping result without uprooting the professor and his/her family for a year? The professorial lifestyle is naturally attractive to people seeking flexibility (recall, you can work any 80 hours you choose). If we were better able to deliver on the promise of flexibility, we may be able to foster a more diverse and community-oriented set of scholars than we now have.

Individuals

Finally, let us consider what you can do as an individual. The JDM literature indicates that people are generally less subject to judgment biases when they are made aware of the potential for bias. So, my advice to you is to think carefully about all your research options. Identify the various options, the doors I mentioned at the beginning of this address, that you could open. Consider your knowledge, your experience, and your skills, and also consider where you might be able to make a unique and novel contribution. Consider the people, places, perceptions, and processes that are hidden from academic view. You may find some doors that were previously overlooked, whether in plain sight, behind a screen, or around the corner. And if you do, select the one that most inspires you to Break on Through (The Doors, 1967).
Acknowledgements

I want to thank Dilip Soman and Angela Lee for their outstanding job in organizing and managing the ACR conference this year. They did a phenomenal job in putting the program together and keeping on top of the seemingly endless details involved in chairing this conference. It was truly a pleasure to work with them. I also want to thank the ACR Board of Directors and the Advisory Council for working with me all year. I am grateful to Wendy Boland, who helped prepare the visuals for my luncheon address, and Angela Lee for providing editorial comments on the written version for the Proceedings. I also want to acknowledge the support of my family members, who have put up with my obsessive work behavior over the years, but especially during the last few months as I was preparing this address. My husband, Rick Snodgrass, patiently listened to the evolution of these ideas over the past two years and provided encouragement along the way. Rick, our daughter (Melanie Brucks), and my mother (Marilyn Brucks) traveled to Memphis to share this experience with me. Our son (Eric Brucks) unfortunately had to take midterm exams and so was unable to show his support in person. Finally, I want to dedicate this address to the memory of my father, Norman Brucks, who would have wanted so much to be here today. I miss his strength and kindness, his enthusiasm for life, and his unwavering confidence in me. But in my heart, he is here with me, even now.

REFERENCES


8 / PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS: Choices in Consumer Research: Unintended Consequences


ACR Fellows Address
Donald R. Lehmann, Columbia University, USA

When it was announced at an ACR luncheon that I had been named an ACR fellow, my first reaction was surprise. In fact, my first words were “are you kidding me?...” My next reactions were:

• Does that mean I have to give a talk?
• Who wants to hear from the last generation?
• What will I say?
• What will I say at 8 am?
• I guess this means I have to go to Memphis.
• I’m glad I didn’t skip lunch.

Awards are subjective and often end up making far more people unhappy than happy. This is especially true after the first few recipients whom essentially everyone agrees are worthy of the honor. I can easily think of others who are at least as deserving as I am, as I’m sure many of you can. Ironically, I was part of a decision to stop naming fellows several years ago precisely because of the controversy and unhappiness they were beginning to engender. I recall Russ Belk giving a wonderful discussion of the downside of awards at an ACR luncheon several years ago which I recommend highly.

When I look at the list of past fellows, and the record of my co-inductee Kent Monroe, I see real scholars, i.e. researchers with deep knowledge of the field and sustained contributions. By contrast, I see myself as more of an engineer/problem solver who has worked on a broad variety of problems and methodological approaches. While after the fact I can tell a story about how the work is related, my research has been fairly unsystematic. Nonetheless, I am flattered, humbled, and delighted to have been named a fellow.

The talk I prepared (and for which I realized my notes were on the kitchen table in New Jersey as I prepared to deliver it) and this paper have three main parts. First I share some (mercifully) brief memories of ACR past. Next I discuss some research opinions which seem worth expressing. Third, I discuss some ideas for future research directions, not including work on fluency, regulatory theory, and networks. Note that these three areas have been major contributions to the field and will continue to be. (I certainly hope so in the case of networks since I am working on several papers in this area.) My point will be that these areas are “taken” while they are safe paths to follow, it is hard to make major breakthroughs in them, especially when others have the lead. (To use a sailing analogy, you generally can’t win by following along in the middle or back of the pack. To win, at some point you need to tack to clear air.) I then close with some more personal thank yous.

MEMORIES OF ACR

I remember the first ACR “mass” conference held at the University of Massachusetts and attended by about 90 people including modelers, practitioners, and public policy makers. (Sadly we have driven most of the last two types away over the years.) In addition to sessions, essentially the entire conference moved to the Lord Jeff tavern to talk and consume beer. (Beer seems to be a common theme to events at ACR including Bettman, Lutz, Scott, Tybout, etc. at the “Saturday Night Live” parties and the “outsider” events promoted by Lichtenstein et al.) There was definitely a spirit of fun and informality (occasionally interrupted by hotel security). There was also a series of football games played at venues including the University of Cincinnati’s practice field, parks in Atlanta and Florida, and the front “yard” of the O’Hare Hilton. In fact, the last game ended when someone ran into a cab trying to catch a pass. No one could find the “official” football the next year.

In addition to fun, the sessions were sometimes intense. I recall one night session (i.e., after a reception where beer was served) when a heated discussion emerged about, as I recall it, the Fishbein model and the halo effect, pitting the Florida school (led by Joel Cohen) against some Purdue types. Some observers were shocked both by the strength of opinions expressed and the fact that several of the protagonists proceeded to go out together for more beer when the session ended. I also recall some poor doctoral student “winning” one of my leisure suits (yes, the old polyester type, this one a fetching green and white plaid number) as a prize in a trivia contest. So my memories of ACR include both intellectual dialog and sophomoric fun.

RESEARCH OPINIONS

Fortunately or not, I have been around long enough that many of my opinions are in print. In particular, several are contained in my 1995 ACR Presidential address which was published in the proceedings of the Minneapolis Conference (Lehmann, 1996). As I looked back at it (in “archaic” hard copy form), I found most of the points still seem relevant so I could just say “ditto”.

I will not use fancy graphics (or Power Point) to make my points. My idea of visual aids is more like the stick figure cartoons I drew at midnight before leaving to give my Presidential Address when I realized I had no visuals and couldn’t play the piano or show interesting pictures. (Someone decided to include them in the proceedings so you can see them if you are that curious.) In fact, I think Power Point etc. damages learning (which is why some people and organizations ban it). Consider also the following: which would be considered the cool/edgy communication medium if text based email had come before phone mail?

Punam Anand, who kindly introduced my talk, has taken to calling me a Luddite, a title I readily accept. When a current MBA student in their evaluation referred to me as “old school”, I accepted that with pride. I don’t get what I call generation text message/virtual reality that thinks relationships are about thumb-enabled poor grammar multitasking and public self presentation. (In the words of a song from Bye Bye Birdie, “what’s the matter with kids today?”). So if you read on, do it for the ideas, not the sizzle.

Opinion 1: Consumer/Customer Insights are Practical

I don’t see a necessary divergence between rigor and relevance. If I am going to work on something, I prefer it to be something that might interest other people beyond a small group of like-minded researchers. Obvious sources of relevance include the MSI priorities based on company concerns, and social and public policy issues. Beyond these, however, how consumers behave is the fundamental unit of knowledge in for- or not-for-profit business. The reason much work in this area is thought to be irrelevant is that we, by either choice or inability, don’t recognize, identify, and communicate its relevance.

Opinion 2: Easy Does it on Theory

My observation is we have almost a fetish about theory. One of the most damaging comments a reviewer can make is “you have no/weak theory.” Operationally, having theory generally means adopting something which has been published, preferably in a