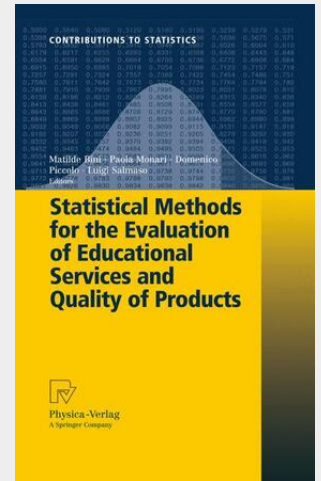


Statistical Methods for the Evaluation of Educational Services and Quality of Products

The book presents statistical methods and models that can usefully support the evaluation of educational services and quality of products. The contributions collected in this book summarize the work of several researchers from the universities of Bologna, Firenze, Napoli and Padova. The contributions are written with a consistent notation and a unified view, and concern methodological advances developed mostly with reference to specific problems of evaluation using real data sets. The evaluation of educational services, as well as the analysis of judgements and preferences, poses severe methodological challenges because of the presence of one or more of the following aspects: the observational (non experimental) nature of the context, which is associated with the well-known problems of selection bias and presence of nuisance factors; the hierarchical structure of the data, that entails correlated observations and consideration of effects at different levels of the hierarchy and their interactions (multilevel analysis); the multivariate and qualitative nature of the dependent variable, that requires the use of ad hoc statistical methodologies; the presence of non observable factors, e. g. the satisfaction, calling for the use of latent variables models; the simultaneous presence of components of pleasure and components of uncertainty in the explication of the judgments, that asks for the specification and estimation of mixture models. The first part of the book deals with latent variable models.

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