Scaling: A Sourcebook for Behavioral Scientists

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Despite the obvious importance of measurement in any scientific endeavor, few students of the social sciences receive adequate training in the principles and problems of assigning numerical values to the subjects, objects, events, groups and operations they study, and still less in the process of translating theoretical ideas and concepts into variables. This kind of casualness with respect to measurement is often in marked contrast to their methodically designed research, which has grown out of subtle and sophisticated theoretical consideration.

Scaling is intended to remedy this deficiency by providing a broad and detailed description of the major processes for developing measurement scales. The chapters, which include both classics in the field and the best of modern work, require no great mathematical sophistication, and go well beyond the conventional study of attitudes to the more general uses of scaling. They enable the student and researcher to examine the development of measures of scalability and the problems and weaknesses they present, to become familiar with the development of tests of significance for reproducibility and scalability and the need for them, and to examine the lively history of the subject and experience the excitement that can be secured from sharing with a creative author the first report of his insight.

Part One presents a series of general articles that deal in philosophic terms with the problem of measurement, with what is meant by measurement and scaling as well as the notions underlying the process of measuring. Part Two deals with the scaling methods developed by L. L. Thurstone, including paired comparison scaling, equal-appearing interval scaling, and successive interval scaling. The third part focuses upon scalogram analysis, presenting the background, rationale and procedures for Guttman scaling. The fourth part is concerned with summated rating, or Likert scaling. Part Five is a consideration of unfolding theory and methods. Part Six is made up of articles that focus on various special cases and problems relevant to scaling. The book also contains an unusually full reference bibliography and a set of convenient reference tables associated with the development and use of measurement scales.

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