Author : Corey S. Sparks

Title of Work : Applied Demographic Data Analysis with R

Based on the materials provided by the author(s), we would like to have your advice on the following points:

1. Overall, do you feel that the textbook as outlined in the proposal will be a useful book for its intended audience?

Probably not.

2. Does it cover the topics mentioned adequately?

No. That is, the sample chapter is of poor quality. I can’t of course judge the quality of the other chapters in the proposed table of contents. The coverage in the other chapter, however, is a bit odd given the ostensible demographic focus of the book. As far as I can tell, the book will cover generalized linear models (including, presumably, linear models), mixed-effects models, event-history (i.e., survival) analysis, and the analysis of survey data. These topics are of general interest in the social sciences, and are typically covered in a second or third statistics course (i.e., beyond the introductory level) for social-science graduate students.

3. What is the relative strength of this proposal compared to textbooks that are currently used in similar courses?

This book appears to be of lower quality than many available texts that teach the use of R for statistical data analysis to a readership of social scientists or those with a generally similar level of preparation.

4. Which parts of the concept would the author need to address before it is suitable for the market segment stated in the proposal? How could the author best address those concerns?

The quality problems with the sample provided are sufficiently serious and pervasive that I don’t think that it is realistic to suppose that the author could address them.

5. Which types of courses would benefit from having this textbook available? Are those self-study or classroom courses?

I don’t think that the proposed text is of high enough quality for me to recommend it to anyone.

6. If different from the readership stated in the proposal, who do you feel will be the primary and secondary audience for this textbook?

Presumably, the primary readership for the book will be graduate students in demography or more generally in the social sciences. (As I mentioned, I don’t really understand the focus on demography, including in the title of the proposed book: The methods that the author intends to cover are of more general interest, and, as far as I can tell, he doesn’t intend to cover methods that are exclusively and traditionally demographic – that is, that focus on fertility, mortality, and migration.) The secondary readership will be independent researchers in these fields.

7. Are the planned pedagogical features of this textbook suitable and sufficient, and are they presented in a way that is engaging and attractive to the intended readership?

I can’t imagine that someone completely unfamiliar with R, or generally unfamiliar with the statistical methods that the author intends to cover, will find this text an effective introduction to statistical data analysis with R.

8. Would this proposed textbook appeal to a global market? If there is a geographical bias that would make this more suitable for a limited audience, please indicate which audience this would be.

I didn’t detect a geographical bias.

9. Is the proposal written in an engaging style and is the English usage in the sample materials in accordance with the intended level and readership?

The book is written in an informal and colloquial style that many might find appealing. On the other hand, there are numerous typographical, stylistic, grammatical errors, and technical errors.