

Series Editor's Note

Theory is an analyst's best friend, while data are the fodder of good theory; but which comes first, the data or the theory? Similarly, some folks never let data get in the way of good theory and some folks never let theory get in the way of good data; but is it this either/or taming-of-the-shrew-like scenario? Constructing a theory is more like crafting an elegant ensemble of logically connected ideas that depict the world and allow knowledge to leap forward. As Jaccard and Jacoby point out, 90% of our graduate training is on methods for collecting and techniques for analyzing data and only 10% is spent on identifying and crafting the ideas into theories that can be tested.

I have always been a student of good theory and this book is a veritable bible on how to craft testable theories, even before the wonderful enhancements to this second edition. Enhancements include, for example, what constitutes a theoretical contribution and how do you craft one? How do you use a logic model to generate ideas and avoid pitfalls in the theory construction process? How do you use mixed methods and data mining to craft good theory? How do you test a theory and revise it if need be? Jaccard and Jacoby answer these questions with practical wisdom born of extensive experience and uncommon insights.

In addition, the expanded discussion of moderator variables, counterfactual causality, and their new 10-step method for generating theory is simply invaluable. Oh, and the new chapters on measurement are absolutely essential because good theory demands good measurement. The operationalization of good theory is way too often neglected in training programs and many seasoned veterans have yet to learn how to do good measurement. Last but not least, they offer insight and wisdom on both interpreting others' theories as well as clearly expressing your own theories.

Their book is transdisciplinary, with many useful examples spanning fields such as anthropology, business, communications, education, economics, health, marketing, organizational studies, political science, psychology, social work, sociology, and so on.

And the companion website is a tremendously useful and helpful resource for students and instructors alike! I will be teaching a course on model building and theory construction. Jaccard and Jacoby is unequivocally the only choice for such a course.

Sadly, Jacob “Jack” Jacoby has departed our worldly sphere. Brilliant thinkers challenge our worldview on humanity and they leave indelible marks that shape us and how we think. Jack was one of our field’s finest.

TODD D. LITTLE
Honeymooning at Casa Montana

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