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During the last years, the attention of statisticians towards the instruments for the evaluation of services for the society has been increased. This phenomenon has been mostly due to the request of both the productive system and the public institutions of techniques that are suitable for evaluating the efficacy, efficiency and quality of services, with respect to not only the customer satisfaction but also to the impact of the evaluation on the innovation of these services.

The Conference "INNOVAZIONE E SOCIETÀ 2011 - Metodi statistici per la valutazione dei servizi (IES2011)", fourth edition of the two-years event of the Permanent Group "Statistica per la Valutazione e Qualità nei Servizi" of the Italian Statistical Society (SIS) aims at both providing approaches and statistical methodologies for the evaluation of services that are currently used in different contexts of the society. The organization of conference IES 2011 was by the Faculty of Economics of the University of Florence. The conference encompassed 80 presentations organized in 2 plenary talk, 20 sessions and two round tables. The twelve papers included in this special issue represent a set of conference presentations. The papers were selected in a second peer review process after the conference. The paper regards different statistical methods and contexts of the society: Business and bank, Education, Health and social services, Law system, Structural equation models and Rasch analysis.

We would like to express our gratitude to the members of the Scientific Program Committee for their ability to attract interesting contributions. We wish also thank the session organizers for inviting speakers the chairpersons and discussants of the sessions for their stimulating comments and suggestions. We are very grateful to the referees for their careful reviews of the submitted papers and for the time spent in this professional activity. We gratefully acknowledge the Department of Statistics of the University of Florence.

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Luigi D'Ambra is full professor in Statistics, University of Naples Federico II. In December 2005 he has been invited by University of Western Sydney (School of Quantitative Methods and Mathematical Sciences) to participate to conferences and to carry out research activity (Project title: The non-symmetrical correspondence analysis of ordinal categorical data).

He participated to numerous international conferences as invited lecturer and discussant.

In 2003 he has been member of Scientific Programme Committee of the European Courses in Advanced Statistics (ECAS).

The main research topics are related to the non-symmetric correspondence analysis, multi-way data tables with respect to qualitative and quantitative variables, cumulative correspondence analysis.

Since 2004, he is President of the SIS Group "Statistica per la Valutazione e la Qualità nei Servizi" (SVQS).

The most important and recent publications are:

1. Beh, E. and D'ambra, L. **Some interpretative tools for non-symmetrical correspondence analysis**, Journal of Classification, vol. 26, 2009, pp. 55-76
2. Beh, E., Simonetti, B. and D'ambra, L. **Partitioning a non-symmetric measure of association for three-way contingency tables**, Journal of Multivariate Analysis, vol. 98, 2007, pp. 1391-1411
3. Lombardo, R., Beh, E. and D'ambra, L. **Non-symmetric correspondence analysis with ordinal variables using orthogonal polynomials**, Computational Statistics & Data Analysis, vol. 52, 2007, pp. 566-577
4. **Correspondence Analysis of Cumulative Frequencies using a Decomposition of Taguchi's Statistic** in Communications in Statistics 2011 SSN: 1532-415X (electronic) 0361-0926 (paper) pagg 1620-1632

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Pasquale Sarnacchiaro is researcher of Statistics, University of Rome Unitelma Sapienza.

Graduated in Economics in 1998 cum laude at University of Naples Federico II.

In 2003, he received the PhD in Total Quality Management at University of Naples Federico II with a thesis titled "Statistical Methods for the evaluation of Customer Satisfaction".

He is member of the Italian Statistical Society (SIS) and since 2009 he is secretary of the Group of the SIS called "Statistics for the evaluation and the quality of services".

The main research topics are: Measurement of Customer Satisfaction and Service Quality with multivariate models, Structural Equation Models with latent variables, Statistical Analysis of Multidimensional Data, Analysis of Means (ANOM), Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Categorical Analysis of Variance (CATANOVA), Orthogonal Polynomials, Statistical Quality Control.

He is regular reviewer of Electronic Journal of Applied Statistical Analysis (EJASA) and Electronic Journal of Applied Statistical Analysis: Decision Support System (EJASA DSS).

The main recent publications are:

1. Sarnacchiaro, P., D'Ambra, A. **Explorative data analysis and Catanova for ordinal variables: an integrated approach**, Journal of Applied Statistics, vol. 34 (9), 2007
2. Sarnacchiaro, P., Díez, S., Montuori, P., Pagano, A., Bayona, J. M. and Triassi, M. **Hair Mercury levels in an urban population from southern Italy: fish consumption as a determinant of exposure**, Environment International, vol. 34(2), 2008, pp. 162-167
3. Sarnacchiaro, P., Arcidiacono, C. and Vellman, R. **A 5-Step intervention to help family members in Italy who live with substance misusers**, Journal Of Mental Health, vol. 17(6), 2008, pp. 643-655
4. Sarnacchiaro, P., Díez, S. and Montuori, P. **Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons Pollution in a Coastal Environment: the Statistical Analysis of Dependence to Estimate the Source of Pollution**, Current Analytical Chemistry, vol. 8, 2012
5. Sarnacchiaro, P. and Montuori, P. **The consumption of genetically modified foods in Italian high school students**, Food Quality and Preference (in press), 2012