Series Editor's Note

I'm very pleased to introduce Christian Geiser's book to you. This book was originally published in German by Springer Verlag. I felt it was so important to bring the book to a broader readership that we secured the rights to produce it in English as part of The Guilford Press series Methodology in the Social Sciences. Given that Christian is a very talented multilingual scholar, I knew that rendering this excellent work in English would be both easy for him and an important contribution. Special thanks go to the legal and contracts team at The Guilford Press who worked diligently to secure the English-language rights to Christian's book and to Whitney Moore, whose assistance in bringing this book to fruition was above the call of duty.

Why am I so pleased to bring this book to you? Simply, it is the most thorough and accessible book available on how to use Mplus for all manner of statistical analysis procedures. Mplus is a popular software package that is capable of estimating a wide variety of useful analyses. Figuring out how to get Mplus to do most of the analyses, however, is both challenging and frustrating if you rely on the Mplus User's Guide. Christian's book is clearly organized, covers a wide variety of analyses that Mplus can estimate, and is easy to follow.

In other words, *Data Analysis with Mplus* fills an important gap. It is not focused simply on a cookbook model of how to run the various analyses in Mplus. Because it is written for the applied researcher and not the quantitative analyst, the models are accessible. Christian explains each

analysis model step-by-step. He does not presume that you will have used Mplus before. In fact, he actually begins with how to prepare and bring in data. This feature is a rarity and an important one because it is an essential step to master *before you can do any of the fun analyses!*

A wide variety of different analyses are described in this book. In a clear and methodical manner, Christian explains what the syntax means, teaches you very useful Mplus tricks, and actually alerts you to the defaults that exist (which can be a mystery sometimes). Because of his skillful syntax pedagogy, new users will feel comfortable knowing what the syntax means and not be intimidated about using it, which is important for new researchers who do not have much exposure to the world of writing syntax for data analyses.

Christian's focus on different types of analyses will help build your knowledge and understanding of Mplus syntax. For example, some analyses are presented first as manifest variable techniques before the complexity of a measurement model is added. This piecewise exposure helps avoid the overwhelming effect of presenting both manifest and latent variables in the same model and allows for highlighting important differences in the required syntax. Christian does a terrific job of explaining Mplus syntax in bite-size pieces so that a reader without prior knowledge can understand it. This aspect of his book is essential, I think, because often it is the failure of nonquantitative users to grasp a simple, or basic, concept that results in their not understanding the following steps. The chapter-specific recommendations focus on the applied researcher.

Christian's book is an excellent resource manual for anyone wishing to use Mplus for advanced statistical data analyses. It is a terrific complement to Rex B. Kline's *Principles and Practices of Structural Equation Modeling*, Timothy A. Brown's *Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Applied Research*, as well as my forthcoming book, *Longitudinal Structural Equation Modeling*.

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