

Preface

LISREL was created about 40 years ago by Karl Jöreskog and Dag Sörbom, among other researchers of the *Educational Testing Services*. It was soon acknowledged as the best solution for the estimation of structural models and also as a complex statistical computer program, hard to learn and use (e.g., Kenny 1979). Bearing this in mind, LISREL experts have been gradually producing more user friendly versions of the computer program, command languages, and handbooks. Nevertheless, the degree of difficulty is still perceived as high, especially for those in the beginning of their learning process, mostly due the absence of handbooks adopting a perspective that is both pragmatic and effective. Another typical problem of the early stages of the learning process is to figure out what and where is the essential and objective information. The risk of dispersion is considerable, given the large number and diversity of sources. This handbook aims at contributing to overcome those obstacles, by adopting a practical perspective of the utilisation of LISREL and pointing out the references considered essential for an effective learning process.

This handbook is particularly appropriate for those users who are not experts in statistics, but have some basic notions of multivariate data analysis that would allow them to use the following pages as a good first incursion into the realm of LISREL. Part I introduces the topic, presents the study that serves as the background for the explanation of matters, and launches the bases for parts II and III, which, in turn, explain the process of estimation of the measurement model and the structural model, respectively. The announcement of each part also includes a suggestion of the references considered essential to go along with the utilisation of the handbook. At the end, the reader will have acquired the basic notions on structural equation modelling, namely with the LISREL program. If, ideally, the reading of this handbook could be accompanied by an actual analysis, based on a real or simulation sample, the reader will get a more accurate idea of how LISREL works in practice and be better prepared to evolve in the learning process.

Good Luck!

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