Introduction to structural equation modeling

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03.11.2021

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Introduction of the Swiss SEM team

- Dr. Frank Pennekamp (main instructor)
- Dr. James Grace (advanced topics and model clinic)
- Dr. Rachel Korn (course development)
- Dr. Noémie Pichon, Dr. Fletcher Halliday, Dr. Eliane Meier, Dr. Hugo Saiz, Dr. Debra Zuppinger-Dingley, Rebecca Oester, Annabelle Constance, Fabienne Wiederkehr (course development)

Schedule

- Day 1:
    - General introduction to SEM to model ecological systems
    - Fitting SEMs to data
    - Model pruning, visualization and reporting
    - Discussion with James Grace
- Day 2:
    - Latent and composite variables
    - Interactions
    - Complex sampling designs
    - Spatial autocorrelation
    - Discussion with James Grace
- Day 3:
    - Self-study with possibility to meet with instructor(s)

Overview

- What the course is about:
  - Global estimation with R package lavaan
  - Hands on exercises and live coding
  - We will work (mostly) with a single, ecological dataset
- What will not be covered
  - Local estimation of SEMs (with piecewiseSEM)
  - Advanced topics like incorporating random effects, feedbacks, temporal autocorrelation

Learning objectives

- Participants understand the benefits and limits of SEMs
- Participants are able to fit, interpret and visualize a SEM
- Participants are able to apply SEM to their own dataset