Informative Hypotheses as a Methodological Middle-Ground in the Formative Measurement Debate

Houston F. Lester; Quantitative, Qualitative, & Psychometric Methods Program, Nebraska Academy for Methodology, Analytics, & Psychometrics

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Social science researchers are often interested in measuring constructs that are not directly observable. Some latent constructs are operationalized using formative measurement approaches in which the construct is formed by its indicators: e.g., socioeconomic status (SES), an individuals’ social standing as determined by their occupational status, education level, and income. The use of formative measurement has been called into question due to several perceived limitations (e.g., interpretational confounding). Prior research has suggested fixing the formative indicator coefficients or allowing them to be estimated freely which results in overly restrictive measurement models and no assurances that the desired construct is being measured, respectively. This presentation describes Bayesian structural equation modeling with informative hypotheses as a methodological middle-ground that has advantages over either of the existing practices.

If you have questions about this seminar, contact Professor Mark Davison, mld@umn.edu.

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