Series Editor's Note

Writing an introduction to a book on longitudinal structural equation modeling is a bit like preaching to the choir. Like Christian Geiser, I have been a student of longitudinal models because of the powerful information that these models can convey. Geiser highlights the advantages of the latent variable approach to longitudinal models, including correcting for measurement error, establishing measurement equivalence, informing causal inference because of the temporal separation of the repeated measurements, and the like. Geiser focuses on the use of Mplus (see *statmodel.com*) as the software platform, with numerous annotated scripts located in the online support pages for his book (*www.guilford.com/Geiser2-materials*) and detailed scripting examples organized in boxes that clearly detail both input syntax and output results.

As I wrote in the introduction to Chip Reichardt's book *Quasi-Experimentation*, I like the word "verisimilitude"—the truth-like value of a study's results. With longitudinal data we can achieve a high level of verisimilitude around causal inference and direction of effects. Geiser covers a broad array of traditional longitudinal models and the latent state–trait framework that he learned about from a couple of pillars in the state–trait longitudinal modeling arena, Michael Eid and Rolf Steyer. The latent state–trait theory and its recent revision provide a different viewpoint for thinking about growth and change in longitudinal research. I'm a big fan of different perspectives because they broaden and enhance how we think and theorize about change processes. Geiser's book gives this perspective an authoritative and complete treatment, and situates other

longitudinal models (e.g., autoregressive, change score, and growth curve models) in the context of the latent state–trait theory.

Chapters are consistently organized and build from one to the next in a clear sequence, with end-of-chapter summaries that highlight the key takeaway messages. In later chapters, Geiser addresses the critical process of model selection (see also James Jaccard & Jacob Jacoby, 2020), handling missing data in longitudinal research, and guidelines for disseminating results in research publications.

Pedagogically, Geiser isolates and emphasizes key topics, formulas, input scripts, and output samples in the form of boxes. These boxes are particularly well crafted and useful because they heighten focus on these critical points. A thorough glossary of Greek symbols, mathematical coefficients and variables symbols, and commonly used acronyms is included. I'm confident you'll find this book a critical resource to complement your library of longitudinal modeling guides. As always, enjoy!

TODD D. LITTLE
At home
Lubbock, Texas

Guilford Publications
370 Seventh Avenue
New York, NY 10001
212-431-9800
800-365-7006
www.guilford.com