

Does One-size-fit all? Revealing Insights Regarding Context Specific Fit Criteria for Confirmatory Factor Analysis vs. Covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling

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Cite as:

Schröder Nadine, Falke Andreas, Endres Herbert (2021), Does One-size-fit all? Revealing Insights Regarding Context Specific Fit Criteria for Confirmatory Factor Analysis vs. Covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 50th, (94546)

Paper from the 50th Annual EMAC Conference, Madrid, May 25-28, 2021



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Abstract

Model (mis-)specification in structural equation modeling can cause researchers to arrive at wrong conclusions or missed insights. There are still contradictory results on how well fit criteria can detect misspecification. In two simulation studies and from empirical examples, we reveal two things. First, recommended fit criteria combinations only marginally cover model (mis-) specification because they still accept many misspecified models or reject too many correctly specified models. Second, the ability of fit criteria to detect (mis-) specification differs between confirmatory factor analysis and covariance-based structural equation modeling and is also subject to data and model characteristics. Therefore, we develop context specific criteria combinations, which accept more correctly specified models than previous recommendations while rejecting the vast majority of misspecified models. Thus, researchers do not lose important insights but gain additional insights from their data.

Keywords: *model classification; structural equation modeling; confirmatory factor analysis*

Track: Methods, Modelling & Marketing Analytics