



## Continuous variables without missing values: confirmatory factor analysis

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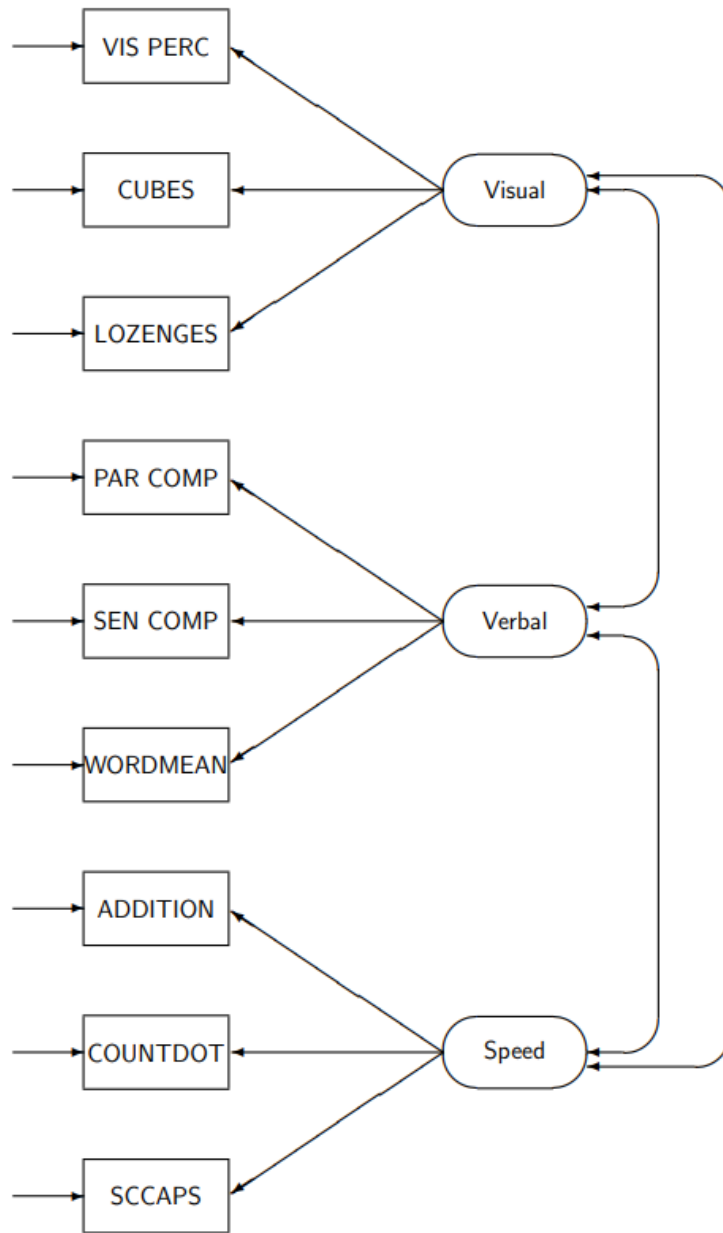
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### 1. Introduction

To illustrate all the different cases and the different steps in the analysis the classical example of confirmatory factor analysis of nine psychological variables (NPV) from the Holzinger-Swineford (1939) study will be used. The nine variables is a subset of 26 variables administered to 145 seventh- and eighth-grade children in the Grant-White school in Chicago. The nine tests are (with the original variable number in parenthesis):

- **VIS PERC** Visual Perception (V1)
- **CUBES** Cubes (V2)
- **LOZENGES** Lozenges (V4)
- **PAR COMP** Paragraph Comprehension (V6)
- **SEN COMP** Sentence Completion (V7)
- **WORDMEAN** Word meaning (V9)
- **ADDITION** Addition (V10)
- **COUNTDOT** Counting dots (V12)
- **SCCAPS** Straight-curved capitals (V13)

It is hypothesized that these variables have three correlated common factors: visual perception here called Visual, verbal ability here called Verbal and speed here called Speed such that the first three variables measure Visual, the next three measure Verbal, and the last three measure Speed. A path diagram of the model to be estimated is given in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model for Nine Psychological Variables**

Suppose the data is available in a text file **npv.dat** with the names of the variables in the first line. The first few lines of the data file looks like this<sup>1</sup>

'VIS PERC'	CUBES	LOZENGES	'PAR COMP'	'SEN COMP'	WORDMEAN	ADDITION	COUNTDOTS	SCCAPS
33	22	17	8	17	10	65	98	195
34	24	22	11	19	19	50	86	228
29	23	9	9	19	11	114	103	144
16	25	10	8	25	24	112	122	160
30	25	20	10	23	18	94	113	201
36	33	36	17	25	41	129	139	333
28	25	9	10	18	11	96	95	174

<sup>1</sup> If a name contains spaces or other special characters, put the name within '' as shown.

30	25	11	11	21	8	103	114	197
20	25	6	9	21	16	89	101	178
27	26	6	10	16	13	88	107	137
32	21	8	1	7	11	103	136	154

## 2. Creating a LISREL Data System File

For most analyses with LISREL it is convenient to work with a LISREL **data system file** of the type **\*.lsf**. LISREL can import data from many formats such as SAS, SPSS, STATA, and EXCEL. LISREL can also import data in text format with spaces (**\*.dat** or **\*.raw**), commas (**\*.csv**) or tab characters (**\*.txt**) as delimiters between entries. The data is then stored as a LISREL data system file **.lsf**. First, we illustrate how to import a text file with spaces as delimiters. The procedure is the same for all other types of files. Importation of data from external sources is described in the PRELIS Guide.

Since the data in this example is a text file with spaces as delimiters, an easy way to create a **.lsf** file is by running the following simple PRELIS syntax file

```
DA NI=9
RA=NPV.DAT LF CO All
OU RA=NPV.LSF
```

LF is a new PRELIS option to tell PRELIS that the labels are in the first line(s) of the data file.

## 3. Estimating the Model by Maximum Likelihood

With the **npv.lsf** file on hand, one can estimate the model by normal theory maximum likelihood<sup>2</sup>. The first SIMPLIS file is (see file **npv1a.spl**):

```
Estimation of the NPV Model by Maximum Likelihood
Raw Data from File npv.lsf
Latent Variables: Visual Verbal Speed Relationships:
'VIS PERC' - LOZENGES = Visual
'PAR COMP' - WORDMEAN = Verbal ADDITION - SCCAPS = Speed
Path Diagram
End of Problem
```

One can also include a line

```
Path Diagram
```

to display path diagrams with parameter estimates, standard errors, and *t*-values.

The sample covariance matrix **S** is given as

		Covariance Matrix					
		VIS PERC	CUBES	LOZENGES	PAR COMP	SEN COMP	WORDMEAN
		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
VIS PERC		47.801					
CUBES		10.013	19.758				

<sup>2</sup> The term normal theory maximum likelihood is used to mean that the estimation of the model is based on the assumption that the variables have a multivariate normal distribution.

LOZENGES	25.798	15.417	69.172			
PAR COMP	7.973	3.421	9.207	11.393		
SEN COMP	9.936	3.296	11.092	11.277	21.616	
WORDMEAN	17.425	6.876	22.954	19.167	25.321	63.163
ADDITION	17.132	7.015	14.763	16.766	28.069	33.768
COUNTDOT	44.651	15.675	41.659	7.357	19.311	20.213
SCCAPS	124.657	40.803	114.763	39.309	61.230	79.993

Covariance Matrix

	ADDITION	COUNTDOT	SCCAPS
	-----	-----	-----
ADDITION	565.593		
COUNTDOT	293.126	440.792	
SCCAPS	368.436	410.823	1371.618

Total Variance = 2610.906 Generalized Variance = 0.106203D+17

Largest Eigenvalue = 1734.725 Smallest Eigenvalue = 3.665

Condition Number = 21.756

The total variance is the sum of the diagonal elements of **S** and the generalized variance is the determinant of **S** which equals the product of all the eigenvalues of **S**. The largest and smallest eigenvalues of **S** are also given. These quantities are useful in principal components analysis. The condition number is the square root of the ratio of the largest and smallest eigenvalue. A small condition number indicates multicollinearity in the data. If the condition number is very small LISREL gives a warning. This might indicate that one or more variables are linear or nearly linear combinations of other variables.

LISREL gives parameter estimates, standard errors, Z-values, P-values and  $R^2$  for the measurement equations as follows:

LISREL Estimates (Maximum Likelihood)

Measurement Equations

VIS PERC = 4.678\*Visual, Errorvar.= 25.915,  $R^2 = 0.458$   
 Standerr (0.624) (4.582)  
 Z-values 7.499 5.656  
 P-values 0.000 0.000

CUBES = 2.296\*Visual, Errorvar.= 14.487,  $R^2 = 0.267$   
 Standerr (0.408) (1.981)  
 Z-values 5.622 7.313  
 P-values 0.000 0.000

LOZENGES = 5.769\*Visual, Errorvar.= 35.896,  $R^2 = 0.481$   
 Standerr (0.751) (6.660)  
 Z-values 7.684 5.390  
 P-values 0.000 0.000

PAR COMP = 2.922\*Verbal, Errorvar.= 2.857,  $R^2 = 0.749$   
 Standerr (0.237) (0.589)  
 Z-values 12.312 4.854  
 P-values 0.000 0.000

SEN COMP = 3.856\*Verbal, Errorvar.= 6.749 , R<sup>2</sup> = 0.688  
 Standerr (0.333) (1.165)  
 Z-values 11.590 5.792  
 P-values 0.000 0.000

WORDMEAN = 6.567\*Verbal, Errorvar.= 20.034, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.683  
 Standerr (0.569) (3.419)  
 Z-values 11.532 5.859  
 P-values 0.000 0.000

ADDITION = 15.676\*Speed, Errorvar.= 319.868, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.434  
 Standerr (2.012) (48.754)  
 Z-values 7.792 6.561  
 P-values 0.000 0.000

COUNTDOT = 16.709\*Speed, Errorvar.= 161.588, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.633  
 Standerr (1.752) (38.166)  
 Z-values 9.535 4.234  
 P-values 0.000 0.000

SCCAPS = 25.956\*Speed, Errorvar.= 697.900 , R<sup>2</sup> = 0.491  
 Standerr (3.117) (116.524)  
 Z-values 8.328 5.989  
 P-values 0.000 0.000

By default LISREL standardizes the latent variables. This seems most reasonable since the latent variables are unobservable and have no definite scale. The correlations among the latent variables, with standard errors and Z-values are given as follows

#### Correlation Matrix of Independent Variables

	Visual	Verbal	Speed
Visual	1.000		
Verbal	0.541 (0.085) 6.355	1.000	
Speed	0.523 (0.094) 5.562	0.336 (0.091) 3.674	1.000

These estimates have been obtained by maximizing the likelihood function  $L$  under multivariate normality. Therefore it is possible to give the log-likelihood values at the maximum of the likelihood function. It is common to report the value of  $-2\ln(L)$ , sometimes called deviance, instead of  $L$ . LISREL gives the value  $-2\ln(L)$  for the estimated model and for a saturated model. A saturated model is a model where the mean vector and covariance matrix of the multivariate normal distribution are unconstrained.

The log-likelihood values are given in the output as

#### Log-likelihood Values

Estimated Model	Saturated Model
-----	-----

Number of free parameters( <i>t</i> )	21	45
-2ln(L)	6706.910	6655.724
AIC (Akaike, 1974)*	6748.910	6745.724
BIC (Schwarz, 1978)*	6811.276	6879.365

\*LISREL uses  $AIC = 2t - 2\ln(L)$  and  $BIC = t\ln(N) - 2\ln(L)$

LISREL also give the values of AIC and BIC. These can be used for the problem of selecting the “best” model from several a priori specified models. One then chooses the model with the smallest AIC or BIC. The original papers of Akaike (1974) and Schwarz (1978) define AIC and BIC in terms of  $\ln(L)$  but LISREL uses  $-2\ln(L)$  and the formulas:

$$AIC = 2t - 2\ln(L), \quad (1)$$

$$BIC = t\ln(N) - 2\ln(L), \quad (2)$$

where  $t$  is the number of free parameters in the model and  $N$  is the total sample size.

#### 4. Testing the Model

Various chi-square statistics are used for testing structural equation models. If normality holds and the model is fitted by the maximum likelihood (ML) method, one such chi-square statistic is obtained as  $N$  times the minimum of the ML fit function, where  $N$  is the sample size. An asymptotically equivalent chi-square statistic can be obtained from a general formula developed by Browne (1984) and using an asymptotic covariance matrix estimated under multivariate normality. These chi-square statistics are denoted  $C_1$  and  $C_2(NT)$ , respectively. They are valid under multivariate normality of the observed variables and if the model holds.

For this analysis, LISREL gives the two chi-square values  $C_1$  and  $C_2(NT)$  as

Degrees of Freedom for (C1)-(C2)	24
Maximum Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square (C1)	51.187 (P = 0.0010)
Browne's (1984) ADF Chi-Square (C2_NT)	48.615 (P = 0.0021)

#### 5. Robust Estimation

The analysis just described assumes that the variables have a multivariate normal distribution. This assumption is questionable in many cases. Although the maximum likelihood parameter estimates are considered to be robust against non-normality, their standard errors and chi-squares are affected by non-normality. It is therefore recommended to use the maximum likelihood method with robustified standard errors and chi-squares, which is called Robust Maximum Likelihood. To do so just include a line

Robust Estimation

anywhere between the second line and the last line, see file **npv2a.spl**. This gives the following information about the distribution of the variables.

Total Sample Size(N) = 145

Univariate Summary Statistics for Continuous Variables

Variable	Mean	St. Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis	Minimum Freq.	Maximum Freq.
-----	----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

VIS PERC	29.579	6.914	-0.119	-0.046	11.000	1	51.000	1
CUBES	24.800	4.445	0.239	0.872	9.000	1	37.000	2
LOZENGES	15.966	8.317	0.623	-0.454	3.000	2	36.000	1
PAR COMP	9.952	3.375	0.405	0.252	1.000	1	19.000	1
SEN COMP	18.848	4.649	-0.550	0.221	4.000	1	28.000	1
WORDMEAN	17.283	7.947	0.729	0.233	2.000	1	41.000	1
ADDITION	90.179	23.782	0.163	-0.356	30.000	1	149.000	1
COUNTDOT	109.766	20.995	0.698	2.283	61.000	1	200.000	1
SCCAPS	191.779	37.035	0.200	0.515	112.000	1	333.000	1

This shows that the range of the variables are quite different, reflecting the case that they are composed of different number of items. For example, PAR COMP has a range of 1 to 19, whereas SCCAPS has a range of 112 to 333. This is also reflected in the means and standard deviations.

LISREL also gives tests of univariate and multivariate skewness and kurtosis.

#### Test of Univariate Normality for Continuous Variables

Variable	Skewness		Kurtosis		Skewness and Kurtosis	
	Z-Score	P-Value	Z-Score	P-Value	Chi-Square	P-Value
VIS PERC	-0.604	0.546	0.045	0.964	0.367	0.833
CUBES	1.202	0.229	1.843	0.065	4.842	0.089
LOZENGES	2.958	0.003	-1.320	0.187	10.491	0.005
PAR COMP	1.995	0.046	0.761	0.447	4.559	0.102
SEN COMP	-2.646	0.008	0.693	0.489	7.483	0.024
WORDMEAN	3.385	0.001	0.720	0.472	11.977	0.003
ADDITION	0.826	0.409	-0.937	0.349	1.560	0.458
COUNTDOT	3.263	0.001	3.325	0.001	21.699	0.000
SCCAPS	1.008	0.313	1.273	0.203	2.638	0.267

The output file **npv2a.out** gives the same parameter estimates as before but different standard errors. As a consequence, *t*-values and *P*-values are also different. The parameter estimates and the two sets of standard errors are given in Table 1.

If the observed variables are non-normal, one can use the same formula from Browne (1984) using an asymptotic covariance matrix (ACM)<sup>3</sup> estimated under non-normality. This chi-square, often called the ADF (Asymptotically Distribution Free) chi-square statistic, is denoted  $C_2(NNT)$  in LISREL. It has been found in simulation studies that the ADF statistic does not work well because it is difficult to estimate the ACM accurately unless *N* is huge, see e.g, Curran, West, & Finch (1996).

<sup>3</sup>The ACM is an estimate of the covariance matrix of the sample variances and covariances. Under non-normality this involves estimates of fourth-order moments.

**Table 1: Parameter Estimates, Normal Standard Errors, and Robust Standard Errors**

Factor Loading	Parameter	Standard Errors	
	Estimates	Normal	Robust
VIS PERC on Visual	4.678	0.624	0.696
CUBES on Visual	2.296	0.408	0.377
LOZENGES on Visual	5.769	0.751	0.728
PAR COMP on Verbal	2.992	0.237	0.251
SEN COMP on Verbal	3.856	0.333	0.332
WORDMEAN on Verbal	6.567	0.569	0.575
ADDITION on Speed	15.676	2.012	1.836
COUNTDOT on Speed	16.709	1.752	1.781
SCCAPS on Speed	25.956	3.117	3.088
Factor Correlations			
Verbal vs Visual	0.541	0.085	0.094
Verbal vs Speed	0.523	0.094	0.100
Verbal vs Speed	0.336	0.091	0.115

Satorra & Bentler (1988) proposed another approximate chi-square statistic  $C_3$ , often called the SB chi-square statistic, which is  $C_1$  multiplied by a scale factor which is estimated from the sample and involves estimates of the ACM both under normality and non-normality. The scale factor is estimated such that  $C_3$  has an asymptotically correct mean even though it does not have an asymptotic chi-square distribution. In practice,  $C_3$  is conceived of as a way of correcting  $C_1$  for the effects of non-normality and  $C_3$  is often used as it performs better than the ADF test  $C_2(NT)$  in LISREL, particularly if  $N$  is not very large, see e.g., Hu, Bentler, & Kano (1992).

Satorra & Bentler (1988) also mentioned the possibility of using a Satterthwaite (1941) type correction which adjusts  $C_1$  such that the corrected value has the correct asymptotic mean and variance. This type of fit measure has not been much investigated, neither for continuous nor for ordinal variables. However, this type of chi-square fit statistic has been implemented in LISREL, where it is denoted  $C_4$ . For our present example, these appear in the output as

Degrees of Freedom for (C1)-(C3),C(5)	24
Maximum Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square (C1)	51.187 (P = 0.0010)
Browne's (1984) ADF Chi-Square (C2_NT)	48.615 (P = 0.0021)
Browne's (1984) ADF Chi-Square (C2_NNT)	64.202 (P = 0.0000)
Satorra-Bentler (1988) Scaled Chi-Square (C3)	49.715 (P = 0.0015)
Satorra-Bentler (1988) Adjusted Chi-Square (C4)	34.891 (P = 0.0060)
Degrees of Freedom for C4	16.844

$C_1$  and  $C_2(NT)$  are the same as before but with robust estimation LISREL9 also gives  $C_2(NNT)$ ,  $C_3$  and  $C_4$  so that one can see what the effect of non-normality is. In particular, the difference  $C_2(NNT) - C_2(NT)$  can be viewed as an effect of non-normality.



Note that  $C_4$  has its own degrees of freedom which is different from the model degrees of freedom. LISREL gives the degrees of freedom for  $C_4$  as a fractional number and uses these fractional degrees of freedom to compute the  $P$ -value for  $C_4$ .

## 6. Estimation Using Data in Text Form

Since the original data is given in text form in this example, it is not necessary to use a **lsf** file to analyze the data. One can read the text data file **npv.dat** directly into LISREL using the following SIMPLIS syntax file, see file **npv3a.spl**.

```

Estimation of the NPV Model by Robust Maximum Likelihood
Using text data with Labels in the first line
Raw Data from File NPV.DAT
Latent Variables: Visual Verbal Speed
Relationships:
  'VIS PERC' - LOZENGES = Visual
  'PAR COMP' - WORDMEAN = Verbal
  ADDITION - SCCAPS = Speed
Robust Estimation
Options: RS SC MI
Path Diagram
End of Problem

```

The Options line can be used to request additional output, see the SIMPLIS Syntax Guide. In this case, RS means residuals and standardized residuals, SC means completely standardized solution, and MI means modification indices.

## 7. Modifying the Model

The output file **npv3a.out** gives the following information about modification indices

The Modification Indices Suggest to Add the			
Path to	from	Decrease in Chi-Square	New Estimate
ADDITION	Visual	8.5	-6.90
COUNTDOT	Verbal	8.3	-4.94
SCCAPS	Visual	28.4	24.44
SCCAPS	Verbal	10.8	11.11

This suggests that the fit can be improved by adding a path from Visual to SCCAPS. If this makes sense, one can add this path and rerun the model. This gives a solution where

SCCAPS =	16.559*Visual	+ 16.274*Speed,	Errorvar.= 620.929,	$R^2 = 0.547$
Standerr	(3.700)	(3.359)	(98.281)	
Z-values	4.475	4.845	6.318	
P-values	0.000	0.000	0.000	

Degrees of Freedom for (C1)-(C3),C(5)	23
Maximum Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square (C1)	28.293 (P = 0.2049)
Browne's (1984) ADF Chi-Square (C2_NT)	27.898 (P = 0.2197)
Browne's (1984) ADF Chi-Square (C2_NNT)	31.701 (P = 0.1065)
Satorra-Bentler (1988) Scaled Chi-Square (C3)	28.221 (P = 0.2075)
Satorra-Bentler (1988) Adjusted Chi-Square (C4)	20.437 (P = 0.2342)
Degrees of Freedom for C4	16.656

indicating a good fit.

## 8. Analyzing Correlations

Factor analysis was mainly developed by psychologists for the purpose of identifying mental abilities by means of psychological testing. Various theories of mental abilities and various procedures for analyzing the correlations among psychological tests emerged.

Following this old tradition, users of LISREL might be tempted to analyze the correlation matrix of the nine psychological variables instead of the covariance matrix as we have done in the previous examples. However, analyzing the correlation matrix by maximum likelihood (ML) is problematic in several ways as pointed out by Cudeck (1989), see also Appendix C in Jöreskog, et al. (2003). There are three ways to resolve this problem:

**Approach 1** Use the covariance matrix and ML as before and request the completely standardized solution (SC)<sup>4</sup> as was done on the Options line in file **npv3a.spl**. This gives the completely standardized solution in matrix form as

### Completely Standardized Solution

LAMBDA-X						
	Visual	Verbal	Speed			
	-----	-----	-----			
VIS PERC	0.677	- -	- -			
CUBES	0.517	- -	- -			
LOZENGES	0.694	- -	- -			
PAR COMP	- -	0.866	- -			
SEN COMP	- -	0.829	- -			
WORDMEAN	- -	0.826	- -			
ADDITION	- -	- -	0.659			
COUNTDOT	- -	- -	0.796			
SCCAPS	- -	- -	0.701			
PHI						
	Visual	Verbal	Speed			
	-----	-----	-----			
Visual	1.000					
Verbal	0.541	1.000				
Speed	0.523	0.336	1.000			
THETA-DELTA						
	VIS PERC	CUBES	LOZENGES	PAR COMP	SEN COMP	WORDMEAN
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	0.542	0.733	0.519	0.251	0.312	0.317
THETA-DELTA						
	ADDITION	COUNTDOT	SCCAPS			
	-----	-----	-----			

<sup>4</sup> LISREL has two kinds of standardized solutions: the standardized solution (SS) in which only the latent variables are standardized and the completely standardized solution (SC) in which both the observed and the latent variables are standardized.

0.566      0.367      0.509

The disadvantage with this alternative is that one does not get standard errors for the completely standardized solution.

**Approach 2** Use the following PRELIS syntax file to standardize the original variables (file **npv2.prl**):

```
RA=NPV.LSF
SV ALL
OU RA=NPVstd.LSF
```

SV is a new PRELIS command to standardize the variables. One can standardize some of the variables by listing them on the SV line. **npv2.prl** produces a new lsf file **NPVstd.lsf** in which all variables have sample means 0 and sample standard deviations 1.

Then use **NPVstd.lsf** instead of **NPV.LSF** in **npv2a.spl** to obtain a completely standardized solution with robust standard errors.

**Approach 3** Use the sample correlation matrix with robust unweighted least squares (RULS) or with robust diagonally weighted least squares (RDWLS). This will use an estimate of the asymptotic covariance matrix of the sample correlations to obtain correct asymptotic standard errors and chi-squares under non-normality.

The following SIMPLIS command file demonstrates the Approach 3, see file **npv4a.spl**:

```
Estimation of the NPV Model
by Robust Diagonally Weighted Least Squares
Using Correlations
Raw Data from File NPV.LSF
Analyze Correlations
Latent Variables: Visual Verbal Speed
Relationships:
  'VIS PERC' - LOZENGES = Visual
  'PAR COMP' - WORDMEAN = Verbal
  ADDITION - SCCAPS = Speed
Robust Estimation
Options: DWLS
Path Diagram
End of Problem
```

Note the added line

Analyze Correlations

This gives the standardized solution as

LISREL Estimates (Robust Diagonally Weighted Least Squares)

Measurement Equations

VIS PERC =	0.726*Visual,	Errorvar.=	0.472 ,	R <sup>2</sup> =	0.528
Standerr	(0.0712)		(0.196)		
Z-values	10.201		2.408		
P-values	0.000		0.016		

CUBES = 0.481\*Visual, Errorvar.= 0.769 , R<sup>2</sup> = 0.231  
 Standerr (0.0815) (0.184)  
 Z-values 5.897 4.175  
 P-values 0.000 0.000

LOZENGES = 0.677\*Visual, Errorvar.= 0.541 , R<sup>2</sup> = 0.459  
 Standerr (0.0691) (0.191)  
 Z-values 9.794 2.832  
 P-values 0.000 0.005

PAR COMP = 0.863\*Verbal, Errorvar.= 0.255 , R<sup>2</sup> = 0.745  
 Standerr (0.0329) (0.176)  
 Z-values 26.257 1.448  
 P-values 0.000 0.147

SEN COMP = 0.836\*Verbal, Errorvar.= 0.302 , R<sup>2</sup> = 0.698  
 Standerr (0.0352) (0.177)  
 Z-values 23.743 1.707  
 P-values 0.000 0.088

WORDMEAN = 0.823\*Verbal, Errorvar.= 0.323 , R<sup>2</sup> = 0.677  
 Standerr (0.0364) (0.177)  
 Z-values 22.620 1.826  
 P-values 0.000 0.068

ADDITION = 0.611\*Speed, Errorvar.= 0.627 , R<sup>2</sup> = 0.373  
 Standerr (0.0662) (0.185)  
 Z-values 9.226 3.384  
 P-values 0.000 0.001

COUNTDOT = 0.711\*Speed, Errorvar.= 0.494 , R<sup>2</sup> = 0.506  
 Standerr (0.0588) (0.186)  
 Z-values 12.094 2.650  
 P-values 0.000 0.008

SCCAPS = 0.842\*Speed, Errorvar.= 0.290 , R<sup>2</sup> = 0.710  
 Standerr (0.0588) (0.194)  
 Z-values 14.324 1.498  
 P-values 0.000 0.134

Correlation Matrix of Independent Variables

	Visual	Verbal	Speed
Visual	1.000		
Verbal	0.535 (0.085) 6.292	1.000	
Speed	0.571 (0.087) 6.591	0.379 (0.087)	1.000