Author's response to reviews

Title: Web-based computer adaptive assessment of individual perceptions of job satisfaction for hospital workplace employees

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Feb. 03, 2011

Re: MS: 1007099461374415

Dear Dr Marshall:

Thank you very much for giving us another opportunity to revise our manuscript. We appreciate the thoughtful and helpful comments and suggestions from the reviewers. We have substantially revised the manuscript, had the English revised once again by a different professional editor, and provide our point-by-point responses starting on the next page.

We are eager to publish this work in your journal and believe this paper is of interest to the readers of the *BMC Medical Research Methodology*.

If you have any further requests or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Ben Su, MD, PhD.
Reviewer's report:
1. The revised manuscript is a great improvement in terms of readability. The authors have also conducted additional analyses on principal component analysis of the residuals and category functioning as suggested. However, for the comparison of responses of workers in two time-points, though the authors described the differences, the significance and implications of the differences over the two time points would need to be explained more clearly.

Response: With regarding to the comparison of responses of workers in two time-points, we have replaced the skewness analysis with traditional t test showing in Table 4, which could be more clearly and concisely for readers to understand.

Reviewer's report:
2. I greatly appreciated your changes of the manuscript and I evaluated that your improvements really increase its readability. Nevertheless, I still observe an aspect to be adequately considered.

One original comment about skewness analysis was: “The authors provide an alternative way to analyze differences in items among subjects across years. This alternative methodology seems to need a formal, methodological demonstration and explanation. In other words, if this methodology - as it seems - is here introduced for the first time, some comparative analyses to evaluate its goodness (with a formal analytical proof of its coherence) are required. On the other hand, if this formal approach has already been explored by previous literature, the references have to be considered and discussed. On the bottom of page 10 authors assert: “Previous studies found that skewness analysis is useful in evaluating dissimilarity of examinee groups”, but no reference is here reported”.

Your response was: “As suggested by the reviewer, we have added the reference [24] to the revised manuscript. Readers who are interested in the skewness analysis in group comparison can practice it with an Excel-VBA module. In the discussion of the previous published paper, there are detailed discussion of the similarities and discrepancies against t-test and ANOVA”. While I consider reference [24] and Excel-VBA module two important points to reply on comments, I would suggest improving your manuscript with a formal analytical proof about relevance of skewness analysis in evaluating dissimilarity of examinee groups. Indeed, in my opinion, reference [24] cannot be considered an entirely satisfactory response to the problem.

Response: We agree that skewness analyses can be confusing to some readers. Thus, we have decided to remove them and replaced with the traditional t-test statistic to examine difference between the two years.

3. Please also highlight (with 'tracked changes'/coloured/underlines/highlighted text) all changes made when revising the manuscript to make it easier for the Editors to give you a prompt decision on your manuscript.

Response: We have highlighted and underlined all the changes to the manuscript. Insertions are in red ??? [= color of inserted text] and deletions are at right hand side ??? [= color of deleted text].

4. Please also ensure that your revised manuscript conforms to the journal style (http://www.biomedcentral.com/info/ifora/medicine_journals). It is important that your files
RESPONSES TO REVIEWERS

are correctly formatted.

Response: We have reformatted the manuscript so that it conforms to journal style.