Author's response to reviews

Title: Should researchers use single indicators, best indicators, or multiple indicators in structural equation models?

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews: see over
June 26, 2012

Dear Adrian Aldercroft,

Below you will find our reply to your correspondence of May 28 2012 regarding

MS: 3072305445607546
Should researchers use single indicators, best indicators, or multiple indicators in structural equation models? by Leslie A. Hayduk and Levente Littvay

The history of this manuscript is that it was originally submitted to BMC Medical Research methodology July 5 2010. After responding to two initial reviewers (Muthen and Widaman) the revised manuscript was resubmitted in June of 2011 and sent to two new reviewers (Dolan and Geiser). Attached you will find our responses to this second set of reviewers.

This article challenges, and improves upon, some commonly-accepted structural equation modeling practices, and hence is likely to be controversial, but we trust BMC Medical Research Methodology is dedicated to keeping academic disagreements in the open/published literature rather than stifling publication based on “Additional material submitted by the reviewers” or comments to which we have no opportunity to respond.

The current reviews were helpful in that they led to smoothing the English and altering some emphasis to avoid misinterpretations. Our replies to the specific comments in your email appear below.

Dear Dr Hayduk,

Your manuscript has now been peer reviewed and the comments are accessible in PDF format from the link below. Do let us know if you have any problems opening the file.

Referee 2:
http://www.biomedcentral.com/imedia/1876318484706038_comment.pdf
Referee 1:
http://www.biomedcentral.com/imedia/1104571581700338_comment.pdf

We would be grateful if you could address the comments in a revised manuscript and provide a cover letter giving a point-by-point response to the concerns.

Please find our attached replies to the reviewers.
Please be aware that as major concerns have been raised, we will be seeking further advice when we receive your revised manuscript.

Only Reviewer 1 claimed his comments were “major compulsory” and we have looked at these especially carefully. We have responded to each of this reviewer’s comments by either clarifying some point(s) in the text, or by pointing out the deficiencies in this reviewer’s claims (in a final/new section of the article) when we felt some readers might be inclined to make similar mis-claims.

I (Leslie Hayduk) do not see what point(s) is/are in need of additional review given that three of the four reviewers have already indicated further statistical review is NOT required. Reviewers Dolan and Widaman directly indicated statistical review is not required, and Muthen indicated he had “assessed” the statistics. If you feel you need “further advice”, we have no objection to further reviews, but we would ask that:

a) you do NOT use Stanley Mulaik as a reviewer (his SEMNET and other actions predict bias),

and b) that you expedite the reviews, given the already-lengthy delay in reviewing this article.

We hope that you are able to convince the reviewers that your work is suitable for publication in BMC Medical Research Methodology.

We have substantively addressed the reviewers’ comments, so if the current reviewers remain unconvinced it is probably due to things they are unable or unwilling to express openly.

We would also like to apologise as we were unable to obtain comments on your revisions based on the earlier reports. Thus we had to start the review process over again. We apologise for the delays this has caused.

If you send this manuscript out to new reviewers, and it is ultimately published, we would appreciate your reporting the original data of submission as July 5 2010 so that the record is clear as to when this work had been submitted to the academic community. That will help ensure that others do not claim publication priority based on things they gleaned from us.

Editorial Requests:

1. Should you disagree with any points from the reviewers, please respond to their comments with a thorough scientific argument. We feel this will be beneficial in the re-review process.

   We have provided line-by-line responses to both reviewers (see attached).

2. For your manuscript to be accepted, we require that you reduce the wordiness of your manuscript. We also ask that you minimize the use of an informal tone.
In preparing our resubmission we expended the most time and effort on this task, and we think the article benefited from this attention. After reading the reviewers’ comments we re-examined the entire manuscript for redundancies, and other English features. This resulted in the manuscript being shortened by about 500 words. Then we returned to, and addressed, the reviewers’ comments in detail. This resulted in adding about 300 words, and hence the current manuscript is about 200 words shorter than previously.

3. We recommend that you copyedit the paper to improve the style of written English. If this is not possible, you may need to use a professional language editing service. For authors who wish to have the language in their manuscript edited by a native-English speaker with scientific expertise, BioMed Central recommends Edanz (www.edanzediting.com/bmc1). BioMed Central has negotiated a 10% discount to the fee charged to BioMed Central authors by Edanz. Use of an editing service is neither a requirement nor a guarantee of acceptance for publication. For more information, see our FAQ on language editing services at http://www.biomedcentral.com/authors/authorfaq/editing.

We preferred to do this ourselves, since many of the more unusual English feature had been introduced to provide alternative correct readings, or avoid incorrect readings. This is not the kind of thing people unfamiliar with the substantive material could do appropriately. Hence we did this ourselves.

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 are correctly formatted.

We have done what we can in this regard, but if there are things we unknowingly missed we would be willing to adjust or alter whatever is required.

We look forward to receiving your revised manuscript by 27 June 2012. If you imagine that it will take longer to prepare please give us some estimate of when we can expect it.

We have replied prior to your indicated date.

You should upload your cover letter and revised manuscript through http://www.biomedcentral.com/manuscript/login/man.asp?txt_nav=man&txt_man_id=3072305445607546. You will find more detailed instructions at the base of this email.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any problems or questions regarding your manuscript.

With best wishes,

Adrian Aldcroft
We hope this manuscript is now reaching publication. This paper is important, even if controversial, because it points out improvements that can be made in some currently-standard operating procedures.

Sincerely,

Leslie Hayduk

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Additional material submitted by the reviewers
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To submit your revised manuscript
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When you have revised your manuscript in light of the reviewer's comments and made any required changes to the format of your paper, please upload the revised version by following these instructions:

1. Go to http://www.biomedcentral.com/manuscript/login/man.asp?txt_nav=man&txt_man_id=3072305445607546 and log on with your email address and password.
2. With the 'Manuscript details' tab, please update the title, abstract and author details if they have changed since the previous version. It is very important that all changes are updated on this page, as well as in the manuscript file as the information on this page will be used in PubMed and on BioMed Central if your manuscript is accepted for publication.
3. With the 'Cover letter' tab, please provide a covering letter with a point-by-point description of the changes made.
4. With the 'Upload files' tab, please upload the revised version of the manuscript and press 'Submit new version'. Please wait for the confirmation page to appear - this may take a few moments.