RESPONSE TO REVIEWER

SAMPLE RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS' COMMENTS

Below are actual comments to a review I wrote sometime ago. I include it here so you can see the level of detail/discussion I expect for your letter. Also, though you don't have to do it for my class; if you're doing it for an actual journal, make sure to use department letterhead.

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Date

<Editor's name & title>
<Journal name>
<postal address>

Dear Prof. <Editor's Name>:

First, I want to thank you and your reviewers for the extremely helpful comments provided for our paper. In the paper we've addressed all comments – both specific and general – from all three reviewers.

There are too many comments and changes for us to list them all here. However, we would like to highlight some of the more general ones.

Many of reviewer #1147's comments came from notes directly on the document. Therefore, though the "typed" comments were two paragraphs, references to that reviewer appear quite frequently below.

Finally, the numbers in parentheses refer to the reviewer.

1. All three reviewers made reference to awkward sentences and lack of clarity in the flow of the text. We've addressed this issue across and within each section, paragraph, and sentence. As a result, we feel this version reads more cohesively and fluidly.

   Additionally, extra care was taken to remove polemical statements (#1072; #1147; #647)

2. "What, exactly, does "after high school" mean? Does it mean high school graduation?" (#1072; implied by #1147).

To address this, the following text was added to the description of the sample:

> All students who were selected in the 8th grade were reinterviewed in each of the subsequent years, regardless of their individual progress. Their subsequent grade level (e.g. 10th grade, 12th grade, etc.) is not the criteria for inclusion. The fact that the student was in the original cohort is the criteria for subsequent inclusion. As a result, though the cohort may be in the 12th grade, some of the students may not be, because they were held back, dropped out, or may have skipped a grade and thus graduated earlier than their 8th grade cohort. However, even with these variances within the post-8th grade years, throughout this document, we will use the same language used by the National Education Longitudinal Study – 8th grade (1988), 12th grade (1992), and two years after high school (1994).

3. Literature Review/Background

a. Due to the lack of clarity, the reference to sociocultural variables was removed (#1072).

b. The text was changed to make it clear when we were referring to differences within African American families as compared to differences between them and their non-African American counterparts (#1072).

c. In the section on theoretical models, race and gender were addressed separately from social class (#1072; #1147).

d. A theoretical/conceptual framework was identified – intersectionality – and followed throughout the document (Editor; #1027; #1147).

e. The family organization section was rewritten to make it less confusing to the reader (#647).

f. Sources/Citations were included where requested (#1147).

4. Data and Methods

a. We made it clear that parents were also interviewed for this study. Further, we made it clear when data came from the parent's survey versus the student's (#1072).

b. Text was added to more clearly describe the tests given to the students (#1147):

> The tests developed and administered with the NELS were similar to the tests given for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Cognitive tests for the NELS are based on Item Response Theory (IRT), where the student's score is based on the probability of getting all of the questions correct.

c. Text was added to make it clear that the parental configurations were not mutually exclusive categories (#1147):

> The three types of single-parent households are NOT configured to be mutually exclusive (see below for an example), but were developed to reflect the types of single-parent families most prevalent among African American children.

And later in that same discussion:

> Again, the configurations are not mutually exclusive, i.e. any student in a married family is also in a two-parent household.

d. The definition of dummy variables was removed (#1147).

5. Results

a. We made it clear that multiple regression was used for analysis (#1072).

b. Summary statistics are included (#1072) because if one wants to replicate our work, s/he will need that information. We did not discuss those results for we felt they were self-explanatory and we did not want to use precious manuscript space … especially given our additions with this revision.

c. Tables have been reformatted to be consistent with the style manual of the American Psychological Association (Editor; #1072).

d. We removed references to "African American students" and used the term "students." However, we did leave it once at the end for purposes of emphasis and clarity.

e. Reviewer #1072 is concerned that each regression model is not discussed. Each model and pertinent findings within them are indeed discussed. We feel that the awkward writing style (which has now been corrected), may have buried this and thus led the reader to think we were "misleading."

f. Reviewer #1027 is also concerned that interaction effects were not run. Footnote b in Table 4 now reads:

> Interaction effects were run between all parental configurations and 8th SES. Because none were statistically significant, the results are not shown here.

Other interaction effects were not run because it is the relationship between parental configuration and SES that is most central to the questions raised in this paper.

6. Discussion/Conclusion

a. Reference to "statistical analyses of data collected with questionnaires [being] a limitation only insofar as African American households are concerned" was removed (#1072).

b. To justify our claim about the intersecting categories of race/class/gender (#1072), we included the following sentence:

> Drawing on the discussion of race in the literature review (see above) and the findings of this study, we conclude that African American family structure is at its core innately tied to changes in the economy and the simultaneously intersecting categories of race/class/gender.

c. Large portions of the discussion section were rewritten to discuss and interpret our findings in the context of what is already known. We also include a discussion of what needs further study (#1072; implied by Editor and #1147).

Sincerely,

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