

European Journal of Higher Education – Transparent Peer Review

Title: A Network Approach to PhD Students' Well-Being: Insights into Risk and Protective Factors

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Reviewer 1

Reviewer Conflict of Interest: None declared.

1st Review

09-Apr-2024

Recommendation: Major Revision

Thank you very much for inviting me to review this manuscript.

I have only some few recommendations for revision before a publication is warranted.

1. I found the results very interesting, especially regarding sickness absence data which is rare in the JDR literature.

However, I found the use of the network analysis approach a bit technical and "arbitrary" argued at the moment.

I think you should try to better argue how this extends the current approaches in this literature.

For instance, one proposition is also that certain work factor constellations (e.g. high demands and high resources) have beneficial effects while others not (high job demands and low job resources).

This is often tested using moderated regression analysis (testing different combinations).

However, one might argue that not all of such combination actually appear in reality and especially that certain job characteristic profiles are more prevalent. So, some scholars have now use latent profile analysis to identify them.

I think your approach goes into that direction.

So this might be a contribution.

2. Please check the correctness of your reference list, e.g.

- page numbers of the Crawford reference list.

- Costantini, G., Epskamp, S., Borsboom, D., Perugini, M., Mõttus, R., Waldorp, L. J., & Cramer, A. O. (2015). State of the aRt personality research

etc.

3. Did you have any hypotheses? The JDR would give you the opportunity to develop and test some.

4. I was wondering, since you have data from PhD students of one university, if you can also investigate or at least control for multilevel characteristics as suggested in the latest JDR review

Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Sanz-Vergel, A. (2023). Job demands–resources theory: Ten years later. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 10, 25–53. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-120920-053933>

For instance, demands to receive the PhD degree might differ between subjects (psychology vs. chemistry vs. medicine vs. literature) and departments.

Even more the work characteristics. For instance, think about a PhD student who has to work at night in the lab to do some experiments or observations of animals.

There might be also different sickness absence cultures in such departments, which is also known from industrial work.

Nowak, J., Emmermacher, A., Wendsche, J., Döbler, A. S., & Wegge, J. (2022). Presenteeism and absenteeism in the manufacturing sector: A multilevel approach identifying underlying factors and relations to health. *Current psychology*, 1–19.

So, if you have more detailed information on department affiliation (more fine grained than faculty affiliation), that could be considered since I would assume that there should be more homogenous within-department work characteristics.

2nd Review

Unavailable

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