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

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Reviewer 2

Reviewer Conflict of Interest: None declared.

1st Review

07-Jun-2024

Recommendation: Major Revision

Authors,

The manuscript "A Network Approach to PhD Students Well-Being: Insights into Risks and Protective Factors" strengthen the knowledgebase of original research for the highly important theme on PhD student well-being as an international phenomenon, due to reported increased levels of PhD students lack of wellbeing.

The problem of the topic/Research questions.

Though, I tried to read the manuscript very carefully, I did not find a research question/research questions. It might be that they are formulated in a way I did not understand. Therefore, the clarification of the research questions should be done.

The description of authors' positionality and the roles in the research team in conducting the paper would strengthen the manuscript, since this would give the reader, a better understanding of the whole research process.

The conceptional framework/the theoretical framework based on the Job-Demands-Resources Theory works well and the conceptions and theoretical underpinnings are discussed throughout the manuscript.

Context of the study. The context of the study is missing. Therefore, more text about the specific context and the learning environment of the participants in the surveys in which the study is conducted is needed. Requirements, the typical doctoral route, supervisory policies, and other descriptions of doctoral education in the country helps the reader to understand the framework in

which the study is conducted.

Methodology and analyses were well described, and the method is supported by suitable references. Below are some suggestions for developing a clearer methods chapter:

- The selection of participants was well described, the description of the sample was clear, though it would be interesting to see the mean age of the participants. The representativeness of the overall population was missing.
- Page 9. line 13-17. "The study was approved.....and participants gave consent". The sentence is unclear. Please clarify the last part of the sentence regarding the consent of the participants.
- Page 13, lines 17-24. The authors are requested to cross-check and validate the reference for the explanation of the Work Engagement factor (9-item scale).
- Items included in all the scales used with Cronbach's Alpha, Mean and Standard Deviations could be shown in a table in the method chapter. This would contribute to the transparency of the measures that was used.

Results. The research team has reported the findings accurately using statistical analyses. The illustrations (figures) describe the results appropriately.

The discussion is supported by the data analyses. The findings are related to the conceptual framework.

- However, on page 26 (line 45) a short description of the PsyCap resource (what does it include) could be mentioned once again, since it was one of the main resources PhD students reported in the study.
- Page 27 (lines 47-52) need references to the suggested claim.

To sum up.

The aim and research questions must also be clarified in the beginning in the study and a bit more needs to be done to enhance the transparency of the Method section. The description of the core measures is suggested to be further clarified and a description of the context is needed.

This study makes a useful addition to the literature in post-graduate education and has appropriate focus and contents. The theme of the paper has clear associations to the long-term well-being dimension in doctoral education both in the research context, but also globally.

2nd Review

Unavailable

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