Reviewer's report

Title: A Mediation Model of Mindfulness and Decentering: Sequential psychological constructs or one and the same?

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Reviewer: Stefan Sütterlin

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript investigates the actual meaning and interrelationship of psychological constructs which have become popular in psychological science over recent years. Despite the growing number of studies investigating the effects of mindfulness, the definition and boundaries of this construct has not been sufficiently investigated, leading to sometimes fuzzy or unclear discussions and theoretical interpretations of study results.

In this manuscript the authors address a fundamental question in this context, the relationship between two concepts that have been both considered to be distinct or identical in controversial discussions.

The authors define the problem clearly and accurately, apply an appropriately chosen method on a decent sample size. I consider the strengths of this manuscript to be the thorough theoretical introduction and the carefully conducted statistical analysis and interpretation. From my opinion, the authors do a very good job on explaining the SEM analysis both precise and understandable also for readers less familiar with this advanced method.

What I am missing in this manuscript and would thus recommend as being part of a (compulsory) revision is a more thorough explanation/discussion of previously conflicting research results on this matter. As a reader of the introductory part of this manuscript I learn about the (seemingly?) contradictory findings of Shapiro et al and Carmody et al. However, at this stage it doesn't become clear enough yet why "one more study" can contribute to a preliminary or final answer to this question. The authors are careful suggesting no specific predictions/hypotheses for their study. I would like to see a clearer rationale why this study contributes more than just "one more result", i.e., what is the unique and superior contribution of THIS particular study - the methodological approach or other design-related advantages? The authors might reflect a bit more on the specifics of the conflicting studies and state which other studies besides the two mentioned contribute to this conflict. I consider these theoretical conflicts between researchers or research groups as potentially fruitful and which to be given a clearer overview and how the present manuscripts fits into this landscape. I can see such an attempt in the discussion section on pp. 22f, lines 544ff (multidimensionality), but think that the considerations that have been made prior to the study should be made clearer and will help the reader to assess the relevance and individual contribution of this paper better.
This being said, I think more manuscripts of this kind, applying advanced and appropriate statistical methods for further validation of frequently used and seemingly understood constructs are needed.

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.