Reviewer's report

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

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Reviewer: Marjan Nijkamp

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REVIEW Manuscript Title:
A mediation model of mindfulness and decentering: sequential psychological constructs or one and the same?

Discretionary Revisions
1. As stated in the introduction of the manuscript, the aim of the study was to clarify the relationship between mindfulness and decentering. A recent study by Hayes-Skelton and Graham (2013) published in Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapy aimed for the same clarification. They applied their research question to social anxiety (as compared to depressive symptoms in the current study). I suggest the authors to include and discuss this relevant publication in the manuscript: * Hayes-Skelton, S. and Graham, J. (2013). Decentering as a common link among mindfulness, cognitive reappraisal, and social anxiety. Behavioral and Cognitive Psychotherapy, 41: 317-328.

2. Forty-eight participants in this study scored above 12 on the DESC, reflecting a possible depressive episode. Did the study team refer these students to a psychologist for counseling? No comments were made with respect to these vulnerable respondents.

Major Compulsory Revisions
3. No information is given about the response rate of the study (only a given n=495). This number is quite low, especially regarding the complexity of the tested model. Furthermore, one should be cautious in generalizing the results of this study among higher educated and mostly Caucasians (no information is given about ethnic background) university students. Please elaborate on this limitation in the Discussion.

4. Concerning the statistical analysis, the analyses seem to be correct. However, it is not clear why besides Mplus, AMOS and SPSS are used additionally to estimate the paths in the model and calculate the effect sizes. In my knowledge Mplus could be sufficient in reporting the necessary data. It could simplify the analyses and improve the readability of the text.

5. The methods as well as the results sections of the study are presented in great detail (total word count over 6000), the authors could limit their text (and improve the readability) by referring to the revealing tables and Figure 1.
With regard to Figure 1 I suggest to present Mindfulness and Decentering as the concepts in relation to Depressive symptoms, instead of only presenting the subscales in relation to depressive symptoms. In this way it is easier to compare the analytic results with for example the former mentioned study by Hayes-Skelton and Graham (2013).

Minor Essential Revisions
6. A review of the linguistic style by a native speaker is recommended before (re)submission.

Based upon the above mentioned critics my advise is to accept the manuscript after major revisions.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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