Reviewer’s report

Title: Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) for General Practice Training selection in Australia: Interviewers' motivation

Version: 0 Date: 26 May 2017

Reviewer: Jacqui McLaughlin

Reviewer's report:

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Background:

In the theoretical framework section, please describe the process of motivation under SDT. How does competence, relatedness, and autonomy needs eventually lead to interviewers choosing to participate in MMI?

Why did the authors choose SDT? They claim it "makes intuitive sense" and "the dataset appeared to resonate closely with SDT." The context of the study is an unusual application of SDT, because whether an interviewer decides to participate in a MMI is a one time decision (vs. longer term motivation in the classroom). Consider adding some discussion about the implications of this application of SDT (as a one-time event) and how it might impact the findings of the study.

Methods:

SDT would posit that giving faculty a choice (i.e. autonomy) to participate in MMI's would increase their intrinsic motivation. However, this is not even mentioned in the method's context section.

Results:

Can you provide any data that describes the 40 focus group participants? Were they approximately representative of the entire sample of interviewers (e.g. 56% female, 86% English
speaking background)? Or were they very different in proportions of the entire sample? If very different, this could have some implications for generalizing the findings.

SDT is the study of intrinsic motivation but the decision to participate in a MMI might also be driven by extrinsic motivation. I would like to see this discussed in the manuscript. Did the authors identify any extrinsic motivators (e.g. paid time off, helping an administrator, asked by their boss ..)? If so, the authors could consider Ryan and Deci's Organismic Integration Theory which also includes extrinsic motivators.

It is also intriguing that "novelty" did come up as a motivating factor for interviewers since MMIs are a new. Could this be expanded upon in the context of the theoretical framework?

Why do the authors use "sense" of competence. Ryan and Deci call these "needs." Could you expand upon why the term "sense" is used or provide a reference that points the readers to more information.

The authors' interpretation so "need of relatedness" seems to deviate from Ryan and Deci's framework, in which a need for relatedness or belongingness is a drive based on peoples' need to feel like they are a part of something - like a community. Many of factors (professional obligation, held positions as trainers, sense of duty) seemed more aligned with interviewers being motivated by their internalized professional values (e.g. duty). The factor "enjoyed the opportunity to meet with their colleagues" seemed more appropriate for relatedness. Could the authors make more explicit connections between the relatedness factors and Ryan and Deci's framework to help the reader better understand the motivational aspects of this theme?

The factors (timetables, briefings) inhibiting motivation were very detail-oriented. Was there an overall theme of what inhibited motivation? Also, these factors seemed to be offered in a different vantage point of the interviewer. For example, how does poor implementation of the MMI impact interviewers' motivation? From this small slice of data, it seems some of the themes from an interviewer-perspective might be 1) interviewers expectations (e.g. expectation of organization) and 2) too much challenge (people are motivated by optimal challenges).

Could you provide clarity about who is getting the training for the "on the job training" and "discussions with experienced interviewers" themes? Are you talking about the applicants or the interviewers? Because this would make a difference as to whether the data fits in this section.

Discussion:

In general, I would've expected more discussion concerning other research on MMI interviewers. A number of studies have been published about MMIs and interviewer experiences and some discussion of that literature would be helpful for understanding how this study extends what's
already been done. In other words, what gap does this work fill in the larger body of research literature? (eg


It would also be helpful in the discussion section to have a paragraph concerning other basic motivation theories and what SDT contributes that others don't (e.g. Expectancy Theory).

There is very limited discussion about factors hindering motivation. Can you link this finding to any literature and discuss the implications of this? Is it similar to what others have found? Or is it different? Can you discuss this finding more in the context of motivation theory? What are the implications of this finding for AGPT and others using the MMI for interviews?

Are there next steps for this research? What additional research questions need to be answered to advance this work and improve our practice with MMIs? What opportunities do we have moving forward based on this study?

References:

For references 10 and 14, consider replacing them or adding additional references based on the primary research literature. The references provided seem to be popular press books written for the general public.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes
Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:
Acceptable

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None

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