Reviewer’s report

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

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Reviewer: Walter Tavares

Reviewer's report:

This study explores the role of MMI interviewer motivation using SDT as a theoretical lens. To understand this construct the authors surveyed and interviewed a number of MMI interviewers who had just participated in an MMI process. They find a number of interesting and potentially relevant findings, particularly toward supporting recruitment and retention of interviewers (both for an against) in the future (one of the rationales provided for conducting this study). I'm less clear on what this study contributes to our understanding beyond that purpose. Also, there are some details missing in the reporting and analysis of this study that would need to be addressed before recommending it for publication.

* The authors aim to study interviewer's motivations but it's not clear why. Rationales given include: it takes times away from clinical work, is resource intensive and might affect future recruitment and interviews. While all true, what does the literature say about motivation specifically in these or other areas and what is unique about the MMI context that suggests new or additional research is needed? This is oddly missing. While the authors are thorough in their review of the MMI, this section on motivation needs to be expanded IF it is the crux of their work. Later the authors introduce SDT and it may be helpful to explore literature using that model as well.

* Details regarding the development and content of the surveys are lacking. It appears as those the survey was purely for demographic reasons. If so, please ignore this comment, or at the most some rationale for what variables were consider may be helpful (a minor point that can be ignored).

* There is very little information regarding how the recruitment and enrolment of the 40 interviewers occurred. Very little information in provided about the how the interviews were conducted as well. Again, how was the interview guide constructed, how was final content determined, was this an open or semi-structured interview, who conducted the interviews etc.

* Some details regarding conventions related to qualitative research are missing. For example, identifying epistemology, whether data collection was concurrent, iterative or after all data was collected, returning to the data after early analyses, memos, end points, etc. It appears it was all collected then analyzed. These should be described.
To the point above, I don't think having only 13% of the interviewer pool is a problem assuming the end point for interviews was based on either information power or saturation. This is not described.

A brief description of "framework analysis" may be helpful, particularly since the references provided are books.

Again, to the points above, it is not clear if the analysis was inductive or deductive particularly after reading the statement "Emergent themes in the dataset appeared to resonate closely with key constructs of SDT. 5 Thereafter, SDT was used as a conceptual framework to identify recurrent themes. A coding framework was developed to code the entire dataset through the theoretical lens of SDT." The results suggest it was deductive, but I'm not certain. The theoretical framework is clearly beneficial. I just wondered what came first.

I apologize if I missed it, but it wasn't until the results that I realized that focus groups were conducted (as per the heading - is this accurate). This should be described / discussed in the methods section. Perhaps we understand focus groups differently - I'm not certain.

I wonder if it would be helpful to expand some quotes / results. For example, the quote "I think having someone who is an experienced GP being part of the interviewing is a good idea" provides little in understanding why. There are other examples. Overall the data is very descriptive rather than interpretive or constructivist - this may or may not be appropriate depending on the qualitative approach taken (see comments above).

I wonder (and could concede) whether obligation and sense of duty were reflective of a "sense of relatedness". Not asking for a revision necessarily, just a point of reflection.

I thought the discussion was well structured. However, I would suggest that for each dimension, the authors describe each based on the literature, and make more explicit what others have said about these dimensions (and their implications), then fit their results into that conversation.

Was there anything in SDT that didn't appear in the results, that perhaps the authors were surprised about?

Finally, as mentioned in the opening, it would be helpful if the authors could elaborate on what they believe these findings contribute either to SDT, MMIs as an admission process or motivation as a construct - extending beyond application to recruitment and retention. It would seem there is some potential to contribute in this way without over extending the results, discussion and conclusions.
Minor

* Might suggest supporting the last line of paragraph 2 on page 3 with a reference.

* The head "surveys" suggest there was more than 1. How many were used?

* I would suggest moving the number of those interviewed to the results, or since its included in the result, removing it from the methods section.

* The statement "emergent themes in the dataset appeared to resonate closely with key constructs of SDT" should be move to the results.

* I would suggest that there are other limitation depending on how the methods are eventually refined (e.g., representativeness, saturation issues etc.).

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

No

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

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable
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