Reviewer’s report

Title: Use of concept mapping to characterize relationships among implementation strategies and assess their feasibility and importance: Results from the Expert Recommendations for Implementing Change (ERIC) study

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Reviewer: Henna Hasson

Reviewer's report:

This paper presents important work concerning definitions of implementation strategies. The paper presents clear findings that are highly needed in the field of implementation science and practice. Even the paper is a "Short paper" it would be helpful for the reader if some more information would be provided. See the suggestions below.

Major Compulsory Revisions

Discussion

1. The short discussion section repeats unnecessarily some of the methodological facts (concept mapping, cluster analyses). It is suggested that two short and clear paragraphs are developed. The first one could shortly state the main contributions of the results and the implication of these for IS and practice. The second paragraph should shortly discuss the main methodological issues of the study such as the experts coming only from two countries and the strengths of the concept mapping method.

Minor Essential Revisions

Background

2. It is stated on p. 3 that the aim of the study is to identify relationships between the 73 ERIC implementation strategies and use this information to cluster the strategies into useful groupings. In the abstract, a broader aim is presented. It would be helpful for the reader to capture the aim of the study in the background text. It seems that the study aims to validate the compilation of 73 implementation strategies by studying the relationships between the strategies together with the relative importance and feasibility. It is suggested that all three parts of the aim (relationships, importance and feasibility) are included in the aim presented in the background section.

3. After the aim, the paragraph continues with description of the methods. It is suggested that this part of the text is presented in the method section and
instead a longer reasoning for why this study is needed is provided (i.e. rational for identifying of relationships, the relative importance and feasibility of the strategies).

Methods

4. It would be helpful for those readers who are not familiar with the concept mapping process if the methods were described with the same terms that are used in the other parts of the paper. For instance, the first paragraph: “sorting task” refers to studying the relationships between the strategies (in some parts of the paper this process is referred as “placing strategies into similar groups”).

5. Please provide some more information about how the experts were instructed to rate the importance and feasibility. For instance, did they rate the importance for the outcomes of an implementation?

6. The second paragraph on p. 5. Please clarify that each point represents a strategy. For instance, “…with each point on the map representing a strategy and numbered with their labels enumerated in Table 1 to aid in cross-referencing the spatial relationships of the points”.

Level of interest: An article of importance 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