

Indicators of Burnout and Recovery in Early-Career Psychologists: A Thematic Analysis

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The sentence “Burnout, a multifaceted syndrome characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment...” would benefit from directly citing Maslach’s foundational work, as this is a standard definition in the literature.

The discussion of precarious employment (“short-term contracts, limited financial security, and unclear career trajectories”) could benefit from including recent data on early-career employment patterns in Ireland or Europe to support the argument empirically.

The authors write, “These insights suggest that recovery from burnout is not merely a return to baseline functioning but may also involve transformative processes of resilience building.” This is insightful but could be framed more clearly in relation to post-traumatic growth literature to situate it within an established theoretical framework.

The authors conclude “inadequate supervision diminishes resilience and increases vulnerability.” This could be better supported by integrating supervisory models (e.g., developmental models of supervision, Bernard’s model).

Authors revised and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The authors cite Dorociak et al. (2017; Fletcher et al., 2011) as evidence of systemic stressors but do not clearly connect how these systemic issues uniquely affect early-career psychologists compared to mid-career or senior professionals. Clarification is needed.

The claim that “psychology presents a distinctive case due to its dual demands of high emotional labor and strong professional values” is compelling but would be strengthened with a comparison to another profession to demonstrate distinctiveness.

The subtheme “Continuous Development” is important, but the examples provided (attending workshops, research) lack depth. Consider illustrating with a quotation showing how professional development directly buffered against burnout.

The authors claim “burnout manifests through emotional exhaustion, cognitive strain, physical symptoms, behavioral withdrawal...” but this largely repeats the Findings section. Consider synthesizing these manifestations with theoretical models (e.g., Maslach, Job Demands-Resources model).

The phrase “management keeps saying ‘self-care is important’ but then piles on more cases” is anecdotal. While illustrative, discussion should contextualize this tension with organizational psychology theory on surface-level vs. substantive support.

Authors revised and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.