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Identifying Perceived Barriers to Seeking Psychological Help Among Rural Youth


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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The statement “help-seeking for psychological difficulties remains alarmingly low among young people globally” would benefit from citing recent European or WHO statistical data to anchor the claim empirically.

Sentences such as “Rural contexts intensify these barriers by combining socio-spatial isolation with tight-knit community structures...” and later “In Greece and similar Mediterranean societies, rural communities are often characterized by collectivist orientations...” partially overlap. Consider condensing for smoother logical flow.

In “A total of 22 participants were recruited through purposive sampling...”, provide clear rationale for sample size and details on recruitment (e.g., how youth organizations were selected, response rate). Readers may question representativeness across four regions.

The phrase “transcribed verbatim in Greek, then translated into English for analysis” raises concerns about translation reliability. Explain whether back-translation or bilingual validation was used to ensure meaning equivalence.

Although the study mentions informed consent, the paragraph lacks explicit mention of institutional ethics approval or review board name. Add this information to reinforce research ethics compliance.

The table lists subcategories and concepts effectively but mixes paraphrased and quoted codes (e.g., “Being called ‘crazy’”). Ensure uniform quotation formatting and consider adding frequency or exemplar participant codes to substantiate theme density.

The excerpt “If people in my village knew I was seeing a psychologist...” is illustrative but needs analytic commentary linking to social identity theory or stigma internalization models. Currently, the quote is powerful yet under-interpreted.

The statement “I tried an online session, but my connection dropped three times...” indicates digital exclusion. The authors could interpret this finding through the digital divide framework to connect with global literature on tele-mental health inequities.

The paragraph “Beyond cultural and systemic influences...” merges several psychological constructs (self-efficacy, fear of self-disclosure, denial). For analytic clarity, consider separating cognitive (beliefs) from affective (emotional inhibition) dimensions.

The quotation “My friends joke that therapy is for city people...” could be analyzed through social conformity and peer norm theory. Including brief theoretical interpretation would elevate analytical depth.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the paragraph beginning “Across international contexts, research has increasingly emphasized...” the global literature is reviewed comprehensively, but the Greek rural context is introduced late. Consider moving part of this discussion earlier and emphasizing why Greece represents a particularly under-researched context.

The paragraph starting “The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides a valuable framework...” could better connect TPB variables (attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control) with the four barriers later found. Explicit theoretical alignment early in the introduction would enhance conceptual coherence.

In “These results highlight that help-seeking is not a simple behavioral decision...” the authors correctly identify multidimensionality but could better articulate inter-theme interactions (e.g., how stigma magnifies structural barriers or low self-efficacy).

The section cites the TPB and MHL frameworks but lacks discussion of how findings extend or challenge these theories. For instance, does the “double stigma” in rural Greece suggest a modification of TPB’s normative component?

The paragraph beginning “The second major theme concerned structural inequities...” compares to global studies, but cross-regional contrasts (e.g., within EU or Balkan rural contexts) are missing. Including at least one comparison to a nearby European sample would enhance contextual relevance.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.