

Prediction of Burnout Among Caregivers in Elderly Care Centers Based on Psychological Capital and Empathy: The Mediating Role of Caregiving Burden

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The paragraph discussing caregiving challenges in Iran would benefit from a clearer linkage to the specific organizational structure of Iranian elderly care centers (e.g., staffing ratios, training requirements). Currently, the cultural argument remains general and could be more tightly contextualized.

The discussion of empathy would benefit from a clearer differentiation between cognitive empathy and affective empathy, particularly because the Empathy Quotient used later includes multiple dimensions. This distinction is theoretically important for interpreting the mediation results.

The paragraph beginning “The relationship between empathy and burnout is therefore complex...” is well written, but the authors could strengthen it by explicitly framing empathy as a double-edged construct, which would later justify the nonsignificant direct path found in the structural model.

The authors describe five subscales but do not explain why total burden rather than specific burden dimensions was emphasized in the structural model. A brief justification would improve transparency.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. *Reviewer 2*

Reviewer:

The definition of psychological capital is theoretically sound; however, the citation “Luthans et al., 2007” appears misspelled and should be corrected to Luthans consistently throughout the manuscript to ensure bibliographic accuracy.

When stating “psychological capital functions as a foundational psychological asset”, the authors should explicitly clarify whether psychological capital is modeled as a second-order latent construct conceptually, since this has implications for SEM justification later in the paper.

The authors introduce caregiver burden as a mediating construct; however, a short conceptual sentence explaining why burden is theoretically positioned as a mediator rather than a moderator would significantly improve model logic.

The study aim is clearly stated. Nonetheless, the authors may consider explicitly mentioning structural equation modeling in the aim sentence to align the research objective with the analytical strategy used.

In the sentence “a non-random, voluntary sampling method was employed”, the authors should clarify potential self-selection bias and briefly explain how it might influence parameter estimates in SEM.

Given the multidimensional nature of empathy, the authors should clarify whether the SEM model treats empathy as a single latent factor or whether subdimensions were tested separately before aggregation.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. **Revised**

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.