Identifying Factors Influencing Career Disengagement in Highly Educated Women

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The statement "Understanding the factors that influence these women's decisions…" would benefit from a brief definition or conceptualization of "career disengagement" early on, to anchor the reader in the scope and implications of the construct.

The authors refer to "iterative coding"—please clarify whether multiple coders were involved and how inter-coder reliability or consensus was established.

The reference to "constant comparison" suggests grounded theory influence. Please specify whether your thematic approach was purely inductive or partly deductive, and whether you followed Braun & Clarke's framework.

The "Open Codes" column is insightful but would benefit from at least one illustrative quote for each main theme to enhance the connection between codes and data.

The quote "I made the choice to leave. That's power." is compelling. Please consider elaborating on how agency and empowerment emerged across participants—was this a majority experience or more nuanced?

You note, "These narratives are consistent with prior findings…"—but it's not clear whether cultural context in South Africa exacerbates these dynamics. Please expand on this point, as cultural specificity is a strength of your study.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2.   Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The sentence "Studies reveal that women may report paradoxically high satisfaction despite limited advancement…" requires further clarification. Consider elaborating on how satisfaction is being measured and whether it's influenced by coping mechanisms or social desirability bias.

The use of "borderless career attitudes" is compelling but undefined. Please briefly define this term and contextualize it within current career development literature.

The sentence "I was there for the diversity numbers…" is powerful. However, this insight would be enhanced by briefly connecting it to tokenism theory (e.g., Kanter, 1977).

The phrase "misalignment with personal values…" could be deepened. Consider linking this to career construction theory or value-based career models for greater theoretical integration.

The claim "meaningful and sustainable career engagement requires not just equal access…" is powerful. Consider translating this insight into specific policy or HR recommendations in a bullet list or concluding table.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2.   Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.
Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.