

Peer Review Comments

Article: Hahn, E., Richter, D., Schupp, J. & Back, M. D. (2019). Predictors of Refugee Adjustment: The Importance of Cognitive Skills and Personality. *Collabra: Psychology*, 5(1): 23. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/collabra.212>

Article type: Original Research Report

Editor: Beth Visser

Article submitted: 06 December 2018

Editor decision: Accept submission

Revision submitted: 29 March 2019

Article accepted: 18 April 2019

Article published: 10 May 2019

Responses for Version 1

Reviewer A:

1) General comments and summary of recommendation

Describe your overall impressions and your recommendation, including changes or revisions. Please note that you should pay attention to scientific, methodological, and ethical soundness only, not novelty, topicality, or scope. A checklist of things to you may want to consider is below:

- Are the methodologies used appropriate?
- Are any methodological weaknesses addressed?
- Is all statistical analysis sound?
- Does the conclusion (if present) reflect the argument, is it supported by data/facts?
- Is the article logically structured, succinct, and does the argument flow coherently?
- Are the references adequate and appropriate?:

The paper is certainly interesting. However, I still think it reads a bit like a project project - and the motivation to stress the role, "and power" of, personality in this paper is very clear, but at the same time not really fully addressed.

The paper implies a certain causal impact of personality characteristics on the outcomes. But I cannot see this in the data and results. There seem to be correlations, yes, but I cannot see a clear proof for a causal impact. Maybe one could change the tone in the manuscript - towards more "correlational" language and whether traits help explaining interindividual differences in xzy in a specific sample, above and beyond the effect of other predictors.

Are there selection effects that result in a certain homogeneity in personality characteristics? For example, maybe those refugees that reached Germany for various reasons score higher in risk-taking or other traits that affect migration decisions. The link between migration decisions and personality is well-established. This perspective is

missing in the paper. One could discuss a socialisation effect (e.g., traumatic experiences, transitions, and investments in new roles might shape personality).

What about faking tendencies? I am wondering whether there is (more) evidence for the validity of the measurements.

Can one also study actual mechanisms in this study? Something that focused on a concrete topic and pathway?

So my point is - it is good to see such a complex analysis with so many predictors for this interesting and understudied population- but what is the actual focus of this study? What is its actual advantage? What is the take-home-message that is really justified by the data (that refugee samples show diversity in traits that in turn help explaining their adjustment is too broad in my view). In my understanding, the paper is still too silent with regard to selection effects (or even socialisation effects), mechanisms, and measurement validity/alternative explanations of the results.

2) Figures/tables/data availability:

Please comment on the author's use of tables, charts, figures, if relevant. Please acknowledge that adequate underlying data is available to ensure reproducibility (see open data policies per discipline of Collabra here):

This is ok.

3) Ethical approval:

If humans or animals have been used as research subjects, and/or tissue or field sampling, are the necessary statements of ethical approval by a relevant authority present? Where humans have participated in research, informed consent should also be declared.

If not, please detail where you think a further ethics approval/statement/follow-up is required.:

This is ok.

4) Language:

Is the text well written and jargon free? Please comment on the quality of English and any need for improvement beyond the scope of this process.:

This is ok.

Reviewer B:

1) General comments and summary of recommendation

Describe your overall impressions and your recommendation, including changes or revisions. Please note that you should pay attention to scientific, methodological, and ethical soundness only, not novelty, topicality, or scope. A checklist of things to you may want to consider is below:

- Are the methodologies used appropriate?
- Are any methodological weaknesses addressed?
- Is all statistical analysis sound?
- Does the conclusion (if present) reflect the argument, is it supported by data/facts?
- Is the article logically structured, succinct, and does the argument flow coherently?
- Are the references adequate and appropriate?:

The manuscript addresses predictors of refugee integration success, a topic of great importance in today's society. The approach used, aiming to go beyond demographic predictors of integration success by including cognitive and personality-related factors, is an important addition to the literature. The use of a high-powered sample for this purpose is commendable.

Regarding the sampling procedure, a more detailed discussion would be helpful. In particular, how does the SOEP decide the sample size aimed for, how is representativeness defined and ensured, and to what degree is the final sample representative given the nonresponse rate (and is nonresponse systematic?). Some details on the questionnaire, such as the other languages it was made available in, could additionally be reported to give readers a better overview of the procedure. Finally, I wonder about the approach to cap the number of new contacts at 20. Given that the authors report that results essentially stay the same - which could be shown in the supplementary materials, for the sake of completeness - the decision to cap this variable seems arbitrary to me.

Regarding the statistical methodology, I would find it interesting to run a Structural Equation Model, given that the authors identify a potential suppressor effect and have already ordered their predictors in correspondence to potential latent variables. Moreover, given that the authors impute the dataset, a brief description of the pattern of missing data and the type of imputation procedure employed would be necessary.

Given that the manuscript is based on correlational analyses, the interpretation of the results appears slightly misdirected. The authors use language that suggests a causal relationship or at least a relationship of a certain direction (e.g., "The most important implication from this study is that successful refugee adjustment to a new country depends not only on sociodemographic factors but also to a certain degree on individual differences in personality traits and competencies.", page 22). The discussion section reads as if the independent variables produce effects on the dependent variables, neglecting the possibility that they covary due to a common underlying factor or that higher integration success exerting influence on some of the predictors. A reformulation appears warranted, and could give rise to potential other explanations of the data patterns.

2) Figures/tables/data availability:

Please comment on the author's use of tables, charts, figures, if relevant. Please acknowledge that adequate underlying data is available to ensure reproducibility (see open data policies per discipline of Collabra here):

Tables, charts and figures are used adequately. The underlying analyses script is available online.

However, the data can only be accessed directly via SOEP. Given this additional step needed to reproduce the analyses, it would preferable if a link to the place where data access can be requested would be provided, or if an email address where inquiries should be directed would be provided. I have not been able to gain access to the data for the purpose of this review, despite emailing the SOEP about it. I have been able to find out, however, that the data could have been deposited in a special online repository to provide easy access for reviewers, which I would recommend the authors consider.

3) Ethical approval:

If humans or animals have been used as research subjects, and/or tissue or field sampling, are the necessary statements of ethical approval by a relevant authority present? Where humans have participated in research, informed consent should also be declared.

If not, please detail where you think a further ethics approval/statement/follow-up is required.:

No information on ethics approval is available in the manuscript.

4) Language:

Is the text well written and jargon free? Please comment on the quality of English and any need for improvement beyond the scope of this process.:

The text is well written and mostly jargon free. The discussion harbors a few minor typos which could be corrected (e.g., "understand" should be "understood" on page 23). On page 22, a direct quotation is used without providing a page number.

On page 15, instead of referencing a command in a statistics package, the procedure employed through this command should be described. This is especially true given that the impute command is no longer officially integrated into Stata.

Editor Decision for Version 1

Editor: Beth Visser

Affiliation: Lakehead University

Editor decision: Revisions Required

Decision date: 22 February 2019

Dear Elisabeth Hahn,

After review, we have reached a decision regarding your submission to Collabra: Psychology, "Predictors of Refugee Adjustment: The Importance of Cognitive Skills and Personality". Our decision is to request revisions of the manuscript prior to acceptance for publication.

The full review information should be included at the bottom of this email. A summary of the requested edits from the editorial team can be found below. Please consider these points and revise the file accordingly:

Like both reviewers, I appreciated the importance of your topic, and believe it will make a valuable contribution to the literature. However, you will note that the reviewers had some suggestions for improving your manuscript (see below). In particular, I agree with both reviewers that while the manuscript is generally very well-written, the analyses conducted do not warrant the causal language used throughout. Both reviewers also had suggestions for both the framing (e.g., Reviewer A's suggestions for a strong, clear message around the advantages to this particular project) and detail (e.g., sampling procedure, selection effects). Could you also please confirm that the data will be accessible to readers (I see that Reviewer B was unable to access the data)?

I thank you for submitting this manuscript to Collabra: Psychology and I very much look forward to reading a revised version.

To access your submission account, follow the below instructions:

- 1) login to the journal webpage with username and password
- 2) click on the submission title
- 3) click 'Review' menu option
- 4) download Reviewed file and make revisions based on review feedback
- 5) upload the edited file
- 6) Click the 'notify editor' icon and email the confirmation of re-submission and any relevant comments to the journal.

Please ensure that your revised files adhere to our author guidelines, and that the files are fully copyedited/proofed prior to upload. Please also ensure that all copyright permissions have been obtained. This is the last opportunity for major editing;, therefore please fully check your file prior to re-submission.

If you have any questions or difficulties during this process, please do contact us.

Please could you have the revisions submitted by March 8th. If you cannot make this deadline, please let us know as early as possible.

Kind regards,

Dr Beth Visser
Lakehead University
bvisser1@lakeheadu.ca

Author's Response to Review Comments for Version 1

Author: Elisabeth Hahn

Affiliation: Saarland University

Revision submitted: 29 March 2019

Dear Beth Visser,
please find enclosed our revision of the paper entitled "Predictors of Refugee Adjustment: The Importance of Cognitive Skills and Personality" for publication in Collabra.

We would like to thank you and the reviewers for this productive and encouraging process which we feel has improved the manuscript. We hope that you find our manuscript suitable for publication and we look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,
Elisabeth Hahn

Attached document:

<https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/ubiquity-partner-network/ucp/journal/collabra/212-2984-1-SP.docx>

Editor Decision for Version 2

Editor: Beth Visser

Affiliation: Lakehead University

Editor decision: Accept submission

Decision date: 18 April 2019

Dear Elisabeth Hahn,

After review, we have reached a decision regarding your submission to Collabra: Psychology, "Predictors of Refugee Adjustment: The Importance of Cognitive Skills and Personality", and are happy to accept your submission for publication, pending the completion of copyediting and formatting processes.

As there are no further reviewer revisions to make, you do not have to complete any tasks at this point. The accepted submission will now undergo final copyediting. You will be contacted once this is complete to answer any queries that may have arisen during copyediting and to allow a final chance to edit the files prior to typesetting. If you wish to view your submission during this time, you can log in via the journal website.

The review information should be included in this email.

Kind regards,

Dr Beth Visser
Lakehead University
bvisser1@lakeheadu.ca