

Review of: "Applying Behaviour Change Theory to Understand PhD Supervisors' Barriers and Enablers to Supporting PhD Students with Academic and Other-Sector Careers"

Aloysius Rukundo¹

¹ Mbarara University of Science and Technology

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

- The paper is fairly written with few technical and stylistic errors. However, the paper would be more digestible if the authors used shorter and clearer sentences (see the last sentence of the first paragraph of the Background, for example). Further, most of the paragraphs are too long to navigate.
- In the statement below, the authors seem to suggest that the current training of doctoral students considers skills transferable to other sectors: *"As such, most doctoral training now aims to embed employability or transferable skills that are relevant to academic and other-sector careers (e.g. communication, project management, problem solving and teamwork)"* In another section: *"PhD students have limited awareness about other-sector careers and job searching strategies and find the transition to other-sector careers stressful (Hayter & Parker, 2019). Similarly, PhD graduates entering other-sector careers experience culture shock due to differences to academia in group dynamics, work patterns, autonomy and the nature of the work (Skakni et al., 2022). Such challenges may, in part, be due to PhD supervisors providing insufficient support for other-sector career development."*, the authors seem to suggest that doctoral students currently face career challenges since they are not equipped with the necessary skills to join other sectors. I sense a contradiction between the two arguments above that may need clarification or rectification.
- The background has many justifications, making it lose focus. Where does the problem lie, among the many gaps identified? What is the main focus of the paper?
- The authors say in the methodology that the aim of the study was concealed from the participants to prevent affecting participants' responses. A concern arises whether such concealment did not distort the message, thereby affecting the validity of the responses?
- In regard to this statement: "Upon completion, participants were offered entry to a prize draw to win a £30 shopping voucher," more clarification is needed: Did the participants know beforehand that they would participate in a prize draw after completing the survey? What was it for - was it an inducement? What was the ethical implication of that?
- Use of the COM-B model was a strength, although I have a feeling that the voice of the doctoral students is lacking in the study - it would have carried more meaning if the authors interviewed doctoral students as well. Probably, considering only PhD supervisors led to biased outcomes.

