

Methodology Issues on 10.1186/s40359-023-01136-z

The article [1] shows that graduate students in China experiencing abusive supervision are more likely to develop suicidal ideation, a topic of growing concern in Chinese academia. However, certain methodological limitations warrant caution when interpreting these findings.

In this article [1], the authors claim that it was a cross-sectional study in two comprehensive universities. However, as the authors mention, "convenient sampling and snowball sampling were used to collect data through questionnaire links", indicating that the study relied on self-recruited samples. Self-recruited samples are prone to introducing selection bias, as students who have experienced abusive supervision and/or developed suicidal ideation were more willing to answer the questionnaires. Furthermore, only 243 participants in those two comprehensive universities answered the questionnaires, raising concerns about the representativeness of the samples. While we recognize that probability sampling may not be feasible in certain contexts, the lack of explicit discussion of these methodological limitations risks undermining accurate interpretation of the study's findings, particularly among non-specialist readers and the general public.

Second, the reporting of the prevalence of abusive supervision lacks sufficient clarity and interpretability. The authors adopted a 10-item Chinese version of the Perceived Abusive Supervision Scale to assess whether participants had ever experienced abusive supervision, and reported a score of 1.75 ± 0.75 in Table 2 to describe the prevalence of abusive supervision. However, the authors did not provide a detailed description of how this score was calculated, nor did they define what the score represents in relation to the prevalence of abusive supervision. The lacking clarity prevent us to determine whether the findings in this article [1] are rigorous.

Although such issues do not suggest any misconduct from the authors, these limitations should be discussed in the article with details, and they should be pointed out by the reviewers during the publication of the article [1]. However, the journal and the reviewers seemed fail to do so. We recommend the authors provide more details about the data to verify their conclusion.

[1] 10.1186/s40359-023-01136-z

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