

Identifying the Subjective Experience of Learning Under High Performance Pressure




Camila Viteri¹, Thandiwe. Mokoena^{2*}, Grace. Mwangi³

¹ Department of Educational Psychology, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Quito, Ecuador

² School of Human and Community Development, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

³ Department of Educational Psychology, University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya

* Corresponding author email address: thandiwe.mokoena@wits.ac.za

E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
Trevor Archer  Professor Department of Psychology University of Gothenburg, Sweden trevorcsarcher49@gmail.com	Reviewer 1: Mahdi Khanjani  Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran. Email: khanjani_m@atu.ac.ir Reviewer 2: Mehdi Rostami  Department of Psychology and Counseling, KMAN Research Institute, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada. Email: dr.mrostami@kmanresce.ca

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The Findings paragraph in the Abstract lists three themes, but the description of Theme 3 (“coping, adaptation, and meaning-making”) merges both adaptive and maladaptive strategies. The reviewer recommends briefly quantifying their prevalence (e.g., “majority adopted adaptive coping”) for greater informational precision.

In paragraph 2 (“Performance pressure can be defined as the perceived expectation...”), the discussion draws heavily on sport psychology analogies (Cabral et al., 2024; Low et al., 2022). The reviewer suggests balancing these with literature from educational psychology or cognitive load theory to ensure domain relevance.

The concluding sentence of the Introduction (“This study aims to identify and explore...”) clearly states purpose but lacks explicit research questions. Adding one or two concise guiding questions would sharpen methodological focus (e.g., “How do learners appraise pressure cognitively and emotionally?”).

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

Paragraph 5 introduces neurobiological mechanisms (“The prefrontal cortex...”). The inclusion is valuable, but the transition from psychosocial to neurocognitive discourse lacks a citation supporting how neural stress responses translate to learning outcomes. Consider citing empirical neuroeducation studies to bridge this conceptual gap.

Paragraph 7 (“Beyond individual psychological processes, the social environment exerts...”) insightfully notes cultural context, but the term collectivist societies is used without specifying cultural groups relevant to South Africa. The reviewer recommends contextualizing collectivism within South African subcultures rather than generalized East-Asian examples implied by the citations.

Paragraph 11 (“The role of motivation in moderating the relationship between pressure and performance is central.”) effectively summarizes prior models but would benefit from a conceptual figure or table comparing these models (e.g., challenge-threat theory, self-determination theory, resilience framework) to enhance theoretical clarity.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.