

LETTER OF REVIEWERS

Reviewer A:

Recommendation: Revisions Required

Relevance: Very high

Novelty: Moderated

Presentation and writing: High

Comments for authors:

Thank you for the opportunity to read and delve into the familiar topic of RSS and their effects on mental health within a population that is unfamiliar to me as a clinician and researcher.

My review of the article:

Abstract

The abstract is well-focused and well-written.

Literature Review

In my view, there is no need to separate headings by variables; rather, the content should be presented in a continuous flow with connections between different paragraphs. This would also improve the structure of the review, which at times feels like it moves from very focused observation to broader observation instead of being constructed in a funnel format (from the widest to the narrowest).

Concluding the literature review with research relevant to the Puerto Rican context would better connect to the research objective. Within this framework, the review also lacks a brief reference to religious and cultural demographic aspects in Puerto Rico to provide better context for the reader, especially for those unfamiliar with the country – relevant denominations, statistics, level of religiosity, etc.

Page 2: The first section dealing with research in Puerto Rico is a focused part of the review and should appear later as part of the funnel structure. It would be better to start more broadly, beginning with "Despite historically..."

Page 3: In detailing Exline's levels, they should be presented in logical order, either from the broadest (demonic) to the most personal (intrapersonal) or vice versa. At their conclusion, a connecting sentence should be presented linking to the next section dealing with the relationship to depression, anxiety, etc.

The heading deals with depression, but the reference to suicide opens a new and different domain that receives no further attention in the continuation.

The sentence "This finding underscores the critical relevance..." is more suitable for discussion than for review. The same applies to the entire subsequent paragraph beginning with "Now, we must keep in mind..." Here we find suggestions for interpretations without focused literature review.

The connection between RSS and anxiety is well-written.

The choice to conceptualize flourishing as a variable from the salutogenic world is innovative and appreciated.

Page 5: The review again returns to pathological findings and the insight that no significant changes were found in positive outcomes. It is unclear how the presentation of these findings serves the article, especially the current section.

Method

The description of research instruments and ethical conduct is well presented.

Page 6: The mention of average age stands somewhat alone as part of the demographic data details. Either omit it and refer to the table, or expand this section slightly more.

Page 7: In the details about religious affiliation in the table – the "none" option, despite one of the criteria being belief in some religious entity or force. How does this align with inclusion in the study? Perhaps it should be noted as "other"?

The additional questions in the demographic questionnaire – it is unclear what their scale is, whether these are yes/no questions, Likert scale, etc. This section should be expanded.

Page 8: One of the examples in RSS-BI14 lacks italicization. Additionally, there is a reference to RSS as "r/s struggle" – this should be corrected for consistency.

Results

The results section is well-presented and clear.

Page 11: Consider moving the data from the general questionnaire to a table.

Page 12: In Table 2, consider moving the flourishing variable to the end of the table as variable no.7, creating a sequence of negative factors followed by a positive factor.

Discussion

The discussion offers good integration between findings and empirical and theoretical literature. In accordance with what was missing in the review, in my view, there is insufficient reference to findings that emerged regarding demographic and cultural aspects of Puerto Rico. Even a reference to this in the applied importance for clinicians would be valuable.

Page 14: The citation in the second paragraph does not appear in accordance with APA format.

Additionally, throughout the discussion, mathematical symbols lack italicization.

The limitations and suggestions for future research are well-written.

Reference List

Well-written.

RESPONSE LETTER

Dear Editor and Reviewer A,

We sincerely thank you for your time, thoughtful feedback, and constructive suggestions. We appreciate the opportunity to improve our manuscript, and we have addressed each comment carefully. Below, we provide a point-by-point response, indicating the changes made and where they can be found in the revised version.

Abstract

Reviewer Comment: *"The abstract is well-focused and clearly written."*

Author Response: We appreciate your positive assessment.

Change: No revision was required.

Literature Review

Reviewer Comment: *"Headings by variable are unnecessary; the review should flow continuously in a funnel structure."*

Author Response: We agree. We removed the subheadings and reorganized the literature review into a continuous, integrated narrative, moving from broader concepts to specific RSS dimensions.

Location: Introduction, pp. 2–4.

Reviewer Comment: *"Conclude the review with research relevant to the Puerto Rican context and add a brief cultural-demographic reference."*

Author Response: We added a concise cultural-demographic contextualization of Puerto Rico's religious landscape (denominations, religiosity, relevance to help-seeking) and placed it at the end of the literature review to strengthen the connection with the study rationale.

Location: Introduction, p. 5.

Reviewer Comment (Page 2): *"Move the Puerto Rico section; it appears too early."*

Author Response: We relocated the Puerto Rico content to a later point in the funnel-shaped review.

Location: Introduction, p. 5.

Reviewer Comment (Page 3): *"Present Exline's levels in logical order and add a linking sentence."*

Author Response: We reordered the RSS dimensions (supernatural → interpersonal → intrapersonal) and added a transition to the next subsection.

Location: Introduction, p. 3.

Reviewer Comment: *"The reference to suicide is unrelated to the flow and not continued."*

Author Response: We removed the suicide reference to maintain coherence.

Location: Introduction, p. 3.

Reviewer Comment: *"Sentences that interpret findings ('This finding underscores...' and 'Now, we must keep in mind...') belong in the discussion."*

Author Response: We removed these interpretive statements from the literature review.

Location: Introduction, pp. 3–4.

Reviewer Comment (Page 5): *"The section returns to pathological findings without clear purpose."*

Author Response: We revised the passage to maintain thematic continuity and relevance.

Location: Introduction, p. 4.

Method

Reviewer Comment (Page 6): *"The average age appears isolated."*

Author Response: We removed the sentence and now present age only in Table 1.

Location: Results/Table 1 note.

Reviewer Comment (Page 7): *"The category 'none' appears inconsistent with inclusion criteria; consider 'other.'"*

Author Response: We clarified that this category refers to *unaffiliated theists*, which aligns with the inclusion criterion of belief in a higher power.

Location: Methods/Table 1, p. 7.

Reviewer Comment: *"Additional demographic questions lack scale description."*

Author Response: We expanded the section to specify scale formats (Likert, yes/no, frequency scale).

Location: Methods, p. 7.

Reviewer Comment (Page 8): *"One RSS-BI14 example lacks italics and 'r/s struggle' should be made consistent."*

Author Response: Italics were added and "RSS" is now used consistently.

Location: Methods, p. 8.

Results

Reviewer Comment (Page 11): *"Consider moving general questionnaire data to a table."*

Author Response: We shortened the narrative and referenced the table instead of repeating percentages.

Location: Results, p. 10.

Reviewer Comment (Page 12): *"Move flourishing to the end of Table 2."*

Author Response: We reordered the variables as requested.

Location: Table 2 (now Table 3 in final numbering).

Discussion

Reviewer Comment: *"Include cultural and demographic relevance of Puerto Rico."*

Author Response: We expanded the discussion to reference Puerto Rico's religious-cultural context and the presence of unaffiliated theists, connecting these aspects to clinical implications.

Location: Discussion, pp. 14–15.

Reviewer Comment (Page 14): *"APA formatting needed for a citation."*

Author Response: The citation was corrected.

Location: Discussion, p. 14.

Reviewer Comment: *"Mathematical symbols should be italicized."*

Author Response: All symbols are now in proper APA italics.

Location: Discussion, pp. 13–15.

Positive Remarks

Reviewer Comments: *"The Results section is clear." / "Limitations and future research are well written."*

Author Response: We appreciate your encouraging evaluation.

Closing Statement

We sincerely thank you for your insightful feedback. All recommended changes have been addressed and incorporated into the revised manuscript. We believe the manuscript is now clearer, more coherent, and stronger in its scientific and cultural contribution.

Kind regards,

Juan Aníbal González-Rivera & Yazmín Álvarez-Alatorre