OPEN PEER REVIEW

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Peer Review

IJ Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
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Peer Review Report for "The Mediating Role of Shame and Self-criticism in Social Anxiety: An Emotion-Focused Therapy Approach"

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Review Timeline:

Submit Date:	18 Oct 2024
Revised Date:	30 Dec 2024
Accepted Date:	21 Jan 2025

Revision (0)

Here, you can see the **Reviewers**, **Associate Editors** and **EICs'** comments from the beginning to the end of the revision process.

REFEREE : Reviewer

4 Nov 2024

Dear AE,
The work is well-designed and executed. Here are some minor queries that need to be addressed:
- The AD date should be written in the method section of the abstract.
- In the results section, the text with the table overlaps. Do not repeat the results in the text.
- Follow the guidelines of the Journal regarding writing decimal numbers.
Kind Regards

REFEREE : Reviewer

16 Dec 2024

Dear AE,
There are some comments which should be addressed by the author:
Comment 1: The title is not appropriate and needs to be corrected.
Comment 2: kindly include clear clinical implications that arise from your work.
Comment 2: the type of study is not cross-sectional. Please correct it.
Comment 3: the following sentence needs to be revised in the abstract.
“The model is significant and 48% of the variance of social anxiety is predicted in this way. The fit indices also showed the goodness of the model.”
Comment 4: please revise the following sentence in the abstract.
“The indirect path early life experiences → shame → self-criticism → social anxiety was also significant (β=.16, p < .001, 95% CI).”
Comment 5: please write the statistical analysis section in detail.
Comment 6: please use the “goodness of fit criteria” instead of the “fit indices”.
Comment 7: please revise the following sentence because the term “significant” is no appropriate here.
“The fit indices of the model were also significant”
Comment 8: Kindly structure the results section completely.
Comment 9: Most R2 values are small and less than 50 percent. What is your justification? Because in this case, it explains less variance of the response variable.
Comment 10: Please explain the interpretation of Figures 1-3 in more detail.
Comment 11: Table 4 is unclear. Please correct and interpret it completely.
Comment 12: What statistical tests were used to investigate the mediating role of the Shame and Self-Criticism variables? Please report and interpret this section in full detail.
Comment 13: The interpretations provided for Figure 1 are incomplete. Kindly interpret the regression coefficients and other outputs fully. Also, clear clinical implications that arise from these findings should be included in this section.
Kind Regards

REFEREE : Associate Editor

17 Dec 2024

Dear EIC,
The manuscript has been studied, and some comments should be addressed by the author. According to the comments, the document needs major revision.
Kind regards,
AE

Editor-in-Chief IJPBS : EIC

17 Dec 2024

Dear Authors,
Thank you for submitting your manuscript for consideration for publication in Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. Your paper has been evaluated

by external peer reviewers. Please do your revisions according to the reviewers' comments. I appreciate you to do the revisions as soon as possible.

After revision authors are obliged to upload reviewers' comments word file in which they have replied to all comments one by one.

Besides, please pay attention to the word count limitation:
Word count limits are declared in this link:
http://kowsarpub.com/en/index.php/services/for-authors/895-word-count

We look forward to receiving your revised manuscript. Thank you for sending your work to the Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. The full manuscript file must be highlighted to indicate revised texts.
Kind Regards
EIC

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

Reply to Reviewers

Ideally, the reviewing process can significantly improve the submitted manuscripts by allowing the authors to take into account the advice of reviewers. Author(s) must reply to all reviewers' comments in a separate Word file, point by point. A "**Reply to Reviewers**" document is submitted along with revised manuscript during submission of revised files, summarizing the changes that the authors made in response to the reviewers' comments. The responses to reviewers' comments specifies how the authors addressed each comment the reviewers made.

You can read the authors' responses to the reviewers' comments in the next page.

Reviewer 1:

The AD date should be written in the method section of the abstract.

Answer 1

The date in the abstract was corrected.

- In the results section, the text with the table overlaps. Do not repeat the results in the text.

Answer 2

You are right, but other respected referees have requested that the tables be explained in more detail.

- Follow the guidelines of the Journal regarding writing decimal numbers.

This comment was applied to all numbers.

Reviewer 2:

Answer 1

Comment: The title is not appropriate and needs to be corrected.

Response: The current title, *"The Mediating Role of Shame and Self-Criticism in Social Anxiety: An Emotion-Focused Therapy Approach,"* accurately reflects the study's focus and methodology. However, if the reviewer finds it lacking clarity, it could be revised to:

"Exploring the Role of Shame and Self-Criticism in Social Anxiety: An Emotion-Focused Therapy Model."

Answer 2

Comment: Kindly include clear clinical implications that arise from your work.

Response: Clinical implications are discussed under section *"5.2. Treatment Implications"* of the article. This section highlights that addressing shame and self-criticism can enhance therapeutic approaches for social anxiety by incorporating emotion-focused strategies. For example, it suggests integrating these strategies into cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) modules to address perfectionism and self-criticism more effectively.

Answer 3

Comment: The type of study is not cross-sectional. Please correct it.

Response: The article describes the study as descriptive correlational, which aligns with the methodology described (refer to *Methods section, 3.1.*). If the reviewer suggests clarification, the term *cross-sectional* can be explicitly excluded to avoid confusion.

Answer 4

Comment: The following sentence needs to be revised in the abstract:

"The model is significant and 48% of the variance of social anxiety is predicted in this way. The fit indices also showed the goodness of the model."

Response: Revised version:

"The model demonstrates a significant explanatory power, accounting for 48% of the variance in social anxiety. The goodness-of-fit criteria confirmed the model's adequacy."

Answer 5

Comment: Please revise the following sentence in the abstract:
"The indirect path early life experiences → shame → self-criticism → social anxiety was also significant (β=.16, p < .001, 95% CI)."
Response: Revised version:
"The indirect pathway from early life experiences through shame and self-criticism to social anxiety was significant, with standardized estimates (β = 0.16, p < .001, 95% CI)."

Answer 6

Comment: Please write the statistical analysis section in detail.
Response: Detailed statistical analysis is provided in *Methods Section 3.2* and *Results Section 4*. It explains the use of structural equation modeling (SmartPLS-3) and SPSS-24 for data analysis, with key metrics such as R^2 values, path coefficients, and bootstrapping used to assess mediation effects. Additional clarifications, such as using PROCESS macro for validation and goodness-of-fit indices, can be expanded for precision.

Answer 7

Comment: Please use the term “goodness of fit criteria” instead of “fit indices.”
Response: All instances of *"fit indices"* can be replaced with *"goodness of fit criteria"* throughout the document, as seen in the revised version provided in Answer 4.

Answer 8

Comment: Please revise the following sentence because the term “significant” is not appropriate here:
"The fit indices of the model were also significant."
Response: Revised version:
"The goodness-of-fit criteria indicated that the model fits the data well."

Answer 9

Comment: Kindly structure the results section completely.
Response: The results section is well-structured, providing descriptive statistics, correlation coefficients, and model fit indices (*Section 4, Results*). For clarity, subsections can be created for:

1. Descriptive Statistics
2. Model Fit Indices
3. Mediation Analysis

Answer 10

Comment: Most R^2 values are small and less than 50 percent. What is your justification?
Response: While R^2 values under 50% indicate moderate explanatory power, they are acceptable in psychological research where multiple factors influence outcomes. This study aligns with standard practice in psychology, as partial variance explained by individual constructs is typical. Further, the model's total explanatory power (48%) for social anxiety is statistically significant.

Answer 11

Comment: Please explain the interpretation of Figures 1-3 in more detail.
Response:

- **Figure 1** illustrates the sequential mediation model, showing significant direct and indirect effects (e.g., $\beta = 0.16$ for the indirect path).
- **Figure 2** visualizes variance predictions for social anxiety based on direct paths, emphasizing broader dispersion.
- **Figure 3** represents the reduced dispersion for indirect paths, underscoring mediation effects.

A more detailed narrative can be added under *Results Section 4*.

Answer 12

Comment: Table 4 is unclear. Please correct and interpret it completely.
Response: Table 4 presents path coefficients and indirect effects, showing statistically significant mediating paths (e.g., $\beta = 0.16$, $p < .001$). Clarifications can include:

- Interpretation of coefficients (e.g., $\beta = 0.23$ for the direct effect of early life experiences on social anxiety).
- Emphasis on bootstrap confidence intervals confirming statistical significance.

Answer 13

Comment: What statistical tests were used to investigate the mediating role of the Shame and Self-Criticism variables?
Response: Bootstrapped confidence intervals with 5,000 samples were used to test mediation. Sobel tests and partial least squares regression (PLS-SEM) confirmed mediation significance (*Results Section 4*).

Answer 14

Comment: Interpret the regression coefficients and other outputs in Figure 1 fully, and include clinical implications.
Response:
Interpretation:

- Early life experiences positively correlate with shame ($\beta = 0.51$), which in turn relates to self-criticism ($\beta = 0.67$).
- Self-criticism significantly predicts social anxiety ($\beta = 0.47$).

Clinical Implications: Interventions targeting early emotional memories, shame, and self-criticism could reduce social anxiety. These findings support developing tailored emotion-focused therapies (*Section 5.2*).

OPEN PEER REVIEW

Revision (1)

REFEREE : Associate Editor

16 Jan 2025

Dear EIC
Based on the authors' answers to the reviewers' comments, the reviewer(s) have recommended publication.
Kind regards.

Editor-in-Chief IJPBS : EIC

21 Jan 2025

Dear Authors,
We have completed our review of your manuscript and are pleased to inform you that it is considered for publication in the IJPBS. Note that the publication of your article will only be finalized upon your cooperation with the editorial processing.
Thank you for your fine contribution. On behalf of the Editors of IJPBS, we look forward to your continued contributions to the Journal..
Kind Regards
EIC