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Prediction of Psychological Pain Based on Emotional Expression with the Mediation of Fear of Intimacy in Girls with Emotional Breakup Experience

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The sentence "The need for love and belonging is one of the fundamental characteristics of humans and a basic need from childhood to old age (Ghazi Nejad et al., 2020)" requires further contextualization. It would be beneficial to elaborate on how this need specifically relates to emotional breakups and psychological pain.

You state, "The questionnaire is scored on a 5-point Likert scale." Including specific examples of the questions would help readers better understand how mental pain is assessed.

The Cronbach's alpha values for the Emotional Expression Questionnaire are somewhat low (0.65 for positive expression and 0.59 for expression of intimacy). Please discuss how this may impact the reliability of your findings.

The descriptive statistics for the variables are clearly presented. However, it would be helpful to include a brief explanation of how the mean values reflect the overall emotional expression and psychological pain levels of the participants.

In discussing the correlation between fear of intimacy and psychological pain ($r = 0.37$, $p < 0.01$), it would be valuable to elaborate on how this finding compares with other studies in the field. Are these correlations consistent with existing literature?

The table showing correlation coefficients is informative, but you should provide more interpretation of the strength and direction of these correlations. For example, explain why negative emotional expression has a stronger correlation with fear of intimacy than positive emotional expression.

You mention that "fear of intimacy could not function as a mediating variable." Please clarify whether this finding contradicts or supports prior research on the role of intimacy in emotional regulation and breakup recovery.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

You mention "Sometimes romantic relationships break apart for various reasons." Providing specific examples or citing studies that explore common causes of emotional breakups would enhance the clarity and depth of this discussion.

The phrase "individuals vary significantly in the intensity of their responses to the end of romantic relationships depending on their personality traits and behavioral patterns" should be expanded by citing relevant psychological theories that explain these variations, such as attachment theory.

The sampling method described as "convenience sampling" is appropriate for this study, but the lack of randomization is a limitation. Please discuss potential biases introduced by this sampling method and how they may affect the generalizability of the findings.

The path coefficient of fear of intimacy to psychological pain ($\beta = 0.15, p < 0.01$) is positive and significant. Please provide a theoretical explanation for why fear of intimacy directly impacts psychological pain and how this relates to existing psychological models.

The indirect path coefficients for emotional expression through fear of intimacy are not significant. This finding contrasts with the theoretical assumption that fear of intimacy mediates the relationship between emotional expression and psychological pain. Can you offer more insight into why this mediation effect was not significant?

The statement "Positive emotional regulation reduces negative emotions" could be supported by citing specific models or studies that address emotional regulation processes, such as Gross's model of emotion regulation.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.