

Maternal Trauma History, Reflective Functioning, and Parental Sensitivity as Predictors of Emotional Dysregulation in Children: An Applied Learning Approach

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the paragraph stating “Among the most influential maternal factors is trauma history...”, the authors discuss trauma broadly but do not sufficiently differentiate between types (e.g., chronic vs. acute, interpersonal vs. non-interpersonal trauma). This lack of specificity may obscure differential effects; I recommend clarifying whether certain trauma subtypes are theoretically expected to exert stronger predictive effects.

In the Methods section under “Study Design and Participants,” the sentence “A total of 240 mother–child dyads were selected through a multistage cluster sampling method...” lacks sufficient detail regarding cluster formation, sampling stages, and representativeness, which limits reproducibility.

In the Measures section describing the CTQ, the manuscript states “The CTQ has demonstrated strong psychometric properties...” but does not report reliability coefficients (e.g., Cronbach’s alpha) for the current sample, which is essential for methodological transparency.

In the Measures section for the RFQ, the sentence “Items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale, and scoring involves recoding procedures...” is vague; the exact scoring algorithm should be described or referenced more precisely to allow replication.

In the Measures section for the MBQS, the manuscript notes it as an observational tool but does not specify the number of raters, training procedures, or inter-rater reliability coefficients, which are critical for validating observational data.

Authors revised and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the paragraph beginning “The intergenerational transmission of trauma operates through multiple pathways...”, while biological, psychological, and relational mechanisms are mentioned, the manuscript does not integrate these pathways into a coherent theoretical model; a schematic or more explicit conceptual linkage among these levels would significantly enhance theoretical rigor.

In the paragraph introducing reflective functioning (“A key construct that mediates the relationship...”), the authors treat reflective functioning primarily as a mediator, yet the study design and analysis do not formally test mediation; this creates a conceptual-methodological mismatch that should be resolved either by reframing the construct as a predictor or by conducting mediation analysis.

In the paragraph stating “Empirical studies have demonstrated that reflective functioning plays a crucial mediating role...”, the authors assert mediation effects without specifying effect sizes or methodological approaches from cited studies; including more precise empirical evidence would strengthen the argument and improve scholarly rigor.

In the paragraph on parental sensitivity (“Parental sensitivity represents another critical factor...”), the authors provide a strong theoretical rationale but do not sufficiently justify why parental sensitivity is expected to outperform reflective functioning in predictive strength, which later emerges in the findings; this discrepancy should be addressed in the introduction.

In the paragraph discussing cultural factors (“Recent research has also emphasized the role of contextual and cultural factors...”), the manuscript introduces cultural variability but does not clearly connect these factors to the Iranian context of the sample; a more localized cultural justification is necessary.

In the paragraph on machine learning (“Another emerging area of research involves the application of advanced analytical methods...”), the rationale for integrating machine learning is introduced, but the manuscript does not clearly specify what unique hypotheses or insights are expected from these methods beyond improved prediction, limiting methodological justification.

In the final paragraph of the introduction ending with “The aim of this study is to investigate whether...”, the aim is clearly stated; however, it would benefit from explicitly articulated hypotheses (directional predictions for each variable) to align with the subsequent regression analysis.

Authors revised and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.