

Experiential Avoidance as a Mediator Between Emotion Dysregulation and Panic Symptoms

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The statement “panic symptoms are among the most distressing manifestations of anxiety disorders...” would benefit from quantitative support. Please consider citing epidemiological prevalence rates in young adult populations to ground this claim empirically.

The phrase “given the sociocultural and environmental stressors faced by individuals in developing nations—such as Nigeria...” is compelling. However, you should briefly elaborate on the specific stressors in the Nigerian context that may intensify experiential avoidance or dysregulation.

While assumptions are reported, the Mahalanobis distance threshold used to assess multivariate outliers should be specified (e.g., critical χ^2 value at $p < .001$ for $df = 3$).

The correlations are significant, but effect sizes should be interpreted more directly (e.g., $r = .54$ is a large effect). Also, were any partial correlations considered to control for demographic variables?

The model fit indices are adequate, but please clarify whether modification indices were consulted and whether any covariances were added post hoc.

You mention that participants who reported high emotion dysregulation also reported high experiential avoidance. However, this is based on cross-sectional data. Please rephrase to avoid implying causality (e.g., “tended to report...”).

Authors revised and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The authors write, “experiential avoidance refers to the unwillingness to remain in contact with aversive internal experiences...” This sentence is accurate but would be strengthened by citing the original ACT model literature, such as Hayes et al. (1996), to acknowledge foundational work.

The sentence “These studies underscore the idea that experiential avoidance may not only exacerbate existing symptoms...” could be more impactful if the specific mechanisms (e.g., reinforcement of avoidance, emotional suppression) were briefly clarified.

While you note both direct and indirect effects, the confidence intervals for the indirect effect (e.g., using bootstrapping) should be reported to provide a more robust test of mediation.

The authors write, “results indicated that emotion dysregulation was significantly and positively associated with panic symptoms...” Please elaborate on whether this suggests partial or full mediation, as this distinction has clinical implications.

Authors revised and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.