The Mediating Role of Early Maladaptive Schemas in the Relationship between Individual and Contextual Risk-Protective Factors and Attitudes towards Substance Use in Adolescents

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The introduction presents relevant statistics on substance use in Iran. However, it would be beneficial to expand on how these statistics compare to other countries, providing a global perspective to enhance the significance of the issue.

The choice of PLS for data analysis is appropriate, but a justification for why PLS was preferred over other modeling approaches (such as covariance-based SEM) would be helpful to understand the analytical choices.

The table presents skewness and kurtosis values, but it would be beneficial to include a brief interpretation of these values in the text, especially regarding the assumption of normality.

In Table 3, the path coefficients are reported, but no confidence intervals are provided. Consider including confidence intervals to offer more robust interpretations of the model's estimates.

The discussion highlights the predictive power of risk and protective factors. However, it would benefit from more specific examples of how these factors manifest in the daily lives of adolescents. Providing qualitative insights could enhance the narrative.

The findings about early maladaptive schemas are well-documented, but the discussion could be enriched by linking these schemas to broader psychological theories on adolescent development, such as Erikson's stages of psychosocial development.

You find that the schema domains of impaired limits and hypervigilance did not significantly predict attitudes towards substance use. Could you elaborate on why this might be the case and suggest avenues for further research in these areas?

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

1.2.   Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The opening sentence states that "a look at the statistics of substance use and addiction in Iran shows an increasing trend each year." Consider providing a more specific timeframe or referencing a particular study or report to substantiate this claim.

In the section describing the sample size, you mention the use of "multi-stage cluster sampling." Could you provide more detail on the rationale for this choice of sampling method and how schools were selected to ensure representativeness?

While you mention that the reliability of the Young Schema Questionnaire has been confirmed in numerous studies, adding specific references to those studies and discussing the cultural adaptation of the questionnaire for the Iranian context would strengthen this section.

The discussion could benefit from a deeper exploration of how cultural factors specific to Iran might influence the development of early maladaptive schemas, especially considering the role of family and societal expectations in shaping adolescent behavior.

The mediation analysis is thorough, but consider providing a visual diagram or flowchart of the structural model to help readers easily grasp the relationships between variables.

You report high Cronbach's alpha values for your measures. However, it would be beneficial to discuss the limitations of relying solely on Cronbach's alpha for reliability, such as its sensitivity to the number of items in a scale.

The introduction mentions several studies on substance use in adolescents, but it could benefit from more recent sources, particularly post-2020 studies, to ensure the literature review reflects the current state of the field.

The practical implications of the findings are briefly mentioned. It would be helpful to expand on how these findings could be integrated into existing substance use prevention programs in Iran, particularly in school settings.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

2.   Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.
Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.