Predicting Risk Behaviors in Adolescents Through Social Isolation and Negative Self-Talk

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E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the introduction, the phrase "Research suggests that socio-environmental factors, personal coping mechanisms, and developmental vulnerabilities interact…" could be expanded by briefly referencing a theoretical framework that explains how these variables interact, such as Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.

The second paragraph of the introduction claims that "Adolescents experiencing social isolation are more likely to report depressive symptoms, poor academic performance, and lower levels of life satisfaction." This is a strong assertion that would benefit from referencing a large-scale or meta-analytic study to reinforce the empirical weight of the statement.

The sentence "These cognitive vulnerabilities often co-occur with environmental stressors…" could be more robust by indicating which specific types of stressors are most commonly observed in such co-occurrence.

In the paragraph discussing risk behaviors not always being negative, the reference to Patterson et al. (2019) could benefit from a clearer explanation of how their findings support the current study's differentiation between positive and negative risk-taking.

The final paragraph of the introduction begins with "As these studies collectively indicate…" and would benefit from a brief summarizing sentence at the end that directly states the research gap this study addresses.

In Table 2, the correlation between social isolation and negative self-talk is .38. Although significant, this moderate correlation could be briefly discussed to clarify whether multicollinearity is a concern or not.

The sentence "Among the two predictors, negative self-talk contributed more strongly to the model…" (Findings section) is correct but would benefit from a short comment on the practical significance of this stronger contribution (e.g., in terms of intervention design).

In the discussion, the sentence "These findings converge with the present study's results…" would be improved by more clearly stating how the results quantitatively converge (e.g., citing similarity of β values across studies if available).

The sentence "These findings reinforce the interpretation that social isolation can act as a precursor to externalizing risk behaviors…" is well-stated, but adding whether this holds after controlling for demographic variables (e.g., gender, ethnicity) would improve rigor.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The sentence "The influence of social isolation on adolescent behavior is compounded when it intersects with cultural, familial, or socioeconomic adversity" (introduction) would be clearer with a concrete example illustrating this intersection—perhaps using a case or study from a minority group context.

In the discussion of negative self-talk (paragraph beginning "Negative self-talk—defined as…"), it would strengthen the argument to briefly explain the theoretical basis of how negative self-talk impacts behavior—possibly citing cognitive-behavioral theory.

Under "Study Design and Participants," the use of the Morgan and Krejcie table is appropriate, but it would be helpful to clarify which demographic strata were used in stratified random sampling (e.g., gender, region, school type).

In the "Measures" section for Social Isolation, while the SELSA-S is said to be validated for adolescents, it would be scientifically rigorous to specify which adolescent samples (e.g., age range or country) and cite the specific validation study.

The "Negative Self-Talk" section notes the NSTS includes four subscales, but the current study's results do not report or analyze the subscale scores. Including or at least commenting on whether subscale differences were observed would enhance depth.

The data analysis section says "normality was assessed using skewness and kurtosis values" and "all fell within the acceptable range of −1 to +1." This is methodologically sound, but providing exact values for each variable would improve transparency.

In Table 1, the values suggest moderate levels of all variables, yet the interpretation in the preceding paragraph uses the phrase "relatively frequent occurrence" for negative self-talk. This wording may overstate the result; consider more cautious language.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

2. Revised

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