Predicting Social Anxiety Through Peer Rejection and Fear of Negative Evaluation in Youth

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1.   Round 1

1.1.   Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The Introduction opens with a general statement on social anxiety but lacks recent epidemiological data. Consider adding prevalence rates from recent Latin American or global adolescent studies to quantify the problem and strengthen the rationale (e.g., first paragraph, line 1).

In the final paragraph of the Introduction, the claim "few studies have simultaneously examined their combined predictive power in youth populations" should be supported by a brief mention of recent literature gaps or systematic reviews to justify the study's novelty.

In the Measures section, the description of the BFNE ends with a citation cluster but contains a typographical error: "(Keshtkaran, 2023; Li et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2022)s." The extra "s" at the end should be deleted for proper formatting.

The Data Analysis section describes the use of SPSS and statistical tests but does not mention how missing data were handled. Did the authors apply any imputation methods, or was listwise deletion used?

In Table 4, the regression coefficient for fear of negative evaluation (B = 0.69, β = .46) is higher than for peer rejection. The paragraph should comment on possible conceptual reasons for this—perhaps cognitive variables being more proximal predictors than social ones.

The first paragraph of the Discussion repeats statistical results already presented. To enhance scientific rigor, replace repetition with deeper theoretical interpretation or compare with studies not yet cited.

In the third paragraph of the Discussion, the phrase "...cognitive bias becomes self-reinforcing..." needs elaboration. What specific biases (e.g., attentional bias, interpretation bias) are at play, and how might they be targeted?

In the sixth paragraph of the Discussion, the authors state "...socially anxious adolescents show atypical activity in brain regions...". For greater scientific precision, the names of the implicated brain regions (e.g., anterior cingulate cortex, amygdala) should be added.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

1.2.   Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the third paragraph of the Introduction, the sentence "These neural responses are particularly heightened in individuals predisposed to internalizing disorders..." would benefit from clarification on what constitutes such predisposition—genetic markers, temperament, or prior trauma?

The fourth paragraph states: "...as early as middle school and are linked with deteriorating social confidence..." This developmental claim would be more robust if supported by a specific longitudinal study or dataset rather than generalized literature.

The Methods section (Study Design and Participants) reports stratified random sampling but does not specify the strata used (e.g., gender, school type, geographic region). Please clarify how stratification was operationalized.

In the description of the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents, the authors write: "The SAS-A has been widely validated...". While informative, it would be scientifically stronger to report Cronbach's alpha for the current sample, not just from past studies.

Similarly, the reliability of the PEQ-R is described using general values ("typically above 0.80"). The authors should include the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) obtained from their own sample.

In the Findings, the demographic paragraph is comprehensive but would benefit from cross-tabulations. For instance, were there differences in gender distribution across school types (public vs. private)?

The interpretation of Table 1 in the paragraph beginning "As shown in Table 1..." would benefit from a benchmark reference. Are these social anxiety scores above clinical thresholds, or merely moderate compared to normative samples?

In the section discussing regression assumptions, the sentence "Multicollinearity was checked using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values..." is clear, but adding the tolerance values alongside VIF would provide more comprehensive diagnostics.

Table 3 reports an R^2 of .40, interpreted as "strong model stability." However, model stability is better supported by cross-validation or adjusted R^2 alone. The sentence should revise its claim and discuss the adjusted R^2 (.39) as a more accurate indicator.

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2.   Revised

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