Instagram Abuse and Deficient Emotion Facial Recognition Explain Young Adults' Affective Depressive Symptoms

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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:

The sentence "Persistent negative emotionality such as pessimism and sadness has been shown to interfere with college students' academic performance..." (p. 2) is well-supported but could be expanded by clarifying whether the authors conceptualize "affective depressive symptoms" as distinct from MDD or part of a continuum.

The rationale for including biological sex as a covariate is strong, but the manuscript would benefit from acknowledging non-binary or gender-diverse participants, especially since the dataset had an "Other" category (reported as 0%). Discuss this limitation briefly.

The sentence "We therefore added the age of participants as a second demographic covariate in our model…" could be strengthened by citing empirical data showing nonlinearity in age-related depressive trends (e.g., curvilinear effects).

The authors combined two BFI-2 subscales ("Depression" and "Emotional Volatility"). While justified statistically (r = .66), the conceptual rationale for merging personality facets into a symptom index should be more explicitly argued.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The paragraph on self-esteem is comprehensive, but the transition to implicit versus explicit measures could confuse readers. Clarify that the Rosenberg scale measures explicit, global self-esteem and justify why this dimension was prioritized.

When discussing "abusive consumption of social media," specify why Instagram (rather than TikTok or Snapchat) was chosen, given their comparable popularity among Gen Z. This will help position the study within the contemporary digital landscape.

The passage "We added deficient recognition of facial emotion expressions as another key factor…" lacks an articulated mechanism. Explain briefly how emotion recognition deficits might exacerbate affective symptoms (e.g., through impaired social feedback processing).

Consider numbering the hypotheses (H1–H5) formally within the text rather than only describing them narratively to enhance clarity and facilitate later reference in the Results and Discussion sections.

The sentence "images were degraded through a filter for reduced visual contrast by 25%..." raises methodological questions. Please clarify the rationale for this modification and whether it was pre-tested to ensure reliability and avoid ceiling/floor effects.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

2. Revised

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