



# Development of a Social Anxiety Model Based on Dark Personality Traits and Metacognition With the Mediating Role of Alexithymia Among University Students in Kermanshah

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## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the paragraph introducing the Dark Triad (“One promising dispositional framework for extending models of social anxiety is the ‘dark’ constellation of personality”), the manuscript moves quickly from description to implication. Please explicitly articulate why dark traits are theoretically relevant to social anxiety, given that some components (e.g., psychopathy) are traditionally associated with fearlessness.

Although dark personality traits, meta-worry, and alexithymia are each well reviewed, the paragraph beginning “Integrating these strands suggests a coherent conceptual pathway” would benefit from a schematic verbal model (e.g., distal → proximal → symptom) stated explicitly before the aim. This will improve conceptual coherence.

In the Measures section, Cronbach’s alpha for dark personality traits is reported as 0.534, which is substantially below conventional thresholds. The statement that this is “tolerable” requires stronger justification. Please provide item-level loadings or cite methodological sources supporting acceptance in PLS-SEM.

The Dirty Dozen is described as using a 7-point scale, but response anchors are listed from 1 to 5. Please correct this inconsistency and confirm the actual response format used in data collection.

The Metacognition Questionnaire is described as assessing “the perceived dangers of metaworry”. Please clarify whether meta-worry is treated as unidimensional in the model and justify excluding other metacognitive belief domains (e.g., positive beliefs about worry).

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

### 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The final sentence of the introduction clearly states the aim; however, it does not specify whether the model is confirmatory or exploratory. Please clarify whether the hypothesized paths were specified a priori or refined based on data-driven considerations.

In Study Design and Participants, the use of convenience sampling is acknowledged, but there is no discussion of selection bias. Please add a short justification for why this sampling approach is acceptable given the modeling goals, or discuss how it may limit inference.

The demographic paragraph reports that 75.2% of participants were female. Please justify why gender was not controlled for in the structural model or explain why gender differences were considered theoretically irrelevant in this context.

The exclusion criterion “absence of a diagnosis of severe psychological disorders... based on self-report” raises concerns about diagnostic validity. Please clarify how participants understood this criterion and whether any screening tool was used.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

## 2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.