

The Relationship Between Attachment Styles and Childhood Trauma and Cyberbullying Among Adolescents

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The final paragraphs of the Introduction identify several research gaps but could articulate the study's specific novelty more sharply. The sentence "Despite the growing literature, several issues remain insufficiently clarified" should be followed by a more explicit statement identifying precisely what this study adds beyond previous research. In particular, the authors should emphasize that the study simultaneously examines three attachment dimensions, the total childhood trauma score and its five specific dimensions, and two cyberbullying roles in a sample of Iranian male adolescents. This would provide a more compelling transition from the literature review to the study objective.

In the Study Design and Participants section, the sentence "The present study employed an applied, descriptive-correlational research design" should be reconsidered in terms of methodological terminology. The designation "applied" concerns the purpose of research rather than its analytic design, whereas "cross-sectional correlational" more accurately characterizes the empirical design. The authors should explicitly state that data were collected at a single time point and avoid terminology that could imply intervention, temporal sequencing, or causal inference. This revision would also support more accurate interpretation of the regression findings later in the manuscript.

The Data Analysis section should report the regression specification more precisely. The sentence “Multiple regression analysis was subsequently performed to determine the extent to which attachment styles and childhood trauma could statistically predict cyberbullying” should identify the exact criterion and predictors: total cyberbullying as the dependent variable, with secure attachment, avoidant attachment, anxious-ambivalent attachment, and total childhood trauma entered simultaneously as predictors. The authors should state whether the regression used the enter/standard method rather than stepwise selection and should report how missing data, outliers, influential cases, and potential violations of linearity and homoscedasticity were assessed.

The paragraph on statistical assumptions needs revision because the reliance on the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test is methodologically insufficient and somewhat inconsistent with contemporary regression diagnostics. The manuscript states that nonsignificant Kolmogorov–Smirnov results “confirmed” normality, but normality in multiple regression primarily concerns residuals rather than requiring each predictor to be normally distributed. The authors should focus on residual diagnostics, linearity, homoscedasticity, influential observations, and multicollinearity. Histograms or Q–Q plots of residuals, standardized residual ranges, and Cook’s distance or leverage statistics would provide a more appropriate assessment of model assumptions.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The participant-selection paragraph should provide explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria. At present, it states that eligible Grade 10–12 male students who voluntarily participated were included, but it does not specify age range, current enrollment requirements, ability to complete online questionnaires, consent requirements, or criteria used to exclude questionnaires from the final dataset. The manuscript states that 384 questionnaires were distributed and 354 retained, so the authors should report exactly why 30 cases were excluded—for example, incomplete responses, failed validity criteria on the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, duplicate responses, or other predetermined criteria—to ensure reproducibility and transparency.

The sentence “Participants were selected using convenience sampling” requires additional discussion because the recruitment procedure appears to involve schools selected through administrative coordination and then students responding voluntarily through SHAD. The authors should describe the number of schools involved, how those schools were selected, whether all eligible students within participating schools received the questionnaire link, and whether participation rates differed by school or grade. This information is necessary to assess potential selection bias and the representativeness of the final sample.

The ethical procedure requires substantial clarification because the participants were secondary-school adolescents and therefore likely included minors. The sentence “Before participation, the objectives and procedures of the research were explained to the students, and informed consent was obtained” does not specify whether parental or guardian consent and adolescent assent were obtained. The manuscript should report the approving ethics committee, ethics approval code, institutional authorization, procedures for obtaining parental permission where required, voluntary assent, confidentiality protections, and safeguards for questions concerning childhood abuse and sexual abuse. Given the sensitivity of the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire, the authors should also explain whether participants were provided with counseling or referral information if questionnaire completion caused distress.

The description of the Collins and Read Attachment Scale contains a scoring inconsistency that should be checked carefully. The manuscript refers to a “five-category Likert-type format” but the original Persian description calls it a “four-degree” scale while listing five response categories scored from 0 to 4. The authors should correct this inconsistency and verify all reverse-scored items against the validated version actually administered. Furthermore, because the sample consists of Iranian adolescents, the manuscript should specify which Persian validation or adaptation was used and report internal consistency coefficients obtained from the present sample rather than relying exclusively on previous studies.

The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire paragraph should be revised to describe the minimization/denial validity scale more accurately and to explain whether this validity index was actually used in data screening. The statement that questionnaires

with scores “higher than 12” should be excluded requires verification against the scoring procedure of the specific version administered. More importantly, if such a criterion was applied, the manuscript should report how many questionnaires were excluded on this basis. If it was not applied, the Methods should not imply that it formed part of the actual exclusion procedure.

The Cyberbullying Questionnaire section should clarify the interpretation of the “total cyberbullying” score. The instrument contains separate cybervictimization and cyberbullying-perpetration dimensions, which represent conceptually different roles. Summing them produces an index of general involvement but may obscure theoretically important distinctions between victimization and perpetration. The authors should justify the psychometric and conceptual basis for calculating a total score, particularly because the regression analysis uses total cyberbullying as the dependent variable while the correlation analysis reports both subscales separately.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.