Borderline Personality Features, Somatization, and Stress Reactivity: A Biopsychosocial Model

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The sentence "From this perspective, borderline personality features can be understood as part of a fast-paced life-history strategy…" introduces an evolutionary framework. Please clarify whether this is intended as a conceptual lens or a testable theoretical assumption, as it is not directly operationalized later in the study.

When discussing neuroendocrine and autonomic findings ("including alterations in cortisol, testosterone, and cardiovascular functioning"), it would strengthen coherence to explicitly state why perceived stress reactivity (PSS) was chosen as a proxy rather than physiological indicators.

The paragraph beginning "Somatization, defined as the experience and reporting of physical symptoms…" is well written, but it would benefit from a brief clarification distinguishing somatization as symptom perception vs. symptom reporting, particularly given the exclusive reliance on self-report measures.

The description of the PAI-BOR is thorough; however, given that subscale scores are reported in Table 1, please clarify whether subscales were examined analytically or only descriptively, and justify this decision.

In the paragraph describing the PSS, the term "stress reactivity" is used interchangeably with perceived stress. Please clarify conceptually whether the authors view perceived stress as equivalent to reactivity, or as a cognitive–appraisal component of reactivity.

The sentence "Data analysis was conducted using statistical software commonly employed in psychological research" is vague. Please specify the exact software and version to meet reproducibility standards.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2.   Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the sentence "The relationship between borderline traits and somatization is also shaped by cognitive and interpersonal processes", consider briefly specifying which of these processes are most proximal to stress reactivity to sharpen the mediational logic.

The statement "Social and contextual factors also play a crucial role…" introduces important variables (trauma, minority stress), but these are not measured. Please explicitly acknowledge that these are contextual moderators not examined in the current model, to maintain conceptual transparency.

The final sentence stating the aim is clear; however, it would be strengthened by explicitly specifying that the mediation model is statistical rather than causal, given the cross-sectional design.

In the paragraph describing the cross-sectional design, please justify more explicitly why mediation analysis is appropriate in a cross-sectional context, referencing theoretical rather than temporal mediation.

The exclusion criterion "acute medical illnesses that could independently account for somatic symptoms" requires clarification. Please specify how this was assessed (self-report, screening questions, or clinician judgment) to improve methodological transparency.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2.   Revised

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