




Cross-Cultural Prediction of Norm Internalization Using Conformity Pressure, Moral Disengagement, and Social Learning

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the Introduction, the statement “Norm internalization is not merely a passive absorption of cultural values but rather a dynamic and context-dependent process” is theoretically sound but insufficiently anchored in a specific theoretical framework. The authors should explicitly situate this claim within established models (e.g., internalization theory, self-determination theory, or social identity theory) to strengthen conceptual rigor and avoid overly generalized assertions .

In the paragraph beginning “One of the central mechanisms influencing norm internalization is conformity pressure,” the manuscript discusses cross-cultural variability but does not specify how culture is operationalized or measured in the study. The absence of a cultural index (e.g., Hofstede dimensions, individualism–collectivism scales) undermines the “cross-cultural” claim and should be addressed explicitly .

The sentence “Empirical studies have shown that conformity pressure is closely linked to behavioral regulation” lacks precise citation integration and fails to distinguish between correlational and causal evidence. The authors should specify the nature of prior evidence and clarify whether the cited literature supports mediation, moderation, or direct effects .

In the paragraph on moral disengagement, the claim “moral disengagement is associated with a wide range of maladaptive outcomes” is too broad and would benefit from specifying effect sizes or relative strengths of association from prior studies, thereby enhancing the scientific precision of the literature synthesis .

In the Findings section, the demographic description “participants ranged in age from 18 to 64 years” would benefit from additional distributional details (e.g., skewness or age-group frequencies), as the wide range may mask cohort effects relevant to norm internalization .

Table 1 reports correlations such as “ $r = 0.46, p < 0.001$,” but the manuscript does not address potential common method variance, given that all variables were collected via self-report. The authors should conduct and report tests such as Harman’s single-factor test or CFA-based approaches .

Response: Revised and uploaded the new document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The discussion of social learning theory includes the sentence “individuals acquire norms by observing the actions of others,” but the manuscript does not clarify whether observational learning was measured behaviorally or via self-report. Given the reliance on questionnaires, the authors should acknowledge potential construct–method overlap and measurement bias .

In the paragraph “The interplay between conformity pressure, moral disengagement, and social learning becomes particularly complex,” the manuscript introduces the normative conflict model but does not integrate it into the study’s hypotheses or analytic model. This creates a theoretical–empirical disconnect that should be resolved by explicitly linking theory to tested relationships .

The sentence “Recent empirical research has also highlighted the role of contextual and situational variables” introduces moderators such as willpower and institutional context, yet these variables are not included in the current model. The omission should be justified, or the discussion should be reframed to avoid implying that the study tests these effects .

In the Methods section, the phrase “standardized and psychometrically validated instruments” is used without reporting specific reliability coefficients (e.g., Cronbach’s alpha) for the current sample. Reporting internal consistency for each scale is essential for methodological rigor and should be included .

The description “a modified version of the Social Learning Questionnaire” lacks detail regarding the nature and extent of modifications. The authors must specify item changes, adaptation procedures, and validation steps to ensure transparency and replicability .

In the Data Analysis section, the statement “assumptions of statistical analyses... were rigorously tested” is insufficient without reporting diagnostic statistics (e.g., VIF values for multicollinearity, skewness/kurtosis for normality). These should be explicitly presented, either in text or supplementary material .

The sentence “machine learning models including Random Forest, Support Vector Machine, and Gradient Boosting algorithms were implemented” lacks specification of hyperparameter tuning procedures. The absence of details such as grid search, cross-validation folds, or parameter ranges limits the reproducibility of the machine learning component .

Response: Revised and uploaded the new document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.