

Structural Relationship Between Social Comparison and Bullying with the Experience of Schadenfreude Considering the Mediating Role of Social Dominance Orientation in Medical Residents


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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the introduction paragraph beginning with “The experience of schadenfreude, defined as the pleasure derived from others’ misfortunes...”, the theoretical framing is strong, but it remains largely descriptive; you should integrate more recent empirical findings quantitatively (e.g., effect sizes or meta-analytic trends) to strengthen the scientific rigor and situate the study more clearly within current evidence-based discourse .

In the paragraph discussing social comparison theory, the statement “Empirical evidence suggests that social comparison processes are deeply rooted in neural and cognitive systems...” is too general; you should specify which neural correlates (e.g., ventral striatum, anterior cingulate cortex) have been identified in prior research to enhance theoretical depth and precision .

In the section introducing workplace bullying, the sentence “Research indicates that exposure to bullying not only leads to adverse outcomes such as stress and burnout...” would benefit from clearer operationalization of bullying; consider distinguishing between frequency, intensity, and duration of bullying behaviors to align more closely with established measurement frameworks .

In Table 1 reporting descriptive statistics, the interpretation paragraph does not sufficiently address the relatively high skewness of the physical bullying dimension (1.09); you should discuss potential implications for normality assumptions and whether transformations or robust estimators were considered .

In Table 2, the correlation matrix includes statistically significant relationships; however, the narrative states “supporting its potential mediating role,” which is conceptually misleading because correlation does not imply mediation—this interpretation should be revised to avoid overstatement

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the paragraph introducing social dominance orientation, the claim “Research has consistently shown that SDO is associated with reduced empathy...” is valid but underdeveloped; you should explicitly link SDO to schadenfreude through specific mediating cognitive mechanisms (e.g., moral disengagement or dehumanization) to better justify its role in the structural model .

In the final paragraph of the introduction, the sentence “Despite these developments, there remains a relative lack of research...” is appropriate, but the research gap is not sufficiently operationalized; you should specify what exact relationships (e.g., direct vs. indirect effects, population-specific gaps) are underexplored to justify the necessity of the current model more rigorously .

In the methods section under “Study Design and Participants,” the justification for using PLS-SEM (“due to its robustness... and suitability for small to moderate sample sizes”) is standard but insufficient; you should also justify why covariance-based SEM was not used, especially given the theoretical nature of the model .

In the sampling description, the sentence “After data screening and exclusion of incomplete or invalid responses... the final sample consisted of 73 medical residents” lacks transparency; you should report the exact number of excluded cases and the criteria used for defining “invalid responses” to ensure reproducibility .

In the measures section, the description “Previous studies have reported satisfactory reliability and validity...” is repeated across instruments; this redundancy should be reduced, and instead, you should report specific reliability coefficients (e.g., Cronbach’s alpha) from prior validation studies to enhance scientific precision .

In the data analysis section, the statement “Indicator reliability was examined through factor loadings, with values above 0.40 considered acceptable” is methodologically weak; contemporary standards typically recommend a threshold of 0.70, so you should justify the use of 0.40 or revise the threshold to align with best practices .

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.