Psychological Determinants of Intimacy Avoidance in High-Achieving Women with Attachment Insecurity

Aleksandra. Kowalska[1] , Lukas. Gruber[2*]

[1] Department of Health Psychology, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland
[2] Department of Educational Psychology, University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria

* Corresponding author email address: lukas.gruber@univie.ac.at

Editor	Reviewers
Mohsen Joshanloo	**Reviewer 1:** Farideh Dokanehi Fard
Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Keimyung University, 1095 Dalgubeol Boulevard, Dalseo-Gu, Daegu 42601, South Korea mohsen.joshanloo@unimelb.edu.au	Associate Professor, Counseling Department, Roudehen Branch, Islamic Azad University, Roudehen, Iran. Email: f.dokaneifard@riau.ac.ir
	Reviewer 2: Nadereh Saadati
	Department of Couple and Family therapy, Alliant International University, California, United States of America. mdaneshpour@alliant.edu

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

Consider specifying these "societal factors" early on—e.g., gender role expectations, neoliberal achievement culture—as this would strengthen the theoretical scaffolding of your introduction.

This is a critical claim. Support it by integrating a brief discussion of feminist or gender role theory literature on emotional socialization of women, particularly in professional domains.

While the phases of coding are named, the process of theme development remains unclear. How were disagreements between coders resolved? Was inter-coder reliability assessed?

This phrase is analytically rich. Consider defining or elaborating the "professional mask" as a psychological construct, potentially linking it to identity performance literature.

Include a more nuanced treatment of the intersection between vulnerability and professionalism. How does this conflict manifest differently across sectors (e.g., law vs. healthcare)?

This pattern is noteworthy. Could you explore whether participants identified friendships as safer due to lower relational stakes? Including that could clarify emotional risk calculus.

Please discuss whether this aligns with maladaptive perfectionism, and how this differs from intrinsic motivation. Including a comparison could deepen interpretation.

This is a powerful subtheme. Consider citing literature on alexithymia or emotional granularity to contextualize the psychological implications of this finding.

This limitation is valid, but please discuss how Austria's cultural norms (e.g., individualism, gender equality indices) might have influenced participants' attachment experiences.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The neurobiological claim is compelling but may be too briefly treated. Consider adding 1–2 sentences about the specific brain regions or mechanisms (e.g., amygdala suppression, prefrontal overactivation) to substantiate this point.

This is accurate but under-elaborated. Please expand on why an interpretivist paradigm (vs. constructivist or phenomenological) was most appropriate for this topic and population.

The term "moderate to high" is vague. Consider including specific benchmarks or examples—e.g., academic publications, managerial positions—to help readers contextualize the participants' career achievements.

Please include the full semi-structured interview guide as an appendix or supplementary file. This would enhance methodological transparency and enable replication.

For theoretical clarity, explicitly link these patterns back to attachment dimensions (e.g., deactivating strategies = avoidant; hyperactivation = anxious). A short typological table could be helpful.

Consider whether "efficiency" here aligns with capitalist or productivity-centric ideologies. Reflecting on broader cultural discourses would add depth to your socio-psychological analysis.

Were there any distinctions between maternal vs. paternal figures in these early imprints? A brief analysis of gendered caregiving patterns might be insightful.

Excellent synthesis. However, please clarify whether participants were aware of this "double bind" or if it was inferred by the authors during analysis.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

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