Structural Model Comparison of the Relationship Between Early Maladaptive Schemas and Self-Compassion via Affective Flexibility in Women Seeking Divorce and Non-clinical Women

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The paragraph effectively introduces self-compassion but lacks transitional coherence from early maladaptive schemas to self-compassion. Consider explicitly explaining how EMS activation leads to self-critical processes that undermine compassion toward self.

There is impressive citation breadth (e.g., {Faustino, 2020 #196981; Volkaert, 2024 #210914}); however, the narrative is dense. It would help to synthesize studies into a summary table comparing methodologies and findings to illustrate research gaps that justify the present study.

The hypotheses are stated but not numbered or operationalized. For example, rather than "it was hypothesized that early maladaptive schemas would negatively predict both affective flexibility and self-compassion," specify H1, H2, H3 and the directionality to increase precision.

Reliability coefficients are only reported for pilot testing ($\alpha = .77$). It would strengthen the manuscript to report internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's α, composite reliability) for the actual study sample (N=400) for each scale and subscale.

The article reports R² values and standardized coefficients but omits key fit indices (CFI, TLI, RMSEA, SRMR). For SEM, these indices are essential. Please provide global model fit statistics for each group and comparative fit results for the constrained model.

When describing mediation testing, include the number of bootstrap samples (e.g., 5,000 or 10,000) and confidence interval type (bias-corrected or percentile) to enhance replicability.

The correlation matrices are informative but would benefit from highlighting significant correlations (e.g., bolding or asterisks). Moreover, ensure p-values are clearly denoted (e.g., p < .05, p < .001) below each table for clarity.

The authors should interpret small but statistically significant paths ($\beta = -0.142$, p = .048) cautiously. Discuss whether such small coefficients have practical or theoretical significance in explaining variance in self-compassion.

The closing section offers useful practice recommendations but lacks specificity about how affective flexibility training could be operationalized in schema therapy. Suggest integrating concrete examples (e.g., mindfulness shifting, emotional exposure tasks) to make the practical value clearer.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2.   Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The introduction synthesizes multiple constructs (schemas, flexibility, compassion) but does not present a conceptual figure or theoretical pathway. A diagram depicting the hypothesized relationships among variables would enhance conceptual clarity for readers.

While the paragraph articulates the mediating role of affective flexibility, it would benefit from clarifying whether flexibility is conceptualized as a trait (stable ability) or a state-dependent regulatory process. This distinction is critical for model interpretation.

The term "critical ratio" is used without explaining the statistical basis. Clarify that these are Z-differences or Wald tests comparing path coefficients across groups, and specify the significance threshold used (e.g., |CR| > 1.96, p < .05).

Some mediation paths have p-values around .05–.07 (e.g., Impaired Autonomy & Performance → Self-Compassion, p = .067). Discuss the interpretation of these borderline results—should they be treated as non-significant or suggestive trends?

The discussion reiterates known schema theory principles but could benefit from integrating novel contributions—specifically, how the comparative model clarifies emotional regulation processes unique to divorce-seeking women.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2.   Revised

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