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# The Relationship Between Cybervictimization and Depression Among Women: The Mediating Roles of Rumination, Self-Esteem, and Social Support

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## 1. Round 1

### *1.1. Reviewer 1*

Reviewer:

In the paragraph beginning “Although the direct association between cybervictimization and depression has been well established,” the manuscript argues that mediation frameworks are necessary because victimization affects mental health through intermediary processes. This rationale is appropriate, but the authors should articulate formal hypotheses at the end of the introduction. For instance, separate hypotheses should state that cybervictimization will positively predict depression, positively predict rumination, negatively predict self-esteem and social support, and indirectly predict depression through each mediator. Explicit hypotheses would improve the logical continuity between the theoretical background and the SEM analysis.

In the methods section, the heading “2.1. Study design and Participant” should be revised to “Study Design and Participants.” More importantly, the paragraph states that participants were recruited through “online advertisements distributed via social media platforms, community organizations, women's support networks, and university mailing lists across several Canadian provinces,” but it does not specify which provinces, platforms, organizations, or recruitment quotas were involved. The authors should provide more methodological detail to allow readers to evaluate sampling diversity, recruitment bias, and the representativeness of the sample.

In Table 1, the authors present means, standard deviations, and correlations, but the table does not report score ranges, possible ranges, observed ranges, or reliability coefficients. Adding these values would substantially improve interpretability. For example, the depression mean of 19.76 on the BDI-II cannot be fully interpreted without indicating whether this corresponds to mild, moderate, or clinically relevant symptom levels. The table should also clarify whether cybervictimization represents lifetime exposure, past-year exposure, or another temporal frame.

In the findings paragraph preceding Table 1, the authors state that "Approximately 57.8% of respondents reported experiencing at least one form of cybervictimization during the previous twelve months." This is a crucial descriptive finding, but the methods section does not state how "at least one form" was operationalized. The authors should define the threshold used to classify participants as cybervictimized, specify whether this was based on any item scored above "never," and report the frequency or severity distribution of cybervictimization experiences.

In Table 2 and the accompanying paragraph, the authors report "Measurement Model Fit Indices" and conclude that "the latent constructs of cybervictimization, rumination, self-esteem, social support, and depression were measured reliably." However, no factor loadings, standard errors, construct reliabilities, average variance extracted, or discriminant validity statistics are presented. If a true measurement model was tested, the manuscript should report these parameters. If the SEM used observed composite scores rather than latent variables, the terminology "measurement model" and "latent constructs" should be revised to avoid methodological overstatement.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

### *1.2. Reviewer 2*

Reviewer:

In the same methods paragraph, the manuscript states that "The target population consisted of adult women residing in Canada during the 2025–2026 period." This timeframe is difficult to reconcile with the article history showing acceptance in July 2025 and publication-related dates in 2025. The authors should clarify the actual data collection period. If data collection extended into 2026, then the acceptance and publication dates require revision; if not, the phrase "2025–2026" should be corrected.

In the methods paragraph describing eligibility criteria, the authors include "possessing sufficient English language proficiency to complete the questionnaires." This criterion is reasonable, but it may introduce selection bias in a multicultural Canadian sample, particularly if immigrant, refugee, Indigenous, or non-English-speaking women were underrepresented. The authors should acknowledge this issue either in the sampling description or limitations section and, if available, report participants' language background or ethnicity distribution.

In the measures section, the manuscript states that "Data were collected using a demographic information form and four standardized psychological instruments," but the authors then describe five standardized instruments: the Cyber Victimization Scale, Beck Depression Inventory-II, Ruminative Responses Scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. This inconsistency should be corrected. The sentence should either state "five standardized psychological instruments" or otherwise clarify whether one of these instruments was treated differently.

In the measures paragraph on the Cyber Victimization Scale, the authors state that "Previous studies have demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties," but no reliability coefficient is reported for the present sample. The same issue appears for the BDI-II, RRS, RSES, and MSPSS. The authors should report internal consistency estimates, preferably Cronbach's alpha and McDonald's omega, for each scale in the present dataset. Because the study's conclusions depend on latent psychological constructs, sample-specific reliability evidence is essential.

In the measures section, the authors describe the Ruminative Responses Scale as including "subdimensions commonly referred to as brooding and reflective pondering," but the analysis uses only a total rumination variable. The authors should clarify whether subscale scores were examined, whether the total RRS score was used, and why the brooding and reflection dimensions were not modeled separately. This is important because brooding is typically more strongly associated with depression than reflective pondering, and combining them may obscure theoretically meaningful differences.



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In the data analysis section, the authors state that "Prior to structural equation modeling, assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and absence of significant outliers were evaluated," but the findings do not report any diagnostic results. The authors should provide skewness and kurtosis values, multicollinearity indices such as VIF or tolerance, outlier screening procedures such as Mahalanobis distance, and missing-data handling procedures. Reporting that assumptions were evaluated is insufficient unless the results of these evaluations are presented.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

## 2. Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.
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