



Attachment Avoidance and Intimacy Decline: The Mediating Role of Expressive Suppression


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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the paragraph discussing collectivist contexts (“In collectivist contexts, suppression may be socially endorsed to maintain harmony”), the authors could expand on Kenyan relational norms or cite African-based attachment research to justify the cultural adaptation.

In the section “An emerging integrative view conceptualizes expressive suppression as a mediator...”, it would strengthen the argument to discuss alternative mediators (e.g., partner responsiveness, emotional awareness) and justify why suppression was prioritized.

The sentence “Tests of normality using Kolmogorov–Smirnov statistics indicated non-significant deviation” is useful, but you could include justification for using KS rather than Shapiro-Wilk given the sample size and clarify handling of potential outliers.

SEM model justification: The methods note “Model fit was evaluated with multiple indices” but does not justify the cut-off criteria (e.g., why $RMSEA \leq .06$ is acceptable). Adding references would strengthen the methodological rigor.

Reporting clarity: In Table 2 (“Pearson Correlations Among Study Variables”), the significance levels (p-values) are clear, but effect size interpretation would help readers (e.g., $r = .61$ is a “large” effect per Cohen’s standards).

The description “Figure 1 Model with Beta Coefficients” lacks a narrative explanation. Discuss which paths were strongest and how the diagram visually supports the theoretical framework.

The sentence “Couple therapy can target suppression by promoting emotional awareness and safe disclosure” could be expanded with specific evidence-based interventions (e.g., Emotionally Focused Therapy, Attachment-Based Family Therapy).

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In “A total of 391 participants... recruited from different counties in Kenya through convenience and voluntary participation”, please elaborate on recruitment channels (social media, universities, community centers?) and steps taken to ensure demographic diversity.

The paper states “The PAIR Inventory has been shown to have strong internal consistency” but does not clarify whether cultural or linguistic adaptation was performed for the Kenyan sample. Specify if the scales underwent translation/back-translation or pilot testing.

In the descriptive results paragraph (“Of the 391 participants, 222 (56.78%) were female...”), consider whether gender moderated the main relationships. Even if exploratory, this would add nuance and practical relevance.

In the Discussion, the authors write “Our results reinforce a robust empirical pattern...”. It would be stronger to explicitly link findings to dual-process attachment models or self-protective deactivation theory and clarify how this study extends them.

The statement “Our Kenyan sample provides new evidence that these processes hold beyond Western and Middle Eastern populations” is important. Expand on potential cultural moderators (e.g., modernization, gender norms) and how they might influence suppression and intimacy.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.