

## Online Identity Management and Relational Closeness: The Mediating Role of Emotional Transparency

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## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

“Users often regulate their digital self-expression through impression management strategies, balancing authenticity with the desire to appear competent...” . Expand on how this balance varies across cultures; currently, the text heavily references Western and East Asian literature but doesn’t integrate Middle Eastern social norms early.

In “From a relational systems perspective, intimacy develops dynamically...” , you mention feedback loops. A conceptual figure illustrating the hypothesized mediation model would help readers visually connect these theoretical elements.

In the implications: “Social media and platform designers should consider integrating features that enhance psychological safety...” . Add examples of concrete features (e.g., tiered visibility controls, AI-powered empathetic prompts) to translate findings into actionable design.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

*1.2. Reviewer 2*

Reviewer:

The paragraph: “Empirical gaps remain, however. Much of the existing work isolates either self-presentation or disclosure without modeling their combined influence on closeness”. Strengthen this section by clarifying what exactly is unknown about emotional transparency’s mediating mechanism in collectivist societies.

The introduction alternates between “emotional openness,” “authentic emotional sharing,” and “emotional transparency” (e.g., “authentic, emotionally rich disclosures foster trust and bonding”). Define emotional transparency operationally and consistently use that term.

In the discussion: “Participants who curated their profiles... were able to maintain a sense of safety and coherence, prerequisites for closeness”. Reframe to avoid implying causality since the design is cross-sectional.

The discussion notes: “Digital platforms can soften these constraints by allowing controlled, paced self-revelation”. Expand on how Egyptian cultural norms (e.g., family honor, gender norms) specifically intersect with online self-presentation.

The text says: “Perceived similarity, social capital building, and relationship maintenance strategies may also strengthen bonds”. Suggest including these as future measured variables to build a richer multi-mediator model.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

**2. Revised**

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.