




Social Skills as a Mediator Between Secure Attachment and Peer Relationships

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the final paragraph of the Introduction, the authors mention “self-compassion interventions.” Since this study does not measure self-compassion, the extensive discussion may appear tangential. The authors should either integrate this into the model or streamline the paragraph to maintain focus.

In the Methods (Study Design and Participants), the authors state that multistage cluster sampling was used but do not provide specific clusters (e.g., schools, districts). Please specify the stages and criteria for selection to ensure reproducibility.

In the Measures section under “Social Skills,” the sentence “The SSRS includes separate forms for teachers, parents, and students...” would benefit from a rationale explaining why the student version was selected over teacher- or parent-rated forms, especially since peer behavior is being assessed.

The article lacks a mediation analysis test such as the Sobel test or bootstrapping confidence intervals. Including these would statistically validate the mediating role of social skills, beyond SEM path significance.

In the Results section, the authors interpret RMSEA = 0.057 as acceptable. While correct, they should also provide the 90% confidence interval for RMSEA to support the adequacy of model fit.

In Table 4, the standard errors (SE) are reported for all paths, but confidence intervals for direct and indirect effects are missing. Consider adding bootstrapped 95% CIs to validate mediation.

In the Discussion, paragraph 7, the authors write "...resonate with neuroscientific evidence showing that secure attachment correlates with enhanced functioning in brain regions..." but no specific regions (e.g., anterior cingulate, amygdala) are named. Naming at least two regions would reinforce the neurobiological link.

Authors revised and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In paragraph 2 of the Introduction, the sentence "Attachment theory, initially conceptualized by Bowlby..." should briefly acknowledge Ainsworth's contribution to attachment styles, especially since the study is based on secure attachment.

In the Introduction (paragraph 4), the authors claim "Empirical studies across various populations support this mediating role." However, only two studies are cited. Consider expanding this with at least one longitudinal or East Asian-based study to strengthen the empirical base.

The article does not report Cronbach's alpha values for the current sample for the IPPA, SSRS, and PRQ. Reliability coefficients for this study are necessary to evaluate the internal consistency of the measures.

In the Data Analysis section, the authors mention "Mahalanobis distance values were within acceptable range..." but do not provide a specific minimum and maximum or number of multivariate outliers removed (if any). Clarifying this improves methodological transparency.

In Table 2, while correlation coefficients are presented, confidence intervals for these correlations are not reported. Including 95% CIs would improve the precision and interpretability of the results.

In the Findings, the sentence "Skewness values ranged from -0.61 to 0.34 and kurtosis values ranged from -0.73 to 0.52..." should specify which variable each value corresponds to for full statistical transparency.

In the Discussion (paragraph 2), the authors state, "Secure attachment promotes emotional regulation, trust, and open communication..." This is accurate but should be substantiated with a more recent meta-analysis or review for robustness.

In the Discussion (paragraph 5), while the authors note the mediating role of social skills, they do not differentiate between types of social skills (e.g., assertiveness vs. cooperation). Given the SSRS subscales, a brief breakdown of which subscale had the strongest mediation would add nuance.

Authors revised and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.