Maladaptive Beliefs as a Mediator Between Rejection Sensitivity and Social Anxiety

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1.   Round 1

1.1.   Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The claim "These beliefs are often formed early in life through adverse experiences..." is important, but the authors should clarify whether this assertion is grounded in longitudinal developmental research, and if so, cite such sources to differentiate from retrospective studies.

The statement "cultural specificity of these cognitive and emotional processes..." introduces a relevant point, but the article lacks cultural variables in the methodology. Consider integrating a cultural moderation hypothesis or acknowledging this as a limitation in the discussion.

The scoring procedure is described as "multiplying level of concern by expected rejection..."—this operationalization could benefit from an example item and calculation to illustrate the formula's logic for non-expert readers.

The authors write, "5 cases exceeded the critical χ^2 value… and were excluded..."—it would strengthen methodological rigor to specify the χ^2 cutoff value used and provide a rationale for exclusion rather than transformation or imputation.

The sentence "The study sample consisted of 595 participants from various universities across India..." is incongruent with the Methods section, which stated N = 408 from Turkey. This major discrepancy must be corrected for the article to retain credibility.

The paragraph preceding Table 1 refers to "moderately high level of social anxiety…"—this interpretation should be justified with a reference to established SIAS norms or diagnostic thresholds.

The sentence "maladaptive beliefs are both modifiable and central to therapeutic change" is important but would be strengthened by specifying which CBT components (e.g., thought records, behavioral experiments) most effectively target these beliefs.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2. *Reviewer 2*

Reviewer:

The authors write, "Maladaptive beliefs may serve as a crucial mechanism…"—consider clarifying if the mediational mechanism has been previously tested in longitudinal or experimental designs, as this could better contextualize the novelty of the current study.

In the sentence "Emotion regulation strategies—particularly those that are maladaptive...", the authors conflate emotion regulation and cognition. It would improve conceptual clarity to delineate how these constructs interact rather than overlap, supported by neurocognitive evidence.

While correlations are statistically significant, the authors should clarify the magnitude of the associations using language consistent with Cohen's guidelines (e.g., moderate, strong).

The authors write, "maladaptive beliefs not only co-occurred with rejection sensitivity…"—the use of "co-occurred" is vague. Consider replacing with a more precise statistical term like "partially mediated," consistent with the results.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

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