




# Internalized Shame as a Mediator Between Emotional Neglect and Self-Harming Behavior

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## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The opening paragraph introduces the topic well but lacks a formal definition of self-harming behavior. Including a definition (e.g., from Nock or the DSM-5) would help distinguish between self-injury with and without suicidal intent and strengthen the conceptual clarity.

While the rationale for the study is clear, the research gap needs to be more explicitly stated. Instead of saying "few studies have examined...", specify how this study uniquely contributes (e.g., first SEM model in a Canadian youth sample).

The use of convenience sampling introduces potential bias. A discussion of how this limitation might affect the generalizability of the findings should be added to the Discussion section.

The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha or other indicators) for the current sample should be reported. Readers need to know whether the instruments performed reliably in this particular study context.

Please clarify whether the authors used the 5-item Emotional Neglect subscale total score or whether a threshold/cutoff was employed for defining high neglect. This would improve transparency and replicability.

While values are within acceptable ranges, multivariate normality should also be evaluated for SEM assumptions, not just univariate. Consider adding Mardia's test or similar diagnostics.

The paragraph before Table 1 interprets the mean scores but lacks context. For instance, is a score of 15.87 on emotional neglect considered clinically significant? Providing normative benchmarks or clinical cutoffs would enhance interpretability.

Consider discussing alternative pathways that may explain self-harming behavior, such as dissociation or peer influences. This would provide a more comprehensive view of adolescent psychopathology.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

This assertion is powerful but would benefit from citing meta-analytic or longitudinal evidence to support the equivalency in psychological impact, such as studies from Gilbert et al. or the ACEs literature.

The paragraph discussing cross-cultural studies could better integrate the cultural specificity of emotional neglect. Consider adding a comparative cultural framework (e.g., individualist vs. collectivist perspectives) to contextualize how emotional neglect is perceived and reported differently.

This section could be strengthened by offering a concise theoretical framework for how shame mediates trauma outcomes, perhaps referencing Lewis (1971) or Gilbert's (2003) biopsychosocial model of shame.

The VIF values are reported, but tolerance statistics should also be provided for completeness. Also, indicate the threshold values considered acceptable in this context.

The direct effect remains significant despite the presence of the mediator. Please clarify whether this suggests partial rather than full mediation and whether the Sobel test or bootstrapping was used to confirm mediation significance.

This sentence could be enhanced by synthesizing findings more critically. What does the partial mediation imply for intervention? Is addressing shame sufficient, or must neglect also be targeted independently?

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

## 2. Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.