

# Emotional Abuse and Social Isolation as Predictors of Trust in Relationships in Undergraduate Students


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## E d i t o r

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## R e v i e w e r s

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## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The discussion of gaslighting and psychological manipulation lacks empirical data. Consider including prevalence rates or empirical case findings that illustrate these mechanisms in romantic relationships among university students.

The phrase "only the items relevant to emotional and psychological abuse were analyzed" is ambiguous. Please clarify which subscales were excluded, the final item count, and justification for this exclusion.

The sentence "Statistical significance was set at  $p < .05$ ..." would be more scientifically robust if the authors reported whether any corrections for multiple comparisons were applied or considered.

The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test is reported, but it's known to be sensitive to sample size. The authors should also report Q-Q plot interpretations or Shapiro–Wilk results for a more nuanced normality assessment.

The  $R^2$  value of 0.22 suggests that 78% of the variance in trust remains unexplained. The authors should acknowledge this in the discussion and explore what additional variables (e.g., attachment style, cultural stigma) could be included in future models.

The paper asserts that “social media can be a positive tool...” but does not suggest how to practically implement this in the South African context. Include culturally-relevant intervention strategies or campaign examples.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The sentence "Social isolation encompasses subjective feelings of loneliness..." should clarify the conceptual distinction between objective social isolation (e.g., number of social contacts) and subjective loneliness to avoid conflation of constructs.

The claim "Recent empirical evidence highlights the interconnected nature of emotional abuse and social isolation..." should be supported with longitudinal data or citations showing the co-development of these variables over time.

The sentence "Poor emotional regulation, a frequent consequence of emotional abuse..." should specify which dimensions of emotion regulation (e.g., impulse control, emotional clarity) are most affected, with corresponding citations.

The justification for studying Turkish undergraduates is valid but would benefit from integrating socio-cultural factors (e.g., collectivism, family norms) that might influence trust, abuse, and isolation uniquely in this population.

The sentence "Findings revealed significant negative correlations..." restates the results. This paragraph could better synthesize results by discussing how the strength of beta values supports theoretical expectations.

The claim "emotional abuse has been repeatedly associated with adverse relational outcomes..." should be expanded by specifying whether these findings vary by gender, cultural background, or type of relationship.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

## 2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.