

Developing a Structural Model of Academic Engagement Based on Academic Self-Regulation and Academic Buoyancy: The Mediating Role of Epistemological Beliefs in Students

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E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the introduction, the paragraph beginning with “Academic engagement is widely regarded as one of the most important indicators...” provides a solid conceptual foundation, but it lacks a clear critical synthesis of competing models of engagement (e.g., motivational vs. sociocultural perspectives); please strengthen theoretical depth by contrasting alternative frameworks rather than only describing definitions .

In the second paragraph of the introduction, the sentence “academic self-regulation can be considered a central personal resource” is presented as a strong claim, yet it is not sufficiently problematized; please justify why self-regulation is prioritized over other predictors such as teacher support or classroom climate, especially given their omission in the model .

In the paragraph introducing academic buoyancy, the distinction between “academic buoyancy” and “academic resilience” is mentioned but not operationalized in the study; please clarify how this conceptual distinction influenced measurement choices and whether overlap with resilience constructs was statistically controlled .

The paragraph on epistemological beliefs includes the sentence “These beliefs can influence how students interpret academic tasks...,” but the mechanism remains descriptive; please elaborate the mediational logic more formally (e.g., via cognitive appraisal theory or epistemic cognition frameworks) to justify its placement as a mediator rather than a predictor or moderator.

In Table 6 (correlation matrix), the relatively high correlation between academic self-regulation and buoyancy ($r = .63$) raises potential concerns about discriminant validity; please report AVE and HTMT ratios or conduct CFA-based discriminant validity checks .

In Table 7, the reporting of fit indices is comprehensive; however, the inclusion of both AGFI and GFI, which are considered outdated or sensitive to sample size, should be justified or supplemented with more robust indices such as SRMR (already included) and possibly AIC for model comparison .

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the final paragraph of the introduction, the claim that “fewer studies have tested these constructs simultaneously within a structural equation modeling framework” requires empirical substantiation; please include a brief review of at least 2–3 SEM-based studies to justify the stated research gap more convincingly .

In the methods section, the description “a sample of 350 students was considered sufficient...” relies on a general rule of thumb; please provide a more rigorous justification (e.g., power analysis, model complexity considerations, or indicator-to-sample ratio) to support adequacy for SEM .

The sampling procedure described as “multistage cluster random sampling” lacks sufficient detail regarding cluster formation, number of clusters, and selection stages; please specify the exact steps to ensure reproducibility and transparency .

In the instruments section, the Academic Engagement Questionnaire scoring categorization (low, moderate, high) appears arbitrary; please clarify whether these cutoffs are empirically validated or researcher-defined, and consider reporting percentile-based interpretations instead .

The Epistemological Beliefs Questionnaire reports relatively low reliability coefficients (e.g., $\alpha = .69$ in this study); please address the implications of marginal reliability on SEM estimates and consider reporting composite reliability or McDonald’s omega for robustness .

In Table 2, the inclusion of “emotional intelligence” variables (e.g., “Expression of emotion,” “Total emotional intelligence”) is inconsistent with the stated model in the title and introduction, where emotional intelligence is not initially presented as a core construct; please clarify whether the model was expanded post hoc and revise the conceptual alignment accordingly .

In the results section, the sentence “The mean scores of academic self-regulation, academic buoyancy, emotional intelligence, and epistemological beliefs were...” includes emotional intelligence again without prior conceptual introduction; this indicates a structural inconsistency that must be resolved between introduction, abstract, and model specification .

The normality assessment using “Mardia’s coefficient = 2.61” is appropriate, but the reported critical ratio (1.36) is not clearly interpreted; please explicitly state the threshold used and whether multivariate kurtosis or skewness was primarily considered .

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.