

The Mediating Role of Attention Bias in the Relationship Between Anxiety Sensitivity and Academic Motivation in Children With Specific Learning Disorders

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The sentence “Specific learning disorders (SLD) are among the most prevalent neurodevelopmental disorders that affect children’s cognitive, emotional, and motivational functioning” is too general. Please include a global or national prevalence rate (e.g., WHO or APA data) to contextualize the magnitude of SLD.

The statement “From a neurocognitive perspective, anxiety sensitivity and attention bias are closely related to the functioning of the limbic and prefrontal systems” would be stronger if supported by neuroimaging evidence or a brief reference to neural correlates (e.g., fMRI studies of the amygdala-prefrontal circuitry).

The discussion of “educational neuroscience approaches” is insightful but too condensed. Expanding this paragraph with one or two examples of such programs or pilot interventions (e.g., attention bias modification training) would make the applied relevance clearer.

The aim statement “The present study therefore aims to investigate the mediating role of attention bias...” is appropriate but should explicitly mention partial mediation hypothesis and clarify that both direct and indirect effects are tested.

Excellent inclusion of local studies, but the paragraph lacks a comparative insight. Please elaborate how the findings align or diverge from international data, strengthening the cross-cultural perspective.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The transition between “emotional disturbances such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and frustration” and “maladaptive motivational orientations characterized by fear of failure” is abrupt. Consider adding a connecting sentence explaining how emotional disturbances translate into motivational patterns.

The phrase “Empirical studies have demonstrated that students with elevated anxiety sensitivity exhibit reduced attention control, poorer executive functioning, and lower academic persistence” should be supported by more recent references (2023–2025) to strengthen the temporal relevance of evidence.

The discussion of “executive dysfunctions may exacerbate anxiety symptoms” would benefit from a clearer explanation of causal direction—whether anxiety heightens executive deficits or vice versa. Clarifying this reciprocal mechanism would enhance theoretical precision.

The sampling strategy is described as “convenience sampling.” This should be justified—why was random or stratified sampling not feasible? Also, specify how representativeness was ensured across socioeconomic strata in Tehran learning centers.

The paragraph starts with a strong summary of findings, but the phrase “These findings provide empirical support for cognitive–emotional interaction models...” should reference specific models (e.g., attentional control theory, emotional Stroop framework) to clarify conceptual alignment.

The authors mention “factors other than attention bias also contribute...” but do not statistically test alternative mediators. Consider suggesting a multiple mediation model (e.g., adding self-efficacy or emotion regulation) in future analyses.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.