







# Presenting a Structural Model of Prolonged Grief Based on Attachment Styles with the Mediating Role of Cognitive Flexibility in Survivors of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
Izet Pehlić  Full professor for Educational sciences, Islamic pedagogical faculty of the University of Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina izet.pehlic@unze.ba	<b>Reviewer 1:</b> Shahrokh Makvand Hoseini  Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Semnan University, Iran. Email: shmakvand@semnan.ac.ir <b>Reviewer 2:</b> Davood Taghvaei  Department of Psychology, Arak Branch, Islamic Azad University, Arak, Iran. Email: d-taghvaei@iau-arak.ac.ir

## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

“Restricted funeral practices, enforced physical distancing, and the inability to say goodbye...” — This is a strong contextualization, but it would be improved by providing epidemiological statistics or a specific study reporting the prevalence of PGD during COVID-19 in Iran, to ground the study locally.

You report “Perception of alternatives ( $\beta = -0.47$ ,  $p < 0.001$ )” etc. — However, you list both unstandardized B and standardized Beta. Please clarify consistently which values are being emphasized in the narrative text.

You state “The regression model revealed a moderate correlation ( $R = 0.58$ ).” — It is more appropriate to refer to “multiple correlation coefficient” or report adjusted  $R^2$ . Current wording may mislead readers.

“The cross-sectional design limits causal inference...” — please expand this point by suggesting how longitudinal modeling (e.g., cross-lagged panel SEM) could specifically help in disentangling directionality between attachment, cognitive flexibility, and grief.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

You write “Cognitive rigidity may lead to persistent rumination...” — it would be useful here to cite empirical evidence linking rumination specifically with PGD outcomes, not just general distress, to strengthen this causal link.

The sentence “These results illustrate that the participants tended to report higher levels of insecure attachment styles compared to secure attachment.” — It would be more precise to report effect size comparisons (e.g., paired-sample t-tests or ANOVA) to substantiate this claim rather than relying on mean differences alone.

“Multicollinearity was assessed by variance inflation factor (VIF) values, all of which were below 2.5...” — please provide actual VIF values in an appendix or supplementary material for transparency.

“These findings align with a growing body of literature emphasizing the crucial roles of attachment and cognitive processes...” — this could be strengthened by explicitly comparing your explained variance (51% by cognitive flexibility, 33% by attachment) with those reported in prior SEM studies. This would highlight your study’s unique contribution.

“Our study extends these findings to a unique population of COVID-19 bereaved survivors...” — consider addressing cultural differences explicitly. Were there cultural mourning practices in Iran that may have interacted with attachment or flexibility? This would enrich the contextual analysis.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.