

# The Structural Relationship Model of Cyberspace Addiction and Rejection Sensitivity: Examining the Mediating Role of Emotional Self-Efficacy

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| E d i t o r                                                                                                                                                                          | R e v i e w e r s                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| Seyed Hamid Atashpour <sup>id</sup><br>Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Isfahan (Khorasgan) Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran<br>hamidatashpour@gmail.com | <b>Reviewer 1:</b> Hajar Torkan <sup>id</sup><br>Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan Branch (Khorasgan), Isfahan, Iran. h.torkan@khuisf.ac.ir<br><b>Reviewer 2:</b> Farhad Namjoo <sup>id</sup><br>Department of Psychology and Counseling, KMAN Research Institute, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada. Email: farhadnamjoo@kmanresce.ca |

## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The paragraph introducing emotional self-efficacy requires sharper construct definition. The statement “Emotional self-efficacy refers to an individual’s belief in their capacity to identify, understand, express, facilitate, and regulate emotional experiences effectively” appears to combine emotional intelligence abilities with self-efficacy beliefs. The authors should clarify whether the construct is regulatory emotional self-efficacy, emotional intelligence self-efficacy, or a broader perceived emotional competence construct. This distinction is essential because the administered scale is based on a multidimensional emotional intelligence framework, whereas several cited studies focus specifically on regulatory emotional self-efficacy.

The introduction should conclude with explicit hypotheses rather than only a general aim statement. The final sentence currently states that the study aimed to examine the structural relationship among rejection sensitivity, internet addiction, and emotional self-efficacy. Before that sentence, the authors should formulate directional hypotheses: rejection sensitivity will positively predict internet addiction; rejection sensitivity will negatively predict emotional self-efficacy; emotional self-efficacy

will negatively predict internet addiction; and emotional self-efficacy will mediate the relationship between rejection sensitivity and internet addiction. These hypotheses would provide a clearer basis for the structural analyses.

In the first paragraph of the Method section, the sentence “The present study was basic in terms of purpose and descriptive-correlational in terms of methodology, using structural equation modeling” should be revised to provide a more internationally recognizable design description. The study is more precisely a cross-sectional correlational study analyzed through structural equation modeling. The term “basic research” is not methodologically informative in this context and may be omitted or separately justified. The authors should also specify the study setting, data-collection period, and whether questionnaires were administered in person, electronically, or through both formats.

In the Emotional Self-Efficacy Scale section, the authors state that exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses of the Persian version supported a unidimensional structure, yet the present model represents emotional self-efficacy through four observed dimensions: emotion identification, emotion understanding, emotion facilitation, and emotion regulation. This is a major measurement inconsistency. The authors should explain why a multidimensional measurement model was specified despite citing evidence for a single-factor Persian structure. They should report the item allocation to each dimension, subscale reliability coefficients, standardized factor loadings, and evidence that the four-factor structure fits the present data.

Table 1 contains several numerical inconsistencies that must be corrected before interpretation. The text reports the mean of internet addiction as 85.17, whereas the table gives 17.85; the table also reports a minimum of 6 and maximum of 70, which appear incompatible with the 20-item IAT scoring procedure described in the Methods. The authors should return to the raw dataset and verify all descriptive statistics, decimal placement, scale ranges, and variable labels. The statement that the variables had “relatively high mean scores” should not be retained unless the means are interpreted relative to validated scale cutoffs or normative values.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The sampling procedure is insufficiently detailed. The sentence “First, the university’s faculties were selected as sampling clusters, and students were then randomly selected from each faculty” does not indicate how many faculties existed, how many were selected, how the three participating faculties were chosen, or how students within each faculty were sampled. The authors should describe the complete sampling frame, cluster-selection method, allocation of sample size across faculties, response rate, number approached, number excluded, and number retained. It should also be clarified whether sampling was proportionate to faculty enrollment.

The sample-size justification based on “5–10 participants for each parameter” is too limited for contemporary structural equation modeling. The authors report 44 parameters and therefore a target range of 220–440 participants, but they do not explain whether the model complexity, anticipated effect sizes, estimator, distributional properties, and missing data were considered. A power analysis based on RMSEA, anticipated indirect effects, or Monte Carlo simulation would provide a more defensible justification. At minimum, the authors should explain why 300 participants were expected to provide adequate power for detecting the mediated effect.

The inclusion criterion “not taking specific psychiatric medications” is ambiguous and potentially problematic. The authors should identify which medications were considered exclusionary, why medication use was treated as a criterion, and how medication status was assessed. It is also unclear whether participants with mild or moderate psychiatric symptoms were included while those with severe psychiatric disorders were excluded. Because depression, anxiety, and stress were apparently measured but not fully incorporated into the reported model, the authors should explain their role in eligibility, descriptive analysis, covariate adjustment, or structural modeling.

The manuscript does not report ethical procedures. A dedicated paragraph should state the approving institutional review board or ethics committee, approval code, date of approval in the Gregorian calendar, informed-consent procedure,

confidentiality protections, voluntary participation, right to withdraw, and management of potentially distressed participants. Given that the study assessed internet addiction and psychiatric exclusion criteria among students, the authors should also explain whether participants with clinically concerning scores were provided with referral information.

In the description of Young's Internet Addiction Test, the sentence "The scale assesses four principal dimensions: personal and social problems, effects on occupational and academic functioning, time management problems, and emotional dependence" requires verification against the exact version administered. The original IAT has been represented by different factorial structures across populations, and the manuscript later cites evidence for a three-factor solution. The authors should identify whether the total score or subscale scores were used, specify the scoring range and cutoff interpretation, and explain why the reported minimum score in Table 1 is 6 when a 20-item scale scored from 1 to 5 should theoretically have a minimum of 20.

The description of the Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire appears inconsistent with the standard scoring method. The manuscript states that the RSQ contains 18 items scored on a six-point agreement scale, whereas the original rejection sensitivity paradigm commonly presents hypothetical interpersonal situations and combines rejection concern with expected acceptance or rejection. The authors must specify the exact version, number of scenarios, response format, scoring algorithm, theoretical range, translation procedure, and evidence supporting its use in the present population. The reported mean of 230 and range of 90–360 also require explanation because they do not correspond transparently to the stated 18-item, 1–6 scoring system.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.