

## Structural Model of Children's Behavioral Problems Based on Mothers' Adverse Childhood Experiences with the Mediating Role of Maternal Mentalization

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E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
Ramakrishna Biswal <sup>ORCID</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, National Institute of Technology Rourkela Rourkela, India biswalrk@nitrkl.ac.in	<b>Reviewer 1:</b> Farhad Namjoo <sup>ORCID</sup> Department of Psychology and Counseling, KMAN Research Institute, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada. Email: farhadnamjoo@kmanresce.ca <b>Reviewer 2:</b> Manijeh Daneshpour <sup>ORCID</sup> Department of Couple and Family therapy, Alliant International University, California, United States of America. mdaneshpour@alliant.edu

### 1. Round 1

#### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

This opening is strong, but the prevalence rates of internalizing and externalizing problems in Iranian children are not mentioned. Including local statistics would contextualize the importance of the problem.

The description of ACEs could benefit from a more detailed account of how these categories were operationalized in the study (e.g., WHO ACE-IQ domains). This would ensure alignment between literature and methodology.

The inclusion of clinical clients raises concerns about selection bias, as their participation was incentivized with discounts. Please discuss how this might limit generalizability or bias the findings.

While ethically commendable, this may have influenced participants' responses by increasing social desirability bias. Acknowledging this limitation in the discussion would be important.

Several subscales have low reliability (e.g., emotional abuse = .60, emotional neglect = .61). The manuscript should justify why these subscales were retained despite marginal reliability.

An alpha of .95 suggests potential item redundancy. Please discuss whether the high value reflects over-homogeneity and how it was handled analytically.

The text reports reliability, but it is not clear whether this reliability was re-calculated on the current sample or drawn from prior studies. Please clarify.

While reassuring, more detail is needed regarding other assumptions of SEM (e.g., multivariate normality, missing data handling). Please specify how these were tested.

This description is largely qualitative. Adding commentary on which variables had the highest prevalence (e.g., family violence mean = 3.59) would better interpret the descriptive results.

While the discussion aligns findings with prior literature, it does not critically explore why some mothers with ACEs may show resilience. Including this nuance would enrich the discussion.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

This sentence introduces the validation of the Mentalization Questionnaire in Iran, but the paragraph does not elaborate on its psychometric properties. Expanding this would justify the appropriateness of using the Persian version.

The rationale is clear, but the specific research questions or hypotheses are not explicitly stated. Please list them clearly at the end of the introduction to guide the reader into the methods section.

The justification for sample size using Kline's rule is adequate, but the procedure for identifying and excluding outliers is not described. Clarify which statistical method (e.g., Mahalanobis distance, z-scores) was used.

Please report the sample size ( $N = 323$ ) under the table for clarity, and consider providing 95% confidence intervals for the correlations.

While fit indices are reported,  $\chi^2$  significance is still presented as .001, which may be misleading since  $\chi^2$  is nearly always significant in large samples. Please provide  $\chi^2$  exact value and df to contextualize.

This section would benefit from reporting effect size interpretation (e.g., small, medium, large according to Cohen's conventions). This aids readers in gauging practical significance.

The indirect effect sizes are substantial ( $\beta = .346, .357$ ). Please explain in the text how these compare to direct effects and whether mediation was partial or full.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

## 2. Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.