

Original Article

Emotion dysregulation as a mediator of the relationship between Instagram use, emotional intelligence, and psychopathology

Paria Amini^{1*}, Mohammad Shadbafi² & Mostafa Zarean³

1. MA in Child and Adolescent Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran.
2. PhD in Psychology, Faculty of Education and Psychology, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran.
3. Assistant Professor in Clinical Psychology, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education and Psychology, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran.

Abstract

The aim of the present study was to determine whether emotional dysregulation mediates the relationship between Instagram use and emotional intelligence with psychopathology. The study employed a descriptive-correlational design, and the statistical population consisted of young Iranian users, from whom 302 participants were selected through convenience sampling. Participants completed the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scales (DASS-21), the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI), an Instagram Usage Questionnaire, the Bradberry-Greaves Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire, and the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS-16). Data were analyzed using AMOS-24 software and structural equation modeling. The results indicated significant relationships between Instagram use, emotional intelligence, emotional dysregulation, and psychopathology ($p < 0.05$). Bootstrap analyses revealed that emotional intelligence had a negative indirect effect on sleep problems ($\beta = -0.11$, $p < 0.01$) and psychological distress ($\beta = -0.24$, $p < 0.01$) through difficulties in emotion regulation. Furthermore, Instagram use had a positive indirect effect on psychological distress ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < 0.05$) and sleep problems ($\beta = 0.11$, $p < 0.05$) through difficulties in emotion regulation. These findings suggest that the implementation of appropriate therapeutic and educational interventions targeting emotion regulation may contribute to the reduction of psychopathology.

Keywords

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Introduction

Psychopathology encompasses a range of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral disturbances, including depression, anxiety, stress, and sleep problems, which frequently co-occur and interact to impair psychological functioning and quality of life (Seighali et al., 2024). Depression, anxiety, and stress are associated with a wide range of adverse outcomes, such as reduced self-esteem, increased engagement in maladaptive behaviors including substance use, and impairments in social, familial, occupational, and academic functioning (Shafiee et al., 2024). Recent clinical research has further highlighted the transdiagnostic nature of psychopathology, suggesting that these symptoms share common underlying mechanisms rather than representing discrete and independent disorders (Phillips et al., 2024).

Sleep disturbances have been identified as a particularly salient dimension of psychopathology, functioning both as

a core component and a consequence of psychological distress (Lok & Zeitzer, 2025). Disrupted sleep is associated with heightened emotional reactivity, cognitive impairments, reduced quality of life, and increased vulnerability to stress, thereby exacerbating depressive and anxiety-related symptoms (O'Regan et al., 2025). Given the high prevalence, co-occurrence, and substantial burden of these interrelated psychological difficulties, identifying shared and disorder-specific contributing factors remains a central objective in contemporary mental health research (Seighali et al., 2024).

Sleep disturbances, in particular, have been identified as both a core component and a consequence of psychopathology, as disrupted sleep exacerbates emotional reactivity, cognitive impairment, and vulnerability to stress, thereby intensifying psychological symptoms (O'Regan et al., 2025).

Alongside individual vulnerabilities, contemporary environmental factors have increasingly been implicated in

Corresponding author: MA in Child and Adolescent Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran. E-mail: Aminiparia10@gmail.com



the development and maintenance of psychopathology. Social media use, especially image-based platforms such as Instagram, has received growing attention as a potential psychological risk factor. Recent studies indicate that intensive Instagram use is associated with higher levels of depression, anxiety, stress, and sleep disturbances, particularly among young adults (Sepas et al., 2024). Current models of digital stress propose that repeated exposure to idealized content, social feedback, and continuous online engagement may function as chronic psychosocial stressors that disrupt emotional balance and increase psychological strain (Valkenburg et al., 2023).

From a theoretical perspective, recent extensions of social comparison theory emphasize the role of upward social comparisons in social media contexts. Empirical findings from recent longitudinal and cross-sectional studies demonstrate that Instagram use promotes frequent upward social comparisons, which are associated with lower self-esteem, increased negative affect, and elevated psychopathological symptoms (Ryding et al., 2025). Furthermore, night-time social media engagement has been linked to impaired sleep quality through heightened cognitive and emotional arousal, reinforcing the reciprocal relationship between Instagram use, emotional distress, and sleep-related problems (Ahmed et al., 2024).

Despite these associations, not all individuals exposed to Instagram experience psychopathological symptoms to the same degree, highlighting the importance of individual difference variables. Emotional intelligence (EI) has been identified as a key protective factor in recent psychological research. Contemporary models conceptualize emotional intelligence as a set of emotional competencies that facilitate emotional awareness, emotional regulation, and adaptive coping in emotionally demanding contexts (Acebes-Sánchez et al., 2025). Recent meta-analytic and empirical evidence indicate that higher emotional intelligence is associated with lower levels of depression, anxiety, and stress, as well as better sleep quality and psychological well-being (Zhao et al., 2024; Ferentinou et al., 2025).

Emotion regulation theory offers an integrative framework for linking Instagram use and emotional intelligence to psychopathology. Recent transdiagnostic models emphasize emotion dysregulation as a central mechanism underlying a wide range of psychological symptoms (Blay et al., 2024). Emotion dysregulation, characterized by difficulties in emotional awareness, impulse control, goal-directed behavior, and access to adaptive regulation strategies, has been shown to mediate the relationship between environmental stressors and psychopathological outcomes (Marques et al., 2024). Emerging evidence suggests that problematic Instagram use is associated with increased emotion dysregulation, potentially through heightened emotional reactivity and maladaptive coping processes (Sepas et al., 2024).

Conversely, emotional intelligence has been consistently linked to more effective emotion regulation capacities in recent studies. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence are better able to manage emotional challenges, reduce maladaptive emotional responses, and

maintain psychological stability in stressful situations, including digital social environments (Roy, 2023; Andrei et al., 2016). Accordingly, emotion dysregulation may serve as a key explanatory mechanism through which Instagram use increases psychopathology and emotional intelligence exerts a protective effect.

Based on these theoretical and empirical considerations, the present study aims to examine the relationships among Instagram use, emotional intelligence, emotion dysregulation, and psychopathology, with particular attention to psychological distress and sleep quality. Specifically, this study investigates whether emotion dysregulation mediates the associations between Instagram use and psychopathological outcomes, as well as between emotional intelligence and psychopathological outcomes. Clarifying these mechanisms may enhance current theoretical models of digital mental health and inform the development of targeted interventions aimed at reducing psychopathology in the context of increasing social media use.

Despite growing evidence linking Instagram use and low emotional intelligence to increased psychopathology, the mechanisms underlying these relationships remain poorly understood. In particular, the potential mediating role of emotion dysregulation has received limited empirical attention. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates whether emotion dysregulation intensifies psychopathology resulting from Instagram use and lack of emotional intelligence. By examining this pathway, our research offers novel insights into the interplay between social media behavior, emotional competencies, and mental health outcomes.

Method

Participants

The present research design was descriptive-correlational and was conducted on young Iranian users. Since the minimum sample size required for structural equation modeling with standard estimation methods is 200 people (Kline, 2023) and latent class analysis is also a model-based method and requires a relatively large sample size, and the average sample size in previous studies conducted with this method has been between 300 and 400 people (Tein et al., 2013), in the present study, a sample size of 300 people was considered, and considering the possibility of some questionnaires being incomplete, 5% more questionnaires were distributed, and finally, 302 questionnaires were used in the final analysis. The sampling method was voluntary, and the questionnaires, whether in person or online, were only provided to those who were willing to fill out the questionnaires, and there was no compulsion to participate in the research.

Instrument

Depression Anxiety Stress Scales-21:

The Depression Anxiety Stress Scales-21 (DASS-21), originally developed by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995), is a brief self-report instrument designed to assess symptoms

of depression, anxiety, and stress experienced during the previous week. The instrument comprises 21 items and three subscales—depression, anxiety, and stress—each including seven items, rated on a 4-point Likert scale from 0 (did not apply to me at all) to 3 (applied to me very much or most of the time), with subscale scores ranging from 0 to 21 and higher scores indicating greater symptom severity items (Lovibond & Lovibond., 1995).

Evidence from international research supports the reliability and construct validity of the DASS-21 across diverse populations. In a large Portuguese community sample ($N = 1,020$), all subscales demonstrated good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha between .80 and .84), and confirmatory factor analysis supported the factorial validity of the scale (Vasconcelos-Raposo et al., 2013).

Additionally, studies conducted with Malaysian participants reported excellent overall internal consistency for the total DASS-21 and its subscales, providing further evidence of the instrument's cross-cultural reliability and validity in non-Western settings. Furthermore, psychometric evaluations among Chinese samples, including large school and adult populations, have consistently found high internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha $> .80$) and supported the original three-factor structure, confirming its applicability across East Asian contexts (Wang et al., 2016).

Psychometric studies of the Persian version of the DASS-21 also indicate acceptable to excellent reliability and construct validity. In a large Iranian sample of healthcare professionals ($n = 1,135$), the Persian DASS-21 demonstrated high internal consistency for the depression ($\alpha = .93$), stress ($\alpha = .91$), and anxiety ($\alpha = .79$) subscales, and confirmatory factor analysis showed acceptable model fit indices, supporting the scale's factorial validity in an Iranian context (Asghari Moghadam et al., 2008).

In the present study, the internal consistency of the DASS-21 subscales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding coefficients of .90 for depression, .82 for anxiety, and .85 for stress, indicating good to excellent reliability within the study sample.

The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index:

The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) is a widely used self-report measure developed by Buysse et al. to assess subjective sleep quality and sleep disturbances over the previous month (Buysse, 2010). The instrument consists of 19 self-rated items that are combined to generate seven component scores, including subjective sleep quality, sleep latency, sleep duration, habitual sleep efficiency, sleep disturbances, use of sleep medication, and daytime dysfunction. Each component is scored on a scale ranging from 0 to 3, and the sum of these components yields a global score ranging from 0 to 21, with higher scores indicating poorer sleep quality (Buysse, 2010).

Previous international studies have reported satisfactory psychometric properties for the PSQI. In the original

validation study, Buysse et al. demonstrated good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .83) and acceptable construct validity, supporting the use of the instrument in both clinical and non-clinical populations (Buysse, 2010). Subsequent research across diverse cultural contexts has consistently confirmed the reliability and validity of the PSQI.

Studies conducted in Iran have also supported the reliability and validity of the PSQI. Zarei and Hemati (2022) reported good internal consistency for the Persian version of the instrument (Cronbach's alpha = .81) and acceptable content validity, with item-level content validity indices exceeding .79. In the present study, the internal consistency of the PSQI was acceptable, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .69.

Bradberry_Greaves Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire:

The Emotional Intelligence Appraisal, developed by Bradberry and Greaves (2009), is a widely used 28-item self-report instrument designed to assess overall emotional intelligence and its core components. The questionnaire is organized into four dimensions: self-awareness (items 1–6), self-management (items 7–15), social awareness (items 16–20), and relationship management (items 21–28), with each item rated on a 6-point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 6 (always), where higher scores indicate higher emotional intelligence (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009).

Previous studies have supported the psychometric adequacy of the Bradberry & Greaves 28-item emotional intelligence questionnaire. Convergent validity with the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory has been demonstrated through a significant positive correlation ($r = .68$, $p < .01$), and internal consistency reliability has been reported in the acceptable range ($\alpha = .85-.91$), indicating adequate convergent validity and reliability for this instrument (Mosallanezhad et al., 2023).

Similarly, Yaser et al. (2013) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .89 for the overall scale. International studies further indicate good internal consistency across diverse adult samples, with alpha coefficients ranging from .85 to .90, and construct validity is supported through associations with related outcomes such as leadership effectiveness, job performance, and interpersonal functioning.

In the present study, the internal consistency of the questionnaire was examined using Cronbach's alpha. The coefficients were .81 for self-awareness, .85 for self-management, .79 for social awareness, and .83 for relationship management, with a total score alpha of .88, indicating good reliability of the instrument in the current sample.

Difficulty in Emotion Regulation Scale:

The Difficulty in Emotion Regulation Scale–Short Form (DERS-16) was developed by Bjureberg et al. to assess difficulties in emotion regulation over multiple dimensions

(Bjureberg et al., 2016). The scale consists of 16 items rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (almost never) to 6 (almost always), with total scores ranging from 16 to 80, where higher scores indicate greater difficulties in emotion regulation (Falahi et al., 2021).

International studies have demonstrated strong psychometric properties of the DERS-16. The original validation study reported excellent internal consistency for the total scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$), satisfactory test-retest reliability ($r = .85$), and strong evidence of convergent and discriminant validity, supporting the construct validity of the instrument across different samples (Bjureberg et al., 2016). Subsequent cross-cultural studies have further confirmed the reliability and factorial validity of the DERS-16 in diverse populations (Fekih-Romdhane et al., 2023).

In Iran, the psychometric properties of the DERS-16 have also been supported. Akbari et al. reported good internal consistency for the total scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .84$) and acceptable test-retest reliability over a four-week interval ($r = .72$). Additionally, the results indicated satisfactory convergent and discriminant validity, confirming the applicability of the DERS-16 in Iranian samples (Akbari et al., 2024).

In the present study, the internal consistency of the DERS-16 was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of .81 for the total scale, indicating good reliability.

Procedure

The method of conducting this research was as follows: To prevent any bias caused by selecting only an in-person or online sample, sampling was conducted using both methods. To guarantee sample diversity and dispersion, in-person sampling was carried out from two geographical regions (Tabriz and Kermanshah cities) and compared to the online sample. Once the questionnaires were prepared, their online version was created, and the questionnaire links were made available to adults who were willing to take part in the research through groups and social networks. During the in-person implementation, the researcher visited educational and recreational centers and provided questionnaires exclusively to adults who were willing to take part in the study. In this study, an attempt was made to use shorter questionnaires as much as possible so that a lot of time was not required to respond and to prevent participants from getting tired, and the data were analyzed with AMOS-24 software.

Results

As the study's final sample, 302 individuals in all were examined. There were 71 men and 231 women among them. The mean and standard deviation of the age of the study sample were (31.31 ± 10.71) for women, (34.73 ± 12.93) for men, and (32.39 ± 11.53) for the total sample. On the other hand, 67 of the samples held a bachelor's degree, 87 had a master's degree or higher, and 32 had a diploma. The study variables' mean, standard deviation, skewness, and elongation are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness, and Elongation of the Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Self-awareness	25.12	4.38	-.09	.12
Self-Management	34.94	6.21	.13	.33
Social Awareness	21.68	3.41	.07	-.42
Relationship Management	33.03	5.93	-.17	.36
Emotional Intelligence	114.78	15.90	.15	.26
Instagram Use	3.51	1.03	-.24	-.50
Clarity	4.68	1.91	.85	.20
Goal	8.35	3.14	.30	-.90
Impulse	7.61	3.33	.53	-.61
Strategy	12.34	5.13	.54	-.65
Nonacceptance	7.56	3.49	.44	-.91
Difficulty in Emotion Regulation	40.53	15.07	.48	-.59
Quality	1.20	.80	.57	.09
Latency	1.65	1.27	.54	-.51
Duration	.68	1.12	1.75	2.35
Efficiency	.53	.91	1.65	1.58
Disturbances	1.25	.56	.32	.18
Medication	.33	.78	2.47	5.11
Daytime Dysfunction	1.22	.89	.31	-.62
Sleep Problems	6.86	3.80	.82	.60
Depression	7.96	5.98	.48	-.87
Anxiety	6.36	4.76	.59	-.43
Stress	9.53	5.15	.11	-.81
Psychological Distress	23.86	14.41	.36	-.68

The overall scores for emotional intelligence (114.78 ± 15.90), Instagram use (3.51 ± 1.03), emotional regulation difficulty (40.53 ± 15.07), sleep issues (6.86 ± 3.80), and psychological distress (23.86 ± 14.41) were computed using the mean and standard deviation

shown in Table 1. The findings also suggest that parametric statistical techniques can be used to analyze the data and that the dispersion of the variables under study is ideal. The correlation matrix between the research variables is displayed in the Table.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix Between Research Variables

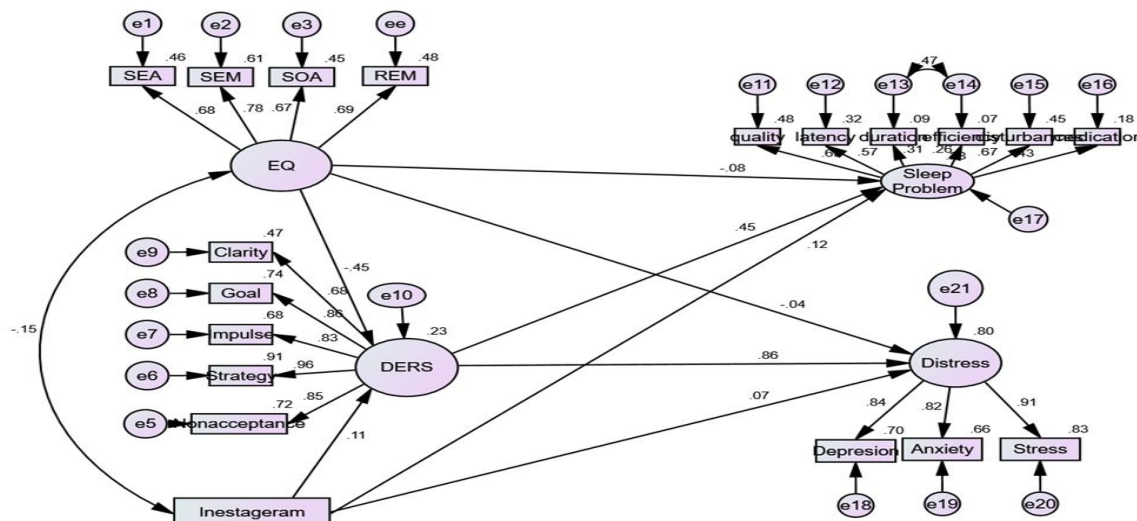
	1	2	3	4	5
Emotional Intelligence	1				
Instagram use	-.13*	1			
Difficulty in Emotion Regulation	-.40**	.17**	1		
Sleep Problems	-.21**	.19**	.40**	1	
Psychological Distress	-.36**	.23**	.82**	.49**	1

**p<0.01; *p<0.05

According to Table 2's findings, emotional intelligence has a negative correlation with psychological distress ($r=-0.36$, $p<0.01$), sleep Problems ($r=-0.21$, $p<0.01$), and difficulty in emotion regulation ($r=-0.40$, $p<0.01$). Additionally, Instagram use is positively associated with psychological distress ($r=0.23$, $p<0.01$), sleep problems ($r=0.19$, $p<0.01$), and difficulty in emotion regulation ($r=0.17$, $p<0.01$). Moreover, psychological distress ($r=0.82$, $p<0.01$) and sleep problems and difficulty in emotion regulation are positively correlated ($r=0.40$, $p<0.01$).

The structural equation model was employed to examine the mediating function of difficulty in emotion regulation in the association between EI and Instagram use with sleep problems and psychological distress, based on the correlation matrix results. However, the assumptions of

multiple non-collinearity of predictor variables, independence of error sources, and normal distribution of research variables were examined prior to the use of this method. The assumption of univariate normality was validated when the data's normal distribution was examined. The variables' absolute values for skewness and kurtosis fell within the range of ± 3 . Amos software was used to determine the Mardia's normalized multivariate kurtosis value (19.07), which is less than 399, which is determined using the formula $p(p+2)$, in order to investigate multivariate normality. Since p in this formula stands for the number of observed variables (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2008), which in this study is 19, the multivariate normality assumption was also satisfied.

**Figure 1.** Structural Model of the Research

Because the variance inflation factor of the variables was less than the critical limit of two and the tolerance index of the variables was higher than 0.50 and near the desired limit of one, the assumption of multiple non-collinearity of the predictor variables was also validated. Lastly, the Durbin-Watson test was used to assess the assumption of independence of error sources. This assumption was also

satisfied because the computed values for psychological distress (2.21) and sleep problems (1.91) did not exceed the two critical limits (1.5-2.5). As a result, the structural equation method was deemed suitable for analyzing the research data. The standard coefficients and the research's structural model are shown in Figure 1. Table 3. presents the model fit indices.

Table 4. Model fit indices

Indica	RMSEA	X ² /df	GFI	AGFI	CFI	NFI	IFI
Model	0.08	2.87	0.90	0.83	0.91	0.90	0.91
Acceptable range	<0.08	3<	>0.90	0.80>	0.90>	0.90>	0.90>

The model's optimal fit is demonstrated by the indices in Table 3, where the comparative fit index (CFI), normalized fit index (NFI), and incremental fit index (IFI) are adaptive fit indices; the chi-square to degree of

freedom ratio (χ^2/DF) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) are adjusted fit indices; and the goodness-of-fit index (GFI) and adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) are absolute fit indices.

The results pertaining to the direct effects of exogenous variables on the model's endogenous variables are

displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Estimation of the Coefficients of Direct Effects of Exogenous Variables on Endogenous Variables

<i>Exogenous variable</i>	<i>Endogenous variable</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>T (C.R)</i>	<i>P</i>
Emotional Intelligence	Difficulty in Emotion Regulation	-.45	-.74	-6.62	.000
Emotional Intelligence	Sleep Problems	-.08	-.01	-0.95	.342
Emotional Intelligence	Psychological Distress	-.04	-.06	-.80	.426
Instagram use	Difficulty in Emotion Regulation	.11	.53	2.06	.039
Instagram use	Sleep Problems	.12	.07	1.98	.048
Instagram use	Psychological Distress	.07	.33	2.13	.034
Difficulty in Emotion Regulation	Sleep Problems	.45	.05	5.59	.000
Difficulty in Emotion Regulation	Psychological Distress	.86	.82	18.51	.000

Table 4 demonstrates a negative and statistically significant direct relationship between emotional intelligence and difficulty regulating emotions ($\beta=0.45$, $p<0.01$). Additionally, Instagram use has a positive and significant direct impact on psychological distress ($\beta=0.07$, $p<0.05$), sleep issues ($\beta=0.12$, $p<0.05$), and difficulty regulating emotions ($\beta=0.11$, $p<0.05$). Furthermore, there is a positive and significant direct correlation between difficulty

regulating emotions and sleep issues ($\beta=0.45$, $p<0.01$) as well as psychological distress ($\beta=0.86$, $p<0.01$). A bootstrap test was then employed to investigate the mediating function of emotion regulation difficulties in the association between emotional intelligence and Instagram use with sleep issues and psychological distress. The test's findings are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Indirect Effects Using the Bootstrap Method

Independent variable	Mediating variable	Dependent variable	Bootstrap limits		Effect amount	P
			Lower limit	Upper limit		
Emotional Intelligence	Difficulty in Emotion Regulation	Sleep Problems	-.32	-.53	-.11	.001
Emotional Intelligence	Difficulty in Emotion Regulation	Psychological Distress	-.53	-.39	-.24	.002
Instagram use	Difficulty in Emotion Regulation	Sleep Problems	.01	.01	.11	.023
Instagram use	Difficulty in Emotion Regulation	Psychological Distress	.01	.10	.19	.031

The findings in Table 5 demonstrate that emotional intelligence has a negative and statistically significant indirect effect on sleep issues ($\beta=0.0-11$, $p<0.0$) and psychological distress ($\beta=0.0-24$, $p<0.01$) as a result of emotion regulation difficulties. Additionally, because Instagram makes it harder to control emotions, its indirect effects on sleep issues ($\beta=0.0-11$, $p<0.05$) and psychological distress ($\beta=0.0-19$, $p<0.05$) are positive and statistically significant. Impaired emotional regulation can lead to Instagram use worsening, and emotional intelligence can lead to psychopathology, according to the results of this study.

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to investigate whether emotional dysregulation mediates the relationship between Instagram use and emotional intelligence with psychopathology. This study found that Instagram use is associated with psychopathology (such as stress, depression, anxiety, and sleep problems). This finding is consistent with previous findings. People who use Instagram are more likely to suffer from emotional and psychological disorders (Tomick et al., 2025). Furthermore, there is a significant correlation between increased use of this platform and anxiety, depression, and insomnia (Feyzi et al., 2025). This finding can be

explained by stating that excessive use of social media can lead to social comparisons and feelings of inadequacy (Riemann et al., 2025), and users are often exposed to the seemingly perfect and ideal lives of others, which may lead to feelings of depression and low self-esteem, and comparing their lives with others (Feyzi et al., 2025). Unrealistic expectations about real life exacerbate this comparison (Lonia, 2024), and membership in these networks can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation (Fabio & Iaconis, 2024). Thus, Instagram can lead to stress, depression, anxiety, and sleep problems by making users feel inadequate, compare their lives to others, and have unrealistic expectations.

The findings of this paper also showed that emotional dysregulation mediates the relationship between Instagram use and psychopathology. The relationship between emotion regulation disorder and psychopathology can be explained as follows: People with emotion regulation disorder experience psychopathology due to reduced awareness (Salmani et al., 2025), lack of emotional clarity, lack of coping strategies for negative emotions, and high emotional perception of negative emotions (especially stress) (Herber et al., 2025).

The findings of this article also showed that emotional dysregulation mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychopathology. To explain this finding,

we can refer to the mixed approach of Bar-On (2000), which states that emotional intelligence is in the domain of adaptive capacity and indicates the ability of an individual to assess the harmony between what is experienced emotionally and what actually exists. A lack of emotional intelligence can lead to an individual experiencing more negative emotions and increasing the risk of developing various disorders. Ignoring emotions can also lead to behavioral problems (Teymoori et al., 2022). To explain, we can refer to the emotional self-efficacy model, according to which emotional intelligence creates a set of behavioral readiness and tendencies in an individual, and people who have higher emotional intelligence have higher emotional and behavioral readiness to overcome their negative emotions. In fact, better understanding and management of emotions in people with higher emotional intelligence prevents the development of a maladaptive emotional style that is associated with mood and anxiety disorders (Zarekar et al., 2015).

This study is no exception to its limitations. The cross-sectional design of this study makes it impossible to draw conclusions about the direction of causality between variables, which is one of its limitations. Self-report questionnaires were utilized, which may result in biases such as social desirability bias. Furthermore, convenience sampling was employed, which may limit the applicability of the results to other populations. Therefore, given the limitations mentioned, it is suggested that future research examine the role of potential moderating factors that may influence the relationship between Instagram use, emotional intelligence, emotional dysregulation, and psychopathology. The extent to which Instagram use affects mental health may be determined by individual differences in personality traits, social support, and coping strategies. Furthermore, future research could investigate the specific mechanisms by which Instagram usage leads to emotional dysregulation.

Conclusion

The results show that emotional dysregulation mediates the relationship between using Instagram and emotional intelligence with psychopathology. Therefore, it seems necessary to pay attention to these variables by mental health researchers and professionals. In addition, effective educational and therapeutic interventions on emotional awareness and regulation of emotions and awareness programs about the consequences of using Instagram can help reduce psychopathology.

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There are no conflicts of interest.

ORCID

Paria Amini: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-9443-4106>

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