

Bridging Emotional Trauma and Future Success: Integrating Psychological Support and Talent Management to Address the Impact of Childhood Emotional Abuse on University Students [Letter]

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Dear editor

We are writing in response to the recently published article, “The Relationship Between Childhood Emotional Abuse and Nonsuicidal Self-Injury Among Chinese College Students: The Mediating Role of Depression and the Moderating Effect of Reciprocal Filial Piety”, by Yang et al.¹ This study makes a valuable contribution to understanding the psychological mechanisms underlying nonsuicidal self-injury (NSSI) in the context of childhood emotional abuse. The authors’ integration of cultural constructs such as reciprocal and authoritarian filial piety into their framework is both innovative and relevant, particularly in a Chinese cultural context where familial relationships play a pivotal role in psychological development. While the findings are compelling, we believe that certain aspects of the study could benefit from further discussion or exploration.

The authors identify that NSSI is indirectly influenced by childhood emotional abuse through depression, validated using structural equation modeling, emphasizing depression’s mediating role. However, the study does not explore why individuals choose NSSI as a coping mechanism. Literature suggests NSSI serves various functions, such as emotion regulation, stress relief, attention-seeking, or expressing distress, with significant individual differences.² This study establishes a positive correlation between emotional abuse and NSSI ($r = 0.061$, $p < 0.001$) but does not clarify the underlying functional motivations. Overlooking this limits the development of tailored interventions. Future research should use functional assessment tools (eg, ecological momentary assessment) to better classify NSSI behaviors and their psychological purposes. For instance, interventions for those using NSSI for emotion regulation should enhance emotional management skills, while those seeking attention could benefit from strategies promoting healthier need expression.

The study treats emotional abuse as a unified variable, without differentiating its types or characteristics, limiting understanding of its specific mechanisms. Research shows that different types of emotional abuse—such as humiliation, neglect, verbal abuse, or excessive control—have distinct effects on mental health.³ For example, humiliation may harm self-esteem, while neglect may impair emotional regulation. Although the authors measured abuse frequency ($M = 6.588$, $SD = 2.355$), they did not examine the nonlinear relationship between intensity and psychological outcomes, potentially missing key patterns. Future research should categorize emotional abuse subtypes and incorporate intensity and frequency into models to better understand their differential and nonlinear impacts on depression and NSSI.

University students who have experienced emotional abuse often face challenges in mental health, career development, and workplace adaptability. Integrating psychological support with career development can help address these

issues. For example, campus counseling can improve emotional regulation, while resilience training in career education prepares students for workplace challenges, fostering both personal growth and professional success.

Disclosure

The authors report no conflicts of interest in this communication.

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