

## **Reviewer- 2**

The manuscript addresses a timely and relevant question, examining how patterns of social media engagement (active vs. passive) relate to empathy among college students, an understudied population. This distinction has practical implications for understanding the social-emotional effects of social media use in emerging adults.

The title is suitable and accurately reflects the content of the study. An alternative title that more directly reflects the study's central finding might be considered, e.g., "*Active versus Passive Social Media Use and Empathy Among College Students*." Or "*The Relationship Between Social Media Interaction Styles and Empathy in Emerging Adults*".

No abstract was included in the submitted manuscript. An abstract summarizing the purpose, sample, methods, key findings, and implications should be added before publication

overall the English quality is suitable for scholarly communication and the writing is clear and professional. A few minor typographical/spacing errors appear in the text and reference list (e.g., "Journal ofPersonality," "undermine subjective" run together in the Verduyn et al. reference) and should be corrected during copyediting.

The manuscript follows a standard and logically organized IMRaD structure (Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results, Discussion). The Literature Review appropriately builds the rationale for the study, the Methods section is clear and detailed, and the Discussion appropriately ties findings back to the literature while acknowledging limitations. Sections are appropriately balanced in length and content.

The references are relevant, appropriately mixing foundational sources (e.g., Davis, 1983; Decety & Jackson, 2004) with recent literature (e.g., Gottfried & Park, 2025; Martingano et al., 2022). The reference list is relatively brief (11 sources) for this topic; additional recent studies specifically involving college-student or emerging-adult samples would strengthen the literature base. Minor formatting inconsistencies in the reference list should be corrected.

### **Specific Comments:**

This is a well-designed exploratory study addressing a timely question: whether the manner of social media engagement (active/interactive vs. passive) relates to empathy among college students.

Strengths include the use of a validated, reliable measure (Basic Empathy Scale,  $\alpha = .80$  for both subscales), triangulation of findings across ANOVA, regression, and correlational analyses, and an appropriately cautious Discussion that acknowledges the cross-sectional design and self-report limitations.

Concerns: (1) no abstract was included in the submitted manuscript; (2) the omnibus ANOVA for affective empathy across interaction groups was only trend-level ( $p = .082$ ), so the framing of this as a central finding should be tempered somewhat in the abstract/discussion; (3) the sample was drawn from a single university and was 80% female, which limits generalizability and is appropriately noted as a limitation; (4) minor formatting/spacing errors appear in the reference list and should be corrected.

Overall, I recommend minor revisions: add an abstract, soften language implying stronger-than-marginal group differences, and clean up reference formatting.