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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: **IJAR-55352**

Title: The Invisible Leash: Understanding Psychological Dependence on AI assistants

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision.....

✓ Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality			✓	
Techn. Quality				✓
Clarity			✓	
Significance		✓		

Reviewer Name: **Dr. Anam Zehra**

This manuscript targets a timely and consequential issue and provides a plausible mechanism-based account of why AI assistants can foster problematic psychological reliance. Nonetheless, the submission is not publication-ready due to major editorial mismatch between abstract and content, inadequate methodological reporting, and uneven evidentiary standards.

Recommendation: Accept after major revision.

Detailed Reviewer's Report

Strengths

- High topical relevance and clear public-interest value:** The focus on dependence, loneliness, and AI-mediated validation reflects an urgent real-world phenomenon.
- Mechanism-oriented framing:** The manuscript usefully connects user attachment to product features (affirmation loops, constant availability, personification).
- Multi-stakeholder recommendations:** It proposes interventions at developer, governmental, and user levels, which improves practical utility.
- Engagement with safety concerns:** The manuscript foregrounds risks for vulnerable users and discusses harm escalation pathways that merit scrutiny.
- Readable, non-technical exposition:** The writing is broadly accessible, making it suitable for interdisciplinary readerships.

Weaknesses

REVIEWER'S REPORT

1. **Structural and editorial inconsistency:** The abstract does not match the paper's stated topic, indicating a likely copy/paste or submission assembly error that must be corrected.
2. **Insufficient methodological rigor:** If interviews underpin the claims, the manuscript must report sampling strategy, ethics/consent, analytic framework, coding reliability, and limitations.
3. **Evidence quality and sourcing discipline:** The paper blends scholarly literature with media reporting; it needs a clearer hierarchy of evidence and a more cautious interpretation of sensational risk claims.
4. **Conceptual imprecision:** Dependence, attachment, addiction, and problematic use are treated interchangeably; clearer definitions and a conceptual model are needed.
5. **Overreach in causal language:** Claims about AI directly worsening mental health require careful qualification (confounding, selection effects, and alternative explanations).