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. Touseef Malik**

Reviewer's Comment for Publication

The manuscript addresses an important emerging risk, psychological overreliance on AI assistants, and offers a readable synthesis of mechanisms and harm pathways with actionable recommendations. However, the submission requires major editorial correction to resolve title/abstract inconsistency and substantial strengthening of methodological transparency and evidence handling. With these revisions, the paper could make a useful contribution to the applied ethics and human AI interaction discourse

Recommendation: Accept after minor revision.

Detailed Reviewer's Report

Strengths

1. The topic is timely and socially salient, addressing psychological dependence and attachment dynamics in everyday AI-assistant use.

2. The paper presents an accessible narrative that bridges technical foundations (how neural networks generate "empathetic" dialogue) with behavioral consequences.

3. It identifies plausible psychological drivers of attachment (loneliness, trust, personification) and links them to design affordances (availability, affirmation, non-judgment).

4. The manuscript extends beyond diagnosis to propose multi-level interventions (developer guardrails, user boundaries, and regulatory oversight).

5. The discussion acknowledges vulnerable user groups and frames risk in practical terms, making the piece potentially useful for public-facing awareness.

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Weaknesses

1. The title–abstract alignment appears inconsistent: the title foregrounds psychological dependence, while parts of the abstract read like an organizational/press-service digital transformation piece, suggesting a structural or editorial error.

2. Methodological reporting is weak: interview sampling, recruitment, participant characteristics, and analysis procedures are not described with enough rigor to evaluate validity.

3. Several quantitative claims are presented without a clear sourcing hierarchy or triangulation; mixing journal sources with popular media requires stronger critical appraisal.

4. The argument sometimes overgeneralizes from risks to broad conclusions without careful boundary conditions (e.g., user type, use case, severity).

5. The paper would benefit from clearer conceptual definitions (dependence vs. problematic use vs. addiction; attachment vs. companionship) and a more disciplined structure.