



SOCIAL RETICENCE AND SOCIAL REJECTION IN ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract: Social reticence and social rejection are two significant aspects of an adolescent that could impact their personality and mental health. These variables tend to share the cause-and-effect relationship leading to the pattern of behavior in adolescents. The present study explores this relationship and concludes the association between social reticence and social rejection in adolescence. 181 samples were selected through Stratified Random sampling from the IX, X, XI, and XII standards, from two higher secondary schools in the Madawarayapuram area in Coimbatore City, India. Out of the 181 samples, 97 were boys and 84 were girls (Age, Mean = 15.59; S.D = 9.33). Karl Pearson Correlation Analysis and Independent Sample t-test were employed for data analysis. Results indicated a positive correlation between social reticence and social rejection in adolescence and showed that there were no significant gender differences in social reticence and social rejection in adolescence. Results also revealed a negative correlation between social reticence and people-pleasing facet (one of the items in social rejection). These findings show that socially reticent adolescents are prone to develop rejection sensitivity and experience social rejection from their peers.

Keywords: Adolescents, Social Reticence, Shyness, Rejection

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence

Adolescence is one of the most crucial among other developmental stages. It is also considered the second decade of life, where emotional lability and risk-taking behaviors are evident in this period. Adolescence is derived from the Greek word 'Adolescere', which means "to grow to maturity." According to the World Health Organization (WHO), adolescence is between 10 and 19 years. Adolescence changes an individual's physical, psychological, and sociological characteristics, as well as their beliefs, attitudes, hobbies, and behavior. According to Jean Piaget, "Adolescence is the age of great ideals and the beginning of theories, as well as the time of simple adaptation to reality." (Sebastian, 2015). Teenagers begin to explore and establish their identities during adolescence. Teenagers figure out where they blend in with their peers and society during this developmental stage. Adolescents' identity tries to clarify who they are and their societal role. Adolescents frequently have an unstable sense of self, experiment with new personal labels, and associate with different peer groups. At this period, typically, adolescents start to develop social aspects. However, in the present era, adolescents have faced difficulties in social aspects, settings, and situations. Social reticence and social rejection are two factors that may hinder the social development of adolescents and may impact their thoughts, feelings, and behavior in classroom settings and other social situations or settings.

Social reticence is a personality trait characterized by shyness, withdrawal, and hesitancy in social situations. Genetic factors, upbringing, and life experiences can cause it. Other factors contributing to social reticence include a lack of social skills and knowledge, negative perceptions of self and others, and negative experiences of rejection and exclusion. Social reticence is commonly referred to as a quality tendency or disposition of human beings to be passive in social interaction and social relationships in an environment.

Social reticence also refers to the tendency of adolescents to be socially withdrawn, inhibited, and avoidant of social interactions. This behavior can be seen when adolescents prefer to stay alone, avoid social events or activities, or feel uncomfortable in social situations. Social reticence can also be understood as an individual's tendency to be quiet and withdrawn in social situations, leading to peer social rejection and contributing to feelings of loneliness and social isolation. The term "reticent" was first used in communication by Phillips in 1965, underscoring that some people have trouble engaging and speaking in various contexts. Reticence, according to Phillips, is a result of poor communication abilities. According to Philips, "We refer to it as reticence when people avoid contact because they feel they will lose more by talking than by being silent". (Phillips, 1984, p. 52) Philip explained how reticent people tend to have limited and inadequate talents (skill deficiencies) (Keaten et al., 1997). Those who are reserved tend to avoid social and public situations where conversation and interaction are required. Lack of communication skills, worry about failing, severe shyness, cultural hurdles, a lack of drive, a lack of responsibility, a lack of metacognition, behavioral inhibition, isolation and rejection, social withdrawal, apathy, and peer neglect are some traits of reticent behavior. Due to their comparable nature and traits, shyness and social anxiety strongly correlate with social reticence (Mumthas & Rajan, 2015). Indeed, shy children tend to be wary and reticent in familiar and unfamiliar social contexts. Difficulties in interacting with other children may impact shy children's development of important social skills, which can further hinder their display of socially competent behaviors. (Sette et al., 2016)

Social rejection is a common and significant experience for adolescents, and it can profoundly impact their psychological and social development. Adolescents, in particular, may be more susceptible to negative outcomes of social rejection due to their rapidly developing brains and identities. Rejected adolescents may experience anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and decreased academic performance. In addition, adolescents who struggle with social skills or have lower self-esteem may also be more prone to social rejection. Several factors can contribute to social rejection, including personality traits such as introversion or self-consciousness, physical appearance, and behaviors or attributes perceived as deviant.

Social rejection can profoundly affect an individual's emotional, cognitive, and physiological well-being, particularly during adolescence, when social interactions and peer relationships are crucial for identity formation and socialization. In explaining social rejection in adolescents, the concepts of Fear of Rejection and Rejection Sensitivity are apt and relevant because these concepts represent the cognitive and emotional responses or precautions adolescents may perceive more readily about social rejection. To be accepted or avoid rejection is one of the main motivations behind why people want to express particular impressions of themselves to others. Importantly, people who are focused on and accustomed to avoiding rejection feel and act very differently from those who are centered and directed on being accepted, and occasionally, they engage in irrational, absurd, and paradoxical ideas that may result in them leaving a worse impression than those who intend to be accepted. Hence, someone with a high demand for social approval will probably grow more afraid of negative judgment and more eager to be viewed favorably (W. et al., 2002). Adolescents who experience social hesitation and rejection suffer major negative impacts, and these effects need to be thoroughly examined to understand the personality and cognitive patterns of adolescents living in a certain environment. Understanding how social rejection and reticence might impact teenage behavior in a social setting is crucial. The study aims to prove or disprove the idea that, in general, Indian people are introverted by nature and prone to develop shyness and reticence as traits and characteristics of positive environmental experiences. The study can substantially aid in analyzing adolescents' perceptions, particularly about the influence of personality and life experiences in a particular setting or context (diverse cultural and social background). It can also aid in identifying the typical causes and contributing elements that may affect social hesitation and rejection in Indian adolescent populations. The social cognitions of adolescents in India can be understood and analyzed using the findings of this study. The study can be useful in defining how adolescents' socialization and conduct are declining in the community in India due to elements like having a shy personality trait or having experienced peer rejection.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE.

In his systematic review paper, Dorcas Ekuia Embeaba Quansah (2016) traced the factors defining shyness in one's personality. Research literature suggests that peer rejection and the preference not to interact with children with withdrawal behavior is because of their internalizing problem. Results show that children are defined as shy based on their behavior in the classroom, with peers and teachers, and how they spend their time around peers.

Ayesha Manzoor Kiran (2016) studied the association between shyness levels in teenagers (aged 13 to 18) attending public and private schools in Islamabad, Pakistan. According to the research, adolescents' degrees of shyness are unaffected by their educational experiences. However, shy teenagers are less likely to engage in conversation, participate in classroom activities, or seek assistance when needed.

Najiyashahul Mumthas and Shyni Rajan (2015) presented a research study focused on determining the effect of parenting styles on social reticence among 600 higher secondary school students from Kannur, Kozhikode, and Malappuram districts in Kerala. The study revealed that male students with authoritative, permissive, and neglectful parenting styles were more socially reticent than those with authoritarian Parenting Styles. Female students with authoritative parenting styles are less reticent than the other categories.

Julie C. Bowker and Radhi Raja (2010) aimed to study the correlation between three social withdrawal subtypes (shyness, unsociability, avoidance), peer isolation, peer difficulties (victimization, rejection, exclusion, low acceptance), and loneliness in 194 adolescents at Surat in India. Results indicated that avoidance and shyness were markedly correlated with exclusion and loneliness, but unsociability was not. The correlation between avoidance and loneliness was mediated by exclusion. Findings suggest that social withdrawal could be characterized as a multidimensional construct during childhood and adolescence in Western and Eastern Societies.

In a study involving 547 young adolescents from Shanghai, China, Junsheng Liu et al. (2018) evaluated a model connecting shyness, characteristics of peer relations, and internalizing difficulties. Results showed that the association between shyness and internalizing issues was mediated by peer difficulties (rejection, victimization). Results, however, also showed a protective benefit for close friendships, particularly for boys. The importance of considering different peer experiences in research on shy young adolescents has been underlined by findings.

This paper explores the factors related to social reticence and social rejection. The study also aimed to understand the relationship between these factors and their effects based on gender. The present study hypothesized that.

1. There is no significant correlation between social reticence and social rejection in adolescents.
2. There is no significant difference in social reticence among male and female adolescents.
3. There is no significant difference in social rejection among male and female adolescents.
4. There is no significant correlation between social reticence and domains of social rejection (exclusion, rejection sensitivity, and people-pleasing).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

High school students in classes IX, X, XI, and XII, aged between 14 and 17, were selected for the present study. The high school students studied in two different schools in Madawarayapuram, Coimbatore district: Karunya Christian School and Evangeline Matriculation Higher Secondary School. Both schools had different boards of education, including CBSE and State board syllabi. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample because the study planned to involve samples from different educational standards from the school. The students' age group ranged varied from 13 to 19 years. Two hundred-five responses were collected from the samples. Only 181 responses were considered for the data analysis, while the 24 samples were considered insignificant.

Social Reticence Scale (SRS)

This scale was developed by Warren H. Jones. This scale is a self-administered 20-item measure of social shyness with a five-point Likert-type response format and verbal anchors. The SRS was originally developed to assess shyness for basic research on personality factors in interpersonal behavior and relationships. It only takes 5 -10 minutes to complete. The SRS is scored using a scoring key that reverses the score for one-half of the items so that higher scores reflect high shyness. The higher score on SRS can be associated with the following features: quiet, isolated, and left out.

Fear of Rejection Scale (FRS)

This scale was developed by Nida Nafees and Musaddiq Jahan. This scale is a self-report inventory of a 15-item measure of fear of rejection (social rejection) with a 7-point Likert-type response format and verbal anchors. The scale ranges from 15 to 105 points, with 15 being the lowest and 105 being the highest possible score. A higher score denotes a greater fear of rejection. The scores are calculated based on the total raw score. A score below 60 indicates a very low fear of rejection, while a score above 100 indicates an extremely high fear of rejection. The rest of the scores fall in ascending order, indicating low, moderate, and high levels.

Using Microsoft Excel 2007 Data Analysis, Descriptive Statistics was also obtained for the 181 samples for further analysis. Karl Pearson Correlation Analysis was employed to find the correlation between social reticence and social rejection. The Independent Sample T-Test was employed to test the hypotheses and compare the gender differences in social reticence and social rejection. The F – Test Two – sample for Variances was also employed to test hypotheses

RESULTS

Table 4.1 represents the correlation between social reticence and social rejection in 181 samples. The Karl Pearson Correlation Analysis was employed to find the Correlation Coefficient. As a result, a Karl Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.3121 was obtained. The critical value was 0.147558 with $df = 179$, at a 5% significance level for a two-tailed test. The calculated correlation coefficient was compared with the critical value obtained from the Pearson table. The calculated Karl Pearson Correlation Coefficient value was found to be the greater critical value obtained from the table ($r = 0.3121 > z = 0.1475$), thus rejecting the null hypothesis.

Table no -4.1. Correlation of social reticence and social rejection among the 181 high school students (adolescents)

	Social Reticence	Social Rejection
Social Reticence	1	
Social Rejection	0.312082989*	1

*Note: Critical value at 95% confidence level and a positive correlation exists $q(r = 0.3121 > z = 0.1475)$

Table 4.2 illustrates the sample size, mean, and standard deviation of male and female sample scores on Social Reticence. The F-Test Two Sample for Variance was employed to find the variance. Based on the results, it was assumed as Equal Variances. The Independent T-Test (two-tailed) for equal variances was employed to test the hypothesis. The p-value of 0.82148 was obtained at a 5% level of significance. The p-value was found to be greater than the alpha value.

($p = 0.82148 > \alpha = 0.05$). The null hypothesis was failed to be rejected.

Table no -4.2. Significance of mean difference between male and female high school students on social reticence

SOCIAL RETICENCE				
GENDER	SAMPLE SIZE (N)	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T – TEST (PVALUE)
MALE	97	56.91752577	8.603136665	0.821483
FEMALE	84	57.20238095	8.286699696	

Note: Significance level at 5% ($p > 0.05$).

Table 4.3 represents the sample size, mean, and standard deviation of male and female sample scores on Social Rejection. The F – Test Two Sample for Variance was employed to find the variances. Based on the results, it was assumed as Unequal Variances. The Independent T-Test (two-tailed) for equal variances was employed to test the hypothesis. P-value was obtained at a 5% level of significance. The p-value exceeded the alpha ($p = 0.069022 > \alpha = 0.05$). The null hypothesis was failed to be rejected.

Table no -4.3. Significance of mean difference between male and female high school students on social rejection

SOCIAL REJECTION				
GENDER	SAMPLE SIZE (N)	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T – TEST (PVALUE)
MALE	97	58.53608247	8.799931174	0.069022
FEMALE	84	61.28571429	11.06451119	

Table 4.4 illustrates the correlation between social reticence and rejection sensitivity domain of social rejection in 181 samples. The Karl Pearson Correlation Analysis was employed to find the Correlation Coefficient. As a result, a Karl Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.30694* was obtained. The critical value was 0.147558 with $df = 179$, at a 5% significance level for a two-tailed test. The calculated correlation coefficient was compared with the critical value obtained from the Pearson table. The calculated Karl Pearson Correlation Coefficient value was the greater critical value obtained from the table.

Table 4.4. Correlation of social reticence and rejection sensitivity (one of the three domains of social rejection) among the 181 high school students (adolescents)

	Social Reticence	Rejection Sensitivity
Social Reticence	1	
Rejection Sensitivity	0.30694*	1

*Note: Critical value at 95% confidence level and a positive correlation exists ($r = 0.3069 > z = 0.1475$)

Table 4.5 represents the correlation between social reticence and the people-pleasing domain of social rejection in 181 samples. The Karl Pearson Correlation Analysis was employed to find the Correlation Coefficient. As a result, the Karl Pearson Correlation Coefficient of -0.40509* was obtained. The critical value was 0.147558 with $df = 179$ at a 5% significance level for a two-tailed test. The calculated correlation coefficient was compared with the critical value obtained from the Pearson table. The calculated Karl Pearson Correlation Coefficient value was found to be the greater critical value obtained from the table ($r = -0.4051 > z = 0.1475$), thus rejecting the null hypothesis.

Table no -4.5. Correlation of social reticence and people-pleasing (one of the three domains of social rejection) among the 181 high school students (adolescents)

	Social Reticence	People Pleasing
Social Reticence	1	
People Pleasing	-0.40509*	1

*Note: Critical value at 95% confidence level and a negative correlation exists ($r = -0.4051 > z = 0.1475$)

DISCUSSION

The author has dwelled on Social Reticence and Fear of Rejection among adolescents as these aspects strongly impact adolescents' personality development. Understanding these concepts can help schools and parents resonate with adolescents' behavior. The present study aims to find the significance of both social reticence and social rejection during the adolescence period, where the adolescents are more typically presented as being driven towards identifying and establishing their personality/identity/self/role in different environments (family, classroom, and outdoors) as well as focused on developing cordial relationships with peers. The study attempted to find the association between them and tried to analyze whether a socially reticent adolescent is facing social rejection or a socially rejected adolescent has become socially reticent.

One of the major findings of the present study is that there was a strong association between social reticence and social rejection among adolescents. This finding is well supported by systematic literature review research on the Effect of Shyness on Peer Interaction (Dorcas et al. (2016)). Leary and Kowalsky, 1995) show that socially reticent individuals tend to withdraw, separate, or split themselves from situations that evoke evaluative concerns regarding rejection. Concerns or fear of rejection can make individuals avoid the clear and direct threats that would leave them vulnerable to rejection and humiliation (Vorauer et al., 2003). The self-presentational theory indicates the theoretical framework behind the relationship between the impacts of peer rejection and social reticence. The self-presentational theory of social anxiety helped create a perspective that tied shyness to people's concerns with others' perceptions and evaluations. According to the theory, people tend to become shy, which may lead them to experience social anxiety and display behavioral inhibition when they intend to make desired impressions on other people but have dubiety regarding making those impressions successfully (W. et al., 2002).

Understanding the underlying factors for socially reticent behavior can help the school and family environment provide a conducive place for the overall development of adolescents. This study highlighted that socially reticent behavior is a reaction to social rejection by peers and society. In this study, one of the facets of Social Rejection, rejection sensitivity, strongly correlates with social reticence scores. Providing a conducive environment requires conscious efforts from schools and parents by training them on positive coping mechanisms for rejection and how to deal with it. The author also highlights that the students are experiencing academic pressure and stress, which greatly impacts their social rejection scores. Academic pressure can also be understood as establishing one's worth among the people around them. Another finding of the study was that there are no gender differences in both scale scores among the adolescents, which gives an insight into the gender-neutral environment in their surroundings. The role of gender is evident and is one of the most important factors that influence the development of personality in adolescents. The study depicted no trace of difference in scores based on their gender.

This study could provoke future research on adolescent social reticence or social rejection. In terms of future research, extending the research with different populations involving various age groups (children and young adults) would be useful. Doing cross-cultural research in different cultural contexts can help understand the role and impact of culture, tradition, and heritage on social rejection and social reticence. Also, comparing the gender differences in social reticence and social rejection with other samples might indicate some contradicting or supporting views on establishing the gender risks of developing social reticence and social rejection. Also, comparing the influence of different educational standards is recommended to find the effects of other variables on social reticence and social rejection. Future research studies could identify, analyze, interpret, and evaluate the influence of several other demographic factors or aspects' role in developing social reticence and social rejection in adolescence.

Further research is needed to understand better the underlying mechanisms of social reticence and social rejection to gain an in-depth understanding and insight into these variables to develop more effective treatments for those who experience it. The present research, therefore, contributes to a growing body of evidence suggesting that social reticence and social rejection may affect adolescents with each other and also distinctively. However, the effects of social reticence and social rejection in an adolescent may lead to serious issues and problems.

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