The Relative Research on Rejection Sensitivity, Self-esteem, Social Support and Social Anxiety of Teenagers

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Abstract. Purposes: to explore the effect of rejection sensitivity, self-esteem and social support on social anxiety. Procedures: to use stratified cluster sampling, 349 sample data were collected by means of group measuring. Methods: to adopt psychological evaluation method, the tools included Tendency to Expect Rejection Scale, Self-esteem Scale, and Perceived Social Support Scale, and Social Anxiety Scale. Results: the gender and area differences are found in the analysis of social anxiety, social anxiety is positively related to rejection sensitivity, higher social anxiety indicates lower self-esteem and perceived social support, they are significant. Rejection sensitivity and self-esteem are the effectively predictive factors in the regression analysis of social anxiety. Conclusions: In order to lower social anxiety, the efforts may be made to lower the rejection sensitivity, improve self-esteem, give them more social support to keep psychological health, the teenagers who are female or from village should be concerned very much.

Keywords: Social Anxiety, Rejection Sensitivity, Self-Esteem, Social Support.

1 Introduction

Social anxiety refers to the uncomfortable feeling in front of the others. The epidemiology studies show that the growing tendency appears obviously for social anxiety from children development stage to adolescence stage, the kind of problem exists extensively among teenagers, and has a profound effect. [1] Social anxiety becomes a common psychological disorder disease for teenagers.

The factors affecting social anxiety mainly include the internal and external aspects. Rejection sensitivity and self-esteem are proposed two important internal factors. Human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships, the deprivation of the need to belong is linked to a variety of ill effects on health, adjustment, and well-being. [2] Social rejection is one way of deprivation, which can result into bad consequences such as self-esteem, loneliness, depression, social anxiety, the decrease of pro-social behavior, and so on. [3]. In order to predict the sensitivity to social rejection, Rebacca developed a measuring tool. [4] The more one’s Self-esteem refers to self-worth. According to sociometer theory, individual’s
degree of inclusiveness in their social world paired with his or her level of the need to be included determines one’s self-esteem, self-esteem serves as a mechanism for monitoring the likelihood of social exclusion at any given time. [5] So the level of self-esteem can affect social interaction behavior. Social support is proposed as one important external factor. It is considered as a mediating mechanism between stress and health, which means the mental and material help and support from others, and reflects the closeness degree of individual bonds with society. The social support includes two kinds, objective support and subjective support, the subjective social support is a kind of emotional experience and satisfaction of individual’s being respected, supported, understood.

There are several assumptions, social anxiety is positively related to rejection sensitivity; the lower self-esteem level is, the higher social anxiety is; social anxiety is inversely related to subjective social support; the rejection sensitivity, self-esteem, and subjective social support can well predict the level of social anxiety.

2 Sample and Procedure

2.1 Sample

Participants were 360 undergraduates from colleges of JiangXi province, the efficient percentage of participants is 97%. Their age range is from 14 to 26 years old ($M=18.71$ years, $SD=1.873$), there are 101 males, 248 females, 119 participants are from polytechnic school, 134 from junior college, 96 from university, 219 people are from village, 130 from town and city, 240 participants’ major is the arts, the rest’ major is the science, of these only 40 persons are the only child from the nuclear family.

2.2 Measures

The Tendency to Expect Rejection Scale. The scale in this study was translated to Chinese on the basis of Rebacca L.Jobe developed in 2003. [4] The opinions of English teacher, psychology postgraduates and experts were obtained during the translation. The scale is consisted of 18 items, this scale assesses individual sensitive tendency of being afraid of being rejected in the social context, participants are encouraged to mark out the degree of agreement with the sentence description on a five-point scale from very disagree (1) to very agree (5). The score range is from 18 to 90, The Cronbach’s reliability of this scale was 0.86, there were good congruent validity and convergent validity in it. Because this scale will be used in the cross-culture context, the reliability and validity need to be verified again.

The Symptom Checklist 90. There are 9 factors which are consisted of 90 items in this checklist, one of them is interpersonal sensitivity factor which refers to the uncomfortable, inferior complex, and negative expectation in the social context. [6] This dimension is the same as the trait of rejection sensitivity to some degree, it is specially selected as the proof of criterion validity of the tendency of expect rejection scale in the cross-culture context. This is a five-point scale ranging from never (1) to very serious (5), this scale had good reliability and validity.