

Applying Sociometer Theory to Different Age Groups and Groups Differences regarding State Self-Esteem Sensitivity

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Abstract : Sociometer Theory is well tested among young adults in western population, however, limited research is found for other age groups, like adolescent and middle-adulthood in Asia population. Thus, one of the main purposes of this study is to verify the validity of Sociometer Theory in different age groups among Asian. To be specific, we hypothesized that an increase in one's perceived social rejection is associated to a decrease in his/her state self-esteem among all age groups in Asian population. And we expected that this association can be found among all age groups including adolescent, young adults and middle-adults group in our first study. In this way, we can verify the validity of Sociometer Theory across different age groups as well as its significance in Asian population. Furthermore, those participants who received rejection about 'mate-role' would also receive some negative feedbacks regarding their current/future capacity of being a good mate. Results suggested that participants' state self-esteem sensitivity for mating-capacity rejection is higher when comparing to that of friend-capacity rejection, i.e. greater drop in state self-esteem when receiving mating-capacity feedbacks than receiving friend-capacity feedbacks. These results, however, is just applicable on young adults. Thus, the main purpose of study two would be testing the state self-esteem sensitivity towards social rejection in different domains among three age groups. We hypothesized that group differences would be found for three age groups regarding state self-esteem sensitivity. Research question 1: perceived social rejection is associated to decrease in state self-esteem, is applicable among different age groups in Asia population. Research question 2: there are significant group differences for three age groups regarding state self-esteem sensitivity. Methods: 300 subjects are divided into three age groups, adolescents group, young adult group and middle-adult group, with 100 subjects in each group. Two questionnaires were used in testing this fundamental concept. Subjects were then asked to rate themselves on questionnaire in measuring their current state self-esteem in order to obtain the baseline measurements for later comparison. In order to avoid demand characteristics from subjects, other unrelated tasks like word matching were also given after the first test. Results: A positive correlation between scores in questionnaire 1 and questionnaire 2 among all age groups. Conclusion: State self-esteem decrease to both imagined social rejection (study1) and experienced social rejection (study2). Moreover, level of decrease in state self-esteem vary when receiving different domains of social rejection. Implications: a better understanding of self-esteem development for various age group might bring insights for education systems and policies for teaching approaches and learning methods among different age groups.

Keywords : state self-esteem, social rejection, stage theory, self-feelings

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