

SELF-DETERMINATION, REJECTION SENSITIVITY AND SOCIAL INTERACTION ANXIETY IN TRANSGENDER

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to explore the relationship between self-determination, rejection sensitivity, and social interaction anxiety in transgender. It was hypothesized that self-determination is likely to be negatively related to social interaction anxiety, and is likely to be a negative predictor of social interaction anxiety in transgender. It was also hypothesized that rejection sensitivity is likely to be positively related to social interaction anxiety, and is likely to be a positive predictor of social interaction anxiety in transgender. A correlational cross-sectional research design was used in this study, and the sample of transgender (N=42) was selected from Fountain House Lahore by using a purposive sampling technique. To collect data, the Personal Information Sheet, The Self-Determination Scale (Seldon & Deci, 1996), the Adult-Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (Downey, Berenson & Kang, 2006), and the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (Mattick & Clark, 1989) were used. The results showed a significant negative relationship between self-determination and social interaction anxiety, whereas rejection sensitivity was not significantly related to social interaction anxiety. Results of regression analysis revealed that friends in transgender community and self-determination were significant predictors of social interaction anxiety, while rejection sensitivity emerged as a non-significant predictor of social interaction anxiety in transgender. The research findings may be useful for clinical psychologists, the committees of transgender rights, and for the relevant policy makers.

Keywords: self-determination, rejection sensitivity, social interaction anxiety, transgender

Introduction

Transgender is a community that is on the intersection with major pathological problems because they face the discrimination, victimization, rejection, social interaction anxiety. If basic psychological needs are not met, negative feelings may occur in the form of social rejection, hurt feelings, or social pain. Minorities groups are particularly affected by these experiences, as they are subject to stigma, discrimination and harassment at the hands of individuals, groups and even institutions. These experiences are part

of minority stress, defined as internal stressors (e.g., fear of rejection, vigilance of being rejected) and external stressors (e.g., discrimination, violence). This continuous stress over time may cause substantial detrimental mental and physical health effects (Kiyar et al., 2025)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), established by Ryan and Deci (2000), is a broad theory that explains human motivation, behavior, and personality development. It is considered a metatheory because it combines several smaller theories that work together to provide a detail

understanding of how people are motivated and how they function psychologically (Legault, 2017). Self-Determination theory suggests that people are able to become self-determined when they accomplish their need for autonomy, proficiency and relatedness. According to self-determination, perspective people need to feel competence, connection and autonomy in their lives (Kendra, 2009). On the report of functional assumption of self-determination, populace behaved as primary agent who makes things to occur. The necessary features of self-determined actions comprise that the person behaves independently in a self-realizing mode in thus a way behavior is self-regulated and the action is a self-starter. Research findings include recommendations that youth with deficiency in knowledge, understanding and skills have low self-determination (Hui & Tsang, 2012). Self-determination theory claim that needs are innate but can expand through social framework. Some people have ability to develop powerful or stronger needs than others do which create individual differences.

Causality orientations are incentive orientations mention the approach that people adjust to either an environment or manage their behavior, the extent to which they are self-determined in different settings. Self-determination theory shaped three orientations that includes autonomous, competence and relatedness (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Life goals are enduring goals that people use to direct their actions. They are of two categories. Intrinsic aspirations that hold life goals including generativity, personal development and affiliation. On the other hand, extrinsic aspirations have life goals like prosperity, reputation and charisma (Rijavec, Brdar, & Miljković, 2011).

Rejection sensitivity refers to the inclination to apprehensively or furiously look forward to rejection from other people and it is connected with adopting obstacles including regulation difficulties, hopelessness, and anxiety (McDonald et al., 2010). Rejection sensitivity refers as the outlook to apprehensively anticipate scenarios, readily recognize and deeply react to any form of rejection (McDonald et al., 2010).

The core concept of this representation is expectations regarding being refused or acknowledged by significant others. If caregivers of children provide with all the things the children needs then the child will grow up with the same belief that other will also do the same. On the other hand, if child grows by facing rejection from their primary caregiver then child will expect rejections from other people as well by applying this fact on them. According to the concept of Bowlby's attachment model regarding which Downey and Feldman (1996) submitted a model with the purpose of suggestion that children whose needs are not considered by their caregivers will develop a sensitivity to rejection.

Social anxiety (SA) is also a potential stressor for transgender are includes the fear of others negative evaluation of one's behavior in social situations. Experiences of gender-based discrimination, rejection, not being validated as transgender, and having negative expectations of the future, as well as having to conceal one's identity and internalizing transphobia were reported to be associated with social anxiety. Repeated discrimination, victimization and rejection experiences can further solidify the belief that future social interactions will be negative (Butler et al., 2018). Social Anxiety is described by a persistent and intense fear of being negatively evaluated, judged, or embarrassed in social situations. Individuals with social anxiety often experience excessive self-consciousness, avoidance of social interactions, and significant distress that interferes with daily functioning.

Defense System is the safeguard framework social anxiety is characterized as nervousness that is cause by the connection among social and vague individual from similar species. In this way, the inclinations to rehearse nervousness in these settings connect to the idea of potential dangers that exist in vague predators. The Safety System are regularly serve to confound our comprehension of social nervousness. Social anxiety may have evolved as an adaptive response to social hierarchy and status competition, particularly among subordinate individuals in group-living species (Tone et al., 2019). In any case, it if genuine that a lot of our public activity is composed into

progressive social examples in which top positions have more capacity to manage dangers and retaining of support over those lower in the chain of importance.

Method

3.1 Research Design

Correlational cross-sectional research design was apply to discover the relationships between self-determination, rejection sensitivity and social interaction anxiety in transgender.

3.2 Sample

Sample consisted of 42 transgender with age range from 18 years and above. The purposive sampling of 42 transgender individuals was drawn from Fountain House.

3.2.1 Inclusion criteria

Both trans female and trans male were included in this research.

The participant with minimum age of 18 years was included.

3.2.2 Exclusion Criteria

Street Transgender were excluded

Non-Muslim Transgender were excluded

Table 3.1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=42)

Variables		f (%)	M (SD)
Age			39.33(12.04)
Education	Illiterate	27 (64.3)	
	Middle	7 (16.7)	
	Primary	5 (11.9)	
	Matric	3 (7.1)	
Sex at birth	Male	19 (45.2)	
	Female	23 (58.4)	
Skills	Stitching	5 (11.9)	
	Parlour	9 (21.4)	
	Other	23 (54.8)	
	No skills	5 (11.9)	
Residence	Place given	3 (7.1) by government	
	Own	39 (92.9)	
Religion	Islam	42 (100)	
	Other		
Monthly income	Less than 5000	31 (73.8)	
	Less than 10000	10 (23.8)	

Table 3.1 (Continued)

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=42)

Variables	f (%)	M (SD)
Friends in transgender	More than 10000	1 (2.4)
	Less than 5	29 (69)
	More than 5	8 (19)
Friends other than transgender	No friend	5(11.9)
	Less than 5	17 (40.5)
	More than 5	1 (2.4)
Relationship with parents	No friend	24 (57.1)
	Fair	17(40.5)
	Good	17(40.5)
Leave house with	No relation	8 (19)
	Yes	30 (71.4)
	No	12 (28.6)
Age when leave home	Less than 5 years	4 (9.5)
	More than 10 years	38 (90.5)
	Age when parents Handover to other Person	
	Less than 5 years	4 (9.5)
	More than 10 years	38 (90.5)

The above table shows the frequency and percentage of the demographics of the research. The mean of age was 39.33 and number of female transgender was more than the number of male transgender. The information about income was also, given which shows that the earning of majority transgender was less than five thousand. The information about relationship with parents were also given. Most of the transgender have friendship with other transgender and no friends other than transgender. Most of the transgender were unemployed.

Demographics showed that majority transgender lived at their own residence and majority left their homes with their will.

3.3 Operational Definition of Variables

3.3.1 Self Determination

Seldon and Deci (1996) defined self-determination as a relatively constant facet of personal's individualities that reveals being more conscious of their thoughts along with their sense of self, as well as awareness for decision making with orientation to their behavior.

3.3.2 Rejection Sensitivity

As stated by Downey and Feldman (1996) the term of rejection sensitivity use marked by those people who are anxious or feel disliked or rejected following an ambiguously intentioned rejection and exaggerate rejection as measure using the Rejection Sensitivity questionnaire.

3.3.3 Social Interaction Anxiety

According to Mattick and Clarke (1989) the term Social Interaction Anxiety indicates extreme distress when inaugurating and maintaining conversations with friends, outsiders or potential mates.

3.4 Assessment measures

Following measures were used

Personal Information Sheet

The Self-Determination Scale

Adult-Rejection sensitivity Questionnaire

Social Interaction Anxiety Scale

3.4.1 Personal Information Sheet

It was formed by researchers to gather information from the participants on religion, age, residence, occupation, education, daily and monthly income, no. of transgender friends, no. of non-transgender friends and relationship of the participants with parents ,extra skills etc.

3.4.2 The Self-Determination Scale (Seldon & Deci, 1996).

The Self-Determination Scale (Seldon& Deci, 1996) was intended to evaluate individual differences with the extent to which people be adapt to work in a self-determined way. It account as a comparative persistent feature of people's personalities that reflect being more alert about their feelings and their sense of self and feeling a sense of alternative with respect to their behaviors. Seldon and Deci originally developed it in 1996. It is a short scale comprising of 10 items with two subscales that consist of 5 items in each subscale. The first subscale include items regarding awareness of oneself and the second one include items related to perceived choice in one's actions. The subscales can use independently or in combine form into an overall self-determination scale's score. It is five point likert scale in which 1=

strongly agree with only A, 2= Agree with A, 3= Agree with both A and B, 4= Agree with only B and 5= strongly agree with only B. It includes statement like A) I always feel like I choose the things I do. B) I sometimes feel that it is not really me choosing the things I do. In current research, Urdu translation of the scale was used. For the present research, Cronbach's alpha reliability of the scale is .67.

3.4.3 Adult-Rejection sensitivity Questionnaire (Downey, Berenson & Kang, 2006).

Adult-Rejection sensitivity Questionnaire (Downey, Berenson & Kang, 2006) was designed to assess the expectations about acceptance and rejection. It comprised of nine hypothetical scenarios in which rejection is most likely to occur. Every item is consisted of two parts. First part is concern with the extent of anxiety and concern about outcome.

Second part is concern with person's expectation about the acceptance and rejection. It is a six point likert scale with two poles. In first pole, 1= very unconcerned to 6=very concerned and in second pole, 1=very unlikely to 6= very likely. In current research, Urdu translation of the scale is used. For the current research, the Cronbach's alpha reliability of the scale is .86

3.4.4 Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (Mattick& Clark, 1989).

Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (Mattick& Clark, 1989) was intended to assess anxiety in social situations. It contains twenty items appraised on four point likert scale. Items are relevant to scenarios or themes that include the feeling of observed by others including public speaking, or doing any other thing in public place. Items were assessed on four categories in which zero=not at all characteristic or true for me, 1= slightly characteristic or true for me, 2= moderately characteristic or true for me, 3= very characteristic or true for me and 4= extremely characteristic or true for me. In scoring of SIAS scores range from zero to eighty in which high scores represents greater anxiety about being observed and vice versa. In current research, Urdu translation of the

scale is used. For the current research, the Cronbach's alpha reliability of the scale is .83

3.5 Proposed Statistical Analysis

SPSS software was used to analyze data. The data was entered in SPSS. Reliability analysis was directed for all scales and Cronbach's alpha for each scale was reported. Descriptive statistics were reported for demographic variables and study variables. The statistical technique Pearson product moment correlation was apply in order to see the association among self- determination, rejection sensitivity and social interaction anxiety in transgender. Hierarchical Regression was applied to see the predictors of dependent variable.

3.6 Procedure

The sample of 42 transgender were recruited with the help of organization's staff. Transgender was selected based on their availability and interest. Consent was taken from the participants verbally as mostly of them was not qualified enough to read and they were brief about the instructions.

Participants were instructed about their right to privacy along with the right to withdraw from the study at any time they wished with no penalty. Those who were not eligible to read, their scales were filled verbally. Administration of each set of questionnaires required around 15-20 minutes. I asked each statement verbally and then their responses were recorded. After data collection, results will analyzed and reported.

Results

This chapter aims to investigate the relationship among self-determination, rejection sensitivity and social interaction anxiety in transgender. Descriptive statistics was used for data analysis. (i) Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients for Study Variables (ii) Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis to explore the relationship among self-determination, rejection sensitivity and social interaction anxiety in transgender. (iii) Hierarchical Regression analysis was use to predict the social interaction anxiety from self-determination and rejection sensitivity.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients for Study Variables

Scales	α	K	M	SD	Range	
					Potential	Actual
Self-determination	.67	10	28.61	7.13	5-50	44-13
Rejection sensitivity	.86	18	166.8	61.1	6-108	324-11
Social Interaction Anxiety	.83	20	45.57	13.11	0-80	72-16

Note: α = reliability coefficient, K= no. of items in scale and subscale.

Table 4.1 shows Cronbach's Alpha reliability of values of scales used in the current study. The reliability of self-determination scale was .67, which is fair. While, the reliabilities of rejection sensitivity scale and social interaction anxiety scale

was .86 and .83 respectively which was high and very good for the current study.

It was assumed that there is likely to be a relationship among self-determination, rejection sensitivity and social interaction anxiety in transgender. To find out the relationship, Pearson Correlation was performed.

Table 4.2

Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Study Variables (N=42)

Scales/Subscales	1	2	3	4
1. Friends in transgender	-	-.04	.08	.51**
2. Self Determination	-	-	-.12	-.31*
3. Rejection sensitivity	-	-	-	.21
4. Social interaction Anxiety	-	-	-	-

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

The table shows the correlation among self-determination, rejection sensitivity and social interaction anxiety in transgender along with demographic i.e., number of friends in transgender community. Other demographics were also included in correlation but due to their non-significant results, they were not reported in the table.

Number of friends in transgender were negatively and significantly related with social interaction anxiety scale while it is negatively and non-significantly related with self-determination.

Table 4.2 further showed that self-determination is negatively and non-significantly related with rejection sensitivity but significantly and negatively

related to social interaction anxiety. Rejection sensitivity was non-significantly related to social interaction anxiety. Similarly, Social interaction anxiety was significantly and negatively related to self-determination and non-significantly related to rejection sensitivity.

Self-Determination had moderate strength of correlation with social interaction anxiety as it R-value lie in .30 to .40.

Next, it was hypothesized that self-determination and rejection sensitivity would predict social interaction anxiety in transgender individuals. To investigate this hypothesis Hierarchical regression analysis was applied. Results are shown in Table 4.3

Table 4.3

Hierarchical Regression Analysis predicting Social Interaction Anxiety in Transgenders

Variables	Social Interaction Anxiety	
	ΔR^2	B
Step 1		
Friends in Transgender	.26	.48**
Step 2		
Self-Determination	.08	-.27*
Step 3		
Rejection Sensitivity	.02	.14
Total ΔR^2	36	

Note. Control Variables = no. of friends in Transgender Community. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

The table show of hierarchical regression analysis for predicting social interaction anxiety suggest that the overall modal was significant at $F(3, 38) = 7.130, p < .001$ and explained 36% variance. In Step 1, the modal was significant and explained 26% variance. In Step 2, self-determination was also significant predictor and it explained 8%

variance in social interaction anxiety. In Step 3, rejection sensitivity emerged as nonsignificant predictor and accounted for 2% variance in social interaction anxiety.

4.1 Summary of Findings

Following is the summary of significant findings Friends in transgender community were significantly related to social interaction anxiety, Self-Determination was negatively and significantly associated to social interaction anxiety. Self-Determination was not related to rejection sensitivity Rejection sensitivity was not associated to social interaction anxiety Self-Determination negatively and significantly predicting social interaction anxiety Rejection sensitivity occurring as a non-significant predictor of social interaction anxiety

Discussion

The existing research was directed to investigate the relationship among self-determination, rejection sensitivity and social interaction anxiety in transgender. For assessment purpose personal information sheet, The Self-Determination Scale (Seldon& deci, 1996), Adult Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (Downey, Berenson & Kang, 2006) and Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (Mattick& Clark, 1989) were used and results are discussed as below.

It was hypothesized that self-determination would be negatively linked to social interaction anxiety and would function as negative indicator. The findings of this study supported this hypothesis, showing a notable negative association among self-determination and social interaction anxiety. To put it in another way, individuals with elevated self-determination experienced lesser anxiety in social interactions.

Supporting evidence from prior research underscored that transgender people frequently face social omission, discrimination and low family acceptance, which adversely influence their mental well-being and intensify feelings of isolation and anxiety. Moreover the research accentuated that social support, acknowledgement and access to validating environment acts as a key factor in boosting confidence and psychological health among transgender people (Sahar et al., 2025). These results endorse the current study by implying that elevated self-determination and social validation may facilitate in reducing social interaction anxiety.

Further confirming support comes from the study which investigated the lived experiences of transgender individuals and found that discrimination, social exclusion, social stigma, and family rejection unfavorably impact their mental well-being, leading to escalated distress, anxiety and social alienation. Regardless of the adversities, many of the subjects exhibited resilience and a compelling determination to sustain their identity and manage unfavorable circumstances. The results indicated that the individuals who retain substantial personal autonomy, resilience and self-acceptance are more proficient in managing psychological repercussion of social stigma (Suleman et al., 2023). These findings support current research by suggesting that elevated levels of self-determination may aid transgender individuals to stand more efficiently with social challenges and mitigating social interaction anxiety.

Another hypothesis projected that rejection sensitivity would be favorably associated with social interaction anxiety. However the outcomes of the current study did not confirm this belief, as rejection sensitivity exhibited a positive yet non-significant relation with social interaction anxiety. Likewise, rejection sensitivity was found to be non-significant pointer of social interaction anxiety in the population of this inquiry.

Furthermore, these results contradicts with numerous former studies. Such as one study stated that transgender individuals often endure discrimination, social dismissal and minority stress, which leads to heightened anxiety and mental distress. Moreover the researchers found that intensified expectancy of rejection and sensitivity to societal appraisal were related to poorer psychological health consequences and escalated anxiety among transgender subjects (Kiyar et al., 2025). Similarly, in a countrywide cohort scrutiny of transgender individuals in South Korea, claimed that discrimination experiences were profoundly linked with anxiety symptoms and mental discomfort among transgender individuals. The research emphasized that recurrent endurance of discriminatory experiences and rejection plays a vital role in deteriorating psychological health outcomes

(Choo et al., 2024). In the same way another study investigated rejection sensitivity and social interaction anxiety among sexually diverse individuals and claimed that the association among rejection sensitivity and social anxiety was found to be inconsistent across all respondents. The research deduced that rejection sensitivity was not a stable or direct indicator of social anxiety and was impelled by mitigating aspects for instance identity strength (Maiolatesi et al., 2022). The incongruity between the present study and preceding researches may be due to shortcomings such as petite sample size and lesser age diverseness among participants. In general, while self-determination appeared as vital protective factor opposed to social interaction anxiety, the role of rejection sensitivity remains unclear and may insist on further probing with extensive and more diverse samples.

Limitations

The recent study has certain limitations that should be kept in mind while interpreting the results. First, sample was taken only from Fountain House, which restricts the applicability of the findings to the extensive transgender population. Additionally, the research targeted confined number of variables, while social interaction anxiety might also be interlinked with various other social and psychological factors. Furthermore, the study used a quantitative cross-sectional design, which limited a thorough insight into participant's experience over the long term. Moreover, sample size was another limitation of the current study, which might have impacted the precision and strength of the findings. Hence, the outcomes of this study should be interpreted with caution.

Recommendations

Depending on the results and limitations of the current study numerous suggestions are proposed for future inquiries. Future researches should involve participants from multiple organizations and community centers to magnify the generalizability of the results. Researchers are also motivated to probe additional social and psychological variables intertwined with social

interaction anxiety in transgender individuals inclusive of social companionship, self-esteem, social stigma, coping mechanisms. Furthermore, qualitative and longitudinal study designs must be implemented to attain an in-depth insight of the personal experiences and the long-standing psychological effects of transgender individuals. Expanding the sample size in upcoming studies would also enhance the validity and reliability of the findings. The results of the present study may further facilitate clinical psychologists, lawmakers and committees of transgender rights in formulating efficient interventions, awareness sessions, and supportive academic exercises for transgender population.

Conclusion

The connection among self-determination, rejection sensitivity and social interaction anxiety revealed that friend in transgender community is substantially linked with social interaction anxiety. Self-determination is negatively significant with social interaction anxiety and negatively non-significant with rejection sensitivity. Rejection sensitivity is positively non-significant with social interaction anxiety. Self-determination is the negative and significant predictor of social interaction anxiety while rejection sensitivity appeared as a non-significant predictor of social interaction anxiety.

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