



Online versus Offline Communication: The Relationship between Rejection Sensitivity and Self-Disclosure

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BACKGROUND

- Previous research has found that rejection sensitivity obstructs self-disclosure during relationship formation (Ando, 1978).
- Individuals more sensitive to rejection were less likely to report self-disclosing to others than those lower in rejection sensitivity (Ksionzky & Mehrabian, 1980).
- The purpose of the current exploratory research was to replicate previous findings and to determine whether rejection sensitive individuals self-disclose more to others in online environments than in offline environments (e.g., face-to-face).

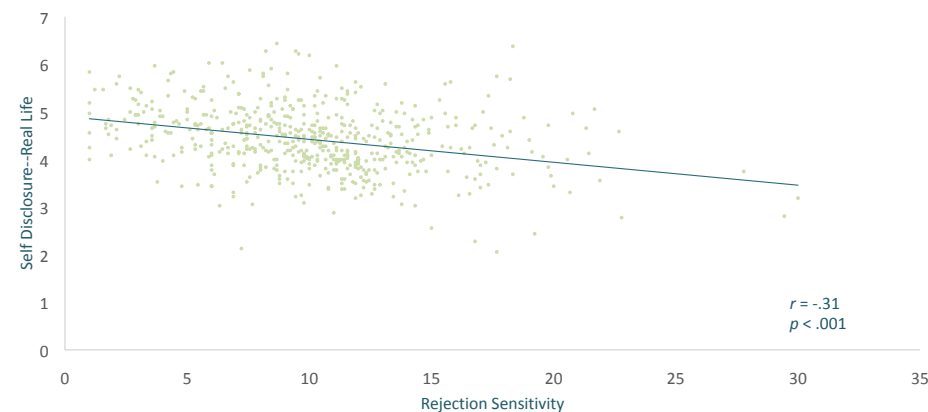
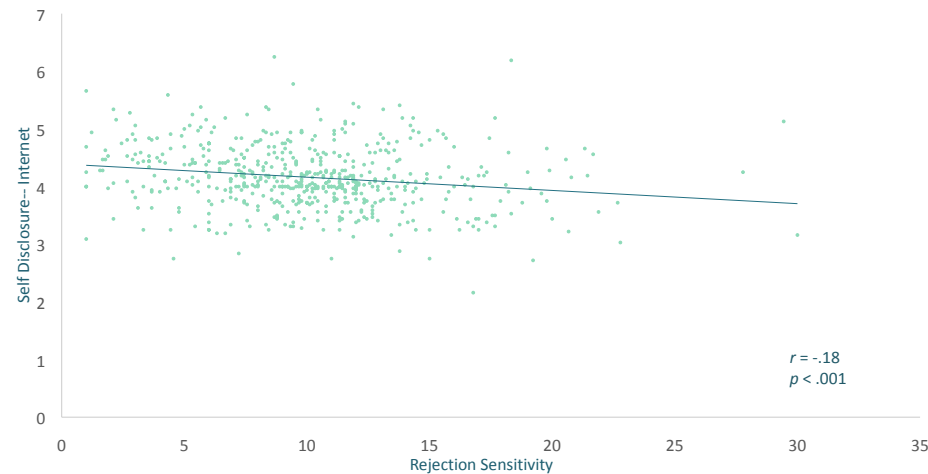


METHOD

- 561 participants (74% female; 85% White/Caucasian) were recruited from a southeastern public university through Sona ($M_{age} = 20.61$, $SD = 4.98$)
- Participants completed the 9-item Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (Downey & Feldman, 1996) and a modified version of the Revised Self-Disclosure Scale (Wheless & Grotz, 1976).
 - The Self-Disclosure Scale was modified to assess self-disclosure in online vs. offline environments.

RESULTS

- Replicating previous findings, results revealed that individuals higher in rejection sensitivity disclose less to others in both online and face-to-face environments.



- A dependent samples z-test comparing these correlation coefficients suggest that rejection sensitive individuals appear to self-disclose less in face-to-face environments than in online, $z = 3.94$, $p < .001$.

APPLICATIONS

- These findings expand previous research on rejection sensitivity and self-disclosure to include the rise of the Internet and how it changes human interaction.
- These results suggest an alternative way to form new relationships for those high in rejection sensitivity to prevent hindering self-disclosure.



LIMITATIONS / FUTURE RESEARCH

- As this research was exploratory additional studies are needed to confirm the current findings.
- A limitation to this research is that it is cross-sectional and correlational; therefore, no causal links can be established.
- 74% of participants in this sample were female; will these results be replicated within a male population?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Dr. Blackhart for mentorship and support in developing this research.

Thank you to SSSP for providing me with an opportunity to present this research.

Thank you to ETSU Honors College Office of Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities and to the ETSU Department of Psychology for funding my travel to SSSP.