

Moderating Impact of Interpersonal Stress on Adolescent Anxiety and Self-Esteem

Daniel Pien, Erin Long, Jami Young, and Benjamin Hankin
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign - Department of Psychology



Background

- Social anxiety (SA) has a median age of onset of 13¹
- Interpersonal stress (IS) often occurs during adolescence and is associated with anxiety²
- Socially anxious adolescents are more prone to encountering IS with peers in the form of rejection³, which has implications for self-esteem (SE)⁴
- The association between IS, SA and SE during adolescence is unclear⁵

Research Question

Does interpersonal stress moderate the relationship between social anxiety and self-esteem?

Hypothesis

- Adolescents with high IS will show a stronger negative relationship between SA and SE, as compared to adolescents with low IS.

Methods

Participants

- 681 youth ($M_{age}=11.8$, $SD=2.4$; 55% female)

Procedure

- Questionnaires at baseline (T1) and 36 months later (T2)

Measures

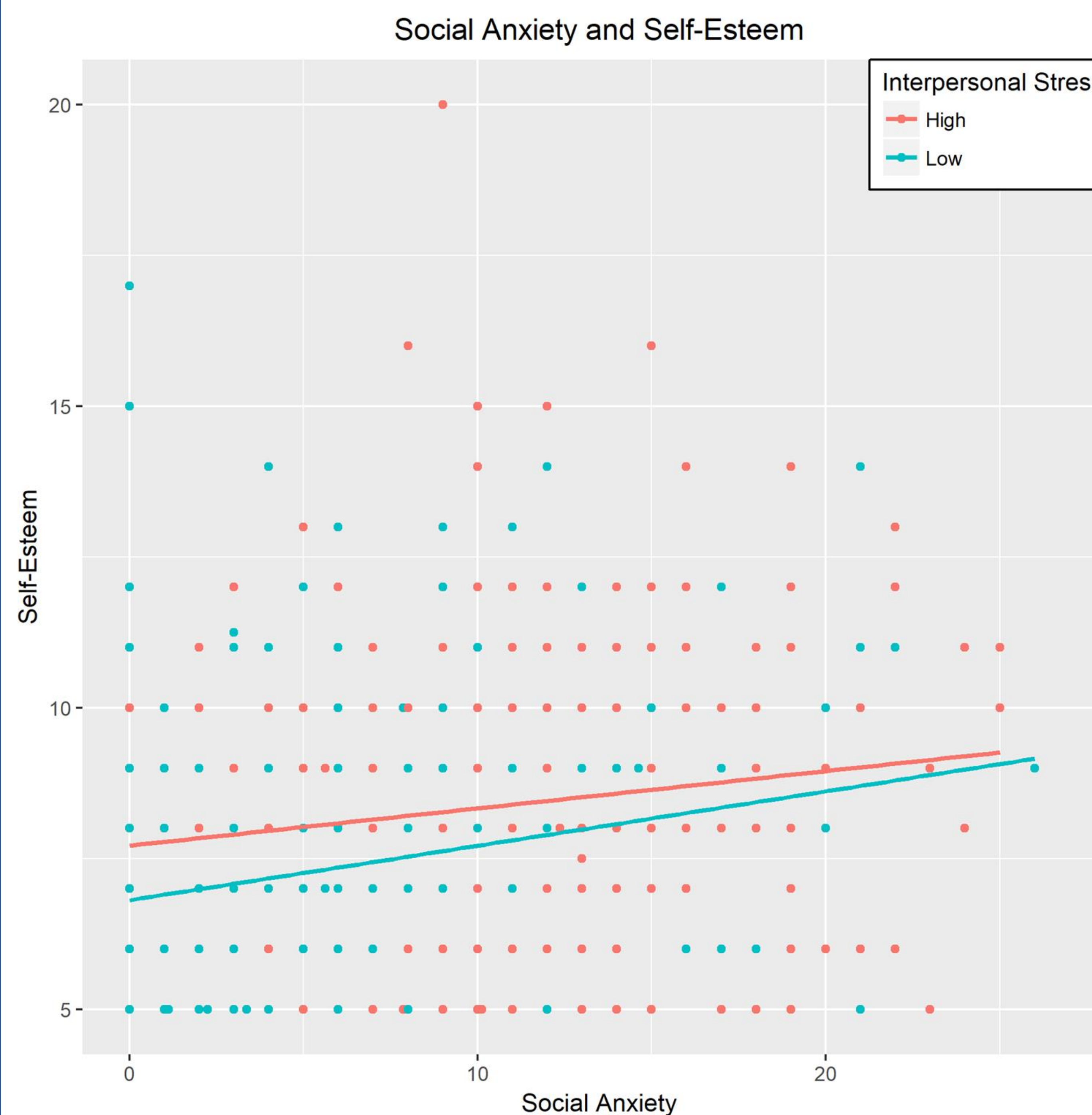
- Multidimensional Anxiety Scale for Children (MASC)⁶
- Self-Esteem Questionnaire (SEQ)⁷
- Adolescent Life Events Questionnaire (ALEQ)⁸

Data Analytic Strategy

- Linear regression models
- Included baseline SE, age, and gender as covariates

Results

- SA at T1 did not have a significant effect on SE at T2 ($\beta=-.157$, $p=.231$)
- IS at T1 significantly predicted SE at T2 ($\beta=.204$, $p=.013$); however, the effect disappeared once age and gender were added ($\beta=.136$, $p=.099$).
- Age ($\beta=-.162$, $p<.001$) and gender ($\beta=-.113$, $p=.005$) significantly predicted SE at T2
- The relationship between SA and SE was not moderated by level of IS ($\beta=-.136$, $p=.288$)



Conclusion

Discussion

- Similar to past research⁹, we found increasing trajectories of SE
- Main effects of IS and SA on SE were not significant
- Age and gender were strong predictors of later levels of self-esteem⁹
- Relationship between SA and SE was not moderated by IS

Future Directions

- Examine IS, SA, and SE across multiple developmental stages with more frequent assessments
- Examine gender differences in developmental trajectories of SE¹⁰

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