The Effects of Social Exclusion and Personality on Social Connectedness

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Background and Introduction

➢ Social exclusion can act as a barrier to social connectedness and its benefits. The rejection of an individual can lead to a lack of connection to social aspects (Pickett & Gardner, 2005).

➢ Past research has shown that social exclusion has led to less participation in prosocial behavior (Twenge, Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocoo, & Bartels, 2007).
  ➢ Participants who were excluded were less likely to help others in the case of a mishap, donated less money to a student fund, and cooperated less in games with other participants.

➢ In addition, past research has suggested a moderating effect of personality on the impact of social exclusion.
  ➢ One study found participants who were extraverted were reminded of this personality trait showed more inclination for self-regulation compared to those who were excluded and introverted (Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Twenge, 2005).

➢ Current study hypotheses:
  ➢ We hypothesized that those who were socially excluded would score lower on the social connectedness scale.
  ➢ We also hypothesized that those who were more extraverted would have higher social connectedness.
  ➢ Finally we hypothesized an interaction effect between these variables. We expected that those who were more extraverted would not be as effected by the exclusion variable.

Methods

➢ **Participants**
  ➢ 124 undergraduates from Winona State University
    ➢ 83.1% female, 16.9% male
    ➢ 89.5% white, 4.8% Asian, 3.2% mixed, 1.6% Black/ African American, and 0.8% other.
    ➢ 37.1% freshman, 25.8% sophomore, 24.2% junior, and 12.9% senior.

➢ **Materials**
  ➢ Two different writing tasks were used to prime the participants. The writing task that was used to prime for social exclusion asked participants to write about a time they had felt excluded. The control writing task asked participants to write about a time they performed poorly on a task, this was to ensure that mood was not effecting the results.
  ➢ Survey packets included the following scales (all self-report):
    ➢ 20 words were rated on a 5-point likert scale (1 = very slightly and 5 = extremely) for the PANAS mood scale (Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988). Participants were asked to rate the word on how they were feeling in that current moment. Some of the words included, interested, guilty, enthusiastic, and irritable.

Methods, continued

➢ **Materials, continued**
  ➢ The Big Five Inventory (Soto & John, 2017) was used to measure extraversion. Extraversion questions accounted for twelve out of the 60 total questions Big Five scale. Participants were asked to rate the statements on a 5-point likert scale (1 = disagree strongly and 5 = agree strongly). Some extraversion statements included, "Is outgoing, sociable" and "Has an assertive personality."
  ➢ The social connectedness scale (Lee & Robbins, 1995) consisted of eight statements rated on a 6-point likert scale (1 = strongly agree and 6 = strongly disagree). An example statement was, "I feel disconnected from the world around me."

➢ **Procedure**
  ➢ Participants were randomly assigned to a priming group and wrote for five minutes about either a time they felt excluded or a time they performed poorly on a task. Participants were asked to write continually for the five minutes.
  ➢ Once the five minutes was up the participants were then asked to fill out the survey packet which included the 3 scales.

Results

➢ Mood differences were examined to make sure the manipulation did not change mood. However, differences in mood were found for negative mood.
  ➢ Positive mood, $t(122) = 0.30$, $p > .05$
    ➢ Control: $M = 25.92$ ($SD = 6.76$)
    ➢ Excluded: $M = 25.51$ ($SD = 8.34$)
  ➢ Negative mood, $t(122) = 2.20$, $p < .05$
    ➢ Control: $M = 19.44$ ($SD = 6.82$)
    ➢ Excluded: $M = 16.97$ ($SD = 5.70$)

➢ Mean differences were examined for the exclusion vs. control groups (see Figure 1)
  ➢ The ME of exclusion was not significant, $F(1, 124) = 0.00$, $p > .05$
    ➢ Control: $M = 37.23$ ($SD = 10.18$)
    ➢ Excluded: $M = 38.11$ ($SD = 8.91$)
  ➢ The ME of extraversion was significant, $F(2, 124) = 10.08$, $p < .01$, with the below average extraversion group being significantly lower in connectedness than the high and average groups
    ➢ Below average extraversion: $M = 33.00$ ($SD = 10.28$)
    ➢ Average extraversion: $M = 39.53$ ($SD = 9.17$)
    ➢ Above average extraversion: $M = 41.21$ ($SD = 6.64$)
  ➢ The interaction effect was not significant, $F(2, 124) = .04$, $p > .05$

Figure 1. Mean Differences in Social Connectedness of the Control vs. Excluded Groups by Extraversion Level.
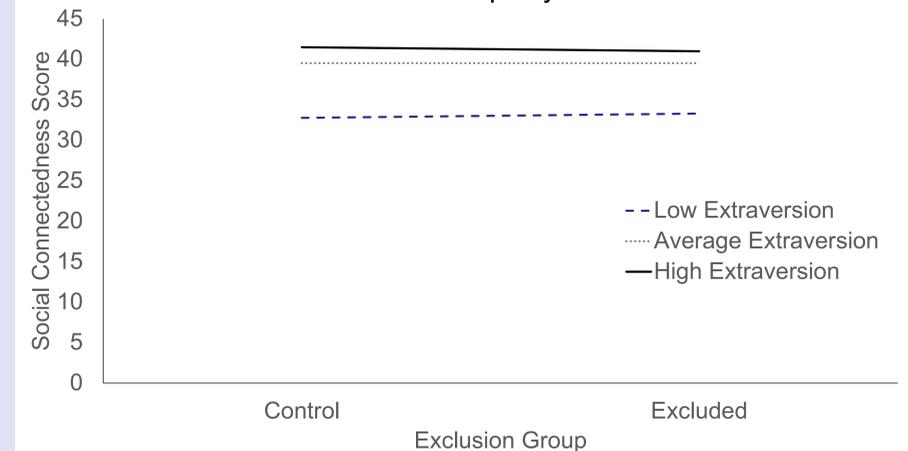
Discussion

➢ Our hypotheses were partly supported.

➢ We found no differences in social connectedness scores between the control group and the exclusion group, and no significant interaction.
  ➢ Thus, our results did not support past research. However, we manipulated social exclusion differently than did Twenge et. al (2005).
  ➢ The manipulation of social exclusion is typically done by a game called "CyberBall." This manipulation may be a better approach to social exclusion. In "CyberBall" participants are more actively excluded compared to recalling a time when they were once excluded.

➢ We did find that those who were more extraverted scored higher on the social connectedness scale. This is to be expected as extraverts tend to have larger social groups surrounding them.

➢ Future research in this subject should use a stronger manipulation.

Reference section

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