

Abstract

Relationships and social bonds are replaceable to satiate the fundamental belonging needs. In face of rejection, which thwarts the need to belong, it is hypothesised that a situation with the possibility of alternative relationship may make the rejection experience less negative and threatening, and the initial motivated responses to rejection are diminished. The reactions interested in this study are negative affect, negative evaluation of the rejector, prosocial tendency, antisocial tendency and avoidance tendency. Two studies were proposed to test the hypotheses. Study 1 was a scenario study; Study 2 was a laboratory experimental study. In the presence of alternative relationship, less negative evaluation and avoidance tendency are consistently observed across the studies, which is in line with the hypothesis. However, no significant difference is observed in the prosocial and antisocial responses. The findings are mixed for negative affect.

Keywords: Rejection, Social exclusion, Prosocial, Antisocial, Avoidance, Need to belong, Belonging substitution