

Shyness Mindset Moderates the Relation Between Social Anxiety and Distress During a Social Exclusion Task

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Introduction

- Shyness mindset (SMS) is the belief that shyness is a fixed trait and cannot change.
- SMS predicts greater anxiety during social interaction tasks in older adolescents (Beer, 2002).
- Reducing SMS in college students is associated with less distress in response to a peer victimization vignette (Hawkinson et al., 2014).
- High levels of social anxiety in children have been linked to parents' intelligence mindset (Schleider et al., 2016), suggesting that social anxiety is impacted by parents' beliefs about the malleability of behavior.
- It is of interest to examine whether SMS might function as a moderator of relationships between social anxiety and distress during a social exclusion task among younger adolescents.

Research Questions

- 1) Does adolescents' shyness mindset moderate the relationship between adolescents' social anxiety and adolescents' social exclusion distress (SED-AR)?
- 2) Does maternal shyness mindset moderate the relationship between adolescents' social anxiety and mothers' reports of adolescents' social exclusion distress (SED-MR)?
- 3) Does maternal shyness mindset moderate the relationship between mothers' reports of adolescents' social exclusion distress and adolescents' social exclusion distress?

Method

Sample

64 mother-adolescent dyads ($M_{age} = 12.38$, $SD = 0.98$; age 11-14 years)

Gender: 64.1% girls, 35.9% boys

Ethnicity: African-American (31.3%); Asian American (3.1%); Latino (12.5%); White (53.1%)

Income: 9.4% < \$20,000, 31.3% \$20,000 - \$50,000, 40.6% \$50,001 - \$100,000, 18.8% > \$100,000

Family Structure: Both parents (59.4%); Single parent (25.0%); Stepfamilies (14.1%); Other (1.5%)

Measures

Shyness Mindset Scale – Adolescent Report (Valentiner et al., 2015)

- 5-item scale assesses mindset (high score = fixed mindset); $\alpha = .87$

Shyness Mindset Scale – Mother Report (Valentiner et al., 2015)

- 5-item scale assesses mindset (high score = fixed mindset); $\alpha = .93$

Social Interaction Anxiety Scale–Short Form (Fergus et al., 2012)

- 6-item scale assesses adolescent trait social anxiety; $\alpha = .83$.

Social Exclusion Distress-Adolescent Report (SED-AR) (Mounts, 2018)

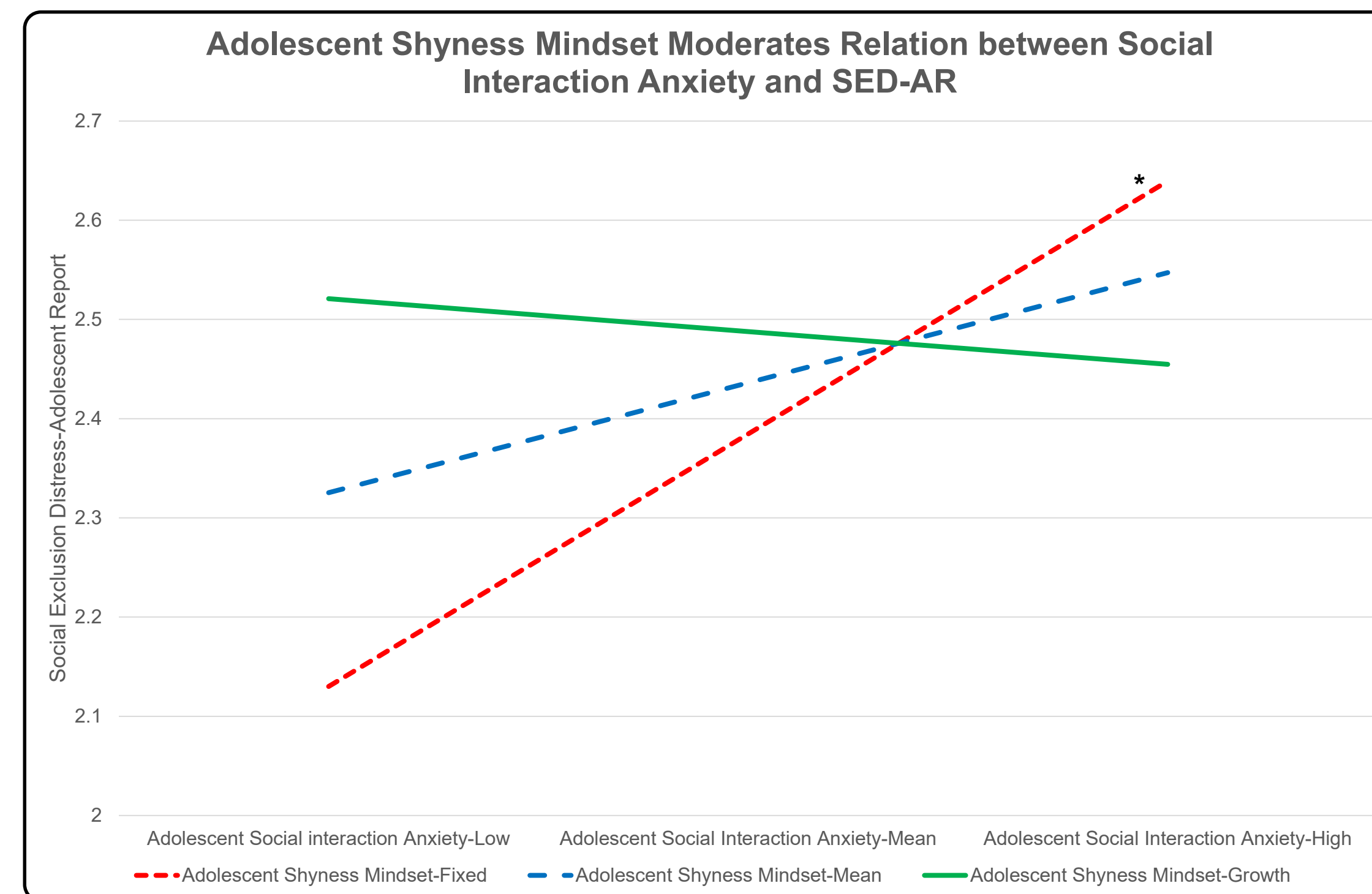
- Using Cyberball (Williams & Jarvis, 2006), adolescents experienced social exclusion while playing a game of catch with two virtual peers, as mothers observed.
- 10-item scale assessed adolescents' level of distress in response to social exclusion (after the game); $\alpha = .85$

Social Exclusion Distress-Mother Report (SED-MR) (Mounts, 2018)

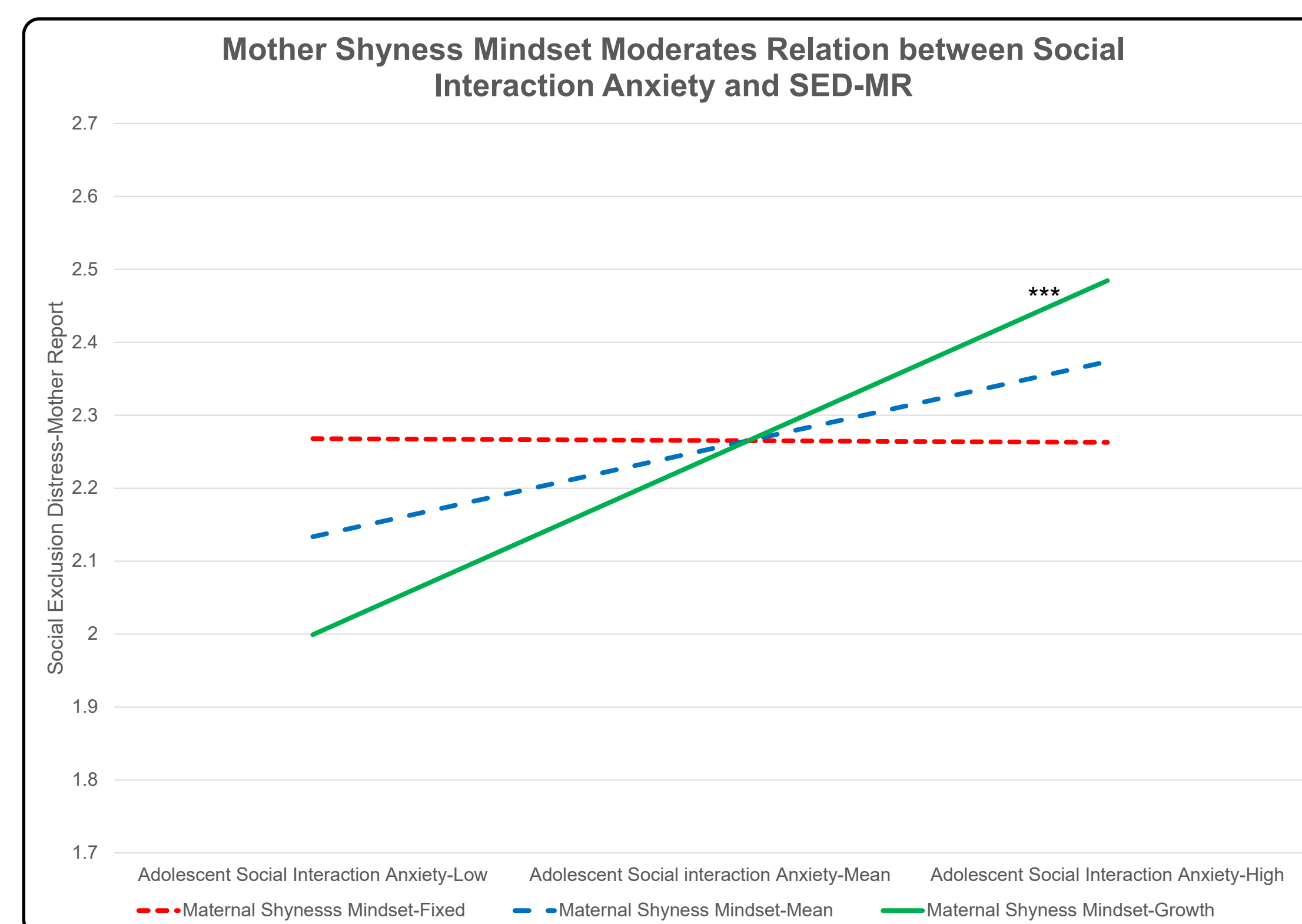
- 10-item scale assessed maternal report of adolescents' level of distress in response to social exclusion; $\alpha = .85$

Results

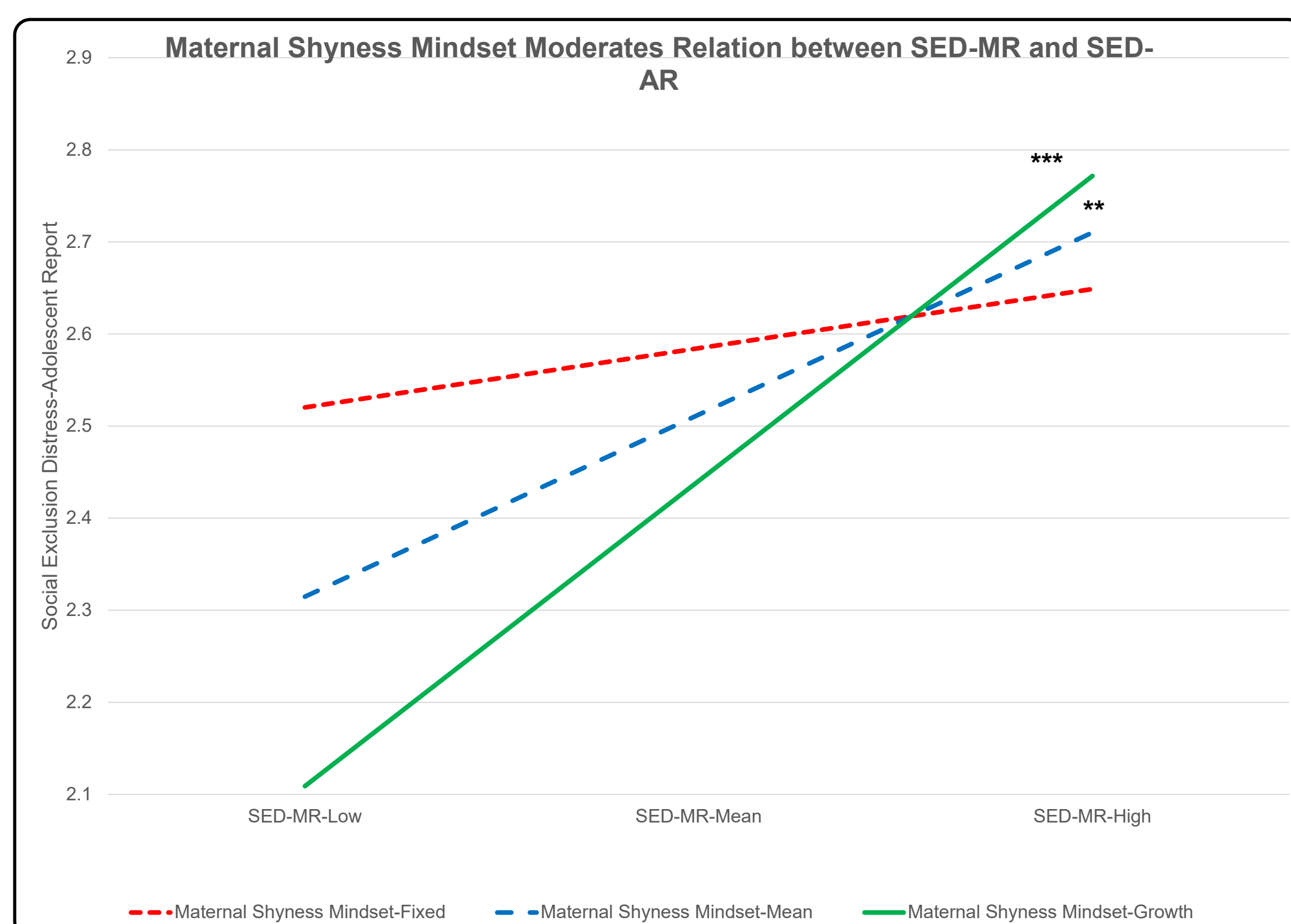
Research Question #1



Research Question #2



Research Question #3



Results

Moderation analyses using PROCESS Model 1 (Hayes, 2018) were used

Research Question #1

- Adolescents' shyness mindset significantly moderated the relationship between social interaction anxiety and SED-AR.
- Consistent with prior findings (Beer, 2002; Hawkinson et al., 2014), the highest levels of SED-AR were observed with adolescents' high social interaction anxiety in combination with a fixed mindset.

Research Question #2

- Mother's shyness mindset moderated the relation between adolescents' social interaction anxiety and SED-MR.
- The relation between adolescents' social interaction anxiety and SED-MR was observed only for mothers with a growth mindset.
- Higher levels of social interaction anxiety in combination with a maternal growth mindset were related to higher SED-MR.
- There was no relation found for mothers with a fixed mindset.

Research Question #3

- Mothers' shyness mindset moderated the relationship between SED-MR and SED-AR
- The relation between SED-MR and SED-AR was observed for mothers with a growth mindset.
- Higher levels of SED-MR in combination with a maternal growth mindset were related to higher levels of SED-AR.

Conclusion

- Results suggest that adolescents with higher levels of social anxiety and a fixed mindset are at risk for experiencing distress in situations of social exclusion.
- This and prior findings are consistent with a central tenet of shyness mindset theory; social challenges are viewed as more threatening for those that believe their social anxiety (shyness) is a fixed trait.
- Results suggest that when mothers have a growth mindset, they seem to be more "in-tune" with the SED of their adolescents.
- Results also suggest that mothers' ratings of adolescents' distress are most accurate when they hold a growth mindset.
- This finding is consistent with an idea from shyness mindset theory; mothers with high shyness mindset feel more threatened when their children are challenged socially, leading them away from accurately attending to their children's affective state.

References

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