Shyness in Early Adolescence in Vietnam

by

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Abstract

Guided by Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1989) Ecological Systems Model and Rose-Krasnor's (1997) Social Competence Prism Model, this thesis examined the implications of self-reported shyness for early adolescent children in Vietnam. Specifically, the study examined the interactions among multiple ecological factors including self-reported shyness and social self-perceptions (individual-level); perceived peer rejection and perceived parenting behaviors (micro-environment level); as well as gender norms and social contexts (macro-environment level). To accomplish these goals, data from self-report questionnaires of 415 middle-school children from urban and rural areas in Vietnam were analyzed with moderated regression analysis. Results showed that higher levels of self-reported shyness predicted higher levels of peer rejection, higher levels of harsh-punitive parenting, and more negative social self-perceptions for both boys and girls in both urban and rural contexts. Implications of shyness in contemporary Vietnamese society and suggestions for intervention and future research were presented.

Key words: shyness, parenting, peer rejection, social self-perceptions, early adolescence

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Linh Nguyen. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name “SHYNESS IN VIETNAMESE CHILDREN”, No. Pro00038206, 04/10/2013.

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Starting at eight months of age, infants may act shy toward strangers by exhibiting anxious, reserved, or withdrawn behaviors, and about 15 percent of toddlers show a distinct pattern of responding with high level of shyness to novel situations or to unfamiliar people (Asendorpf, 2009). Shyness can also be observed in familiar settings where perceived social evaluations may cause feelings of discomfort, wariness, or anxiety, as well as reserved, inhibited, or withdrawn behaviors (Asendorpf, 1990, 2009). Shyness in social situations represents an approach-avoidance motivational conflict in which the desire to interact with others is simultaneously inhibited by social wariness (Asendorpf, 1990). Therefore, it has been observed that children with high levels of shyness tend not to initiate social interactions but watch other children playing and wait to be asked to join (Coplan, Prakash, O'Neil, & Armer, 2004).

Shyness has been consistently associated with peer difficulties (peer rejection, exclusion, victimization), maladaptive parenting behaviors (overprotective, harsh-punitive), and internalizing problems (anxiety, depression, negative self-perceptions, loneliness) in Western countries, like Canada, the United States, and Germany (e.g., Asendorpf & van Aken, 1994; Coplan, Arbeau, & Armer, 2008; Hughes & Coplan, 2010; Karevold, Ystrom, Coplan, Sanson, & Mathiesen, 2012; Van Zalk & Kerr, 2011). In contrast, shyness seems more prevalent and has been linked to maternal warmth and support, positive teacher ratings of school social competence, peer acceptance, as well as nominations for leadership positions in Eastern countries, such as China and India (e.g., Bowker & Raja, 2011; Chen et al., 1998; Chen, Rubin, Li, & Li, 1999). It is possible that

shyness is considered "deviant" and maladaptive in individualistic cultures which emphasize "social initiative and assertiveness," while shyness is regarded less negatively in collectivist cultures where these characteristics are less highly valued (Chen & French, 2008, p. 594-595).

Recently, however, some researchers have postulated that due to increasing Western influence and subsequent dramatic social and cultural changes, inhibited, withdrawn behaviors are increasingly associated with negative reactions from peers, teachers, and parents in contemporary Eastern societies like Mainland China, Taiwan, and South Korea (Cheah & Park, 2006; Chen, Cen, Li, & He, 2005; Chen, Wang, & Wang, 2009; Liu, Chen, Li, & French, 2012; Wei & Chen, 2009). For example, unlike the past, shy children in urban China now experience peer rejection and loneliness (Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2012). In addition, mothers of preschoolers in South Korea reported negative emotions (e.g., angry, disappointed, embarrassed) in response to hypothetical vignettes depicting the child acting withdrawn among peers (Cheah & Park, 2006). Also, teacher ratings of withdrawal/timidity were significantly associated with peer reports of rejection and victimization among Taiwanese middle-school children, and peer rejection mediated the link between withdrawal/timidity and peer victimization (Wei & Chen, 2009). However, a recent study conducted in Surat, one of the biggest metropolitan areas in India, found that shyness was not significantly related to peer rejection (Bowker & Raja, 2011). Such discrepancies in research findings about the implications of shyness across social-cultural contexts necessitate further investigation of the phenomenon.

The majority of research on shyness in Eastern contexts has been conducted in

China while only one study was conducted in another Asian context – India (Bowker & Raja, 2011). Therefore, it is important to further investigate this phenomenon in other cultural settings in Asia. Vietnam, a small country in Southeast Asia, is an interesting context to study the implications of shyness. Vietnam was divided during the Vietnam War and then reunited in 1975. During the war, the South of Vietnam was supported by the American government and was strongly influenced by Western economic and cultural values. In contrast, the Northern part of Vietnam, which was under control of the Communist forces, upheld traditional values that were rooted in Confucianism and collectivism (Mestechkina, Nguyen, & Shin, 2014). In 1975, the Vietnam War ended, and the country was reunited under the Communist rule. In the 1980s, together with the process of economic reform, referred to by Vietnamese people as Doi Moi (literally "Reform"), the government also launched the Mo Cua ("Open Door") policy, resulting in an extensive opening to the outside world, especially to the non-communist side, and thus exposing Vietnam to the dynamic forces of economic and cultural globalization. Since then, together with rapid and radical economic and cultural changes, Vietnamese people's values and behaviors have shown significant signs of adaptations (Huong & Fry, 2004; Mestechkina et al., 2014). Following Doi Moi, with the introduction of the market economy and the exposure to Western values, there has been a surge in individualism in modern Vietnam (Huong & Fry, 2004).

Consequently, it is possible that social initiative and assertiveness, as opposed to a reserved manner in social interactions, have become highly valued and considered desirable traits in contemporary Vietnamese society. As there is currently no known research on shyness in Vietnamese children, it is unclear how anxious, inhibited

behaviors are perceived and responded to as well as how shyness may be related to peer relations, social self-perceptions, and parenting behaviors in Vietnam. In addition, as Vietnam is a small country where all policies are implemented under the centralized planning of the one-party government system and the country started in the last three decades to become open to the Western world (Govindasamy, Chang Kyoo, & Er-Win, 2014; Nuttall, Seddon, & Phan, 2012; Painter, 2005), it is unclear whether the extent of Western influences in general and the implications of shyness in particular may be different between rural and urban areas. Therefore, this study compared the implications of shyness in two samples, one from the biggest metropolitan city and the other from a very remote area in northern Vietnam.

Moreover, there is a general lack of research on shyness in early adolescence. The majority of research has focused on earlier developmental phases, particularly infancy, early- and middle- childhood. Studying shyness in early adolescence is critical because the increasing emphasis on peer interactions and peer-group relationships in this developmental stage may put shy adolescents at risk for social and emotional maladjustment (Chen, Rubin, & Li, 1995). In addition, studies conducted in Western contexts have shown that there are transactions between shyness and parenting behaviors (e.g., Coplan et al., 2008; Degnan, Fox, Henderson, Rubin, & Nichols, 2008; Miller, Tserakhava, & Miller, 2011; Mills & Rubin, 1998; Rubin, Hastings, Stewart, Henderson, & Chen, 1997; Rubin, Burgess, & Hastings, 2002; Van Zalk & Kerr, 2011), but it is unclear if and how shyness is associated with overprotective or harsh, punitive parenting in Eastern contexts. Also, the majority of research has involved only the mothers of children; therefore, little is known about how shyness is related to paternal parenting.

Furthermore, while research in Western contexts indicated that socially fearful and withdrawn behaviors are associated with negative self-perceptions in different domains such as physical competence, cognitive competence, and social competence (e.g., Boivin & Hymel, 1997; Hymel, Bowker, & Woody, 1993; Nelson, Rubin, & Fox, 2005), little is known about the link between shy, anxious behaviors and self-perceptions in Eastern societies. An exception is a short-term longitudinal study in urban China that found shyness was related to low global self-worth (general perception of the self) at both the start and the end of the school year (Liu et al., 2014). Therefore, it is important to further examine self-perceptions of children with high levels of shyness in Eastern societies, especially their social self-perceptions (judgments of one's own abilities or skills to be successful in social interactions).

To address the identified gaps in the literature, the present study examined the implications of self-reported shyness for early adolescent children in Vietnam, particularly peer rejection, social self-perceptions, overprotective parenting, and harsh-punitive parenting. In addition, since recent research in China has shown that shyness is associated with adjustment difficulties in the urban but not the rural setting (e.g., Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2012), this study explored whether social contexts (urban versus rural) may influence the link between self-reported shyness and peer rejection, parenting behaviors, and social self-perceptions. Moreover, as it has been suggested that "shyness is less socially acceptable for boys than for girls because it violates gender norms related to male social assertion and dominance" (Doey, Coplan, & Kingsbury, 2014, p. 255), this study examined gender as a potential moderator of the associations between self-reported shyness and peer rejection, parenting behaviors, and

social self-perceptions.

Data from self-report questionnaires of 415 middle-school children in Vietnam were used to answer the following questions:

1) How is self-reported shyness related to peer rejection, overprotective parenting, harsh-punitive parenting, and social self-perceptions in early adolescence in Vietnam?

2) Does social context (urban versus rural) moderate the link between self-reported shyness and peer rejection, overprotective parenting, harsh-punitive parenting, and social self-perceptions?

3) Does gender moderate the link between self-reported shyness and peer rejection, overprotective parenting, harsh-punitive parenting, and social self-perceptions?

Background

Theoretical Frameworks

Ecological Systems Model. According to an Ecological Systems perspective, due to the interaction and interdependence of humans (as biological and social entities) with their environment, individuals need to be examined within the context of their environment (also referred to as ecological systems; Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1989) depicted the ecological systems as an arrangement of nested, interdependent structures, each of which influences and is influenced by the others. The individual is surrounded by layers of interrelated subsystems: the microsystem (the immediate environments), the mesosystem (the connections between the contexts within the microsystem), the exosystem (social systems that indirectly influence the individual through their impacts on those in his or her immediate environments), the macrosystem (the customs, ideologies, values, culture, and

laws of the socio-cultural environment one lives in), and the chronosystem (changes within the individual and in the environments over one's life course; Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1989).

Social-Competence Prism Model. Rose-Krasnor (1997) proposed the Social Competence Prism to provide a theoretical framework of social competence. The prism model includes three general levels of analysis. The top level is called the Theoretical Level, which defines social competence as effectiveness in social interactions, with effectiveness being measured by success in age-appropriate relationship skills and tasks. The Theoretical Level analysis of social competence emphasizes that competence is "transactional" and "context-dependent" (Rose-Krasnor, 1997, p. 120). Particularly, rather than being a set of predetermined abilities inherent within an individual, social competence emerges from interactions between people. In addition, how others respond to one's behaviors determines his or her social effectiveness, and behaviors that are effective in a specific context may not be effective in another situation.

The middle level, the Index Level, which consists of indices that reflect qualities of interaction sequences, is divided into "Self" and "Other" Domains to illustrate the importance of balancing self- and other-oriented priorities in social interactions. Examples of indices in the Self Domain include success in attaining one's own goals and feelings of efficacy in social interactions. Indices in the Other Domain involve the achievement of interpersonal connectedness, which is indicated by healthy relationships with peers and adults. Both the Self and Other domains in the Index Level are divided into social context 'slices' to further demonstrate the "context-dependent" nature of social competence (Rose-Krasnor, 1997, p. 122). Examples of specific indices in the

Other Domain include peer group status (i.e., peer acceptance or rejection), friendship quality, the attachment security with parents, and the quality of social networks. The bottom level of the prism, the Skills Level, is the foundation for the higher levels. Particularly, the Skills Level includes skills and motivations that reside within an individual and enable him or her to achieve intrapersonal and interpersonal goals in the Self and Other Domains at the Index Level, which contributes to a general sense of effectiveness in social interactions at the Theoretical level.

From a developmental perspective, Rose-Krasnor (1997) posited that age-related changes are apparent in the relative importance of relationship indices in the Index level as well as in the relative importance of specific skills and motivations underlying competence. For example, a normative developmental task during adolescence is to gradually gain greater autonomy and become less dependent on parents (Van Zalk & Kerr, 2011). In addition, during early adolescence, the importance of peer relations increases, and, thus, the ability to effectively initiate and maintain peer interactions also becomes increasingly important (Bukowski, Buhrmester, & Underwood, 2011).

Application of the theoretical frameworks. Guided by the Social Competence Prism model (Rose-Krasnor, 1997), the study examined social self- perceptions and peer relations (i.e., peer rejection) in early adolescents who have high levels of self-reported shyness (see Figure 1). Self-reported shyness was posited at the Skills Level of the Social Competence Prism, which was postulated to consist of motivations and abilities that determine one's effectiveness in social interactions. It has been suggested that shyness represents an approach-avoidance motivational conflict because shy children desire social interactions but their approach motivation is simultaneously inhibited by an avoidance

motivation that is provoked by anxiety in the context of unfamiliar social situations or perceived social evaluations (Asendorpf, 2009).

The Index Level consisted of the Self and Others Domains (Rose-Krasnor, 1997). Indices in the Others Domain of the Social Competence Prism involved healthy relationships with peers and adults, and the Others Domain in this study focused on peer relations (i.e., peer rejection). The Self Domain involved social self- perceptions (judgments of one's abilities or skills to be successful in social interactions) (Rose-Krasnor, 1997). The present study focused on children's self-evaluations of their abilities or skills to initiate and maintain positive relationships with peers. According to Rose-Krasnor (1997), at the Theoretical Level, social competence is conceptualized as effectiveness in interactions, with effectiveness being measured by the accomplishment of age-appropriate developmental needs. In this study, age-appropriate developmental needs for early adolescents involved the establishment and maintenance of positive peer relations (Bukowski et al., 2011; Van Zalk & Kerr, 2011).

Moreover, taking an Ecological Systems approach, this study examined the relationships between individual characteristics (i.e., shyness, social self- perceptions), micro-environment factors (i.e., peer rejection, parenting behaviors), and macro-environment factors (i.e., gender norms, social contexts; see Figure 2). It was hypothesized that these factors were interrelated and interdependent. Particularly, self-reported shyness was hypothesized to be related to social self-perceptions, peer rejection, and parenting behaviors and social contexts and gender norms might moderate these associations. Although this study did not directly measure the influence of cultural values regarding shyness on social self- perceptions, peer rejection, and parenting behaviors in

different social contexts, the present work compared two groups of children, one in a modern urban context and the other in a remote rural area. The rationale was to replicate recent research findings in Mainland China that indicate historical and societal changes may have transformed traditional cultural values and thus altered the adaptive function of shyness in modern Chinese society, especially in metropolitan areas where the influence of Western values is prevailing (e.g., Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2012). In the last two decades, like China, Vietnam has been undergoing major economic, social, and cultural changes, and it is possible that shyness is now associated with peer rejection, negative social self- perceptions, and maladaptive parenting, for Vietnamese children, especially those living in metropolitan settings. In addition, while the study did not directly assess gender norms about male assertiveness and how such gender stereotypes may influence children with high levels of shyness, this study examined whether gender influences how shyness is perceived and responded to by parents and peers as well as how children with high levels of shyness perceive their social competence.

Review of Literature

The literature review will start with a review of background literature on the conceptualization of shyness. The second section will present information about the prevalence and implications of shyness in Western and Eastern contexts. Particularly, research on how parents and peers react to children with high levels of shyness in Western and Eastern contexts will be reviewed. In addition, the section will present some research findings about social self-perceptions of children with high levels of shyness. The third section will review gender differences in the implications of shyness.

Conceptualization of shyness. The word "shy" is often used to describe: 1) a subjective experience of uneasiness and discomfort provoked by unfamiliarity or social evaluative concerns ("I feel shy"); 2) observable inhibited, reserved behaviors in unfamiliar situations or in situations involving public attention and/or social evaluations; and 3) a temperamental personality trait that involves a tendency to experience and express shyness frequently and intensely across times and contexts ("He is a shy person;"Asendorpf, 2009, p. 390). From a motivational perspective, shyness represents an approach-avoidance conflict in which one's motivation to approach objects, people, or situations is simultaneously inhibited by an avoidance motivation that is caused by wariness and anxiety (Asendorpf, 2009). The following section provides some background on two types of shyness: shyness toward unfamiliarity and shyness toward perceived social evaluations. Both types of shyness have a biological foundation in "temperament" which refers to "individual differences in emotional, motor, and attentional reactivity measured by latency, intensity, and recovery of response, and self-regulation processes such as effortful control that modulate reactivity" (Rothbart, 2007, p. 207).

Shyness toward unfamiliarity. Inter-individual differences in shyness has been attributed to extreme sensitivity of the Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS), a neurologically-based motivational system that regulates negative affect and avoidance behaviors in response to novelty, uncertainty, conflict, as well as cues for nonreward or punishment (Gray, 1982). Particularly, shyness toward strangers, which emerges in infancy, derives from "behavioral inhibition toward the unfamiliar" (Kagan, Reznick, Clarke, Snidman, & Garcia-Coll, 1984), defined as "a biologically-based temperamental

style in which young children consistently respond to unfamiliar situations, objects, and people with negative emotion and withdrawal" (Lewis-Morraty et al., 2012, p. 1). It is estimated that 15 percent of children display this dispositional characteristic (Kagan, Reznick, & Snidman, 1988). Behavioral inhibition has both a behavioral and a physiological component (Kagan et al., 1988). In response to unfamiliar people, objects, or settings, children with high levels of shyness not only display inhibited behaviors but also exhibit elevated cortisol levels (a stress hormone), a greater activation in the right frontal region of the brain (which "promotes withdrawal-directed responses to perceived aversive stimuli"), as well as low heart period (high heart rate and low-frequency heart rate variability; Fox, Henderson, Marshall, Nichols, & Ghera, 2005, p. 239-240).

These distinct patterns of behavioral and physiological responses to novelty have been reported in various studies in Western contexts (Calkins, Fox, & Marshall, 1996, Fox, Henderson, Rubin, Calkins, & Schmidt, 2001; Henderson, Marshall, Fox, & Rubin, 2004; Kertes et al., 2009; Rubin et al., 1997). Evidence for a biological foundation of shyness has also been reported in Eastern contexts. For example, in a study conducted at an elementary school in China, lower heart period was related to mothers' higher ratings of children's shyness toward unfamiliar adults or peers and observations of inhibited behaviors ("facial and bodily tension, discomfort, avoidance of eye contact, speech block, stammer") in a Stranger Encounter situation at the laboratory (Xu, Yu, Farver, & Zhang, 2009, p. 1065).

Shyness toward social evaluations. Extreme sensitivity of the Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS) has been suggested to contribute to not only a distinct pattern of responding with a high level of shyness to unfamiliar situations or people, but also the

tendency to react shy in the context of social evaluative concerns (Asendorpf, 2009). Social evaluations can be perceived as threatening stimulus that activate the Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS) and increase physiological arousal (Asendorpf, 2009). Indeed, in both Western and Eastern contexts, when students were asked about what situational conditions make them shy, the most frequently reported shyness-eliciting conditions are: 1) unfamiliarity, 2) being the center of others' attention, and 3) self-presentation anxiety (fears of receiving negative or unsatisfactory evaluations from others; Russell et al., 1986; Xu & Farver, 2009; Zimbardo, 1977).

Empirical research provided evidence that social evaluative concerns have underlying physiological reactions regulated by the Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS). In an experimental study conducted in the U.S., changes in various physiological measures were tracked over a task in which children were required to prepare a speech about their most embarrassing moment, which would be recorded and later shown to a group of age-mates (Schmidt, Fox, Schulkin, & Gold, 1999). Although in the end the children were told that they no longer needed to give the speech, during the anticipation period, those who were rated as shy by their mothers not only displayed more anxious behaviors, but also showed significantly greater increases in heart rate and activation of the right frontal region of the brain than their non-shy counterparts (Schmidt et al., 1999). These findings suggest that simply anticipating social evaluations is enough to elevate physiological arousal among shy children (Schmidt et al., 1999).

In a study conducted in China, children's inhibited behaviors and physiological reactivity were assessed at baseline, during encounters with an adult stranger, and during a card-sorting task aimed to elicit social evaluative concerns (Xu et al., 2009). Although

there is no single right or wrong way to sort the cards, children were told their performance would be compared with that of their classmates and at the 1-minute mark were also given some evaluative cues from a research assistant including an eyebrow frown, shaking the head, and a verbal comment (Xu et al., 2009). Results showed that both shyness to strangers and shyness to perceived social evaluations would have similar physiological reactions indicated by low heart period (high heart rate and low-frequency heart rate variability; Xu et al., 2009). In addition, maternal ratings of the child's shyness toward strangers are related to classmates' ratings of anxious shyness in familiar peer contexts, suggesting that some children are shy in both unfamiliar and familiar social situations (Xu et al., 2009). However, maternal ratings of shyness toward strangers was related to inhibited behaviors and low heart period during the stranger encounter, while classmates' ratings of anxious shyness in familiar peer contexts was related to inhibited behaviors and low heart period during the card-sorting session that involves social evaluative cues (Xu et al., 2009). These findings indicate that shyness toward strangers may reflect the Behavioral Inhibition System's (BIS) response to novel stimuli whereas anxious shyness in familiar social situations may reflect BIS' reaction to nonreward cues such as social evaluative concerns (Xu et al., 2009).

In summary, research in both Western and Eastern contexts have shown that shyness is a universal phenomenon which is characterized by some common underlying physiological reactions including elevated levels of stress hormone, greater activation in the right frontal brain region, and low heart period (e.g., Fox et al., 2005). These physiological reactions are regulated by the Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS), a neurologically-based motivational system that is sensitive to unfamiliarity, uncertainty,

conflict, punishment, and nonreward (Asendorpf, 2009). Shyness toward strangers reflects the BIS response to novel stimuli whereas shyness in familiar social situations reflects the BIS response to nonreward cues such as social evaluative concerns (Asendorpf, 2009). In social situations, shyness represents an approach-avoidance motivational conflict in which one's desire to approach social interactions is simultaneously inhibited by a motivation to withdraw that is triggered by social wariness or anxiety (Asendorpf, 1990).

This study adopted such conceptualization of shyness and aimed to study how shyness as an approach-avoidance motivational conflict may influence children's peer relations, their beliefs about their ability to have positive relationships with peers, as well as their perceptions of parenting behaviors.

Prevalence and implications of shyness in Western and Eastern contexts. While shyness derives from dispositional characteristics commonly found in Western and Eastern contexts, how shyness is expressed, evaluated, and reacted to may vary across cultures (Xu et al., 2009). The following section elaborates these points by reviewing cross-cultural research on the prevalence of shyness, how children with high levels of shyness are perceived and treated by other social agents (i.e., peers and parents), as well as social self-perceptions of shy children.

Prevalence of shyness in Western and Eastern cultures. Children with an Eastern cultural background, in comparison to their Western counterparts, tend to have higher levels of shyness and engage in less social play (Chen et al., 1998; Chen & Tse, 2008; Farver, Kim, & Lee, 1995; Rubin et al., 2006). For example, Chen et al. (1998) examined behavioral inhibition among Chinese and Canadian toddlers with the

Behavioral Inhibition Paradigm and found that Chinese toddlers were significantly more inhibited than Canadian toddlers. Similarly, using the Revised Class Play, a peer assessment of social functioning that includes a measure of "shyness-sensitivity" (example items are "very shy" and "feelings get hurt easily"), it was found that Chinese-Canadian elementary school girls were more shy-sensitive than their European-Canadian counterparts (Chen & Tse, 2008, p. 1185). These findings are consistent with what has been reported in a large cross-cultural study that found Chinese children were more inhibited than their Italian, Canadian, and Australian counterparts (Rubin et al., 2006). In another study, observations of preschool children in their naturalistic play setting showed that Korean-American children were more "unoccupied" (not engaging in any activity) and engaged in more "parallel play" (engaging in the same or similar activities with peers but not making eye contact or social interactions) than Anglo-American children (Farver et al., 1995, p. 1092, 1095). Also, teacher report indicated that Korean-American children were more likely to be rated as "hesitant" ("characteristically shy," "withdraws from peer activity," "watches rather than participates") while Anglo-American children were more likely to be rated as "sociable" ("initiates activities with peers," "is liked by peers;" Farver et al., 1995, p. 1096).

Shyness and peer relations. Cross-cultural research has shown that not only does shyness seem more prevalent but is also less negatively evaluated and reacted to by peers in Eastern cultures compared to Western cultures (e.g., Chen, DeSouza, Chen, & Wang, 2006; Chen & Tse, 2008; Farver et al., 1995). The differences in how shyness is evaluated and responded to in Eastern and Western cultures have been attributed to the relative importance of social initiative and social assertiveness in individualistic societies

in the West and in collectivist societies in the East (Chen & French, 2008, Chen, Rubin, & Sun, 1992; Chen et al., 1998; Chen et al., 1999). While a lack of initiative, assertiveness, and self-expression in social interactions might be considered a sign of social immaturity in individualistic cultures, it may not be regarded as negatively in collectivist cultures that value group cohesiveness and harmony and emphasize self-restraint of personal expression (Chen & French, 2008, Chen et al., 1992; Chen et al., 1998; Chen et al., 1999). Accordingly, children in individualistic societies may be discouraged to exhibit shy, inhibited behaviors, which makes shyness less prevalent and more likely to be considered deviant by both age-mates and adults and making children with high levels of shyness more vulnerable for negative responses in Western than Eastern contexts (Chen & French, 2008, Chen et al., 1992; Chen et al., 1998; Chen et al., 1999).

For example, in an observational study that examined 4-year-olds in a laboratory play session with unfamiliar age-mates, reticent behaviors were positively related to peers' negative responses (refusal and disagreement) and negatively related to peers' positive responses (approval and cooperation) among the Canadian sample, while reticent behaviors were positively related to peers' positive responses among the Chinese sample (Chen et al., 2006). Similarly, shyness-sensitivity (assessed by items like "very shy" and "feelings get hurt easily") was significantly associated with peer rejection and peer victimization for European-Canadian children while the association between shyness-sensitivity and peer difficulties was non-significant for Chinese-Canadian children (Chen & Tse, 2008). Other studies using similar measures have also reported that shyness-sensitivity was not related to negative adjustment outcomes among Chinese children

(Chen et al., 1992; Chen et al., 1999). Indeed, shy-sensitive children were accepted and not isolated/rejected by peers, were rated by teachers as having school social competence, and tended to be elected by teachers and peers into leadership positions (Chen et al., 1992; Chen et al., 1999).

Recently, however, there are reports of mixed findings about the implications of shyness in modern Eastern societies (Mainland China, Taiwan, South Korea) which suggest that shyness and inhibition in Eastern contexts might be evaluated less favorably now than in the past (Hart et al., 2000; Cheah & Park, 2006; Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009; Chen, Wang, & Cao, 2011; Liu et al, 2012; Wei & Chen, 2009). Indeed, by employing similar procedures (peer nominations of social functioning and peer-group status, teacher ratings of school social competence, and school record of leadership positions), researchers were able to track the changes in adjustment outcomes of children with high levels of shyness across different historical times in China (Chen et al., 1992; Chen et al., 1999; Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009; Chen et al, 2011; Liu et al, 2012). Particularly, in Chinese urban areas, shyness-sensitivity was associated with positive social and school adjustment in the 1990 and 1994 cohorts, but the associations became weaker or non-significant in the 1998 cohort, and shyness-sensitivity was related to negative adjustment (including peer rejection and teacher ratings of low school social competence) in the 2002-2005 cohorts (Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009, Liu et al, 2012).

It has been suggested that increasing exposure to Western values and extensive economic reforms toward market economy have led to major social and cultural changes in China (Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009, Chen et al; 2011; Liu et al, 2012). Due to

the increased value of initiative and assertiveness in the competitive market-oriented modern society, shy, inhibited behaviors, once considered adaptive in traditional Chinese culture, have become increasingly incompatible with current social and cultural trends, which puts children with high levels of shyness at a disadvantage in terms of social and school success in contemporary China (Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009, Chen et al; 2011; Liu et al, 2012). Historical influences on the function of shyness-inhibition in Chinese society are further evidenced by the findings that shyness-sensitivity is still associated with positive social and school functioning in rural areas in which the influences of Western values and market-oriented economic reforms are less pervasive and traditional values of group harmony and self-restraint of personal expression are still reserved to a great extent (Chen et al., 2011).

Shyness and parenting behaviors. Parental responses to a child's maladaptive behaviors are guided by: (1) how they feel about the behaviors (e.g., angry, concerned, displeased, puzzled), (2) what they think underlies the behaviors (internal or external factors), (3) what they believe they should do about the behaviors, and (4) what goals they want to achieve from undertaking such actions, and culture has a significant influence on this "socialization belief system" (Cheah & Rubin, 2004, p. 84; Cheah & Park, 2006, p. 63).

In the West, shyness has consistently been considered deviant and maladaptive; therefore, shyness often provokes negative affective responses in Western parents, which, in turn, determines their behavioral responses (Hastings & Rubin, 1999; Rubin, Nelson, Hastings, & Asendorpf, 1999). Particularly, behavioral inhibition was found to be related to "concern and protection" as well as "punishment orientation" child-rearing attitudes in

Canada (Chen et al., 1998). In fact, various studies (e.g., Kiel & Buss, 2011; Hastings & Rubin, 1999; Mills & Rubin, 1998; Rubin et al., 1997; Rubin et al., 1999) have found concurrent and prospective links between child's shyness and parents' overprotective behaviors, generally defined as "the provision of help and physical comfort in situations in which it is not required, as well as the intrusive restriction of independence" (Rubin et al., 2002, p. 485). For example, in a longitudinal study that employed path analyses, parents' ratings of child's "social fear" at 2 years, but not observations of inhibited behaviors in inhibition-assessment paradigms at the laboratory, predicted a decrease in parents' report of "encouragement of independence" at 4 years (Rubin et al., 1999, p. 943, 951). In another longitudinal study, if mothers were highly accurate in their predictions of child's fearful responses to novelty (which was assessed by comparing mothers' predictions and actual observations of the child), fearful temperament was concurrently related to observations of maternal overprotective behaviors (e.g., "physically shielding the child or moving the child away from the stimuli or activity") at age 2 and was prospectively related to mothers' report of overprotective parenting at age 5 (Kiel & Buss, 2011, p. 959, 963).

In addition, while some mothers react to shyness and inhibition with concern and have a desire to protect their children from distress or negative social experiences by exhibiting protective behaviors, other mothers may feel embarrassed, disappointed, or angry by their child's shy, inhibited behaviors, and thus might be driven to act in a power-assertive, punitive manner (e.g., directiveness, coercion, scolding, shaming) to forcefully change those behaviors (Kiel & Buss, 2013; Miller et al., 2011; Rubin et al., 2002). For instance, in one study, when mothers reported feelings of embarrassment in

response to a hypothetical vignette depicting their toddler child acting in a shy, withdrawn manner with unfamiliar peers, they were more likely to be "intrusive" in their interactions with the toddler in a laboratory situation involving a novel stimulus (e.g., pushing or carrying the child toward the stimulus, forcing physical contact with the stimulus) (Kiel & Buss, 2013, p. 516). Moreover, shyness has also been prospectively linked to harsh parental responses: in a longitudinal study in which a cohort of adolescents in Grades 7-9 was followed for a period of three years, statistical analyses showed that shyness in social situations assessed at Time 1 predicted an increase in parents' "intrusive control" and "rejection" at Time 2, and an increase in shyness from Time 1 to Time 2 predicted a decrease in parents' "emotional warmth" at Time 3 (Van Zalk & Kerr, 2011, p. 388).

In the East, behavioral inhibition was previously found to be associated with mothers' positive attitudes toward the child (Chen et al., 1998). However, recently, as social initiative and social assertiveness have become increasingly valued as important assets for success in the modern society and anxious shyness is increasingly associated with negative adjustment (e.g., Chen et al., 2005), it has been reported that parents in contemporary Eastern societies (China, South Korea) encourage initiative taking, feel negatively about shyness-inhibition, and actively take actions to modify shy, inhibited behaviors (Cheah & Park, 2006; Chen & Li, 2012; Nelson et al., 2006).

For example, Nelson et al. (2006, p. 264-265) found associations between Chinese mothers' reports of maternal "directiveness" (e.g., "tells our child how he/she should behave," "tries to change our child"), "coercion" (using physical punishment), and "psychological control/shaming" (e.g., "tells child that he/she should be ashamed," "tells

our child he/she is not as good as other children," "tells child we get embarrassed when he/she doesn't meet our expectations") with teacher ratings of socially withdrawn behaviors. In another study, when presented with hypothetical vignettes depicting the focal child being socially withdrawn, South Korean mothers responded with negative feelings ("puzzled, disappointed, anxious, disgusted, and angry;" Cheah & Park, 2006, p. 67). Also, due to South Korea's rapid modernization and subsequent pervasive influences of Western values in the last few decades, Koreans have been suggested to be "the most individualistic of Asians;" therefore, Koreans' parenting beliefs are increasingly deviating from traditional Confucianism-based parenting values (Cheah & Park, 2006, p. 62). Particularly, while Chinese mothers, whose beliefs are shaped by Confucian ideology that environmental factors, especially family upbringing, play the most important role in the formation of individuals' personalities, have been reported to attribute a child's social withdrawal to unstable, situational causes, South Korean mothers attributed social withdrawal to stable, dispositional characteristics (temperament; Cheah & Park, 2006). Such internal attribution style is similar to that of Western mothers (see Cheah & Rubin, 2004, for a report of Canadian mothers' parenting attributions). Moreover, "collectivist goals" were not considered major socialization goals of Korean mothers in their effort to help children with high levels of shyness improve their social skills (Cheah & Park, 2006, p. 72). This indicates that Korean mothers put less importance on collectivist interest and more importance on individual wellbeing, reflecting the recent social and cultural changes in modern Eastern societies toward individualistic values (Cheah & Park, 2006).

In summary, research in both Western and Eastern contexts demonstrated parents' emotional and behavioral reactions to children's shy, inhibited behaviors largely depends on their perceptions of shyness that are guided by the values of the social, cultural environment in which they live. Shy, inhibited behaviors in children can evoke concern or aversive feelings in parents and thus may naturally drive parents to be overprotective or power-assertive, punitive toward children (e.g., Booth-Laforce & Oxford, 2008; Rubin et al., 2002; Williams et al., 2009).

Shyness and social self-perceptions. Research in Western contexts such as the U.S. has shown that individuals with high levels of shyness tend to have more negative perceptions of themselves than those who score low on measures of shyness (e.g., Koydemir-Özden & Demir, 2009; Malik & Rafique, 2012; Nelson et al., 2005). Particularly, shyness is related to lower levels of self-esteem (Cheek & Buss, 1981; Crozier, 1995; Malik & Rafique, 2012), self-efficacy (Caprara, Steca, Cervone, & Artistico, 2003), social self-perceptions (Nelson et al., 2005; Miller, 1995), global self-worth (Bosacki, 2012); as well as a greater tendency to self-blame or to have self-defeating ideations (Ishiyama & Munson, 1993; Wichman, Coplan, & Daniels, 2004). As children with high levels of shyness often receive negative responses from peers and parents, they tend to develop negative thoughts and feelings about themselves, including negative perceptions of their social skills and their abilities to be successful in social contact (e.g., Boivin & Hymel, 1997; Koydemir-Özden & Demir, 2009; Ladd & Troop-Gordon, 2003; Malik & Rafique, 2012; Nelson et al., 2005). For example, Nelson et al. (2005) found that reticent, withdrawn behaviors at age 4 predicted lower levels of peer

acceptance at age 4 and age 7, and peer acceptance at age 4 predicted self-perceptions of cognitive, physical, and social competence at age 7.

In Eastern contexts, there is limited research that examines the association between shyness and self-cognitions. One exception is a recent study in Hong Kong found that shyness predicted lower self-esteem in early adolescents (Chan, 2012). In addition, although no research in Eastern contexts has examined social self- perceptions in children with high levels of shyness, a short-term longitudinal study in urban China has shown that shyness was related to negative general self-perceptions (how much one likes oneself as a person) at both the start and the end of the school year (Liu et al., 2014).

Gender differences in the implications of shyness. In Western contexts, as "shyness is less socially acceptable for boys than for girls because it violates gender norms related to male social assertion and dominance" (Doey et al., 2014, p. 255), shy behaviors in boys tend to be perceived and treated more negatively by teachers, peers, and parents. A qualitative study that explored elementary school teachers' perceptions regarding shyness and educational strategies to enhance socio-communicative competence and social-emotional literacy for children with high levels of shyness, half of the participating teachers indicate that shyness may be problematic for boys because shy behaviors in boys violate gender-role stereotypes and social expectations for males to be "aggressive, gregarious, and outgoing" (Akseer, Bosacki, Rose-Krasnor, & Coplan, 2014, p. 106). In addition, teacher reports and peer nominations indicate that shyness is more strongly associated with peer rejection and exclusion among boys than girls, and self reports show that shy boys are more likely than shy girls to describe themselves as lonely (Coplan, Closson, & Arbeau, 2007; Gazelle & Ladd, 2003; Nelson et al., 2005).

Moreover, as shyness can be considered a stereotypical "feminine" trait (Bosacki, 2012, p. 576), shyness in girls is more likely to be accepted and rewarded by parents while boys are more likely to be discouraged and punished when displaying shy, anxious behaviors (Coplan et al., 2004; Eggum et al., 2009; Garside & Klimes-Dougan, 2002; Rubin, Cheah, & Fox, 2001). In a recent study, Kingsbury and Coplan (2012) found that mothers with more traditional gender-role attitudes reported fewer positive emotions and anticipated benefits in response to vignettes depicting shy-withdrawn behaviors in boys. In summary, research in Western contexts has shown that gender plays a role in how shy children are perceived and responded to in their family and at school.

In Eastern contexts, it is still unclear whether there are gender differences in response to shyness and in the adjustment outcomes of children with high levels of shyness. Most studies that examine parenting beliefs and behaviors related to a child's shyness either did not consider gender as a potential factor that influenced how parents perceived and responded to children's shy behaviors or reported mixed findings (Cheah & Park, 2006; Cheah & Rubin, 2004; Chen et al., 1998; Nelson et al., 2006). Also, recent studies in China found that shyness has been increasingly associated with peer difficulties, school problems, and psychological issues in urban settings for both boys and girls (Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2012). Interestingly, in urban China, girls were more shy-sensitive than boys in the 1990 and 1998 cohorts but not the 2002 cohort (Chen et al., 2005), suggesting a shift in traditional gender-stereotypical ideologies. Specifically, while Chinese girls were traditionally expected to be passive and reserved, those traditional beliefs may have become less valued in modern, Westernized cities where assertiveness becomes a desired trait, and thus girls in urban China may

adjust their behaviors accordingly. It is still unclear, however, whether shyness is considered equally problematic for boys and girls in modern Eastern societies.

The Present Study

The present study examined the link between self-reported shyness and social adjustment of early adolescent children in Vietnam, particularly peer rejection, social self- perceptions, overprotective parenting, and harsh-punitive parenting behaviors. In addition, since recent research in China has shown that shyness is associated with adjustment difficulties in the urban but not the rural setting (e.g., Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2012), this study aimed to explore whether social context (urban versus rural) may moderate the link between self-reported shyness and peer relations, parenting behaviors, and social self-perceptions. Also, as it has been suggested that shyness is less socially accepted for boys than for girls and that shy boys experience more difficulties than shy girls (Akseer et al., 2014; Coplan et al., 2004; Eggum et al., 2009; Garside & Klimes-Dougan, 2002; Rubin et al., 2001), the study examined gender as a potential moderator of the link between self-reported shyness and the outcome variables.

Survey data from 415 middle-school children in Vietnam were used to answer the following questions:

1) How is self-reported shyness related to peer rejection, overprotective parenting, harsh-punitive parenting, and social self-perceptions in early adolescence in Vietnam?

2) Does social context (urban versus rural) moderate the link between self-reported shyness and peer rejection, overprotective parenting, harsh-punitive parenting, and social self-perceptions?

3) Does gender moderate the link between self-reported shyness and peer rejection,

overprotective parenting, harsh-punitive parenting, and social self-perceptions?

Hypotheses. It was expected that higher levels of self-reported shyness would be related to higher levels of peer rejection, overprotective parenting, and harsh-punitive parenting as well as related to more negative social self- perceptions (Rubin, Coplan, & Bowker, 2009). However, it was expected that the strength of the associations may be different between urban and rural groups (Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2012) as well as between boys and girls (Doey et al., 2014). Specifically, in urban Vietnam where Western influences are prevalent, self-reported shyness might be considered deviant and, thus, would be related to higher levels of peer rejection, overprotective parenting, and harsh-punitive parenting as well as related to more negative social self- perceptions. However, it was expected that in rural regions where the influence of traditions might be enduring, shyness might not be regarded as non-normative or problematic as in urban areas (Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2012). The associations between self-reported shyness and peer rejection, social self-perceptions, overprotective and harsh-punitive parenting would be small or even non-significant in rural areas. In addition, it was hypothesized that the associations between self-reported shyness and the outcome variables would be stronger for boys because shyness may be considered less socially acceptable for boys than for girls and shy boys tend to experience more social difficulties than shy girls (Akseer et al., 2014; Coplan et al., 2004; Doey et al., 2014; Eggum et al., 2009; Garside & Klimes-Dougan, 2002; Rubin et al., 2001).

Control variables. Parental divorce and remarriage can impact the parent-child relationship, parenting behaviors, and a child's social-emotional functioning (Dunn,

2002; Sweeny, 2010). Parents' marital status was included in the regression analyses as a control variable. However, it should be noted that in this study 94.5% families in the urban group and 97.2% families in the rural group were intact families; thus, the effect of parents' marital status was expected to be small.

The analyses also incorporated family's socioeconomic status as a control variable. It is important to statistically account for this variable because socioeconomic status has been found to have direct and indirect influences on children's development via lack of access to cognitively stimulating materials and experiences, as well as maladaptive parenting behaviors, such as negative control strategies and low warmth/responsiveness (e.g., Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Guo &Mullan-Harris, 2000; Lin, 2013; Yunus & Dahlan, 2013). For example, one study found significant differences in cognitive stimulation activities and socialization practices among high, middle, and low socioeconomic background parents (Yunus & Dahlan, 2013). In another study, there were significant interaction effects between socioeconomic status and school life adjustment (i.e., study, peer relations, teacher-student relations) on the perceived well-being of early adolescents (Lin, 2013).

Method

Procedures

After receiving ethics approval for the proposed study, I went to Vietnam for data collection. Through my contacts with teachers and administrators at some public middle schools in Vietnam, information letters with details about the research purposes and procedures were sent to various school boards. When a school board expressed interest in participation, I arranged a visit to present the research plan to the school board and head

teachers of Grade 6 classes. Particularly, detailed information was delivered about research purposes and procedures, as well as participants' rights (confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the ability to withdraw at any time). Any concerns about research procedures were discussed. For example, the initial plan for data collection included: 1) students' self-report of shyness, social self- perceptions, peer rejection, and parenting behaviors; 2) head teachers' ratings of students' school social competence; 3) peer reports of shyness and peer rejection. However, it was at the end of the school year, teachers were busy marking final exams and calculating course grades, so they refused to participate. In addition, class size tends to be big in Vietnam with 40-50 students in each class; therefore, teachers indicated that they could not find time for providing ratings for individual students. Moreover, school boards and teachers expressed concern that peer nominations of shyness, peer acceptance, and peer rejection may affect students' relationships with their classmates and further alienate students who are considered "unpopular" by their peers. Therefore, it was requested that the peer nominations not be used in the study. As a result, the approved data collection plan only involved students' self-report questionnaires.

Once permission from the school boards was granted, the researcher went to classrooms and directly presented the research plan and rights of participants to students. It was emphasized to the students that their participation was completely voluntary, non-participation would not affect their grades, their answers on the questionnaires would be kept confidential and could only be accessed by the researcher, no identifying information (name, class, school) would be included in publications or presentations of research results, students could freely withdraw at any time, and students would be given

some snacks in exchange for their participation. Any questions about the study were answered. Parent informed consent forms were then distributed to students to take home. After parent consent forms were collected in class (3 days later), child assent forms were delivered to students. After obtaining child assent, self-report questionnaires were delivered to children and were completed in a 45-minute classroom session. The questionnaires include self-report measures of shyness, social self-perceptions, perceived peer rejection, and perceived parenting behaviors. The researcher was present during the session to answer students' questions about the questionnaires and students were offered the chance to debrief with the researcher after the session if they had any questions or concerns regarding the study. No student showed any signs of emotional distress or expressed any concerns. Students were given snacks in exchange for their participation.

Participants

Participants include 200 sixth graders from Hanoi, the capital city and also the second largest city in Vietnam, as well as 215 sixth graders from a small, remote area in the province Nghe An.

Sixth-graders were selected because most Vietnamese children start middle school (Grade 6) at age 12. In the Vietnamese education system, high school, middle school, and elementary school are separate institutions. Therefore, moving from elementary school to middle school is an important transition in which children need to adjust to a new environment, make new friends, and establish relationships with new classmates. Starting middle school may present significant adjustment challenges to children who have high levels of shyness: although they are interested in social interactions, they may experience anxiety provoked by novelty, which may prevent them

from initiating or engaging in peer interactions. In addition, stable shyness among familiar peers throughout the first year of middle school can make shy children face peer difficulties due to age-specific norms and expectations with greater emphasis on peer interactions in early adolescence.

The urban sample includes 86 male and 114 female students. The rural sample includes 108 male and 107 female students. Students were asked to indicate their family's socio-economic status (SES). In the urban sample, 0.5% reported very poor, 1% reported poor, 18.5% reported almost average, 51.5% reported average, 22% reported rich, and 5.5% reported very rich. In the rural sample, 0.9% reported very poor, 14.4% reported poor, 39.1% reported almost average, 34.9% reported average, 9.3% reported rich, and 1.4% reported very rich. Students also reported their parents' marital status. In the urban sample, 94.5% of parents were married, 4.5% were divorced, and 1% were divorced and remarried. In the rural sample, 97.2% of parents were married, 1.4% were divorced, and 1.4% were divorced and remarried.

Measures

All instruments were originally in English and were translated into Vietnamese. The instruments were translated into Vietnamese by the researcher, a graduate student who is currently pursuing an M.Sc. degree in Family Ecology at the University of Alberta. The translation was then back-translated to English by a researcher and psychiatrist at the Center for Research, Information and Service in Psychology (CRISP), at Vietnam National University. Discrepancies between the two translations were resolved by the two translators in consultation with another Vietnamese researcher and

psychiatrist at CRISP. Those involved in the translation process are fluent in both Vietnamese and English and are familiar with the constructs measured in the instruments.

Similar procedures of translation and adaptation of Western-based measures have been employed in a number of studies on children's social functioning in China for the purpose of comparing the findings with those in Western contexts (Chen et al., 1995; Chen at al., 1999; Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009; Chen et al, 2011; Liu et al, 2012; Liu et al., 2014). In those studies, measures were translated to Chinese by researchers who were fluent in both Chinese and English and then were back-translated to ensure comparability with the original English versions.

Self-reported shyness. Self-reported shyness was assessed by the Shyness sub-scale in the Child Social Preference Scale - Revised (CSPS, Coplan et al., 2004; CSPS-R, Bowker & Raja, 2011). Bowker and Raja (2011) modified the Child Social Preference Scale (CSPS; Coplan et al., 2004), a commonly used parent- and teacher-report measure of children's approach and avoidance motivations in peer interactions, to be a self-report measure. The CSPS-R contains 15 items including three items assessing avoidance (high in avoidance and low in approach motivations), four items assessing unsociability (low in both avoidance and approach motivations), four items assessing shyness (high in both avoidance and approach motivations), and four items assessing peer isolation. The authors constructed these subscales through exploratory factor analysis. Internal reliabilities for these four factors are: avoidance α=0.67, unsociability α=0.67, shyness α=0.66; and peer isolation α=0.84. These four factors accounted for 59.67% of the total variance.

This scale was selected because it is the only known self-report measure that captures the underlying approach-avoidance motivational conflict of shyness that is related to the activation of the Behavioral Inhibition System (BIS). In addition, this scale has been used and validated in a study involving early adolescents in India, an Eastern context (Bowker & Raja, 2011). The authors reported high correlations between the CSPS-R and peer-reports of shyness, providing evidence of validity for the Shyness subscale of the CSPS-R.

The CSPS-R operationalizes the approach-avoidance motivational conflicts of shy children through 4 items: "Although I desire to be with other kids, I feel nervous about interacting with them," "Sometimes I turn down chances to hang out with other kids because I feel too shy," "I stand near where other kids are playing, without joining in," and "I'd like to play with other kids, but I'm sometimes nervous to."

Children were asked to rate each item on a scale from 1 = *Not At All* to 5 = *A Lot* to indicate agreement with each statement. An average score was calculated, with higher scores indicating higher levels of shyness. Internal reliability for the Shyness subscale in this sample was α=0.66.

Peer rejection. Peer rejection was measured by the Peer Isolation subscale in the Child Social Preference Scale-Revised (CSPS, Coplan et al., 2004; CSPS-R, Bowker & Raja, 2011) through four items that describe peer rejection or exclusion: "I want to play with others but often they don't want to play with me," "I wish I could spend more time with other kids, but they don't let me," "I'd like to hang out with other kids, but I'm often excluded," and "Sometimes kids don't want me to hang out with them."

Children were asked to rate on a scale of 1 = *Not At All* to 5 = *A Lot* to indicate how similar they are to the statements. An average score was calculated with higher scores indicating higher levels of peer rejection. Internal reliability for the Peer Isolation subscale in this sample was α=0.75.

Social self-perceptions. Children's social self-perceptions (judgments of one's abilities or skills to be successful in social interactions) was assessed by the Social Competence subscale in the Self-perception Profile for Children (SPPC; Harter, 1985). The SPPC is a self-report questionnaire of 36 items assessing children's self-perceptions in five specific domains, including scholastic competence, social competence, athletic competence, physical appearance, and behavioral conduct, as well as children's global self-worth. The internal reliabilities of the subscales were between 0.73 and 0.86. The test–retest stabilities of the subscales over a 4-week period were between 0.84 and 0.90. Moreover, the subscales were significantly related to self-, parent-, and teacher- reports of personality traits and internalizing problems (i.e., anxiety, depression). These findings provided further evidence for the psychometric qualities of the SPPC and indicated that the SPPC is a reliable and valid self-report measure of children's self-perceptions. This is one important reason why the SPPC was selected for the current study. Another reason is two studies in Mainland China that employed the SPPC to examine the associations between shyness and children's self-perceptions have shown that the measure is a valid and reliable measure to be used with Chinese children (Chen et al., 1999; Liu et al., 2014). Given the similarities between Chinese and Vietnamese socio-cultural contexts, the SPPC is likely to be a valid and reliable measure to be used with Vietnamese children. Indeed, a modified version of the SPPC was recently employed to study the

relations between peer victimization, self-cognitions, and depression in elementary- and middle-school children in Vietnam (Tran, 2013). For those reasons, the SPPC was selected for measuring self-perceptions of social competence in this study.

Each subscale in the SPPC consists of six items. Each item consists of two opposite descriptions, e.g., ‘‘Some kids don’t have the social skills to make friends” but “Other kids do have the social skills to make friends.” For each item, children select one of two statements to indicate whether they are more like a child who is good or a child who is not so good at a particular skill or activity. Then, they indicate whether the selected statement is “sort of true” or “really true” for themselves. Accordingly, each item is scored on a four-point scale with a higher score reflecting a more positive self-perception. Thus, the item scores for those with the most adequate description on the left are scored 4, 3, 2, 1 (from left to right); whereas the item scores for those with the most adequate description on the right are scored 1, 2, 3, 4 (from left to right). For each of the domains and for the global self-worth scale, a total score is computed by summing relevant items, and higher scores indicate greater self-perceived competence in a specific domain or greater self-worth.

In this study, a total score for the Social Competence sub-scale was calculated with higher scores indicating more positive social self-perceptions (judgments of one’s abilities or skills to be successful in social interactions). Internal reliability for the Social Competence subscale in this sample was α=0.66.

Items in the Social Competence sub-scale include:

Really true for me	Sort of true for me				Sort of true for me	Really true for me

		Some kids find it hard to make friends	BUT	Other kids find it's pretty easy to make friends		
		Some kids know how to make classmates like them	BUT	Other kids find it's pretty easy to make friends		
		Some kids don't have the social skills to make friends	BUT	Other kids do have the social skills to make friends		
		Some kids understand how to get peers to accept them	BUT	Other kids don't understand how to get peers to accept them		
		Some kids wish they knew how to make more friends	BUT	Other kids know how to make as many friends as they want		
		Some kids know how to become popular	BUT	Other kids do not know how to become popular		

Parenting behaviors. Parenting behaviors were assessed by the Leuven Adolescent Perceived Parenting Scale (LAPPS; Soenens et al., 2004). The LAPPS is a comprehensive measure of four dimensions of parenting styles, including responsiveness/acceptance, behavioral control, psychological control, and autonomy support. All subscales were adapted from other well-known instruments originally developed in the United States including the Child Report of Parental Behaviour Inventory (CRPBI; Schaefer, 1965; Schludermann & Schludermann, 1988), the Parenting Scales (PS; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991), and the Perception of Parents Scale (POPS; Grolnick, Deci, & Ryan, 1997).

All subscales have shown high levels of internal consistency reliabilities ranging between 0.73 and 0.92 (Beyers & Goossens, 2008). The full instrument and its subscales have been used extensively with Dutch-speaking adolescents in Belgium (e.g., Beyers & Goossens, 2008; Smits, Soenens, Luyckx, Duriez, Berzon-sky, & Goossens, 2008; Smits, Soenens,Vansteenkiste, Luyckx, & Goossens, 2010; Soenens, Vansteenkiste, Luyckx, & Goossens, 2006). In an effort to validate the LAPPS in another linguistic region, the

instrument was administered to a sample of French-speaking adolescents (N= 625) and a carefully matched sample of Dutch-speaking adolescents (N= 630; Delhaye, Beyers, Klimstra, Linkowski, & Goossens, 2012). Internal consistency reliabilities, factor structure, and mean scores for the LAPPS subscales were highly similar between two samples. From those results, it can be suggested that the LAPPS is a reliable and valid measure of adolescents' perceptions of parenting for participants of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Only the Psychological Control and Autonomy Support subscales were of interest in this study because the descriptions in these two subscales closely match with the current study's conceptualization of harsh, punitive and overprotective parenting behaviors. In addition, a recent study in Mainland China has shown that overprotective parenting and shaming (a form of psychological control) were associated with children's anxious shyness (Xu, Zhang, & Choo, 2009).

In this study, overprotective parenting behaviors were assessed by seven items of the Autonomy Support sub-scale: "lets me make my own plans for things I want to do," "often tells me that I must think about my life myself," "encourages me to be independent from him/her," "whenever possible, allows me to choose what to do," "allows me to decide things for myself," "insists upon my doing things his/her way," and "helps me to choose my own direction."

Harsh, punitive parenting behaviors were assessed by seven items of the Psychological Control sub-scale: "is always trying to change me," "is less friendly with me, if I do not see things his/her way," "will avoid looking at me when I have disappointed him/her," "if I have hurt his/her feelings, stops talking to me until I please

him/her again," "won't let me do things with him/her, when I do something he/she doesn't like," "make my life miserable when I get a poor grade at school," and "acts cold and unfriendly if I do something she/he doesn't like."

Children were asked to rate on a scale of 1 = *Not At All True* to 5 = *Very Much True* to indicate how true the statements are for their fathers and their mothers (children completed two separate questionnaires, one for each parent). After scores were reversed for relevant items (e.g., "allows me to decide things for myself"), an average score was calculated with high scores indicating higher levels of overprotective or harsh, punitive parenting. Internal reliabilities were α = 0. 76 for report of maternal harsh-punitive parenting and α = 0.82 for report of paternal harsh-punitive parenting in the urban group; α = 0.65 for report of maternal overprotective parenting and α = 0.72 for report of paternal overprotective parenting in the rural group.

Results

Missing data

Data were first explored with a missing values analysis in SPSS. While the percentage of missing data for each variable ranges from 0% to 3.1%, 33.01% of the cases had at least one missing value on a variable (see Figure 3). It is understandable that many Grade 6 students may have forgotten to respond to a few items in a questionnaire consisting of almost one hundred items, especially when it might have been the first time these students participated in a research study.

Case deletion, also known as listwise deletion or complete-case analysis, is the default method of handling missing values in many statistical programs, including SPSS, in which "entire cases are removed from the analysis if they have any missing values for

any of the variables being considered" (Wilson et al., 2014, p. 336). While this approach is convenient, it can lead to the loss of a large amount of data and significantly reduce statistical power (Acock, 2005; Wilson et al., 2014). It has been suggested that multiple imputation is one of the most effective methods to deal with item nonresponse in surveys (Acock, 2005; Johnson & Young, 2011; Schafer & Graham, 2002; Wilson et al., 2014). The Multiple Imputation command in SPSS "uses linear regression to predict missing data in a multistage process that uses the values present in the incomplete dataset to construct full datasets while maintaining variability of the missing data and relationships among variables and incorporating appropriate uncertainty" (Wilson et al., 2014, p. 341). The created dataset consists of the original data set with missing values and *m* imputed datasets (default $m = 5$); each imputed dataset has the same cases and variables as in the original dataset plus a variable called Imputation_ (Wilson et al., 2014). In other words, SPSS stacks all datasets into one single file, and thus data manipulations tasks (e.g., transforming or computing variables) are automatically applied to all datasets. In addition, the imputed dataset was split using the Compare groups option, with Imputation_ as a grouping variable in order to be treated as a multiple imputation dataset in analyses.

Multiple regression analyses were conducted with the imputed data. Although SPSS 20 allows linear regression analysis to be conducted with imputed data, standardized regression coefficients, *F* statistics, and R^2 value are not produced for pooled results. A series of hierarchical regression analyses were then conducted using list-wise deletion as the method of handling missing data. The pattern of results was the

same to that of the regression analyses conducted with imputed data. Therefore, results using list-wise deletion approach will be reported for all analyses.

Testing assumptions

The current study employed linear regression analysis, which is a parametric test and requires certain assumptions to be met for the test to be accurate. Parametric tests are the most common type of inferential statistics whose purpose is "generalizing the findings of a sample to the population it represents" (Kantor & Kershaw, 2010, p. 1000). The basic assumptions for parametric tests are normally distributed data, homogeneity of variance, interval data, and independence of observations (Field, 2009, p. 133).

Assessing normality. Parametric tests assume that the sample has been randomly selected from the population it represents and that the population has an underlying normal distribution (Kantor & Kershaw, 2010). Knowing the underlying assumption of the population is important for making predictions because using that knowledge and repeated sampling of equal sizes of a particular population will generate approximately the same estimate (Kantor & Kershaw, 2010). The normal distribution is a theoretical distribution whose shape is such that the most common scores are toward the middle (the mean/mode/median) and the lease common scores are toward the two ends of the curve (Vogt, 2007).

It is suggested that normality of distribution can be assessed through values that quantify aspects of a distribution (i.e., kurtosis and skewness; Field, 2009, p. 133-139). The skewness statistic indicates "the extent to which a graph of a distribution is symmetrical" (Vogt, 2007, p. 63), and the kurtosis statistic indicates "how flat or pointy a graph of a distribution is" (Vogt, 2007, p. 64). Kline (2011) suggests that absolute values

greater than 3 for skewness and absolute values greater than 8 for kurtosis indicate non-normal data. None of the variables in this study have absolute values greater than 3 for skewness and greater than 8 for kurtosis (see Table 3 for skewness and kurtosis statistics for the study variables). Therefore, it can be concluded that the data satisfied the normality assumption.

Assessing homogeneity of variance. To test homogeneity of variance, or the assumption that "the spread of scores is roughly equal in different groups of cases" (Field, 2009, p. 152), the current study employed Levene's test to compare groups (i.e., male and female, urban and rural). Levene's test statistics were calculated and examined for *p* values lower than or equal to 0.05 because this would indicate that the variances are significantly different and the assumption of homogeneity of variance has been violated. When comparing male and female, *p* values for peer rejection, maternal harsh-punitive parenting, and paternal harsh-punitive parenting are lower than 0.05, which indicates a significant difference between the male and female variances (see Table 1). When comparing rural and urban, *p* values for SES, self-reported shyness, peer rejection, maternal overprotective parenting, paternal overprotective parenting are lower than 0.05, which indicates a significant difference between rural and urban variances (see Table 2).

Transformations using log transformation, square root transformation, and reciprocal transformation were conducted to see if they could solve the problem, but the transformations only changed the *p* values for some but not all variables. In addition, Field (2013) argues when the data constitute of equal group sizes, violation of the homogeneity of variance does not cause a serious issue and can be ignored. In this study, group sizes are relatively equal: there are 221 females (53.3%) and 194 males (46.7%),

and the urban group includes 200 participants (48.2%) and the rural group includes 215 participants (51.8%). For these reasons, I did not use log transformation, square root transformation, or reciprocal transformation with the data.

Other assumptions. Another assumption of parametric tests is interval data (Field, 2009; Kantor & Kershaw, 2010). Specifically, parametric tests require dependent variables to be measured on interval scales which have "an equal distance between measurements throughout the scale that correspond to equal differences in the quality being measured that can be compared in a meaningful way" (Kantor & Kershaw, 2010, p. 2000). In this study, dependent variables (i.e., self-reported shyness, peer rejection, overprotective parenting, and harsh parenting) were measured at the interval level.

In addition, parametric tests assume that there is independence of observations (Field, 2009). Particularly, it is assumed that "data from different participants are independent" or "the behavior of a participant does not influence the behavior of another" (Field, 2009, p. 133). In this study, individual data on self-reported shyness, social self-perceptions, and parenting behaviors were expected to be independent. However, since some participants came from the same classroom, it is possible that behaviors such as peer rejection in one student may influence or be influenced by the behaviors of other students in the same class. Future research should use procedures to account for non-independence in the data.

Bivariate Correlations

Table 3 presents the bivariate correlations statistics. Higher levels of self-reported shyness were significantly related to higher levels of peer rejection ($r = .54$, $p < .01$), more negative social self-perceptions ($r = -.33$, $p < .01$), and higher levels of paternal

overprotective parenting ($r = .11$; $p < .05$), maternal harsh parenting ($r = .21$, $p < .01$), and paternal harsh parenting ($r = .29$, $p < .01$). Self-reported shyness was not related to maternal overprotective parenting. Lower socioeconomic status (SES) was significantly related to higher levels of self-reported shyness ($r = -.18$, $p < .01$), higher levels of peer rejection ($r = -.16$, $p < .01$), more negative social self-perceptions ($r = .13$, $p < .05$), as well as higher levels of paternal overprotective parenting ($r = -.12$, $p < .05$) and maternal overprotective parenting ($r = -.15$, $p < .01$).

Moderated Regression Analyses

The purpose of the current study was to examine the relationships between the predictor variable, self-reported shyness, and the outcome variables, including peer rejection, maternal overprotective parenting, paternal overprotective parenting, maternal harsh-punitive parenting, paternal harsh-punitive parenting, and social self-perceptions. In addition, the study aimed to determine whether gender and social context moderated these associations. The research questions were answered with moderated regression analysis.

Moderated regression is an analysis for exploring the "boundary conditions for an association between two variables" in which a third variable may affect direction or strength of the association (Hayes, 2013, p. 8). For example, questions involving moderators aim to answer "when" or "for whom" one variable most strongly predicts another variable (Frazier, Tix, & Barron, 2004). Frazier et al. (2004, p. 115) argued that "a moderator effect is nothing more than an interaction whereby the effect of one variable depends on the level of another" (see Figure 4 for a graphic depiction of moderation).

This study followed Anderson et al.'s (2014) and Frazier et al.'s (2004) guidelines to conduct a moderation analysis. To prepare for the moderated regression analysis, the categorical control variable parents' marital status was coded using dummy codes (0,1). Also, the control variable socio-economic status and the predictor variable (self-reported shyness) were standardized so that the mean of those variables became zero. Since the predictor and moderator variables are likely to be highly correlated with the interaction terms created by multiplying these variables, standardizing the variables can help reduce multicollinearity (i.e., high correlations) among the variables. Also, the relations between the predictor and the outcome variable and between the moderator and the outcome variable are interpreted as conditional effects at the value of 0 for the other variables included in the model (Judd, McClelland, & Culhane, 1995). Therefore, using z-score transformations provides a meaningful zero point and makes it easy to interpret the effects of the predictor and the moderator as well as to plot significant moderator effects. Afterwards, the newly coded and transformed moderator and predictor variables were multiplied to create interaction variables. Next, a series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to analyze the regression model in stages, which is called blocks in SPSS. In each hierarchical regression analysis, the outcome variable was entered in the box labeled "Dependent," followed by adding the control variables into the "Independent" box, and then the moderator and predictor variables into the second block, and finally the interaction term was entered into the third block.

A multiple regression model was tested to investigate whether the association between self-reported shyness and peer rejection depends on gender (see Table 4). Results from Model 1 indicated that lower socio-economic status (B = -.16, $SE\ B$ = .05, β

= -.16, p = .001) predicted higher levels of peer rejection, but the effect of socio-economic status became non-significant in Model 2 and Model 3 when self-reported shyness, gender, and their interaction term were added. Results from Model 2 indicated main effects of self-reported shyness and gender on peer rejection; particularly, higher levels of self-reported shyness (B = .52, $SE\ B$ = .04, β = .52, p < .001) predicted higher levels of peer rejection, and boys reported more peer difficulties than girls (B = .25, $SE\ B$ = .09, β = .11, p = .004). *R-Squared* changed from .03 in Model 1 to .31 in Model 2 suggesting that adding self-reported shyness and gender led to increased predictive power. Results from Model 3 did not indicate a significant interaction effect, suggesting that the association between self-reported shyness and peer rejection did not depend on gender.

Another multiple regression model was tested to investigate whether the association between self-reported shyness and peer rejection depends on social context (rural versus urban; see Table 5). Results from Model 1 indicated that lower socio-economic status (B = -.16, $SE\ B$ = .05, β = -.16, p = .001) predicted higher levels of peer rejection, but the effect of socio-economic status became non-significant in Model 2 and Model 3 when self-reported shyness, social context, and their interaction term were added. Results from Model 2 indicated main effects of self-reported shyness and social context on peer rejection; particularly, higher levels of self-reported shyness (B = .47, $SE\ B$ = .04, β = .46, p < .001) predicted higher levels of peer rejection, and children in the urban area reported more peer difficulties than those living in the rural area (B = -.46, $SE\ B$ = .10, β = -.23, p < .001). *R-Squared* changed from .03 in Model 1 to .34 in Model 2 suggesting that adding self-reported shyness and social context led to increased predictive

power. Results from Model 3 did not indicate a significant interaction effect, suggesting that the association between self-reported shyness and peer rejection did not depend on social context.

Next, a multiple regression model was tested to investigate whether the association between self-reported shyness and maternal harsh parenting depends on gender (see Table 6). Results from Model 1 did not show any significant effect. Results from Model 2 indicated only the main effect of self-reported shyness on maternal harsh parenting; particularly, higher levels of self-reported shyness (B = .21, $SE\ B$ = .05, β = .21, $p < .001$) predicted higher levels of maternal harsh parenting. *R-Squared* changed from .01 in Model 1 to .6 in Model 2 suggesting that adding self-reported shyness to the regression model led to increased predictive power. Results from Model 3 did not indicate a significant interaction effect, suggesting that the association between self-reported shyness and maternal harsh parenting did not depend on gender.

A multiple regression model was tested to investigate whether the association between self-reported shyness and maternal harsh parenting depends on social context (see Table 7). Results from Model 1 did not show any significant effect. Results from Model 2 indicated only the main effect of self-reported shyness on maternal harsh parenting; particularly, higher levels of self-reported shyness (B = .19, $SE\ B$ = .05, β = .19, $p < .001$) predicted higher levels of maternal harsh parenting. *R-Squared* changed from .01 in Model 1 to .06 in Model 2 suggesting that adding self-reported shyness to the regression model led to increased predictive power. Results from Model 3 did not indicate a significant interaction effect, suggesting that the association between self-reported shyness and maternal harsh parenting did not depend on social context.

A multiple regression model was tested to investigate whether the association between self-reported shyness and paternal harsh parenting depends on gender (see Table 8). Results from Model 1 did not show any significant effect. Results from Model 2 indicated main effects of self-reported shyness and gender on paternal harsh parenting; particularly, higher levels of self-reported shyness (B = .30, $SE\ B$ = .05, β = .30, $p < .001$) predicted higher levels of paternal harsh parenting, and boys reported higher levels of paternal harsh parenting than girls (B = .33, $SE\ B$ = .10, β = .16, p = .001). *R-Squared* changed from .00 in Model 1 to .11 in Model 2 suggesting that adding self-reported shyness and gender led to increased predictive power. Results from Model 3 did not indicate a significant interaction effect, suggesting that the association between self-reported shyness and paternal harsh parenting did not depend on gender.

A multiple regression model was tested to investigate whether the association between self-reported shyness and paternal harsh parenting depends on social context (see Table 9). Results from Model 1 did not show any significant effect. Results from Model 2 indicated main effects of self-reported shyness and social context on paternal harsh parenting; particularly, higher levels of self-reported shyness (B = .26, $SE\ B$ = .05, β = .26, $p < .001$) predicted higher levels of paternal harsh parenting, and children in the rural sample reported higher levels of paternal harsh parenting than those in the urban context (B = -.29, $SE\ B$ = .10, β = -14, p = .01). *R-Squared* changed from .00 in Model 1 to .11 in Model 2 suggesting that adding self-reported shyness and social context led to increased predictive power. Results from Model 3 did not indicate a significant interaction effect, suggesting that the association between self-reported shyness and paternal harsh parenting did not depend on social context.

A multiple regression model was tested to investigate whether the association between self-reported shyness and social self-perceptions depends on gender (see Table 10). Results from Model 1 indicated that higher socioeconomic status (B = .14, $SE\ B$ = .05, β = .13, p = .01) predicted more positive social self-perceptions, but the effect of socio-economic status became non-significant in Model 2 and Model 3 when self-reported shyness, gender, and their interaction term were added. Results from Model 2 indicated main effects of self-reported shyness and gender on social self-perceptions; particularly, higher levels of self-reported shyness (B = -.31, $SE\ B$ = .05, β = -.30, $p <$ .001) predicted more negative social self-perceptions, and boys reported more negative social self-perceptions than girls (B = -.29, $SE\ B$ = .10, β = -.14, p = .004). *R-Squared* changed from .02 in Model 1 to .13 in Model 2 suggesting that adding self-reported shyness and gender led to increased predictive power. Results from Model 3 did not indicate a significant interaction effect, suggesting that the association between self-reported shyness and social self-perceptions did not depend on gender.

Finally, a multiple regression model was tested to investigate whether the association between self-reported shyness and social self-perceptions depends on social context (see Table 11). Results from Model 1 indicated that higher socioeconomic status (B = .14, $SE\ B$ = .05, β = .13, p = .01) predicted more positive social self-perceptions, but the effect of socio-economic status became non-significant in Model 2 and Model 3 when self-reported shyness, social context, and their interaction term were added. Results from Model 2 indicated main effects of self-reported shyness and social context on social self-perceptions; particularly, higher levels of self-reported shyness (B = -.25, $SE\ B$ = .05, β = -.24, $p <$ .001) predicted more negative social self-perceptions, and children in the urban

area reported more positive social self-perceptions than those living in the rural area (B = .42, $SE\ B$ = .11, β = .21, p< .001). *R-Squared* changed from .02 in Model 1 to .15 in Model 2 suggesting that adding self-reported shyness and social context led to increased predictive power. Results from Model 3 did not indicate a significant interaction effect, suggesting that the association between self-reported shyness and social self-perceptions did not depend on social context.

Discussion

Motivated by the need to elucidate the implications of shyness for children in Eastern societies, the purpose of this study was to examine associations between self-reported shyness and peer rejection, parenting behaviors, and social self-perceptions in Vietnam. This research also explored gender and social contexts (urban versus rural) as potential moderators of the associations between self-reported shyness and the outcome variables.

Shyness and Peer-rejection

The current study found higher levels of self-reported shyness predicted higher levels of peer rejection, consistent with findings reported in research conducted in Western countries (e.g., Coplan et al., 2013; Erath, Flanagan, & Bierman, 2007; Nelson et al., 2005; Spangler & Gazelle, 2009). Similarly, recent studies conducted in Eastern contexts, such as Mainland China and Taiwan, also reported a significant relation between shy-withdrawn behaviors and peer problems (i.e., rejection, victimization; Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2012; Wei & Chen, 2009).

Overt displays of anxious and inhibited behaviors are regarded unfavorably by peers as early as preschool and kindergarten, and children with high levels of shyness

tend to be considered unappealing playmates, making these children vulnerable to peer rejection, exclusion, and victimization (e.g., Coplan, Girardi, Findlay, & Frohlick, 2007; Gazelle & Ladd, 2003; Hart et al., 2000; Nelson et al., 2005; Perren & Alsaker, 2006). As children enter later developmental stages, particularly late childhood to adolescence, the peer group becomes an increasingly important social context and there is an increasing emphasis on peer interactions and group involvement as opposed to dyadic relationships (Hay, Payne, & Chadwick, 2004; Rubin, Bukowski, et al., 2006; Rubin, Coplan, Chen, Bowker, & McDonald, 2010). With increased age, therefore, shy and withdrawn behaviors are viewed by peers as increasingly deviant from age-appropriate norms and expectations and children with high levels of shyness experience more peer difficulties (Asendorf, 2009; Rubin, Bukowski, et al., 2006; Rubin et al., 2010). Consequently, it is understandable that in this study early adolescents who reported high levels of shyness also reported high levels of peer rejection.

Although the current study did not directly explore the mechanism underlying the association between self-reported shyness and peer difficulties, some possible explanations can be found in the literature. Specifically, it has been argued that shy and withdrawn behaviors result in fewer opportunities to practice and enhance social skills (Karevold et al., 2012; Rubin, Bukowski, et al., 2006). In turn, this may make children with high levels of shyness less competent in social interactions than their non-shy counterparts and, thus, more vulnerable to being disliked, rejected, and victimized by peers (Karevold et al., 2012; Rubin, Bukowski, et al., 2006).

Moreover, it has been proposed that there is a transactional cycle between shy, withdrawn behaviors and peer difficulties (Asendorpf, 1990, 2009; Gazelle &Rudolph,

2004; Oh et al., 2008; Rubin et al., 2009). Particularly, children with high levels of shyness may initially choose to avoid engaging social interactions; such demeanor may provoke negative reactions from their peers (i.e., rejection, exclusion, victimization), which, in turn, may increase these children's anxious feelings, inhibited behaviors, and subsequent peer problems (Asendorpf, 1990; Asendorpf & van Aken, 1994; Gazelle &Rudolph, 2004; Oh et al., 2008; Salmivalli & Isaacs, 2005). For example, in a longitudinal study that tracked the developmental trajectories of social withdrawal (low stable, increasing, and decreasing) in a group of 392 children from the final year of elementary school, across the transition to middle school, and to the end of middle school, high levels of peer exclusion and victimization was a significant predictor for the increasing group while low levels of peer difficulties predicted decrease in social withdrawal for the decreasing group (Oh et al., 2008). Future research should track children's shyness, social skills, and peer problems longitudinally to clarify the mechanism(s) underlying the link between shyness and peer rejection.

Gender did not moderate the association between self-reported shyness and peer rejection. While many studies conducted in Western contexts have found shyness is more strongly related to peer difficulties for boys than for girls because anxious, withdrawn behaviors among boys violate gender norms related to male social assertion (e.g., Akseer et al., 2014; Doey et al., 2014; Coplan et al., 2007; Gazelle & Ladd, 2003; Nelson et al., 2005), gender differences in Eastern contexts have been inconsistent (Chen et al., 1998; Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009; Coplan, Zheng, Weeks, & Cheng, 2012; Liu et al., 2012; Nelson et al., 2006).

Interestingly, in urban China, girls were more shy-sensitive than boys in the 1990 and 1998 cohorts, but not in the 2002 cohort (Chen et al., 2005), suggesting a shift in traditional gender-stereotypical ideologies. Specifically, while Chinese girls were traditionally expected to be passive and reserved, those traditional beliefs may have become less valued in modern, westernized cities where assertiveness becomes a desired trait, and thus girls in urban China may adjust their behaviors accordingly. This study did not find gender differences in the link between self-reported shyness and peer rejection, which is consistent with the results of recent studies conducted in China and Taiwan (Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2012; Wei & Chen, 2009). It is possible that shy, withdrawn behaviors are generally considered deviant and maladaptive by peers, and thus both boys and girls with high levels of shyness may experience peer difficulties.

Contrary to expectations, social context (urban versus rural) also did not moderate the association between self-reported shyness and peer rejection. It was hypothesized that higher levels of self-reported shyness would predict higher levels of peer rejection only in the urban group on the basis of previous studies in China that showed shy children in metropolitan areas experience various adjustment difficulties, including peer problems, while shy children living in rural regions are well-functioning academically and socially (Chen et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2012). It has been suggested that increasing exposure to Western values and extensive economic reforms toward a market economy have led to major social and cultural changes in metropolitan areas in China (Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009, Chen et al; 2011; Liu et al, 2012). Due to the increased value of initiative and assertiveness in the competitive market-oriented modern society, shy-inhibited behaviors, once considered adaptive in traditional Chinese culture,

have become increasingly incompatible with current social and cultural trends, which puts children with high levels of shyness at a disadvantage in terms of social and school success in modern cities (Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009, Chen et al; 2011; Liu et al, 2012). In contrast, in rural regions, the influences of Western values and market-oriented economic reforms are less pervasive and traditional values of group harmony and self-restraint of personal expression are still reserved to a great extent (Chen et al., 2011).

The current study highlights an important difference between China and Vietnam. This research found that in both the urban and the rural groups higher levels of self-reported shyness predicted higher levels of peer rejection. Vietnam is a small country where all policies are implemented under the centralized planning of the one-party government system (Govindasamy et al., 2014; Painter, 2003). Therefore, it is possible that the implementation of the Doi Moi (Reform) and Mo Cua (Open Door) policies have been highly consistent and, thus, Western influence does not vary significantly across regions, rendering the implications of shyness similar in urban and rural areas. Additionally, in recent years, the Ministry of Education has been shifting the traditional teacher-led education system in which students sit quietly and listen to the lecture towards a learner-directed model (Nuttall et al., 2012; Tibbetts, 2007). Accordingly, the national standardized textbooks as well as school boards and teachers across the country are mandated to promote self-directed and group activities (Nuttall et al., 2012; Tibbetts, 2007). Consistent within the school system across Vietnam, students' academic performance is no longer assessed only by test grades but now is also evaluated based on their participation in classroom activities and group work (Nuttall et al., 2012; Tibbetts, 2007). Consequently, in both urban and rural areas, children with high levels of shyness,

due to their social wariness, may experience challenges in these innovative learning activities, and thus can be considered less academically competent and regarded as undesirable learning partners by their classmates, making these children subject to peer rejection and exclusion.

Shyness and Parenting Behaviors

This study found that higher levels of self-reported shyness predicted higher levels of harsh, punitive parenting behaviors in both mothers and fathers. As shyness has consistently been considered deviant and maladaptive in Western culture and has increasingly been considered an undesirable trait in modern Eastern societies (e.g., China, Taiwan, South Korea), studies in both Western and Eastern contexts have shown that shy, withdrawn behaviors in children can provoke negative affective and behavioral responses in parents (e.g., Cheah & Park, 2006; Kiel & Buss, 2013; Miller et al., 2011; Nelson et al., 2006; Rubin et al., 2002). Particularly, parents may feel embarrassed, disappointed, or angry by their child's shy, inhibited behaviors, and thus might be driven to act in a power-assertive, punitive manner (e.g., directiveness, coercion, scolding, shaming) to forcefully change those behaviors (Cheah & Park, 2006; Kiel & Buss, 2013; Miller et al., 2011; Nelson et al., 2006; Rubin et al., 2002).

The finding that higher levels of self-reported shyness predict higher levels of harsh, punitive parenting in both parents extends previous research on the relationship between shyness and parenting behaviors because most studies involve only mothers, not both parents. In addition, it should be noted that the association between self-reported shyness and paternal harsh parenting was stronger than that between shyness and maternal harsh parenting. Given that Confucian-based cultures (e.g., China, Japan, South

Korea, Vietnam) emphasize patriarchy and filial piety (particularly in the father-child relationship), fathers may have a critical role in the socialization and development of children in some Eastern societies (Cheah & Park, 2006). In Vietnam, Confucianism guides family and social roles of men and women, with men being the central figures and decision-makers in the family (Locke, Ngan Hoa, & Thanh Tam, 2012; Mestechkina et al., 2014). Fathers play a less direct role in child rearing in infancy and early childhood, but become increasingly involved in middle childhood and adolescence, and the discipline role is traditionally associated with fathers (Locke et al., 2012). This helps explain the findings of the current study; particularly, when shy-inhibited behaviors are considered maladaptive by parents, the fathers of shy adolescents are likely to take on the prominent role in modifying these undesirable behaviors.

While research in Western contexts indicated some parents may react to shyness and inhibition with concern and have a desire to protect their children from distress or negative social experiences by exhibiting overprotective behaviors (e.g., Kiel & Buss, 2011; Hastings & Rubin, 1999; Mills & Rubin, 1998; Rubin et al., 1997; Rubin et al., 1999), this study found that self-reported shyness was not a significant predictor of overprotective parenting in either parent. Overprotective parenting is characterized by high levels of both warmth and control (Becker, 1964); in contrast, harsh-punitive parenting (also referred to as authoritarian parenting) is characterized by low warmth and high control (Baumrind, 1991). To maintain the parent-child hierarchy in Confucian-based cultures (e.g., China, Vietnam, Japan, South Korea), parents, especially fathers, are expected to keep an emotional distance from their children and engage in strict, power-assertive child rearing strategies such as rigorous teaching, shaming, and corporal

punishment (Xiong, Detzner, & Rettig, 2001; Xu, 2014; Yoo & Miller, 2011). It is understandable, therefore, that in the current study self-reported shyness was found to predict harsh-punitive parenting, but not overprotective parenting.

In addition, it is possible that the association between self-reported shyness and harsh-punitive parenting in this study was bidirectional because various studies have identified transactional-bidirectional interactions between shyness and such parenting behaviors (e.g., Hastings et al., 2008; Miller et al., 2011; Mills & Rubin, 1998; Rubin et al., 2002, Van Zalk & Kerr, 2011). When parents exhibit directiveness (telling the child what to do and demanding the child to follow) or coercion (using physical force to push the child toward the challenging situation, using punishment or threatening to use punishment to make the child obey), they may exacerbate the child's feelings of anxiety and distress, and their harsh, forceful control may prevent the child from developing a sense of autonomy and independent coping strategies (Mills & Rubin, 1998). In addition, when parents use psychological control (e.g., inducing guilt, shaming, showing rejection, withdrawing affection) to make the child comply, it can cause the child to develop negative thoughts and feelings about the self and adversely affect his or her self-esteem, making a shy child even more likely to feel anxious and withdraw from novel or challenging situations (Miller et al., 2011; Mills & Rubin, 1998; Rubin et al., 2002, Van Zalk & Kerr, 2011). While there is little research on the influence of parenting behaviors on shyness in Eastern societies, a recent study in China found that parents' report of harsh-punitive behaviors (i.e., directiveness, shaming) predicted children's anxious shyness in familiar peer settings in elementary school (Xu, Zhang, et al., 2009). As such, future research in Eastern contexts should explore whether harsh-punitive parenting

behaviors maintain or exacerbate shyness overtime by assessing shyness and parenting behaviors at multiple times, ideally starting at early childhood, and then at middle childhood, early adolescence, and late adolescence.

Gender did not moderate the link between self-reported shyness and parenting behaviors. While research in Western contexts has shown that shyness in boys is more likely to be discouraged by parents (e.g., Coplan et al., 2004; Eggum et al., 2009; Garside & Klimes-Dougan, 2002; Rubin et al., 2001), research in Eastern contexts has reported mixed findings (Cheah & Park, 2006; Cheah & Rubin, 2004; Chen et al., 1998; Nelson et al., 2006). This study found that both boys and girls who reported high levels of shyness experienced harsh-punitive parenting, indicating that shy-inhibited behaviors are generally regarded negatively by parents. While this study extended previous research by showing that gender did not moderate the link between self-reported shyness and parenting behaviors, more research is needed with larger, more diverse samples to clarify whether there are gender differences in how shyness is perceived and responded to by parents. The relatively small sample size in this study did not provide enough statistical power to detect small, but potentially meaningful gender differences.

Similarly, social contexts (urban versus rural) did not moderate the association between self-reported shyness and parenting behaviors. To my knowledge, there is no research conducted in Eastern societies that examines social contexts as a potential moderator when exploring how shyness is related to parenting beliefs and practices. On the other hand, a recent study in China found that parents in urban and urbanized areas are more likely than parents in rural areas to encourage initiative-taking and that parents' encouragement of initiative taking was more strongly associated with children's

sociability, assertiveness, and leadership in the urban and urbanized groups than in the rural group (Chen & Li, 2012). It has been suggested that parents in urban and urbanized regions realize the increased value of self-directive, assertive, and initiative-taking behaviors in a competitive market-oriented economy in a rapidly-changing Chinese society and adapt their child socialization goals and practices accordingly (Chen & Li, 2012). In contrast, in rural regions where the influences of modernization and Westernization are less pervasive, parents may not see any significant benefit of initiative-taking and thus may maintain traditional Chinese parenting beliefs and practices that generally discourage independence and assertiveness in children (Chen & Li, 2012).

Although Chen and Li (2012) did not directly study how parents perceived and reacted to shyness, their research shows a shift in parents' socialization goals in contemporary Chinese society due to Western influence. Based on this finding, it can be postulated that in modern Vietnamese society, as the extent of exposure to Western values might be relatively similar in urban and rural areas, parents in both social contexts may now appreciate social assertiveness and initiative-taking and consider shy-inhibited behaviors as maladaptive and undesirable. Moreover, it should be noted that the exposure to Western values in rural areas might come from different sources, including centralized economic and educational policies implemented by the one-party government system as well as labor migration within and across Vietnam's borders. Particularly, it is common for people in rural areas to go to metropolitan regions or go overseas to work in factories, construction, or domestic services while their families stay behind (Dang, Tacoli, & Hoang, 2003; Locke et al., 2012). When these people come back to their hometown to visit their families, they may bring along new values and lifestyles (Dang et al., 2003).

Shyness and Social Self-Perceptions

Higher levels of self-reported shyness predicted more negative social self-perceptions (judgments of one's abilities or skills to be successful in social interactions). Specifically, children who reported higher levels of shyness also rated themselves as less socially skilled and less capable of being successful in social contact (indicated by such items as "don't have the social skills to make friends" or "do not know how to become popular" in the Self-Perceptions Profile scale). This is consistent with findings of previous research. Studies in the United States have shown that individuals with high levels of shyness tend to have more negative perceptions of themselves than those who score low on measures of shyness (e.g., Koydemir-Özden & Demir, 2009; Malik & Rafique, 2012; Nelson et al., 2005). Particularly, shyness is related to lower levels of self-esteem (Malik & Rafique, 2012), self-efficacy (Caprara et al., 2003), social self-perceptions (Nelson et al., 2005), global self-worth (Bosacki, 2012); as well as a greater tendency to self-blame or to have self-defeating ideations (Wichman et al., 2004). As children with high levels of shyness often receive negative responses from peers and parents (affirmed with findings in this study), they tend to develop negative thoughts and feelings about themselves, including negative perceptions of their social skills and their abilities to be successful in social contact (e.g., Boivin & Hymel, 1997; Cillessen, 1997; Koydemir-Özden & Demir, 2009; Ladd & Troop-Gordon, 2003; Malik & Rafique, 2012; Nelson et al., 2005). For example, Nelson et al. (2005) found that reticent, withdrawn behaviors at age 4 predicted lower levels of peer acceptance at age 4 and age 7, and peer acceptance at age 4 predicted self-perceptions of cognitive, physical, and social competence at age 7.

In Eastern contexts, there is limited research that examines the association between shyness and self-cognitions. One exception is a recent study in Hong Kong that found shyness predicted lower self-esteem in early adolescence (Chan, 2012). Although no research in Eastern countries examined social self- perceptions in children with high levels of shyness, a short-term longitudinal study in urban China found shyness was related to negative general self-perceptions (how much one likes oneself as a person) at both the start and the end of the school year (Liu et al., 2014). The current study contributes to the literature by identifying significant associations between shyness and social-self-perceptions among early adolescents in a Southeast Asian country. Although this study did not examine peer rejection and harsh-punitive parenting as potential mediators, it is likely that shyness is related to social self-perceptions both directly and indirectly via peer rejection and harsh-punitive parenting. More research is needed to further explore these associations.

In addition, it is possible that the relation between self-reported shyness and social self-perceptions in this study is bidirectional. Particularly, shy children's negative judgments of their social skills and their abilities to be successful in social contact are likely to maintain or even exacerbate their tendency to feel anxious and display inhibited, withdrawn behaviors in interpersonal encounters (Boivin & Hymel, 1997; Caprara, et al., 2003; Cillessen, 1997; Nelson et al., 2005; Rubin et al., 2009). It has been posited that individuals' beliefs about their abilities to succeed in achieving their desired outcomes can influence their motivations and behaviors (Bandura, 1997). Accordingly, it is possible that negative social self-perceptions reinforce shy children's withdrawal motivation and restrain them from initiating or engaging in social interactions. Future

research should employ a longitudinal design to explore how social self-perceptions might be concurrently and predictively related to shyness in Eastern contexts.

Gender and social contexts (urban versus rural) did not moderate the link between self-reported shyness and social self-perceptions. Given that gender and social contexts did not moderate the association between self-reported shyness and any outcome variables, it can be concluded that Vietnamese early adolescents with high levels of shyness share similar experiences. To be specific, they generally receive negative responses from their peers and parents and tend to hold negative social self-perceptions, regardless of their gender and where they reside in Vietnam.

Implications for Intervention

Results in this current study showed that higher levels of self-reported shyness predicted higher levels of peer rejection, higher levels of harsh-punitive parenting, and more negative social self-perceptions for both boys and girls in both urban and rural contexts. These findings have important implications for prevention and intervention programs that aim at promoting shy children's social emotional development.

Firstly, Rose-Krasnor (1997) proposed that interventions should be based on training the skills and motivational characteristics required to help the child attain intra- and interpersonal goals in social interactions. Accordingly, intervention programs for shy children should be centered on social emotional skills training, which may involve the coaching of emotion regulation strategies and social problem solving skills. For example, Coplan, Schneider, Matheson, and Graham (2010) developed and implemented Play Skills for Shy Children, an 8-week social-skills-training facilitated-play program for extremely inhibited preschoolers. They found that the children in the intervention group,

compared to those in the wait-list control group, demonstrated a significantly greater decrease in reticent, solitary behaviors and expression of anxiety as well as a significantly greater increase in group play, peer conversation, social initiations, and positive affect (Coplan et al., 2010).

Secondly, as shyness and social withdrawal could be predicted by behavioral inhibition displayed as early as in infancy (Fox et al., 2001), preventive efforts should begin in early childhood. These programs should also address specific needs of shy children, including the consideration of age and gender (Greco & Morris, 2001). Thirdly, given that the pathways to and from shyness and social withdrawal are interrelated and multidimensional processes, a systemic perspective and an ecological multilevel approach to prevention and intervention should be useful. Ecological Systems Model has been used extensively to develop and evaluate prevention and intervention programs because multilevel approaches, as opposed to individual-focused approaches, are more likely to elicit changes in behaviors (Smith & Hamon, 2012). As the quality of peer relations as well as parenting beliefs and behaviors might serve to maintain, ameliorate, or exacerbate social wariness and withdrawal, preventions and interventions should involve peers and parents. Rubin et al. (2009, p. 163) suggested that different forms of "peer mediated interactions, such as peer-pairing and facilitated play" could be helpful for shy, withdrawn children. For example, in an intervention where socially withdrawn children were paired with sociable playmates in 10 play sessions in a setting with toys that stimulate cooperative play, it was found that facilitated dyadic interaction led to a significant improvement in sociability and prosocial behaviors for withdrawn children (Furman, Rahe, & Hartup, 1979).

Also, it has been found that parent education programs can be effective in improving adjustment outcomes for shy children (e.g., Rapee et al., 2005; Spence, Donovan, & Brechman-Toussaint, 2000). Particularly, when parents are sensitive to their shy children's characteristics and needs, respond with appropriate levels of warmth and control, and provide opportunities to develop age-appropriate autonomy, self-regulation, and coping strategies, parents can help remove their shy children off the maladaptive developmental path (Coplan et al., 2008; Early et al., 2002; Davis & Buss, 2012; Kertes et al., 2009; Rubin et al., 2001). Particularly, it has been suggested that when shy children are gently encouraged (as opposed to being forced) to explore unfamiliar environments and are given more opportunities to engage in peer interactions, they may gradually become less fearful of novel settings and unfamiliar people (Rubin et al., 2001). Also, it was found that when mothers indicated a preference for using supportive emotion socialization strategies in response to child's shy, withdrawn behaviors (e.g., help child plan actions to make social interactions less scary, talk about the fun things they can do with the unfamiliar people), children who were identified as having an inhibited temperament in toddlerhood were more likely to develop effective emotion regulation skills and engage in more adaptive behaviors in peer interactions ("solitary passive play" as opposed to "reticent" behaviors) in kindergarten (Davis & Buss, 2012, p. 816).

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The current study has several limitations. This research only explored the relations of self-reported shyness to social self-perceptions, peer rejection, and parenting behaviors. Future research should also examine the associations between shyness and other psychological and academic outcomes. Recent studies indicated shy children in

contemporary Chinese society experience internalizing problems (loneliness, depression) and low academic achievement (Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2014). In addition, while Rose-Krasnor (1997) postulated that examples of relationship indices in the Index Level of the Social Competence Prism include peer group, friendship, parent-child relationship, and social networks, the proposed study tests only portions of the model (the peer group and the parent-child relationship). Future studies can explore the quality of friendship and the social networks among children who have high levels of shyness.

Moreover, the current study did not employ a longitudinal design and, thus, was not able to test the transactional-bidirectional relations between shyness and adjustment difficulties that has been established in theories and empirical research on the stability and development of shyness across contexts (e.g., Asendorpf & van Aken 1994; Asendorpf, 2009; Gazelle & Ladd, 2003). Particularly, the associations between self-reported shyness and peer rejection, parenting behaviors, and social self-perceptions in the present study may actually be bidirectional. Longitudinal studies conducted in Western contexts found shyness, especially stable shyness in familiar peer settings, may lead to peer difficulties and negative self-perceptions, which, in turn, reinforces shy children's tendency to experience feelings of anxiety and display reserved, inhibited behaviors in peer interactions (e.g., Asendorpf & van Aken, 1994; Booth-LaForce et al., 2006, 2012; Oh et al., 2008; Karevold et al., 2012). Future research can extend this study by following children over the course of their first year in middle school to explore how shyness at the beginning of the year (shyness toward unfamiliarity) versus shyness at the middle and end of the year (shyness in familiar peer contexts) may influence children's

peer relationships, how peer difficulties may influence social self-perceptions and maintain or exacerbate initial shyness.

In addition, shy, inhibited behaviors in children can evoke concern or aversive feelings in parents and thus may naturally drive parents to be power-assertive, punitive toward children, which, in turn, may negatively influence children's confidence in their ability to handle challenging social situations (e.g., Booth-Laforce& Oxford, 2008; Rubin et al., 2002; Williams et al., 2009). Longitudinal studies, therefore, are needed to examine the transactional-bidirectional relations between shyness and parenting behaviors, how parenting behaviors may mediate the link between shyness and self-perceptions, as well as how social self-perceptions may be concurrently and predictively related to shyness.

Furthermore, the proposed study only collected self-report data from children. Future studies should involve multiple informants, including parents, teachers, and classmates, and natural observations to attain a more comprehensive assessment. For example, the Revised Class Play (RCP; Masten, Morison, & Pellegrini, 1985), a peer assessment of social functioning, has been used extensively in shyness research with Chinese children and has been proved a valid and reliable measure (e.g., Chen et al., 1992; Chen et al., 1999; Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2012; Rubin et al., 1995). Children are asked to imagine that they are the director of a class play and for each role (e.g., "very shy") they need to nominate three classmates whose characteristics best suit the role (Masten et al., 1985). Nominations received from all classmates are used to compute each item score for each child (Masten, 1985). In addition, it has been suggested that "children's self-perceptions are influenced by their direct experiences of acceptance and rejection during peer interactions" (Nelson et al., 2005, p. 187).

Therefore, in addition to self-report, natural observations of children's actual experiences with peers can be an objective and effective measure of children's peer interactions and peer relations.

Moreover, while this study extended previous research by showing that gender and social context did not moderate the link between self-reported shyness and the outcome variables, the relatively small sample size in this study did not provide enough statistical power to detect small but potentially meaningful moderating effects. Therefore, more research is needed with larger, more diverse samples to elucidate these associations.

Finally, this study asked children to compare their family with that of their classmates and rate their family's socioeconomic status on a scale of 1 = *very poor* to 6 = *very rich*. Future research should take a more comprehensive approach to assessing socioeconomic status. For example, it has been postulated that composite measures of SES typically consist of combinations of at least two of the following measures: parental education level, parental marital status, parental employment status, parental occupation prestige, and household income (Ensminger & Fotherill, 2003).

Conclusion

Shyness represents an approach-avoidance motivational conflict in which the desire to interact with others is simultaneously inhibited by social wariness (Asendorpf, 1990). Shyness can be considered a universal phenomenon due to its biological foundations, but how shyness is expressed, evaluated, and responded to is culture-specific (Xu et al., 2009).

Shyness has been consistently associated with peer difficulties, maladaptive parenting behaviors, and internalizing problems in Western countries, like Canada, the

United States, and Germany (e.g., Asendorpf & van Aken, 1994; Coplan et al., 2008; Hughes & Coplan, 2010; Karevold et al., 2012; Van Zalk & Kerr, 2011). In contrast, shyness seems more prevalent and has been linked to maternal warmth and support, positive teacher ratings of school social competence, peer acceptance, as well as nominations for leadership positions in Eastern countries, such as China and India (e.g., Bowker & Raja, 2011; Chen et al., 1998; Chen et al., 1999). Recently, however, researchers have argued that due to increasing Western influence and subsequent dramatic social and cultural changes, inhibited-withdrawn behaviors are increasingly associated with negative reactions from peers, teachers, and parents in contemporary Eastern societies like Mainland China, Taiwan, and South Korea (Cheah & Park, 2006; Chen et al., 2005; Chen et al., 2009; Liu et al., 2012; Wei & Chen, 2009).

Motivated to understand the implications of shyness for children in Eastern societies, the purpose of this study was to examine the associations between self-reported shyness and peer rejection, social self-perceptions, and parenting behaviors in Vietnam, a country in Southeast Asia. Results showed that higher levels of self-reported shyness predicted higher levels of peer rejection, higher levels of harsh-punitive parenting, and more negative social self-perceptions for both boys and girls in both urban and rural contexts. These findings point out the need for the development of appropriate and effective prevention and intervention programs for shy children in Vietnam and highlight the need for more extensive research on shyness in children in Vietnam, as well as in other cultural settings.

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Figure 1.

Application of Rose-Krasnor's (1997) Social Competence Prism Model

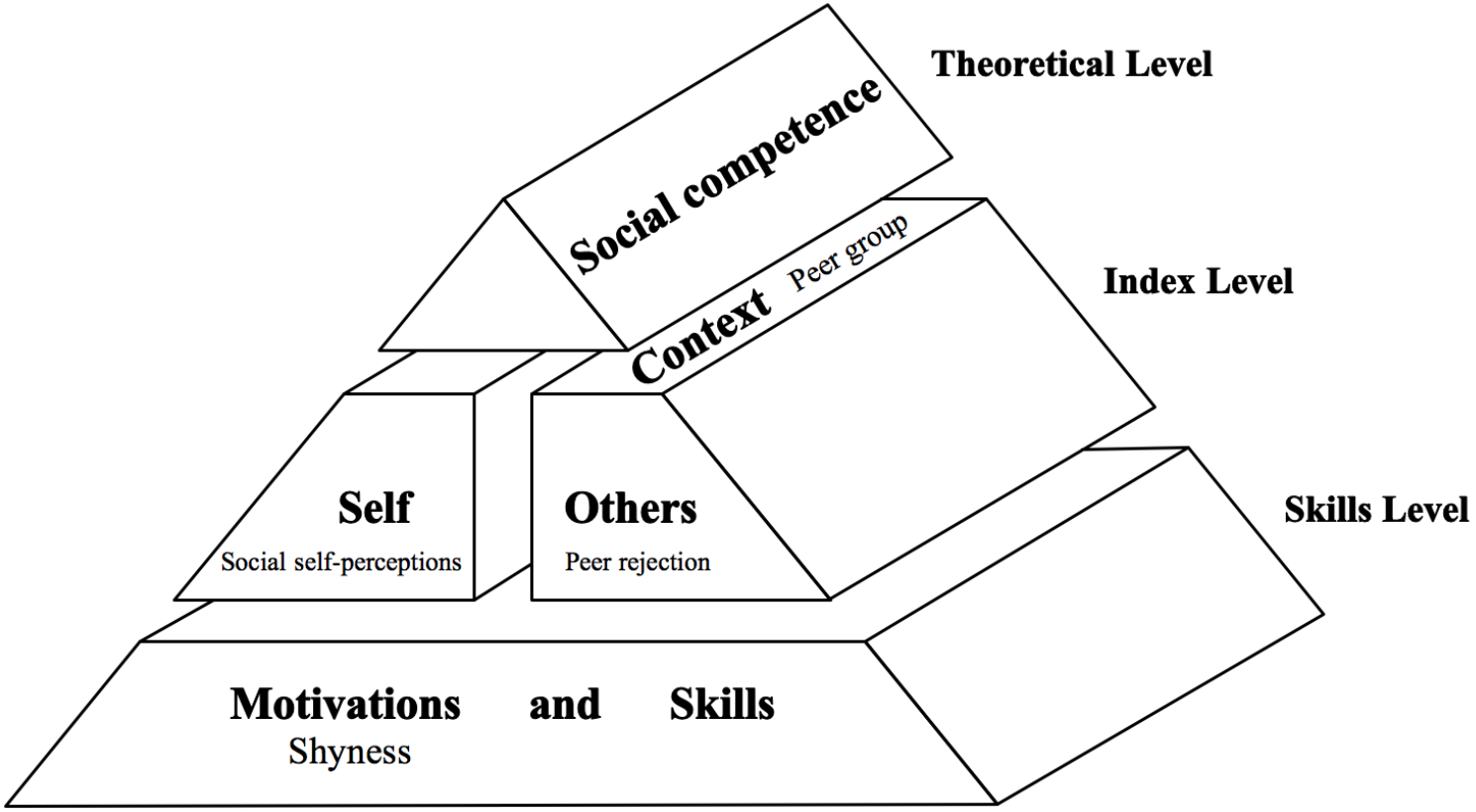

Figure 2.

Application of Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1989) Ecological Systems Model

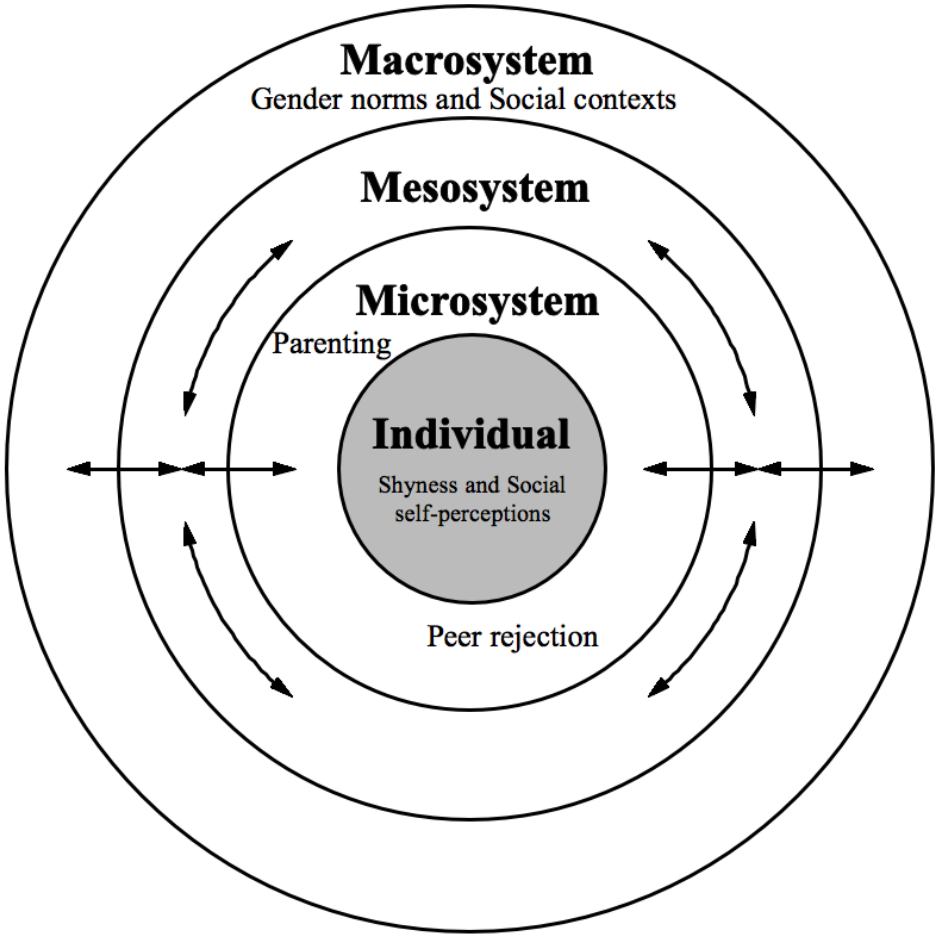

Figure 3.

Overall summary of missing values

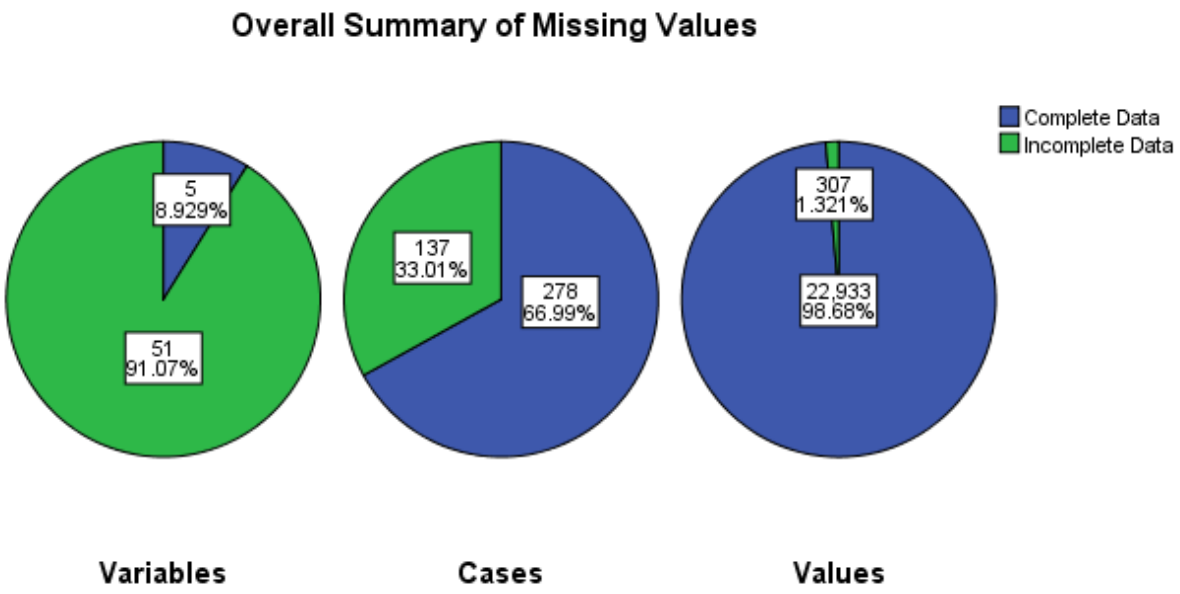

Figure 4.

Typical graphical depiction of moderation

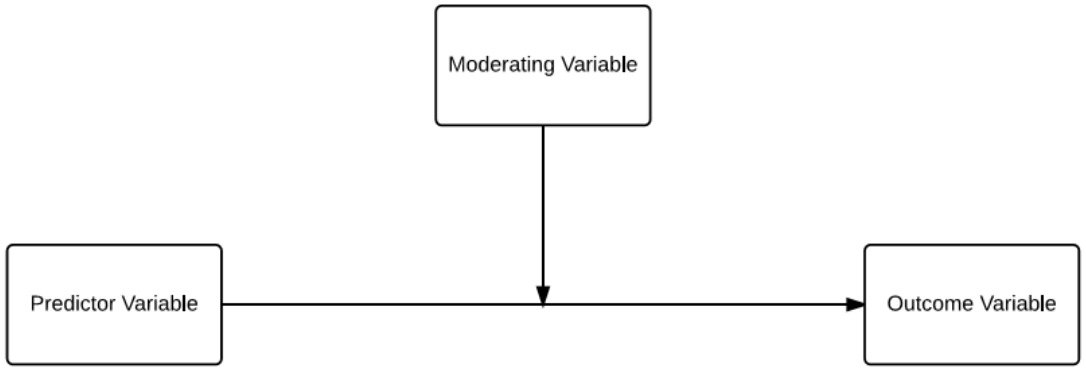

Table 1.

Test statistics for homogeneity of variance - male versus female (n = 415)

Variable	Levene Statistic	*p* value
SES	F(1, 411) = .01	.91
Shyness	F(1, 396) = 1.524	.22
Peer Rejection	F(1, 401) = 9.20	.00
SSPerceptions	F(1, 378) = 1.96	.16
OverprotectiveF	F(1, 382) = .66	.42
OverprotectiveM	F(1, 396) = 3.67	.06
HarshM	F(1, 402) = 5.12	.02
HarshF	F(1, 382) = 18.13	.00

Note. SSPerceptions = Social self-perceptions, OverprotectiveF = Paternal overprotective parenting, OverprotectiveM = Maternal overprotective parenting, HarshM = Maternal harsh parenting, HarshF = Paternal harsh parenting.

Table 2.

Test statistics for homogeneity of variance - urban versus rural (n = 415)

Variable	Levene Statistic	*p* value
SES	F(1, 411) = 10.20	.00
Shyness	F(1, 396) = 5.00	.03
Peer Rejection	F(1, 401) = 6.48	.01
SSPerceptions	F(1, 378) = .57	.45
OverprotectiveF	F(1, 382) = 13.12	.00
OverprotectiveM	F(1, 396) = 10.84	.00
HarshM	F(1, 402) = .18	.67
HarshF	F(1, 382) = .74	.39

Note. SSPerceptions = Social self-perceptions, OverprotectiveF = Paternal overprotective parenting, OverprotectiveM = Maternal overprotective parenting, HarshM = Maternal harsh parenting, HarshF = Paternal harsh parenting.

Table 3.

Correlations between variables (n = 415)

Variables	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Range	M	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
1. SES	-.18**	-.16**	.13*	-.12*	-.15**	.02	-.01	1-6	3.75	.95	-.00	.07
2. Shyness	--	.54**	-.33**	.11*	.07	.21**	.29**	4-20	8.30	3.50	.70	-.07
3. Peer Rejection		--	-.37**	.12*	.11*	.29**	.35**	4-20	7.06	3.44	1.26	1.34
4. SSPerceptions			--	-.22**	-.23**	-.17**	-.16**	6-24	16.79	3.73	-.41	.18
5. OverprotectiveF				--	.66**	.06	.10	7-34	19.43	5.99	-.19	-.64
6. OverprotectiveM					--	.13**	-.07	7-32	19.58	5.50	-.17	-.60
7. HarshM						--	.54**	7-35	12.51	5.38	1.52	2.64
8. HarshF							--	7-35	12.14	5.28	1.51	2.73

Note. SSPerceptions = Social self-perceptions, OverprotectiveF = Paternal overprotective parenting, OverprotectiveM = Maternal overprotective parenting, HarshM = Maternal harsh parenting, HarshF = Paternal harsh parenting.

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$ (two-tailed).

Table 4.

Effects of shyness and gender on peer rejection (n = 415)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
Variables	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta
SES	-.16**	.05**	-.16**	-.08	.04	-.08	-.08	.04	-.08
Divorced	-.25	.29	-.04	.05	.25	.01	.06	.25	.01
Remarried	-.15	.45	-.02	.01	.38	.01	.10	.38	.01
Shyness				.52***	.04***	.52***	.55***	.06***	.55***
Gender				.25**	.09**	.12**	.25**	.09**	.12**
Shyness*Gender							-.05	.09	-.03
R-Squared	.03			.31			.31		
R-Squared Change				.28			.00		
F	3.72*			34.43***			28.69***		

Note. Female = 0, Male = 1.

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$ (two-tailed).

Table 5.

Effects of shyness and social context on peer rejection (n = 415)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
Variables	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta
SES	-.16**	.05**	-.16**	.01	.05	.01	.00	.05	.00
Divorced	-.25	.29	-.04	.11	.24	.02	.10	.24	.02
Remarried	-.15	.45	-.02	.04	.37	.00	.04	.37	.00
Shyness				.47***	.04***	.46***	.42***	.06***	.42***
Social context				-.46***	.10***	-.23***	-.45***	.10***	-.22***
Shyness*SocialContext							.10	.09	.07
R-Squared	.03			.34			.34		
R-Squared Change				.31			.00		
F	3.72*			38.52***			32.35***		

Note. Rural = 0, Urban = 1.

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$ (two-tailed).

Table 6.

Effects of shyness and gender on maternal harsh parenting (n = 415)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
Variables	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta
SES	.00	.05	.00	.04	.05	.04	.04	.05	.04
Divorced	-.53	.30	-.09	-.39	.29	-.07	-.44	.29	-.08
Remarried	.15	.46	.02	.23	.45	.03	.22	.44	.02
Shyness				.21***	.05***	.21***	.14***	.07***	.14***
Gender				.19	.10	.09	.19	.10	.09
Shyness*Gender							.13	.10	.10
R-Squared	.01			.06			.06		
R-Squared Change				.05			.00		
F	1.11			4.88***			4.37***		

Note. Female = 0, Male = 1.

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$ (two-tailed).

Table 7.

Effects of shyness and social context on maternal harsh parenting (n = 415)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
Variables	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta
SES	.00	.05	.00	.07	.05	.06	.07	.05	.07
Divorced	-.53	.30	-.09	-.39	.29	-.07	-.37	.29	-.06
Remarried	.15	.46	.02	.23	.45	.02	.23	.45	.03
Shyness				.19***	.05***	.19***	.28***	.07***	.28***
Social context				-.15	.12	-.07	-.16	.12	-.08
Shyness*SocialContext							-.20	.11	-.13
R-Squared	.01			.06			.06		
R-Squared Change				.05			.00		
F	1.11			4.48**			4.36***		

Note. Rural = 0, Urban = 1.

* p<.05; **p<.01, ***p<.001 (two-tailed).

Table 8.

Effects of shyness and gender on paternal harsh parenting (n = 415)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
Variables	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta
SES	-.03	.05	-.03	.02	.05	.02	.02	.05	.02
Divorced	.23	.34	.03	.41	.32	.06	.42	.33	.06
Remarried	.41	.45	.05	.52	.43	.06	.52	.43	.06
Shyness				.30***	.05***	.30***	.31***	.07***	.30***
Gender				.33**	.10**	.16**	.33**	.10**	.16**
Shyness*Gender							-.01	.10	-.01
R-Squared	.00			.11			.11		
R-Squared Change				.10			.00		
F	.50			9.65***			8.03***		

Note. Female = 0, Male = 1.

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$ (two-tailed).

Table 9.

Effects of shyness and social context on paternal harsh parenting (n = 415)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
Variables	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta
SES	-.03	.05	-.03	.08	.05	.08	.08	.05	.08
Divorced	.23	.34	.03	.42	.33	.06	.43	.33	.07
Remarried	.41	.45	.05	.50	.43	.06	.51	.43	.06
Shyness				.26***	.05***	.26***	.30***	.07***	.30***
Social context				-.29*	.12*	-.14*	-.29*	.12*	-.15*
Shyness*SocialContext							-.09	.11	-.06
R-Squared	.00			.11			.11		
R-Squared Change				.11			.00		
F	.50			8.65***			7.32***		

Note. Rural = 0, Urban = 1.

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$ (two-tailed).

Table 10.

Effects of shyness and gender on social self-perceptions (n = 415)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
Variables	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta
SES	.14*	.05*	.13*	.08	.05	.08	.08	.05	.08
Divorced	.46	.31	.08	.17	.29	.03	.16	.30	.03
Remarried	.19	.45	.02	.07	.43	.01	.07	.43	.01
Shyness				-.31***	.05***	-.30***	-.32***	.07***	-.31***
Gender				-.29**	.10**	-.14**	-.29**	.10**	-.14**
Shyness*Gender							.02	.10	.01
R-Squared	.02			.13			.13		
R-Squared Change				.11			.00		
F	2.98*			10.95***			9.10***		

Note. Female = 0, Male = 1.

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$ (two-tailed).

Table 11.

Effects of shyness and social context on social self-perceptions (n = 415)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
Variables	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta	B	SE B	Beta
SES	.14*	.05*	.13*	.01	.05	.01	.00	.05	.00
Divorced	.46	.31	.08	.17	.29	.03	.17	.29	.03
Remarried	.19	.45	.02	.12	.43	.01	.12	.43	.01
Shyness				-.25***	.05***	-.24***	-.27***	.07***	-.27***
Social context				.42***	.11***	.21***	.43***	.11***	.21***
Shyness*SocialContext							.06	.11	.04
R-Squared	.02			.15			.15		
R-Squared Change				.13			.00		
F	2.98*			12.16***			10.16***		

Note. Rural = 0, Urban = 1.

* $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$ (two-tailed).