

Abstract

This study compared shy and non-shy adolescents in online and offline contexts on their self-disclosure patterns. Secondary school adolescents (N=152) participated in either an online questionnaire or a paper-and-pencil format questionnaire. The dependent variables include real world self-disclosure towards cross-sex friends and cross-sex groups, their amount and quality of self-disclosure online, and their loneliness level. Individuals were classified as shy or non-shy based on the scores in Revised Shyness Scale (Cheek, 1983). Results suggested a gender difference in their real world self-disclosure pattern, with the difference between the shy and non-shy female groups as significant. As expected, all the groups were not significantly different on all the domains of self-disclosure in the online context. The results were interpreted as support for a disinhibition characteristic in computer-mediated communication (CMC), in which anonymity and the absence of interactive cues in online context encouraged shy individuals' to increase their level of self-disclosure. Furthermore, the relationship between revealing real identity and self-disclosure will also be discussed.