




Parental Overcontrol and Adolescent Social Withdrawal: The Mediating Role of Fear of Evaluation

Mariana. Nikolova¹, Ibrahim. Adeyemi^{2*}, Neha. Sharma³

¹ Department of Family Counseling, New Bulgarian University, Sofia, Bulgaria

² Department of Educational Psychology, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

³ Department of Clinical Psychology, University of Delhi, Delhi, India

* Corresponding author email address: ibrahim.adeyemi@ui.edu.ng

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aimed to investigate the relationship between parental overcontrol and adolescent social withdrawal, with fear of negative and positive evaluation as potential mediating variables.

Methods: The research employed a descriptive correlational design and included a sample of 551 Nigerian adolescents selected based on the Morgan and Krejcie table. Data were collected using standardized self-report instruments: the Psychological Control Scale–Youth Self-Report (PCS-YSR) for parental overcontrol, the Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (BFNE), the Fear of Positive Evaluation Scale (FPES), and the Withdrawn/Depressed subscale of the Youth Self-Report (YSR). Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated using SPSS-27, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted via AMOS-21 to examine direct and indirect pathways among the variables.

Findings: Pearson correlation analysis showed that parental overcontrol was significantly associated with fear of negative evaluation ($r = .51, p < .001$), fear of positive evaluation ($r = .47, p < .001$), and social withdrawal ($r = .42, p < .001$). SEM results confirmed that the structural model had good fit indices ($\chi^2 = 146.23, df = 84, \chi^2/df = 1.74, CFI = 0.97, RMSEA = 0.041$). Parental overcontrol had significant direct effects on fear of negative evaluation ($\beta = .51, p < .001$), fear of positive evaluation ($\beta = .48, p < .001$), and social withdrawal ($\beta = .27, p < .001$). Both fears significantly predicted social withdrawal (FNE: $\beta = .45, p < .001$; FPE: $\beta = .38, p < .001$). Indirect effects of parental overcontrol on social withdrawal via FNE ($B = 0.19, p < .001$) and FPE ($B = 0.14, p < .001$) were also significant.

Conclusion: These findings highlight that fear of evaluation—both negative and positive—serves as a psychological mechanism linking parental overcontrol to social withdrawal in adolescents, emphasizing the importance of addressing cognitive-affective vulnerabilities in preventive and therapeutic interventions.

Keywords: Parental overcontrol, adolescent social withdrawal, fear of negative evaluation, fear of positive evaluation.

1. Introduction

Adolescence is a developmental stage marked by intense social exploration, identity formation, and increasing autonomy from caregivers. Yet, this period can also be characterized by vulnerabilities to emotional and social disturbances, particularly when parent-child dynamics are marked by overcontrol. Parental overcontrol—defined as intrusive, restrictive, and autonomy-limiting parenting—has been consistently linked to maladaptive adolescent outcomes, including diminished social functioning and heightened anxiety-related symptoms (Ullman & Tunç, 2023; Zhang, 2025). Social withdrawal, a behavioral pattern involving the consistent avoidance of social interaction, is one such outcome. Socially withdrawn adolescents often experience difficulties establishing peer relationships and managing interpersonal challenges, which can subsequently influence their academic, emotional, and psychological development (Fredrick & Luebbe, 2022; Trompeter et al., 2023).

One potential mechanism by which parental overcontrol influences social withdrawal is through the adolescent's fear of evaluation. Fear of evaluation comprises both fear of negative evaluation (FNE)—the apprehension about being judged unfavorably—and fear of positive evaluation (FPE)—the anxiety associated with being praised or positively noticed, both of which are central to social anxiety and interpersonal avoidance (Cook et al., 2022; Hofmann, 2025). The Bivalent Fear of Evaluation Model suggests that both types of evaluative fears can co-occur and serve as precursors to various psychopathological outcomes, especially in socially anxious populations (Johnson et al., 2020). Adolescents subjected to overly controlling parental behaviors may internalize a heightened sensitivity to how they are perceived by others, becoming preoccupied with judgment in both positive and negative forms, thereby reducing their willingness to engage in social settings (Jeon & Park, 2023; Shin & Rodebaugh, 2023).

Fear of negative evaluation has long been established as a central construct in the development of social withdrawal and anxiety. It refers to the distress experienced in anticipation of critical judgment from others and has been linked to both avoidant behaviors and maladaptive thought patterns (Auliannisa et al., 2024; Iqbal & Ajmal, 2019). Studies indicate that adolescents with high FNE are more likely to disengage from peer interactions and classroom participation, which can reinforce their sense of social ineptitude and further entrench withdrawal behaviors

(Fredrick & Luebbe, 2022; Kim & Seo, 2024). Moreover, parental overcontrol may exacerbate these fears by fostering an environment in which mistakes are magnified and autonomy is suppressed, undermining adolescents' self-confidence in social contexts (Ullman & Tunç, 2023; Zeng & Zhu, 2021).

Fear of positive evaluation, although less frequently examined, is equally relevant. FPE involves unease in response to praise or public recognition and is often rooted in beliefs that positive attention will increase future expectations or draw unwanted scrutiny (Kocijan & Harris, 2016; Weinbrecht et al., 2020). Adolescents reporting high levels of FPE may resist social opportunities not because they fear criticism, but because they fear the burden of maintaining perceived competence or likability. Parental overcontrol, with its emphasis on perfectionism and compliance, may intensify this dynamic, as adolescents learn to avoid attention as a protective strategy (Hofmann, 2025; Tsarpalis-Fragkoulidis et al., 2022). Thus, both forms of evaluative fear may mediate the relationship between parental overcontrol and social withdrawal, highlighting the need for integrated models that account for these dual influences (Reichenberger et al., 2017; Shahul et al., 2022).

The literature further suggests that parental overcontrol limits adolescents' opportunities to practice independent social behavior, which can diminish their perceived self-efficacy and reinforce social avoidance (Dismuke, 2021; Kim & Seo, 2024). When adolescents are not allowed to navigate social challenges independently, they may develop maladaptive expectations about interpersonal encounters, including assumptions of inevitable judgment or failure (Ahn & Choi, 2023; Zhang, 2025). Over time, these assumptions may evolve into persistent fears that inhibit social exploration and lead to chronic withdrawal. In this regard, parental overcontrol functions not only as a direct predictor of withdrawal but also as a distal contributor to internalized cognitive vulnerabilities such as fear of evaluation (Cartagena, 2020; Rahmat et al., 2022).

Although the mediating role of fear of evaluation in the link between parenting and adolescent outcomes has received some attention, the current understanding remains fragmented. Most empirical work has examined FNE and FPE in isolation, without considering their combined or interactive effects. Recent research, however, has emphasized the need to explore how both fears operate together in shaping adolescent behavior (Cook et al., 2022; Johnson et al., 2020). For instance, a study by Fredrick and Luebbe (2022) found that adolescents who experienced both

high FNE and high FPE showed greater impairments in peer relationships and higher symptoms of social anxiety than those with elevated scores on only one type of fear (Fredrick & Luebbe, 2022). This suggests that dual evaluative fears may amplify the risk of social withdrawal, particularly in contexts where parental overcontrol is present.

Importantly, cultural context may also influence the expression and interpretation of parental overcontrol and evaluation fears. In collectivistic societies like Nigeria, parental involvement may be more normative, and adolescent autonomy less emphasized, potentially masking or reshaping how overcontrol is experienced and internalized (Shin & Rodebaugh, 2023; Zhang, 2025). This cultural dynamic warrants the need for regionally grounded investigations that assess whether the pathways proposed in Western-based models generalize to non-Western populations. Furthermore, understanding how Nigerian adolescents uniquely respond to perceived parental overcontrol can inform culturally sensitive intervention strategies aimed at reducing social withdrawal and enhancing social competence.

To address these gaps, the present study aims to examine the mediating role of fear of evaluation—encompassing both FNE and FPE—in the relationship between parental overcontrol and adolescent social withdrawal in a Nigerian adolescent population.

2. Methods

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The final sample included 551 adolescents from various regions of Nigeria. Among the participants, 284 (51.54%) were female and 267 (48.46%) were male. The age of participants ranged from 13 to 18 years, with a mean age of 15.72 years ($SD = 1.43$). In terms of educational level, 192 participants (34.84%) were in junior secondary school, while 359 participants (65.15%) were in senior secondary school. Regarding parental education, 204 participants (37.02%) reported that their fathers had completed tertiary education, while 178 participants (32.30%) reported secondary education, and the remaining 169 participants (30.67%) indicated primary education or less. Similarly, 187 participants (33.93%) reported that their mothers had completed tertiary education, 201 (36.47%) secondary education, and 163 (29.58%) primary education or less. These demographics reflect a diverse sample suitable for investigating the research questions.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Social Withdrawal

To assess adolescent social withdrawal, the study employed the Youth Self-Report (YSR) Withdrawn/Depressed Subscale developed by Achenbach and Rescorla (2001). This subscale is part of the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA) and includes 8 items specifically targeting behaviors and emotions associated with withdrawal, such as preferring to be alone or lacking interest in social interactions. Respondents rate items on a 3-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (not true) to 2 (very true or often true), with higher scores indicating greater levels of withdrawal. The YSR has demonstrated robust psychometric properties, with extensive evidence supporting its validity and reliability across diverse adolescent populations. Numerous studies have confirmed the internal consistency of the Withdrawn/Depressed subscale, reporting Cronbach's alpha coefficients typically above 0.70 (Iannattone et al., 2021; McVarnock & Closson, 2022; Rondon et al., 2020).

2.2.2. Fear of Evaluation

Fear of evaluation was measured using the Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale – Brief Version (BFNE) developed by Leary (1983) and later revised by Carleton, McCreary, Norton, and Asmundson (2006). The BFNE consists of 12 items designed to assess apprehension about being judged negatively by others. The brief version retains the core features of the original 30-item scale while offering improved psychometric performance and time efficiency. Respondents indicate agreement on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all characteristic of me) to 5 (extremely characteristic of me), with higher scores indicating greater fear of negative evaluation. The BFNE has two subscales: straightforwardly worded items and reverse-worded items. Research has consistently confirmed its factorial validity and internal reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values frequently reported between 0.85 and 0.91 (Hofmann, 2025; Shin & Rodebaugh, 2023; Wilson et al., 2023).

2.2.3. Parental Overcontrol

Parental overcontrol was assessed using the Psychological Control Scale – Youth Self-Report (PCS-YSR) developed by Barber (1996). This 8-item scale measures adolescents' perceptions of intrusive and

manipulative parenting behaviors that constrain autonomy and psychological development. Items assess behaviors such as guilt induction, love withdrawal, and invalidation of feelings, rated on a 3-point scale from 1 (not like my parent) to 3 (a lot like my parent). The PCS-YSR yields a single score representing the degree of perceived psychological control by parents, with higher scores indicating higher levels of parental overcontrol. This measure has been widely used in adolescent research and exhibits strong psychometric properties, with reported Cronbach's alpha values commonly exceeding 0.70. Its convergent and discriminant validity have been supported across various cultural contexts (Neitzel & Stright, 2004; Гордеева et al., 2024).

2.3. Data Analysis

Prior to conducting Pearson correlation and Structural Equation Modeling analyses, assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity were evaluated. Skewness values for all key variables ranged from -0.41 to 0.52, and kurtosis values ranged from -0.78 to 0.69, indicating approximate univariate normality. Scatterplots and residual plots supported the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity. Tolerance values ranged from 0.73 to 0.88, and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values ranged

from 1.13 to 1.36, suggesting no issues with multicollinearity. Additionally, Mahalanobis distance was computed to assess multivariate outliers, and no significant violations were identified. These results confirmed that the data met all necessary assumptions for conducting Pearson correlation and SEM analyses.

3. Findings and Results

The sample consisted of 396 parents from various regions of Morocco. Of these, 234 participants (59.1%) were mothers and 162 (40.9%) were fathers. In terms of age, 48 participants (12.1%) were between 20 and 29 years old, 178 (44.9%) were between 30 and 39, 122 (30.8%) were between 40 and 49, and 48 (12.1%) were 50 years or older. Regarding educational background, 102 participants (25.8%) had a high school diploma or less, 189 (47.7%) held a bachelor's degree, and 105 (26.5%) had completed graduate-level education. The majority of participants (267; 67.4%) reported living in urban areas, while 129 (32.6%) resided in rural regions. Additionally, 312 participants (78.8%) were living in intact two-parent households, whereas 84 (21.2%) were co-parenting from separate households following separation or divorce.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Parental Overcontrol	19.46	4.27
Fear of Negative Evaluation	39.87	6.13
Fear of Positive Evaluation	33.21	5.42
Adolescent Social Withdrawal	11.63	3.29

In Table 1, the descriptive statistics show that the mean score for child behavioral problems was 61.47 (SD = 10.82), indicating a moderate level of behavioral issues among the sample. Parenting stress had a mean of 89.63 (SD = 14.29), suggesting moderate to high perceived stress levels. Co-parenting quality had a relatively high mean of 148.22 (SD = 17.65), reflecting generally positive co-parenting experiences among participants.

Prior to conducting the linear regression analysis, all necessary assumptions were examined and confirmed. Normality of residuals was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which yielded a non-significant result ($p = .087$),

indicating no violation of normality. Linearity was visually confirmed through scatterplot inspection, and the Durbin-Watson statistic was 1.91, suggesting no significant autocorrelation. Homoscedasticity was checked through standardized residual plots and no pattern was detected. To test for multicollinearity, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were calculated and found to be 1.34 for co-parenting quality and 1.41 for parenting stress, both well below the commonly accepted threshold of 5. These results confirm that the data met all necessary assumptions for linear regression.

Table 2

Pearson Correlations Between Study Variables (N = 396)

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Parental Overcontrol	19.46	4.27
Fear of Negative Evaluation	39.87	6.13
Fear of Positive Evaluation	33.21	5.42
Adolescent Social Withdrawal	11.63	3.29

As shown in Table 2, all variables were significantly correlated in the expected directions. Parental overcontrol was significantly and positively associated with fear of negative evaluation ($r = .51, p < .001$), fear of positive evaluation ($r = .47, p < .001$), and adolescent social withdrawal ($r = .42, p < .001$). Fear of negative evaluation

also showed a strong positive correlation with social withdrawal ($r = .58, p < .001$), while fear of positive evaluation was similarly positively associated ($r = .49, p < .001$). These results support the initial assumption that both types of fear of evaluation may mediate the relationship between parental overcontrol and social withdrawal.

Table 3

Fit Indices for the Structural Equation Model

Fit Index	Value	Threshold for Good Fit
Chi-Square (χ^2)	146.23	—
Degrees of Freedom (df)	84	—
χ^2/df Ratio	1.74	< 3.00
GFI	0.96	> 0.90
AGFI	0.94	> 0.90
CFI	0.97	> 0.95
TLI	0.95	> 0.95
RMSEA	0.041	< 0.06

The model fit indices in Table 3 indicate that the proposed structural model demonstrated a good fit to the data. The chi-square value was 146.23 with 84 degrees of freedom, yielding a χ^2/df ratio of 1.74, which is well below the acceptable threshold of 3.00. Other indices including GFI

(0.96), AGFI (0.94), CFI (0.97), and TLI (0.95) all exceeded their respective cutoffs for good model fit. Additionally, the RMSEA value of 0.041 indicates a close fit of the model to the observed data, further validating the robustness of the hypothesized model.

Table 4

Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects in the Structural Model

Path	B	SE	β	p
Parental Overcontrol → Fear of Negative Evaluation	0.53	0.06	0.51	< .001
Parental Overcontrol → Fear of Positive Evaluation	0.47	0.05	0.48	< .001
Fear of Negative Evaluation → Social Withdrawal	0.36	0.04	0.45	< .001
Fear of Positive Evaluation → Social Withdrawal	0.29	0.03	0.38	< .001
Parental Overcontrol → Social Withdrawal (direct)	0.22	0.05	0.27	< .001
Parental Overcontrol → Social Withdrawal (indirect via FNE)	0.19	0.03	—	< .001
Parental Overcontrol → Social Withdrawal (indirect via FPE)	0.14	0.03	—	< .001
Parental Overcontrol → Social Withdrawal (total)	0.55	0.06	—	< .001

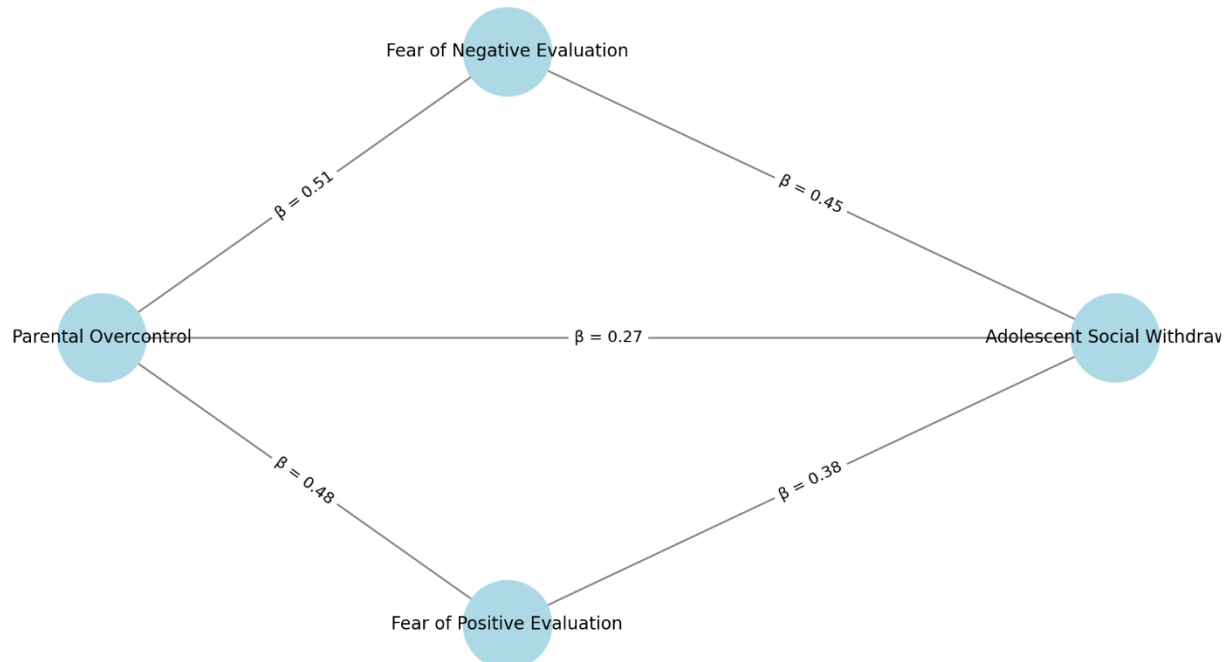
As presented in Table 4, all direct and indirect pathways in the structural model were statistically significant. Parental overcontrol had a significant direct effect on social withdrawal ($B = 0.22, p < .001$), but also exerted notable indirect effects through fear of negative evaluation ($B =$

0.19, $p < .001$) and fear of positive evaluation ($B = 0.14, p < .001$). The total effect of parental overcontrol on adolescent social withdrawal was 0.55, underscoring the substantial role that both evaluative fears play as mediators. These results empirically support the hypothesized model in which fear of

evaluation functions as a mechanism through which parental overcontrol influences adolescent social functioning.

Figure 1

Model with Beta Coefficients



4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between parental overcontrol and adolescent social withdrawal, with fear of evaluation—comprising both fear of negative evaluation (FNE) and fear of positive evaluation (FPE)—as a potential mediating variable. The findings confirmed that parental overcontrol was significantly positively associated with adolescent social withdrawal. Additionally, both FNE and FPE were found to partially mediate this relationship. These results suggest that adolescents who perceive their parents as overcontrolling may internalize a heightened sensitivity to social judgment, leading to avoidance of interpersonal interactions and subsequent social withdrawal. Structural Equation Modeling supported the proposed model, indicating a good overall fit and statistically significant paths from parental overcontrol to both FNE and FPE, and from these fears to social withdrawal.

The finding that parental overcontrol is a significant predictor of adolescent social withdrawal aligns with previous research suggesting that overly controlling parenting styles suppress adolescents' autonomy and hinder

the development of independent social skills (Zhang, 2025). When adolescents are not allowed to make their own choices or explore social environments freely, they may become reliant on parental guidance, leading to a diminished sense of competence in social contexts and increased avoidance behavior (Uluman & Tunç, 2023). This pattern is consistent with the autonomy-suppression hypothesis, which posits that controlling parenting limits opportunities for adolescents to learn adaptive social behaviors, contributing to maladaptive outcomes such as social withdrawal (Trompeter et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the study's finding that fear of negative evaluation mediates the relationship between parental overcontrol and social withdrawal is strongly supported by existing literature. Adolescents who grow up in environments characterized by criticism, guilt induction, and emotional manipulation are more likely to develop cognitive patterns centered around social apprehension and fear of disapproval (Auliannisa et al., 2024; Iqbal & Ajmal, 2019). The present results are consistent with those reported by Fredrick and Luebbe (2022), who found that FNE was a key predictor of social anxiety and peer avoidance among adolescents (Fredrick & Luebbe, 2022). Similarly, Dismuke (2021) noted in a meta-analysis that FNE consistently

correlates with increased levels of social anxiety and avoidance tendencies across adolescent samples (Dismuke, 2021). In our study, adolescents experiencing high levels of parental overcontrol may interpret such behaviors as indicative of their own inadequacy, thereby reinforcing their fears of being judged or rejected by others.

The role of fear of positive evaluation in mediating the link between parental overcontrol and social withdrawal also yielded significant results, highlighting a less traditionally recognized but increasingly relevant pathway. FPE, while conceptually different from FNE, similarly contributes to interpersonal avoidance due to anxiety about standing out, receiving praise, or being subject to heightened expectations (Kocijan & Harris, 2016; Weinbrecht et al., 2020). The findings support Hofmann's (2025) Bivalent Fear of Evaluation Model, which conceptualizes both FNE and FPE as interconnected constructs contributing to the maintenance of social anxiety and withdrawal behaviors (Hofmann, 2025). Adolescents who experience parental overcontrol may become conditioned to avoid both criticism and attention, interpreting any form of evaluation—positive or negative—as a potential threat to their emotional safety (Tsarपालis-Fragkoulidis et al., 2022). This dynamic has been supported in longitudinal research by Johnson et al. (2020), who found that FPE significantly predicted later increases in social avoidance in adolescents diagnosed with social anxiety disorder (Johnson et al., 2020).

The study also aligns with evidence from Jeon and Park (2023), who demonstrated that both FNE and FPE mediated the relationship between internalized shame and self-concealment in adolescents, showing that evaluative fears play a pivotal role in shaping avoidant social behaviors (Jeon & Park, 2023). Our findings further extend the generalizability of this mechanism to include parental behaviors as a critical antecedent. Moreover, Shin and Rodebaugh (2023) emphasized the role of evaluative fears in group perception and social functioning, reinforcing the idea that adolescents who harbor fears of judgment often misinterpret neutral or positive social cues as threatening, thereby withdrawing from social opportunities (Shin & Rodebaugh, 2023).

From a cultural standpoint, the relevance of these findings within the Nigerian context provides additional insights. Although parental overcontrol may be more socially accepted in collectivistic cultures, its psychological consequences remain significant, especially when adolescents perceive such behavior as overly restrictive or emotionally invalidating (Zeng & Zhu, 2021). This supports

the findings of Zhang (2025), who noted that childhood experiences of overcontrol in non-Western settings still contribute to fear of evaluation and social avoidance patterns later in life (Zhang, 2025). Moreover, in such cultural contexts, the socialization of obedience and conformity may exacerbate the internalization of evaluative fears, further strengthening the observed associations in our model.

The significant role of evaluative fears in adolescent psychological functioning also aligns with research on emotional vulnerability and evaluative conditioning. Lipp et al. (2019) found that conditioned emotional responses to evaluative stimuli can influence future emotional regulation and avoidance behavior, especially in socially sensitive individuals (Lipp et al., 2019). Similarly, Reichenberger et al. (2017) emphasized the daily fluctuations in FNE and FPE and their real-time impact on adolescent social behavior and mood (Reichenberger et al., 2017). These findings reinforce the present study's conclusion that evaluative fears are not only stable predictors of social withdrawal but also dynamic processes shaped by ongoing parental and social interactions.

Additionally, this study supports recent meta-analytical work by Cook et al. (2022), who showed that both FPE and FNE contribute meaningfully to social anxiety and withdrawal, urging clinicians and researchers to address both constructs in their assessment and intervention frameworks (Cook et al., 2022). Our data reinforce this call, suggesting that adolescents with high evaluative fears—regardless of valence—require support that addresses both their dread of criticism and their discomfort with attention or praise.

5. Suggestions and Limitations

Despite its contributions, the current study is not without limitations. First, the cross-sectional design restricts any inference about causality. Although the proposed mediation model is theoretically grounded and statistically supported, longitudinal research is necessary to confirm the directionality of these associations. Second, all data were collected via self-report measures, which may be subject to social desirability bias or response distortion. Third, the study was conducted exclusively among adolescents in Nigeria, which, while offering valuable cultural insights, may limit generalizability to adolescents from other sociocultural backgrounds. Additionally, although the study assessed both FNE and FPE, it did not include other potentially relevant mediators such as self-esteem, emotional regulation, or attachment style, which might

further elucidate the mechanisms linking parental overcontrol and social withdrawal.

Future studies should employ longitudinal or experimental designs to better establish causal relationships among the variables examined. Investigating how these relationships evolve over time—particularly across critical developmental transitions such as the move from adolescence to early adulthood—could offer a more nuanced understanding of the processes involved. Moreover, qualitative methods could be used to explore adolescents' lived experiences of parental overcontrol and social fears, enriching the quantitative findings. It would also be valuable to replicate the study across different cultural contexts to assess the universality or specificity of the mediation model. Finally, future research should consider additional mediators and moderators, including personality traits, peer influences, and digital communication habits, which may impact how adolescents interpret parental behaviors and form evaluative fears.

These findings offer meaningful implications for mental health practitioners, educators, and parents. Intervention programs aimed at reducing adolescent social withdrawal should address not only the behavioral symptoms but also the underlying cognitive fears of evaluation. Parental guidance programs should promote autonomy-supportive parenting styles that validate adolescents' emotions while encouraging independent social experiences. School-based workshops may also help adolescents develop healthy coping strategies for handling both criticism and praise, thereby reducing evaluative fears. Finally, therapeutic approaches—particularly cognitive-behavioral therapies—should incorporate modules on both fear of negative and fear of positive evaluation, as addressing both dimensions is crucial for reducing social anxiety and improving interpersonal functioning in adolescents.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. The design of this research has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Islamic Azad University, Shiraz Branch, under ethics code IR.IAU.SHIRAZ.REC.1402.153. All participants were fully informed that participation in this research was voluntary, and they had the option to withdraw at any time without penalty.

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