

Relationship between Personality and Emotion Dysregulation of Adolescents

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Abstract:

This research study is to find out the relationship between personality and emotion dysregulation of adolescents. Here the relationship between emotion dysregulation and negative dimensions of personality such as inferiority complex, emotional instability and positive dimensions of personality such as assertiveness, self-control, tolerance, sense of well-being, self-esteem, sense of personal worth, social skills, adaptability and sensitivity are also studied. The sample consisted of adolescents, both boys and girls of the age group of 15-17 years. The total sample size was 80, collected from secondary schools of Manmunai South Eruvil Pattu Education Division of Paddiruppu Education Zone. The purposive sampling method was used to get the samples which were the students in Grade 10 and Grade 11. And it adopted the quantitative research method. DERS (Difficulties in Emotion Regulation scale) developed by Gratz Roemer (2004) and the Personality inventory for adolescents developed by Anitha Kumary Vidyadharan & Divya Jayan (2011) were used as tools. Pearson correlation coefficient was used for the statistical analysis of the data. The result shows that there is a positive correlation between emotion dysregulation and negative dimensions of personality and there is a negative correlation found between emotion dysregulation and positive dimensions of personality. This study is also an attempt to identify specific emotion regulation and related personality factors with the assumption that early identification of dysregulated emotion may help in the development of healthy individuals.

Keywords: Adolescents, Emotion, Emotion Dysregulation, Personality

Introduction

Emotions play a vital part in our day to day lives and they intensely affect our activities, even though we don't always care about them. Emotional regulation is defined as the understanding and balancing of emotions. It includes being attentive to emotions, understanding and identifying emotions and managing emotional reactions. Emotion regulation is an important aspect of an individual's early development. When emotional connections are disturbed, their emotional development may be diminished or delayed, resulting emotion dysregulation. Adolescence is the crucial developmental period of mind and body and it is also the transitional period of emotion, which is also the sensitive period of appearing with emotional disorders. Emotion has both direct and indirect effects on personality. If the emotions are hostile such as fear and jealousy or if they are resilient and unrestrained they are damaging to the personality pattern.

Personality is defined as the psychodynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determines the unique adjustment to his or her environment (Allport, 1937). Although our personalities are certainly predisposed by our environment, and particularly by others in our lives, we feel that we carry with us the same personalities from situation to situation in our lives. The definition of personality emphasizes that the main sources of personality reside within the individual and hence they are at least somewhat stable over time and somewhat constant over situations. Personality influences how we act, how we view ourselves, how we select our surroundings, what goals and requirements we pursue in life, and how we respond to external forces rather, personality plays a key role in affecting how people shape their lives.

We experience emotions of different categories and make efforts to handle these emotions in either active or unproductive ways. Without emotions our lives would not have meaning. Emotions tell us about our desires, obstructions, and our privileges; they inspire us to make changes, fly from hard situations, or know when

we are gratified. Yet there are many people who find themselves overwhelmed by their emotions, awful about their feelings, and unable to cope because they believe that their sadness or anxiety forbids effective behavior. Individuals coping with stressful experiences will feel increasing intensity of emotions, which can be a further cause of stress and further quickening of emotions. Once the emotions of anxiety, sorrow or anger have occurred, problematic styles of coping with the emotional intensity may determine whether his stressful life experience spirals into further problematic ways of coping. His emotional dysregulation may cause him to criticize, notify and attack or withdraw from others. He may reflect on his emotions, trying to figure out what is really going on, which sinks him deeper into depression, isolation and inactivity (Adams & Baronberg, 2005).

The emotional regulation is the ability to respond to the current demands of experience with a series of emotions in a manner that is socially tolerable reactions, including the ability to delay impulsive reactions as needed. When emotional connections are troubled their emotional development may be impaired or delayed, resulting in emotion dysregulation. Thus dysregulation is observed as a failure to achieve the developmental process of being able to regulate one's emotions. According to Nicole Alea et al., (2004) the personality refers to the relatively constant characteristics of an individual that are tolerated across time and settings, personality must be stable across adulthood. In later childhood and adolescence as emotions themselves are understood in more complex terms, children begin to gain the various internal constituents of emotional experience that can be the target of regulatory effort. Overtime individual's differences in emotional regulatory capacities develop in performance with personality, so that children accomplish their feelings in a way that is reliable with their character - based tolerance needs for security or stimulation, capacities for self-control, and other personality developments understanding how these developmental processes arise and are

combined in the growth of emotion regulation skills. Emotions have both direct and indirect effects on personality. The direct effects arise from physical and mental disturbances, while the indirect effects come from the reactions of members of the social group toward the person who is experiencing the emotion.

According to Adler (1917) the feelings of inferiority trigger a person to struggle upward, so that normal feelings of inferiority urge us to solve our difficulties successfully whereas the inferiority complex stops us from doing so. It is said that to some degree, every emotion finds expression in the body, and from the corrupt responses the person develops an inferiority complex. The capacity to control the expression of emotion, principally negative emotions, develops over the first years of life and has particular importance for the explanation of suitable and adaptive social behavior (Eisenberg et al., 1994). Emotional instability and poor emotional awareness are key features of the emotional dysregulation connected with borderline personality disorder (BPD). Yet, early childhood emotional reactivity and disclosure to antagonistic family situations are connected with a various range of long term outcomes. These are the dimensions of personality that affect emotion dysregulation.

Statement of the problem

This study is to find out the relationship between personality and emotion dysregulation among adolescents. The unbalanced state of emotion are labeled as emotion dysregulation. Emotion regulation is an important aspect of individual's early development. In general observation, the adolescents show high emotional dysregulation and it is observed that many adolescents exhibit weaker personality characteristics. Hence this study is an attempt to identify specific emotion regulation constructs and related personality factors with the assumption that early identification of dysregulated emotions may help in the development of healthy individuals.

Review of Literature

Gregor Domes et al., (2007) conducted a study on emotion recognition in borderline personality disorder (BPD) is considered by various impairment in emotional regulation resulting, in emotional instability especially in the social milieu. It has been recommended that weakened social cognitive functioning such as impaired facial emotion gratefulness contributes to the social disturbances in BPD. It is categorized by prevalent patterns of emotional instability, unstable interpersonal relations and impaired impulsive control. The most prominent clinical symptoms are repeated self-injury, impulsive aggression and chronic suicidal tendencies and severely affecting patients and their social environment.

According to the study of Gross (2002) on emotion regulation, emotion dysregulation has been mentioned as an impact cause of a wide range of awkward or chaotic behavior patterns including social withdrawal, anxiety, aggression and disruptiveness, other disciplines have also recognized the contribution of emotion dysregulation to potentially maladaptive behaviors.

Gratz (2003) conducted a study on experimental investigation of emotion dysregulation in borderline personality disorder. This study covers research by giving an experimental investigation of emotion dysregulation among outpatients with Borderline Personality Disorder. Further, this study modified an experimental measure of distress tolerance to examine the difference between outpatients with Borderline Personality Disorder (n=17) and those without a personality disorder (n=18) in two aspects of emotion dysregulation. (a) The unwillingness to experience emotional distress in order to pursue goal directed behavior when distressed. As hypothesized individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder were less willing to experience distress in order to pursue goal directed behavior when distressed. Results

point out directions for particular features of emotion dysregulation that may be more or less relevant to BPD.

Nicole Alea et al., (2004) carried out a study on 'Personality and emotion dysregulation in adolescents'. They review theoretical developments and challenges discuss methodological issues, and present the major empirical findings about personality and emotion in adolescents. They conclude with a discussion of how future work that better integrates these two areas will be beneficial in advancing our understanding of well-being in adolescents' lives.

Marina (2009) studied on externalizing psychopathology and behaviors substance use disorder, borderline personality disorder and their inter relationship. She has an interest on borderline personality disorder (BPD) she focuses in how the inability to withstand psychological distress and negative emotions (distress tolerance) and inhibitory control underlie the development of the phenomena, and how these susceptibilities interact with environmental stressors. She uses correlational studies in clinical populations to identify risk factors associated with externalizing behaviors.

[Niedtfeld, Inga](#) & [Schmahl, Christian](#), (2009) made a study on 'Emotion regulation and pain in borderline personality disorder'. Patients with BPD experience strong emotions and show a lack of emotion regulation skills at the times. This research representing that BPD is characterized by a precise pattern of emotion dysregulation revealed in hyperactivity of limbic structures paralleled by deficient prefrontal control mechanisms. This issues will be combined in to prevailing theories regulation.

Kristalyn Salters et al., (2010) directed a study on Emotion regulation skills training, learn healthy emotion regulation skills to diminish emotional uncertainty. Emotion regulation as a wide set of skills and capacities that help good emotion regulation includes the ability to recognize that you are having an emotional response

understand what are the emotional responses; through this study they concluded that accept your emotional responses rather than throwaway the access tactics that allow you to decrease the concentration, engage in goal focused behavior when upset.

From the previous studies it is observed that the research on the relationship between personality and emotion dysregulation of adolescents has not been carried out in the population where this study has been made. And also the relationship between emotion dysregulation and positive dimensions of personality such as assertiveness, self-control, tolerance, sense of well-being, self-esteem, sense of personal worth, social skills, adaptability, sensitivity has not been studied earlier in this context.

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between emotion dysregulation and negative dimensions of personality such as inferiority complex emotional instability.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between emotion dysregulation and positive dimensions of personality such as assertiveness, self-control, tolerance, sense of well-being, self-esteem, sense of personal worth, social skills, adaptability and sensitivity.

Materials and Methods:

Materials

There are two tools used for the study.

1. Difficulties in emotion regulation scale (DERS) was developed by Gratz Kim and Lizabeth Roemer, (2004). The DERS is a 36 item self-report questionnaire with a specific weight on negative emotions. Items are recorded on six scales, categorized as lack of emotional awareness (6 Items), lack of emotional clarity (5 items), Difficulties controlling impulsive behaviors when distressed (6 items), difficulties engaging in goal directed behavior when distressed (5 items), non-acceptance of

negative emotional responses (6 items) and limited access to effective ER strategies(8 items). Items are scored on a 5 point scale ranging from 1(almost never) to 5 (almost always) subscale scores are obtained by totaling the corresponding items. Although the DERS is a relatively new measure, initial empirical studies have been promising. Evidence has been rendered in support of the reliability of DERS scores. DERS scores have been found to demonstrate good test - retest reliability over a period of 4 to 8 weeks in a sample of college students, and both the overall DERS scores and subscale scores have been found to have enough high internal consistency with both clinical and nonclinical populations.

2). A Personality inventory for adolescents was created by Anitha Kumary Vidyadharan & Divya Jayan (2011). It consists of 11 variables with measures several aspects of adolescents' personality dimension. There were negative and positive dimensions for this questionnaire. There are 5 response categories A, B, C, D and E, A denotes 'strongly agree', B denotes 'agree', C denotes undecided, D denotes 'disagree' and E denotes strongly disagree. Personality dimensions contain of negative items such as Emotional instability and inferiority complex. Positive items are Assertiveness, Self-control, Tolerance, Sense of well-being, Self-esteem, Sense of personal worth, Social skills, Adaptability, Sensitivity.

Methods

The research population is the adolescent students in Grade 10 and 11 of Manmunai South Eruvilpattu. The sample consisted of adolescents, both boys and girls of the age group 15-17 years. The sample was collected from secondary schools in Paddiruppu Educational Zone using purposive sampling method. Because it was difficult to use the random sampling as the many schools were faraway places.

The researcher introduced himself to the students and gave a description about the purpose of visit and expectation from the students. The questionnaire was administered and the necessary clarification was done.

The data obtained was analyzed statistically using appropriate descriptive and inferential techniques. The data was statistically analyzed using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Shows the correlation between emotion dysregulation and negative dimensions of personality.

VARIABLE	Emotion Dysregulation
Emotional instability	0.23**
Inferiority complex	0.29**

**Significant at 0.01 level

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between emotion dysregulation and negative dimensions of personality such as inferiority complex and emotional instability.

The result shows that there is a positive correlation between emotional instability (0.23) and the inferiority complex (0.29) with emotional dysregulation. Hence, the stated hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between emotion dysregulation, inferiority complex and emotional stability is rejected.

It is supported by previous studies conducted by Salsman and Linehan (2012) that self-reported problems with emotion regulation, as measured by the Difficulties in

Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS), were associated with self-reported emotional instability of undergraduate students.

The present research is also supported by the study of Pamela et al., (2009) and Lori (2013) whose research findings showed significantly positive correlation between emotional dysregulation, emotional instability and inferiority complex.

Adams & Baronberg (2005) recommended emotional dysregulation as an important cause of a broad range of challenging or disorder behavior patterns, including inhibition, social withdrawal, anxiety, aggression and disorderliness. Other disciplines have also recognized the contributions of emotion dysregulation to potentially maladaptive behaviors such as the links drawn by health psychologists between highly assertive and competitive individuals and the experience of reactive challenges Paul, Hastings et al., (2007) adolescents is that lack emotion regulation capabilities are more prone to expressions of anger which commonly yield further symptoms of aggression, depression and drug use.

Table 2: Shows the correlation between emotion dysregulation and positive dimension of personality.

Variable	Emotion Dysregulation
Assertiveness	-0.22**
Self-control	-0.16*
Tolerance	-0.24**
Sense of well-being	-0.33**
Self-esteem	-0.23**
Sense of personal worth	-0.36**
Social skills	-0.08**
Adaptability	-0.22*

Sensitivity	-0.16*
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**Significant at 0.01 level, *Significant at 0.05 level

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between emotion dysregulation and positive dimensions of personality such as assertiveness, self-control, tolerance, sense of well-being, self-esteem, sense of personal worth, social skills, adaptability, and sensitivity.

The result reveals that there is negative correlation between emotional dysregulation and personality domains such as assertiveness (-0.22), self-control (-0.16), tolerance (-0.24), sense of wellbeing (-0.33), self-esteem (-0.23), sense of personal worth (-0.36), social skills (-0.08), adaptability (-0.22) and sensitivity (-0.16). Hence, the stated hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between emotion dysregulation, inferiority complex and emotional stability is rejected.

The present research findings are sustained by many previous studies. Lee et al., (2020) revealed the findings that emotional dysregulation is negatively correlated with assertiveness. Further, the study by Nora (2015) revealed that the negative association between Emotional dysregulation and social skills among youth. Further the study of Aziz et al. (2010) also supported to the findings of present study that the emotional regulation is positively correlated with tolerance.

Conclusion

From the results, we can conclude that the negative domains of personality, such as inferiority complex and emotional instability, have a significantly positive correlation with emotion dysregulation. It means the adolescents with inferiority complexes and emotional instability have difficulties to regulate the emotions.

On the other hand positive domains of personality such as assertiveness, self-control, tolerance, sense of wellbeing, self-esteem, sense of personal worth, social skills, adaptability and sensitivity have a significantly negative correlation with emotion

dysregulation. So adolescents with high assertiveness, self-control, tolerance, sense of well-being, self-esteem, sense of personal worth, social skills, adaptability and sensitivity have the ability to regulate the emotion.

Personality and emotion have been at the vital of research showing positive advances or maintenance of functioning in adolescents. Personality and emotion offer an opportunity on facets of successful aging. Emotional regulation difficulties have been hypothesized to proceed the onset of personality disorders. Adolescents establish an important developmental period for the study of associations between affective dysregulation and psychopathology.

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