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Article:	Emotion Dysregulation and Psychological Distress in Students
Author(s):	Moafia Dastagir Research Assistant, Riphah Institute of Clinical and Professional Psychology, Riphah International University Lahore
	Dr. Muhammad Rashid Khan Assistant Professor, Institute of Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore
	Raazia Israr MS Scholar, Department of Psychology, International Islamic University, Islamabad
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Author(s) Note:	Moafia Dastagir is serving as Research Assistant at Riphah Institute of Clinical and Professional Psychology, Riphah International University Lahore Email: moafia124@gmail.com
	Dr. Muhammad Rashid Khan is serving as Assistant Professor at Institute of Communication Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore
	Raazia Israr is a MS Scholar at Department of Psychology, International Islamic University, Islamabad

Abstract

The given study found relationship between emotion dysregulation and psychological distress in students. Correlation research design was used to explore the results of 400 students of age ranges 15-25, (male=200, female=200) from different educational institutes of Lahore. Difficulties in emotion regulation scale (DERS; Gratz & Roemer, 2004) and Kessler's scale of psychological distress (Kessler, 2002) were used to found dysregulated emotions and psychological issues respectively. Analysis was conducted to find relationship between emotion dysregulation and psychological distress as well predicting role of emotions for outcome variable psychological distress. Result showed significant relationship between emotion dysregulation and psychological distress. Moreover, result showed emotion dysregulation positively predicted psychological distress. on the basis of this information future mental health related programs and advanced intervention plans would be introduced at educational institutes to reduce distress due to dysregulated/maladaptive emotions.

Keywords: Emotion Dysregulation, Psychological Distress, Awareness, Clarity, Impulse, Non-Acceptance.

Introduction

Accomplishment of tasks, developmental activities require normal regulation of the emotions dysregulated emotions automatically result in decreasing both physical and mental health and students perform better at their studies and other curricular activities. Late adolescents and early adults also face difficulties in normal regulation of emotions, this failure in normal regulation of emotion become the reason of anxiety, severe uneasiness, uncontrolled actions, and social extraction. When this dysregulation of emotions persistent it may result in major disorders like anxiety, depression and other neurotic disorders (Macklem, 2011). Normal and adaptive regulations of emotions are consisting on intensity and duration that is altering by different conditions and does not depend on the change in patterns of experiencing these emotions. Lack of capacity to experience and differentiate in situations related emotions and respond accordingly leads to decreases one's ability to attain positive emotions, increase capacity to produce negative emotions and maladaptive behaviors (Carpenter, 2013).

As research study was conducted by Rabia and Kehkashan from Foundation University and Islamic International University investigate difficulties with normal regulation of emotions and psychological distress in cardiac patients. Sample of the study was 150 cardiac patients having age ranges 20-40. Study concluded positive relationship between social tolerance, dysregulation of emotions and psychological distress. Results showed increased difficulties in strategies and regulation of emotions tends to increase the feeling of loneliness, depressed mood and increased vulnerability towards psychological distress (Rabia & Kehkashan, 2017).

Regulation of emotions, being grounded of research, inspects the manipulation and manages the knowledge to convey their emotional regulation. One of the important significant roles of emotion regulations was checked by David in 87 individuals having

symptoms of anxiety. The conclusion of research provided early understanding about the nature and consequences of the relationship between problematic emotional states and symptoms of Anxiety. Participants having GAD had difficulty in to perform emotions according to given stimuli (David et al, 2014).

Rationale of the Study

Present study was to investigate the nature of relationship between psychological distresses of the students developed by emotion dysregulation along with the predicting role of various levels to psychological distress. Moreover, it aimed to acknowledge the students of strategies they may use to regulate their emotion according to different situation they face. In academic institutions understanding between teachers and students may become stronger if teachers aware of the dysregulation of emotions of the students having a valid reason behind.

Objectives of the Study

- Present study was aimed to find association between emotion dysregulation and psychological distress.
- To find the patterns of emotions that increases the level of psychological distress in students.
- To find the influence of demographic characteristics combine with disturbed emotions to increase psychological distress in students.

Hypotheses of the Study

- There will be significant positive relationship between emotion dysregulation and psychological distress in students.
- There will be significant positive relationship between level of emotion dysregulation and psychological distress in students.
- Emotion dysregulation would likely to predict psychological distress in students.
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Method

Research Design and Sampling Strategy

Research design that followed was correlation research design. Purposive sampling strategy was used to select student participants as were distinct in characteristics and selected for a purpose and of the characteristics of participants were specific in nature.

Participant

Total of 400 students (male = 200, female = 200) were taken from different educational institutes' i.e. colleges, academies and universities of the Lahore.

The inclusion criteria of participants included following:

- Students with age range 15-25 i.e. late adolescents and early adults.
- Included Educational Institutes of Lahore i.e. students of Universities, colleges and academies were included as participants.
- Regular students were included.
- Students from both private and government institutes were included in study.

The exclusion criteria of participants included following:

- Students with any diagnosed psychological disability
- Individuals with any physical Disability
- Students who studied privately at home were not included.

Operational Definitions

Emotion Dysregulation: difficulties in emotion regulation include inability to monitor, understand and accept emotions, and difficulties to engage in goal directed behavior. Individuals with poor emotional intensity, poor understanding of emotions, negative reactivity to emotional states, and difficulty managing emotional states are included in Emotion Dysregulation (Roemer & Gratz, 2004).

Psychological Distress: Psychological distress is a series of psychological and physical illness that further leads towards chronic and acute state. It's a combination of corporeal discomfort, sleep problems, eating disability, disturbed heartbeat, headache and body pain etc. along with psychological anguish like stress, long lasting anxiety, lack of confidence, low interest, mood swings, depression and fear of the things (Kessler, 2002).

Measures

Demographic Information Sheet: Demographic Information sheet was used to obtain sample personal characteristics. Purpose of adding demographic sheet was to obtain information related to those characteristics of sample which can influence the effects the relationship between variables i.e. age, gender, marital status, family system, economical status, belonging area, obtained marks in last examination and one's participation in academic activities,

Difficulty in Emotion Dysregulation Scale (DERS): Dysregulation of participant's emotions were assessed by using difficulty in Emotion Regulation scale developed by Gratz and Roemer (2004). DERS is 36 item scales having six subscale including Goals, Strategies, Non- acceptance, Clarity, Impulse and Awareness. Each subscale further consisted on 6 items which measured the emotional state and response of the participant in different situations. Participants were asked to respond to each question 1-5 scale, from very 'less' to 'always'. Reverse scoring of items (1,3,7,8,9,12,21,24,26,28) was suggested by author. The scale has good reliability (.72-.80) and good validity. It is a Likert Scale and has ratings (1-5). Urdu translated version of the scale has been translated by Dawood (2013) and used in current research.

Kessler's Scale for Psychological Distress: Kessler's Scale of Psychological Distress developed by Kessler for the purpose to check one's psychological condition and the level of Stress, Anxiety and Depression (Kessler, 2002). It is 10 items Likert scale in which

(1= lowest and 5= highest level of distress). All the items of scale measures stress, level of anxiety and depression separately. It's highly reliable and easy to administer scale and have no reverse scoring. 5 items of the scale are purposed measure severity and intensity of symptoms over the period of time. Scale has very good reliability (.79-.83) and validity. Full length scale was used in the study due to its high reliability and validity. Translated scale was also available that was translated by (Dawood, 2015).

Procedure

Following the approval of topic, permissions from original Authors and those who translated were taken to use measurement scale in study. Permissions were from educational institutes before collection of data. Participants were approached in different institutes and, provided information sheet as well as briefed about the aim of the study. Prior of taking consent from the participants, they were ensured about confidentiality of their personal information. Participants were educated about the ethical consideration of the research and about their rights being participants in the study. Students were acknowledged and thanked after the collection of data for their participation. Data were analyzed and results were discussed after the completion of data collection. Participants were appreciated for their time and efforts for the study.

Ethical Consideration

Permissions from Higher Authorities of the department, Authors and concerned persons who translated the scale were taken. Participants were informed about purpose of the research and role of their participation. Informed consent was taken prior to collection of data to ensure their participation and to resolve any harm to research. Participants were served by psychotherapy during data collection when any of them experienced distress.

Results

Data was analyzed by using Statistical Packages for Social Science, version 21(SPSS-21). Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis and Hierarchical Regression Analysis (Linear method) was used to find nature of relationship and prediction respectively.

Pearson Product Moment Co-relation Analysis

Correlation Analysis between various domains of emotion dysregulation and psychological distress showed results for following hypotheses.

I There is likely to be significant positive relationship between dysregulation of emotion and psychological distress in students.

II There is likely to be significant positive relationship between the domains of emotion dysregulation (non-acceptance, impulses and awareness) and psychological distress.

Table 1

Table Showing Correlation between Emotion Dysregulation and Psychological Distress

Variables	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.Non-A	.04	.19**	.11*	.09	.13*	.40**	.13*	-.04	.10	.07
2.Goals	-	.27**	-.02	.29**	.22**	.44**	.14**	.06	.01	.13*
3.Impluse	-	-	.17**	.26**	.42**	.75**	.35**	.01	.10	.19**
4.Awareness	-	-	-	-.08	.08	.37**	.04	-.01	.14	.06
5. Strategies	-	-	-	-	.35**	.51**	.21**	-.03	-.06	.15**
6. Clarity	-	-	-	-	-	.73**	.28**	-.00	.06	.21**
7.DERS	-	-	-	-	-	-	.35**	-.04	.11	.24**
8.PD	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.01	-.02	.13**
9. Age	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.14	-.08
10.Gender	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.15**
11.Nervousness	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. Non-A= Non-Acceptance, DERS= Difficulties in Emotion Regulation scale, PD= Psychological Distress, Gender= (male=1 female=2), Feeling of Nervousness (less=1, moderate=2, high=3)

Table 1 showed the hypothesis of significant positive relationship between Emotion Dysregulation and Psychological was approved as results indicated significant positive relationship between these variables as the value of correlation-Coefficient is significant $p < 0.005$. The hypothesis of significant positive relationship between various domains of emotion dysregulation and psychological distress was also approved except for the subscale of awareness as its relationship was not significant.

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Significant amount of variance between Emotion Dysregulation and Psychological Distress found for hypothesis, Emotion Dysregulation likely to predict level of Psychological Distress in Students.

Table 2

Hierarchical Regression Analysis of Ostracism, Emotion Dysregulation and Psychological Distress (N=400)

<i>Predictor</i>	Psychological Distress	
	ΔR^2	<i>B</i>
Step 1	.146	
Control Variables ¹⁶		.16***
Step 2	.239	
Non-Acceptance		.13**
Goals		.06
Impulse		.28***
Awareness		.06
Strategies		.12
Clarity		.19***
Total R ²	.55***	
N	400	

Note. ΔR^2 = Significant Change, β = Standardize Coefficient, N= number of Participants (male=1, female=2), Control Variables= Age, Gender, Area, Education, Family System, Number of Siblings

In Model I with Demographic characteristics of the participants as a predictor for Psychological Distress explained 9% variance and was significant $F(25,375) = 2.56, p < 0.005$. Model II with Difficulties in regulation of emotion and state to this difficulty as Non-Acceptance, Goals, Awareness, Impulse, Strategy and Clarity as predictor to Psychological Distress were explained variance of the prediction $F(34,366) = 3.4, p < 0.005$.

Discussion

Given research study analyzed the relationship between emotion dysregulation and Psychological Distress. Present investigation was about the effects of levels of emotion dysregulation on people physical, mental and Psychological health along with the importance of Difficulties in regulating one's Emotion. Previous researches revealed that students experienced and gone through different type of problematic emotions then leads toward many psychological distresses including their poor attention towards studies, lack of interest, trauma, stress long lasting anxiety and depression. Emotion dysregulation affects individual's physical and mental health which result in decreasing their behavior towards class participation and group activities. Problem with normal regulation of emotions among students at educational institutes which lead towards various psychological distresses i.e. long last anxiety, low mood, lack of cognitive functioning, low self-esteem and low interest in educational activities (Zadro, Boland & Richardson, 2006).

Difficulties in regulating one's emotions related to different situations leads toward the symptoms of Psychological distress. Findings of present study showed relationship between Dysregulation of Emotions and Psychological Distress. Results of previous study favor the hypothesis and support the findings of present study. Research conducting on

students with perceived symptoms of post-traumatic stress and concluded, emotion dysregulation (feeling of hopelessness, fear, difficulty in controlling impulse, lack of emotional acceptance) tend to decrease the rate of students cognitive functioning and had significant positive relationship with Psychological Distress (Tull & Roemer, 2007).

Results of present investigation were supported by the previous literature that emotion dysregulation is a significant predictor of Psychological Distress. Previous study conducted by Blackhart (2012) supported the hypothesis and concluded that neutral state of emotion dysregulation markedly effect positive and negative symptoms of depression, long lasting anxiety and threats to sense of belongingness. Lack of acceptance (state of emotion dysregulation) caused to increase mood swings and lower self-esteem of individuals. Conclusions of the study showed low level of sense of existence, confidence, will power, motivation, wellbeing, self-esteem, and more negative emotions tend to increase social rejection which increased level of psychological distress.

Conclusion

Based on current research it was concluded that emotion dysregulation caused psychological distress which further may lead to develop other severe psychological disorders. These domains would also be conduct on future on different population with addition of ostracisms experience in academic institutions. Psychotherapeutic interventions resulted in decrease level of distress.

Limitation of Studies

Information was only collected from various educational institutes of colleges and Universities of Lahore. As the students of Lahore have different attributes than students from all over the Pakistan. This might reason, findings of the study only are generalized on student population of Lahore, and others to some extent.

Suggestions for Future

Future studies may combine the other variables like bullying and wellbeing along with emotion dysregulation so that the results must explore and explain the effects of emotion dysregulation combined with other distresses. In future two groups of participants from Lahore and from rural area should be studied and compare the level of Distress based on different area of belonging.

Implications of Study

Psychological services are required at school and college to decrease the suffering of students from stressors of routine life which should be addressed and sought out by the psychologists to improve student's mental health and psychological wellbeing. Findings of this study should acknowledge the teachers and parents for better understandings of reason behind every emotional state of students both at home and at educational institutes. Moreover students should be acknowledging about the negative/positive states of emotion and difference between normal and abnormal regulations of emotions and maladaptive behaviors that resulted by problematic emotions.

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