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Home environment, emotional intelligence and value-conflict and its impact upon mental health among college students

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Abstract

Present study represents an attempt to study the impact of perceived family environment, emotional intelligence, value-conflict and upon mental health. An attempt was also made to assess the interactional pattern between the three variables and their possible effect upon mental health. For the purposes of the study a sample of 348 students of B.A. Part Ist, IInd and IIIrd from Govt. and Non-Govt. colleges were included. The sample comprised of both boys and girls. In order to assess perceived family environment, emotional intelligence, value-conflict and mental health- Perceived Family Environment Scale- Dr. Harpreet Bhatia and Dr. N.K. Chadda (2000), Emotional intelligence Scale- Dr. Uma Devi L, Value-Conflict Scale – Dr. R. L. Bhardwaj, Mental Health Check-list- Dr. Pramod Kumar- were used. Data gathered were subjected to two-way and three-way ANOVA. All the effects were entered simultaneously. Results revealed that perceived family environment, emotional intelligence, value-conflict have positive and significant effect upon mental health among adolescents at .01 and .05 level of probability but taken together all the three variables do not interact with each other and do not have any significant effect upon mental health among adolescents.

Keywords: Environment, emotional intelligence, value-conflict, mental health

Introduction

Home Environment

Family is the most pervasive and highly influential socialization agent for children and has been used by Psychologists and scientists for predicting behavioural and emotional problems among children (Wilde & Rapee, 2008) ^[11]. Since, family structure has been indicated to represent a transactional model having important bearing on the sound development of a child.

Various studies have empirically established the important role the family plays in the educational and vocational attainment of the child. Family being the miniature form of society functions as a social unit or agency not only for the harmonious and wholesome development of the society but also for bringing desirable changes in the behaviour. Family provides ground where moorings develop. Therefore it becomes the most potent force in developing the ability to assimilate with and become an acceptable member of the society.

Primary responsibility for the child's adjustment lies with the parents who set the basic personality pattern and value system through the security they provide particularly in his /her early life (McLoed, Jeffery, Wood and Weisz 2007) ^[8]. The revelation of the subtlety, complexity, and elusiveness of the psychological forces in the family affecting the child's feelings and attitudes are a special contribution to the child's way of adjustment. Healthy family environment leads to good personal and social adjustment i.e. it results in sound mental health. Children deprived of parental love, care and assistance may result in multifarious complexities like delinquency, maladjustment, regression, alienation or psycho/social aggressiveness.

Emotional Intelligence

In the recent years emotions are increasingly being viewed as signals that provide information, direct attention and facilitate attainment of goals and are seen as organizing processes that enable people to think and behave adaptively.

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Knowing one's emotions, managing emotions, motivating one's self, persistence and social deftness are the key components of emotional intelligence. The Emotional Intelligence involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use them to guide one's thinking and actions (Mayor and Salovey, 1993). So emotional intelligence refers to an ability to recognize the meaning of emotions and their relationships to solve the problems on the basis of them Mayer, Caruso & Salovey, 2000)^[7]. This also means that dysregulation or the inability to manage hostile or negative emotions can lead to work and relationship difficulties and is associated with clinical problems such as anxiety and mood disorders in other words lack of emotional intelligence can disrupt one's mental health.

Value-Conflict

The word value denotes a preferred mode of behaviour or an end state of existence over some other mode of behaviour or an end state of existence. Values affect our behaviour. Each individual possesses and follows a set of principles that guides his thoughts and influences behaviour. Congruity between people's values and their environment promotes well-being no matter which particular values people ascribe importance. People are likely to experience a positive sense of well-being when they emphasize the same values that prevail in their environment, and when they inhabit an environment that allows them to attain the goals to which their values are directed. Thus value congruence leads to greater satisfaction, stress reduction, higher emotional well-being and fewer psychosomatic symptoms.

Mental Health

"The preamble of the World Health Organization's charter defined health as state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (Monopolis, *et al.*, 1977)^[9].

Fromm (1955)^[6] reported mental health as the ability to love and to create, by the emergence from incestuous ties to clay and soil, by a sense of identity based on one's experience of self as the subject and agent of one's powers, by the grasp of reality inside and outside of ourselves; that is by the development of objectivity and reason.

The concept of mental health has two dimensions, the positive and the negative.

Positive Mental Health is a value in itself. Individuals with positive mental health usually demonstrate positive affect and positive personality traits, which are considered as resources. They have high self-esteem, sense of mastery, sense of coherence and self-efficacy. It can be conceptualised as a person's ability to cope with adversity, and avoid breakdown or diverse health problems when confronted with adverse experiences.

Negative Mental Health is concerned with mental disorders, symptoms and problems. Symptoms of mental disorders and mental health problems also exist without the criteria for clinical disorders being fulfilled. These subclinical conditions as well as general psychological distress are often a consequence of persistent or temporary adversities. They can be a heavy burden and often lead to consultations with primary health care or other professionals.

Mental health, as an indivisible part of general health, reflects the equilibrium between the individual and the environment. It is influenced by: 1) Individual psychological

and biological factors, 2) Social interactions, 3) Societal structures and resources including family; and 4) cultural values. In this context mental health is a central part of a process that comprises predisposing, actual precipitating and supporting factors as well as various consequences and outcomes. Mental ill-health encompasses a continuum extending from the most severe mental disorders to a range of symptoms of different intensity and durations that result in a variety of consequences. Much mental ill-health is experienced as part of normal life. Such everyday mental problems are correlates of personal distress Psychological distress is a non-specific syndrome that covers constructs such as anxiety, depression, cognitive problems, irritability, anger and obsession-compulsion.

Rationale of the study: Since perceived family environment, emotional intelligence and value-conflict have been found to have impact on mental health but not much work has been done on these variables. So it was decided to assess their effect on mental health and their interacting relationship and their combined effect on mental health.

Objectives

1. To study and examine the nature of perceived family environment, emotional intelligence and value-conflict and mental health
2. To study the interactional pattern if any between perceived family environment, emotional intelligence and value-conflict.
3. To study the impact of perceived family environment, emotional intelligence and value-conflict upon mental health.
4. Hypotheses- 1. Perceived family environment don't have any positive and significant effect on mental health among adolescents.
5. Emotional intelligence don't have any positive and significant effect on mental health among adolescents.
6. Value-conflict don't have any positive and significant effect on mental health among adolescents.
7. Perceived family environment and emotional intelligence don't interact with each other and the two variables taken together don't have any positive and significant effect on mental health among adolescents.
8. Perceived family environment and Value-conflict don't interact with each other and the two variables taken together don't have any positive and significant effect on mental health among adolescents.
9. 6 Emotional intelligence and Value-conflict don't interact with each other and the two variables taken together don't have any positive and significant effect on mental health among adolescents.
10. Perceived family environment, emotional intelligence and Value-conflict don't interact with each other and the three variables taken together don't have any positive and significant effect on mental health among adolescents.

Method

Design

In order to achieve the purpose of the present study an 2*2*2 factorial design was selected in which perceived family environment, emotional intelligence and value-conflict were divided into high and low.

Independent Variables

1. Perceived Family Environment
2. Emotional intelligence
3. Value-Conflict

3. Value-Conflict Scale – Dr. R. L. Bhardwaj
4. Mental Health Check-list- Dr. Pramod Kumar

Dependent Variable: Mental Health

Tools Employed

1. Perceived Family Environment Scale- Dr. Harpreet Bhatia and Dr. N.K. Chadda (2000)
2. Emotional intelligence Scale- Dr. Uma Devi L.

Sample

For the purposes of the study a sample of 348 boys and girls was taken from amongst B.A.Ist yr. IInd yr. and IIIrd yr.students of colleges an and around Alwar district (Rajasthan)

Results and discussion

Table 1: Showing Mean and Sd for PFE, EIS and VC on Mental Health

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error of Mean
PFE	Low	177	22.85	6.539	0.492
	High	172	19.74	5.997	0.457
EIS	Low	177	22.77	6.622	0.494
	High	172	19.77	5.919	0.455
VC	Low	177	19.55	4.835	0.327
	High	172	24.26	7.664	0.67

Table 2: Showing main effects and combined effects of two and three way ANOVA for Mental Health (dependent variable)

		Anova (a, b)					
		Unique Method					
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Mental Health	Main Effects	Combined	2115.135	3	705.045	20.01	0
		HL_PFE	253.657	1	253.657	7.198	0.008
		HL_EIS	162.914	1	162.914	4.623	0.032
		HL_VC	1037.592	1	1037.592	29.44	0
	2-Way Interactions	Combined	66.492	1	22.143	0.628	0.597
		HL_PFE* HL_EIS	3.957	1	3.957	0.112	0.738
		HL_PFE* HL_VC	36.963	1	36.963	1.049	0.306
		HL_EIS* HL_VC	29.163	1	29.163	0.828	0.364
	3-Way Interactions	HL_PFE* HL_EIS* HL_VC	7.63	1	7.63	0.217	0.642
	Model		2505.116	7	357.874	10.16	0
Residual		12016.58	341	35.239			
Total		14521.696	348	41.729			
a Mental Health by HL_PFE, HL_EIS, HL_VC							
B All effects entered simultaneously							

Table 2. depicting analysis of variance for mental health of adolescents reveals that null hypothesis no.1 is not supported by the results at both .01 and .05 level of probability with $f= 7.1.98$. Thus the alternative hypothesis that perceived family environment has significant and positive effect upon mental health of adolescents is validated. Research literature available supports these findings. Personality formation as a function of home environment has been focus of a number of researches Adolescents’ perceptions about home environment have also been found to show varied and conflicting results. Poor environment has been reported to have long term impact on adolescents’ life style Broken homes have been found to have ill effects on adolescent development. Substance use among adolescents has been reported to have an association with home environment.

In fact, home environment is the quality and quantity of the cognitive, emotional and social support that has been available to the child within the home and connotes the psychological environment of the home. The total home environment refers to both positive and negative conditions which interact with each other, either favourably or unfavourably, to determine home environment to be “better” or “poor”.

The table further reveals that null hypothesis no.2 also stands disproved at 0.05 level of probability with $f=4.623$,

thus it is clear that emotional intelligence does significantly and positively affect mental health of adolescents. This finding is validated in the light of researches available. Individuals with higher EI are more likely to experience better health and well-being, more likely to seek help and follow advice of health professionals, and more likely to resist pressure in connection with risky health behaviour such as smoking. Psychological emotions detrimental to health, such as distress and depression, have been found to be negatively correlated with EI.

It is noted that null hypothesis no.3 also stands disproved at both .01 and 0.05 level of probability with $f=29.44$ and alternative hypothesis that value conflict significantly and positively affects mental health is proved. Congruity between people’s values and their environment promotes well-being regardless of the particular values to which people ascribe importance. People are likely experience a positive sense of well-being when they emphasize the same values that prevail in their environment, and when they inhabit an environment that allows them to attain the goals to which their values are directed. Several studies have examined the impact of value congruence on well-being and noted that value congruence leads to greater satisfaction, greater wholesomeness in life, higher family satisfaction, stress reduction, higher emotional well-being and fewer psychosomatic symptoms (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2000) ^[10]

have proposed three different mechanisms why value conflict ought to have a negative impact on the well-being of people. The first mechanism is environmental affordances. Incongruent environments don't afford people opportunities to express their important values and block goal attainment. Living in such environment is likely to produce negative well-being.

The second mechanism concerns social sanctions. When most people in an environment share a set of value priorities, they are likely to communicate clearly which beliefs, values and behaviours are normative. People, who reject the prevailing normative definitions, because these definitions oppose their own values, may be ignored or punished and undermine their sense of well-being. The third mechanism is internal conflict. One's sense of well-being may be undermined by conflict between values acquired earlier and values whose internalisation is advocated in a new environment. When one must take decisions, highly valuing incompatible sets of values are likely to provoke internal value conflict and as a result undermining subjective well-being.

Finally, personal values may be at conflict with those of the society. An adolescent who perceives discrepancy between values practiced and values advocated by the parents and significant others and the society in which he lives, may be at a loss to understand which value system to adopt and which to reject. Such normative conflict has been predicted to affect a person's psychological well-being.

However, the null hypothesis no. 4,5,6,7 are proved in that all the three variables i.e. perceived family environment, emotional intelligence and value-conflict do not interact with each other and together these variables do not have any significant and positive effect upon mental health.

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