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Personal identity, perceived level of stress, and tend to aggressive behavior among the adolescents and emerging adulthood

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Abstract

The present research aims to examine the personal identity, perceived level of stress, and tend to aggressive behavior among adolescents and emerging adulthood of university students. Participants were 300 (150 male and 150 female). Instruments were used stress measuring scale by Chashoo and Khan (2009), Aspect of identity questionnaire-revised was developed by Cheek and Briggs, (2013), aggression scale by Mathur and Rajkumari Bhatnagar, (2004). The results concluded that a significant positive correlation was found between perceived level of stress and personal identity. A strong correlation was found between the perceived level of stress and aggressive behavior in adolescents. Also, personal identity was found to be correlated with aggressive behavior among the adolescents and emerging adulthood of university students. The findings inferred that aggressive behavior was a significant predictor of the perceived level of stress and personal identity among adolescents and adulthood on these variables.

Keywords: Perceived level of stress, personal identity, aggressive behavior, adolescents, adulthood

Introduction

Adolescence is widely recognized as the core developmental period for the foundation and formation of a healthy identity (Erikson 1968) ^[14]. Adolescence is a particularly compelling period of development. Over the lifespan, adolescence is characterized by a rather lengthy transition phase in which the individual is neither a child nor an adult. This transition involves biological, social, and psychological changes marked by the development of mature forms of thought, perception emotion, attitude, and behavior. Adolescent developmental tasks include challenges of identity, autonomy, sexuality, academic functioning, and peer and group relationships. There is typically a greater expression of risk-taking and exploration of the new forms of behaviors during adolescence, which are part of the developmental processes that contribute to identity formation and functioning.

Personal Identity

The proposal of personal identity is fundamental to the antecedents of human thought, feeling, and actions. Personal identity provides an association between the socialization experiences and modification of personality and continues the development that through adolescence period of time, into adulthood and old stage. Personal identity is used as an object, in which an individual is illustrated as having knowledge of interpretation the personal as the object in much the same way one has the knowledge and interprets by another person one can like and dislike to another, one can like and dislike oneself.

Personal identity having takes place at particular levels over the period of the developmental stage. Infants and toddlers beginning to walk is evidence of a sense of physical identity as well as “personal identity as they start to refer to evaluate images of themselves with their own names during the second year of the developmental stage, and as the use of personal pronouns like me and I becomes takes placed during the third year” (Ames, 1952; Lewis & Brooks, 1979) ^[2, 22]. Adolescents are manifesting a concern with their psychological identity whenever they question who they are and what they will become (Erikson, 1959) ^[13]. “One can trace progressive developmental shifts in identity during adolescence”

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(Waterman, 1982). We can say that adolescents who have established a committee for themselves after a period of the developmental stage to exploration are contemplated to have attained the status of personal identity achievement.

Erikson (1968) ^[14] and others have reported that “the more essential of self-identity such as cultural and social environment have major influences on identity developmental stage. During adolescence, the complexity of this process increases, and not all are successful in achieving positive outcomes”.

In this research, we have highlighted several reasons why identity is important during adolescence and the transition to adulthood. However, what exactly is personal identity, how does it work, and how does it develop?

The term identity refers to “many different phenomena, including people’s goals, values, beliefs; group memberships; and roles played in the larger society” (Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, 2011, p.341) ^[35]. The meaning of “identity” has become so unclear that some writers (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Rattansi & Phoenix, 2005) ^[5, 29] have recommended discontinuing the use of the term separately and all together. We adopt the position that the diversity of meanings assigned to “identity” is a virtue. Social-psychological (Brown, 2000; Spears, 2011) ^[6] and sociological (Hitlin, 2003; Stryker, 2003) ^[18, 34] perspectives prescribed that “individuals have multiple identities.” These various aspects of identity come together to define who one is—although, of course, certain group memberships (e.g., gender, ethnicity, nationality) can increase or decrease the chances that one will be able to attain certain personal goals. We will also explore various dimensions of identity—especially personal and cultural and how these dimensions of identity interact with, and guide, personality, and emotional development. In particular, we will focus on how specific personality configurations are linked with certain personal and cultural identity trajectories and on how identity processes are associated with positive and negative psychosocial and health outcomes.

Perceived Level of Stress

Stress in human existence is frequently associated with strain, uneasiness, and weight. Stress is crucial throughout everyday life and it can cause either valuable or negative impacts. Stress is a combination of psychological, physiological, and behavioral relations that people have in response to events that threaten or challenge them. We find stress everywhere, whether it is within the family, business organization/ enterprise, or any other societal or economic activity.

Previous research led on the psychological issue shows that pressure is a significant factor that impacts the physical and emotional well-being of an individual; it decides our ability and unfavorably influences our wellbeing framework (Martin, *et al.*, 1995; May berry and Graham, 2001) ^[25, 24]. Among all phases of life youth is perhaps the most developmental period in which they presented to a few kinds of unpleasant life occasions or encounters that increments in negative stressors record and stays focal as an expected danger to the expanded pace of mental prosperity and sound advancement during puberty. Subsequently, it is important to think about both, the idea of stress and potential defensive factors that may improve the degree of psychological well-being condition or moderate the connection between various kinds of negative stressors and

social results. A few elements may kill the negative impact of stress like social help, confidence, adopting a style that seems to direct the hurtful impact of stress on aggressive behavior.

The Council Report-112 (2003) investigated the significance of stressful students’ life of the factors that contribute to the mental health condition. Consistent with this, a group of researchers (Ge, Lorenz, *et al.* 1994) ^[16] explore that observed maternal support and warmth, moderates the effects of negative life changes or challenges on adolescents’ mental health trajectories. Other researchers also observed that living with caring, warmth; understanding, communicative, and supportive parents altered or moderates the negative impact of life stress on adolescents. Wills and Cleary, 1996; Wills, Vaccaro and McNamara, 1992) ^[36, 37] psychological condition. However, stress among adolescents may indeed come due to intrapersonal conflict, including problems in interpersonal relationships; stress may come due to environmental factors, the burden of academics, poor facilities provided in school or colleges, the administration is not cooperative, etc. The causes of stress or pressure may be anything, but the fact is that all increases the level of stress. Studies among college students also suggested that higher level of stress generally related to greater symptoms including anxiety (Sarason, Johnson, and Siegel, 1978) ^[30], lower levels of general well-being (Cole, 1955) ^[10], low self-esteem (Guinn and Vincent, 2002; Abouserie, 1994; Youngs and Rathge, 1990) ^[17, 1, 38] and depression (Lustman, Sown and O Hara, 1984) ^[23] among university students.

Aggressive Behavior

Aggression conduct is a multifaceted wonder as it tends to be characterized from specific viewpoints causing irregularities in the utilization of the term in clinical practice. Aggression can be inspected concerning any conduct that makes a difficult to encounter someone else, stress, individual qualities, or as activities that are ruinous to one's self, others, or belongings.

Adolescence is seen as a time of significant change in the nature and seriousness of human hostility. To comprehend and explain the components fundamental of young adult's animosity, Belsky, (1980) ^[4]; Bronfenbrenner, (1979) ^[7]; Dutton, (1985) hypothesized "The Nested Ecological Theory". This model considers the mix of various levels and settings and examination of the different impacts and interrelatedness of elements to build up the more extensive picture on juvenile hostility; research that centers on any one level thinks little of the impacts of different settings. The Nested Ecological Theory along these lines suggests that to comprehend juvenile animosity, one should analyze factors at four levels: the way of life, the climate, the family, and the person. Additionally, it is discovered that there is a bidirectional impact inside and between the levels.

Moreover, aggression in control appears to be a crucial adaptive behavior in human beings. Even it is viewed as a positive behavior when one is threatened. Poussaint and Alexander (2000) ^[28] asserted that aggression may also be viewed as an attempt to overcome feelings of weakness and powerlessness. While as Knox, King, Hanna, Logan, and Ghaziuddin (2000) ^[20] and Pliszka, Sherman, Barrow, and Irick (2000) ^[27] argued that aggression among adolescents can arise in an attempt to cope with stress tendencies. Pieces of evidence have shown that anger, hostility, irritability, and aggressiveness are frequently present in stressed patients

(Pasquini, Picardi, Biondi, Gaetano & Morosini, 2004) [26]. Ebesutani, Kim, and Young (2014) [12] attempted to examine the role of violence exposure and negative affect (anxiety and depression) in understanding child and adolescent aggression. We found to be predicting aggressive behavior significantly among adolescents. Moreover, negative affect was found to partially mediate the relationship between exposure to violence and aggression.

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between perceived levels of stress, personal identity, and trends of aggressive behavior among adolescents and emerging adulthood.
2. To examine the critical predictors of perceived levels of stress, personal identity and trends of aggressive behavior among adolescents and emerging adulthood.

Hypotheses

H1a: There will be a positive relationship between perceived levels of stress, personal identity, and trends of aggressive behavior among adolescents and emerging adulthood.

H1b: There will be significant predictors of perceived levels of stress, personal identity, and trends of aggressive behavior among adolescents and emerging adulthood.

Method

Participants

The present study comprised of 300 adolescents` participants, both male and female, taken from the university. The age range of all the participants was from 14 to 21 years. Data was taken randomly from AIU, Bishkek.

Measures/Tools

1. **Stress Measuring Scale:** The stress Measuring Scale developed by Chashoo and Khan (2009) [28] was used to measure the stress level among adolescents. This scale was specially designed to measure the stress level of the adolescents. The stress measuring scale has 20 items and the responses are obtained on a 5-point Likert type scale. Cronbach`s alpha reliability of the present scale was reported to be .78.
2. **Aspects of Identity Questionnaire (AIQ-IV):** The aspect of identity questionnaire was developed by Cheek & Briggs (2013). This scale began with the selection of items from Sampson's (1978) list of identity characteristics that were judged to represent the

domains of personal and social identity (Cheek & Briggs, 1981, 1982). Subsequently, some items were reworded, others eliminated and new items were developed to improve the reliability and content validity of the measures (Cheek, 1982/83; Cheek & Hogan, 1981; Hogan & Cheek, 1983). The psychometric analyses indicated that certain items originally scored in the social identity category (e.g., "Being a part of the many generations of my family") were tending to cluster on a third factor representing communal or collective identity, a third scale for this domain was developed (Cheek, Underwood, & Cutler, 1985 and Cheek, Tropp, Chen, & Underwood, 1994). Neither the social nor collective scales focus on intimate relationships with close friends or romantic partners, so the fourth scale for relational identity orientation ("Being a good friend to those I really care about") was added to the AIQ-IV (Cheek, Smith, & Troop, 2002). Therefore, in the present study, the fourth version of Cheek, (2002) scale was used.

3. **Aggressive Behaviour Scale:** This scale was developed by Dr. G. P. Mathur and Dr. Raj Kumari Bhatnagar (2004) [15]. It comprises 55 statements on a five-point rating scale-Strongly agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, and strongly disagree. The higher the score higher is the level of aggression. The validity of the scale is 0.78 in females and 0.80 in males and the test-retest reliability is 0.88 in males and 0.81 in females. Cronbach`s alpha reliability of the present scale was reported to be .74.

Statistical Analysis

Statistics provides the strategy and methods for gathering the maximum amount of information for a given expenditure of time and other resources. Once the relevant information is obtained, the researcher requires methods to describe and summarized data so that results are interpretable and communicated (Mendenhal and Ramey, 1973). For statistical analysis of data that were collected in light of study objectives and variables measured, the following statistical methods are:

1. Means and standard deviations to identify the degree to which respondents were responsive to instrument items.
2. Statistical analysis: correlation analysis/ multiple linear regression analysis.

Table 1: Results of descriptive statistics the personal values, perceived levels of stress, and tend to aggressive behaviour among adolescents and emerging adulthood.

| Descriptive Statistics | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Variables | N | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation | Skewness | | Kurtosis | |
| | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Std. Error | Statistic | Std. Error |
| Personal Identity | 300 | 20.00 | 15.8400 | 2.87901 | -1.622 | .141 | 4.055 | .281 |
| Perceived Stress | 300 | 20.00 | 16.3600 | 2.67599 | -1.103 | .141 | 2.413 | .281 |
| Aggressive Beh. | 300 | 20.00 | 16.5567 | 2.87303 | -1.106 | .141 | 1.415 | .281 |

Note: p-values, p<.001**, p<.005* (two-tailed)

Table 2: Results of Coefficient of correlation between personal identity, perceived levels of stress, and trends to aggressive behaviour among adolescents and emerging adulthood.

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|-------------------|--------|-------|--------|
| Personal Identity | .316** | - | - |
| Perceived Stress | .255** | .072* | - |
| Aggressive Beh. | .421** | .087* | .169** |

Note: p<.005*, p<.001** (two-tailed), X1=Stress, X2=Personal Identity, Y1=Aggression

Table 2 shows that the correlation between the psychological variables of personal identity, perceived level of stress, and aggressive behavior for the overall adolescents and emerging adulthood sample of the university students. A significant positive correlation was found between the level of stress and personal identity ($r = .255, p < .001$), indicating that level of stress was also found to be positively

significantly correlated with personal identity ($r = .421, p < .001$), depicting that adolescents reporting a higher level of stress gave more importance to their personal identity. Results can be inferred that a strong positive correlation between adolescents' level of stress and aggression, revealing that adulthood having a higher level of stress had greater aggressive behavior tendencies.

Table 3: Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of considering personal identity, perceived levels of stress, and tend to aggressive behavior among adolescents and emerging adulthood (N=300).

| Predictor Variables | Multiple R | R ² | R ² Change | Standardized β | t | F | p |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------|--------|------|
| Model-1st | (Model $Y_1 = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2$) | | | | | | |
| X ₁ | .606 | .367 | .367 | - | 8.090 | 173.22 | .000 |
| X ₁ , X ₂ | .655 | .424 | .062 | .352 | 13.158 | 32.163 | .000 |
| Constant | 32.675 | | | | | | |

** $p < .01$ (One-tailed), Predictor Variable: X₁= Perceived level of Stress, X₂=Personal Identity; Criterion Variable: Y₁= Aggressive Behaviour

Table 3: The results revealed that perceived level of stress (in the 1st model) that could be explained 36.7% of the variance in aggressive behavior of adolescents and emerging adulthood and; (in the 2nd model separately explained 42.4% of the variance in the criterion variable. It is clear those overall variables which emerged as the strongest significant predictor found to be significantly predicting the 42.4% variance to the criterion viz. personal identity whereas 36.7% of the variance in aggressive behavior, i.e. aggressive behavior can be jointly explained by the level of stress and personal identity. After that, when all the predictor variables were entered together into the criterion probability to enter (probability of F-to-enter=0.05) and together considered 42.4% of the variance in aggressive behavior of the adolescents of university students. In this model, stress (X₁) and personal identity (X₂) strongest predictor emerge as aggressive behavior among the adolescents and emerging adulthood of university students which is bears R square $R^2 = .424$ revealed that 42.4% of the variance in aggressive behavior and second predictor personal identity (X₂) of $R^2 = .367$ that is considered 42.4% of the variance among adolescents and emerging adulthood of the university students.

To verify the goodness of the fit model, the obtained F values for stress (X₁) as a significant predictor from other variable personal identity, $F = 173.22, 32.163$ are found to be positively significant $p < .001$ at the level of significance.

Conclusion

Adolescence is a significant life stage when both individual character and dimensions of personality traits are entirely helpful, especially among the adolescents of university students. The exploration is relied upon to be stacked with important information which will in the general investigation and establish future collateral research and related perspectives. Determination of self-efficacy related to personality traits may help the clinical psychologists in creating tools that would be utilized for instant applications in tackling behavioral, mental, and psychological problems, sometimes intractable. The results concluded that in the total sample of university students a significant positive correlation was found between stress and personal identity. A strong positive correlation was also found between adolescents' stress levels and aggressive behavior. Also, personal values were found to be correlated with aggressive behavior among the adolescents of university students. It

can be inferred that aggressive behavior is a significant predictor of the perceived level of stress and personal identity among the adolescents and emerging adulthood of university students on these variables.

Future Implications

The results of the present research provided us valuable insight into the extent to which adolescents and emerging adulthood are affected by long-lasting and ravaging frustration, aggressive behavior, and conflict. Furthermore, the difference in value prioritization was also revealed. Although it is not possible to separate the influence of aggressive conflict from the physiological, psychological, social, economic, and political aspects of the people of the university, the obtained results can be utilized by various agencies like school counselors, clinical psychologists, and policymakers in planning their intervention strategies.

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