

IMPACT OF EARLY MEMORIES OF WARMTH AND SAFENESS ON EMOTION REGULATION OF YOUNG ADULTS.

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ABSTRACT

All of us have encountered some kind of emotional disruption in our life and as individual differences prevail in everybody, the way how they tackle the incoming problems in their life also differs. Emotion Regulation is how we monitor and manage our emotions during some emotion producing event which can be responded either in a negative or a positive way. Standardized scales were used to study the variables. This study was conducted on 200 participants in age 18-25 years. The findings of the study revealed that early memories have a positive significant relation with the Cognitive Reappraisal Facet of Regulations of Emotions which confirms that the more Warmth, feeling of Safeness and Comfort a child is provided with the more efficiently he can administer his emotional problems in his adulthood. While this study has found one important factor which influences the Emotional Regulation in later life, further studies should expand this research by looking into other factors which will enhance our ability to regulate our emotions in a better way so that we make the best out of any difficult crises in our life.

KEYWORDS: Early memories, Warmth, Safeness, Emotion Regulation, Cognitive Reappraisal.

INTRODUCTION

Positive memories of our childhood have an important implication on many aspects of an individual's later life. Studies have shown how much of an important aspect it is for building a competent character for every individual so that he/she makes the most out of their life. Every person in this world passes through some rough times in their life where they experience emotional turbulences and as we all know there are people who are able to adapt to such situations in a healthy manner and there are some who take it very hard on themselves in stressful situations and don't know how to deal with it in a way so that they can stress about a situation less and instead manage it efficiently. Usually how someone will regulate their emotions during some conflicting times would depend on the two main

factors which are circumstances of the problem and the personality traits of the person and as we have little control over the outer situations we do have control over the inner response to the situation so we give a response in accordance to the possible outcomes and figuring which works best for us and carrying it out accordingly. And personality traits and coping mechanisms have a strong relation with the positive memories a person have of his childhood. . The recall of parental warmth is positively associated with ability to be self- reassuring and self-soothing in stressful situation (Irons et al., 2006).

Emotional Regulation plays a significant role in managing out the overall life satisfaction of individuals as people who are better capable in handling the unpleasant parts of life by cognitive reappraisals of a situation instead of suppressing the distressing sentiments to themselves which remain unsettled and later create a problem for them eventually leading to discontent. Stress is considered as an imbalance between the demands coming on an individual and the resources to cope from it. (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). He states that stress differs between individuals depending on the factor that how differently they perceive and interpret some situation and outcomes of it from sequence of patterns of thinking called appraisals (Lazarus, 1991). Children who have had a happy childhood filled with love and affection tend to adopt strategies which are logical and coherent making them to have amplified sense of self, and adopting healthy and practical behaviors and optimizing them to the fullest. On the other hand, children who have faced traumas or have had a bad childhood would definitely show problematic behavior later in life and would respond very hazily to pressures in life.

How a person regulates his emotions also has a strong connection with the emotional intelligence (EQ) of a person which again has been linked in many studies with the childhood recollection of events. And the memories of parental care, warmth, positive experiences, nurturance, compassion, safeness, etc. have an important role to play in building up traits of self-esteem, self-image, and overall personality of an individual and how immune he is in handling different conflicts in life and how differently he will perceive and interpret his daily hassles. This also ties up with individual differences which make every individual react to stress in a distinct way.

In our daily life we frequently use 2 emotion regulation strategies: cognitive reappraisal strategy (antecedent focused strategy) and suppressive expression strategy (response-focused strategy). Most research has compared the effectiveness of these two strategies. Reappraisal is an antecedent-focused strategy that is aimed at modifying the emotional meaning and impact of a situation that elicits emotion. In contrast, suppression is a form of response modulation and is defined as inhibiting emotional expression. Other theoretical proposals define emotion regulation as a process aimed at maximization of positive emotions and minimization of negative ones (Larsen & Prizmic, 1999; Wojciszke, 2003). Although emotions address different adaptive problems (Ekman, 1992), which improves decision making and prepare the individual for rapid motor responses (Frijda, 1986), and give information about the conflict between the individual and his environment. We expected that individuals who habitually reappraise should have lesser negative emotion experience and expression, and greater positive emotion experience and expression.

EMOTION REGULATION

“Emotional regulation refers to the process by which individual influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express their feelings and it can be automatic or controlled, conscious or unconscious, and may have effects at one or more points in the emotion producing process.” (Gross et al., 1998).

Although individuals often try to decrease negative emotion, there is more to emotion regulation than this. Individuals try to escalate, maintain and reduce negative as well as positive experiences. (Parrott, 1993).

Many examples of emotion regulation are conscious, such as deciding to change an upsetting topic, or biting one's lip when angry. However, emotion regulation may also occur without conscious awareness, such as when one exaggerates one's joy upon receiving an unattractive present (Cole, 1986) or when one quickly shifts attention away from something upsetting (Boden & Baumeister, 1997).

Emotions don't have to be regulated or changed all the time but only when they are challenging our right behaviors and goals (Gross, 2014). Most researches have been done to find the adaptive or maladaptive strategies of emotion regulation. Studies done on the use of reappraisal and suppression by individuals and their consequences which were used in experimental research have found that reappraisal is more adaptive and healthier than suppression. (Gross, 2004, 2015)

WARMTH AND SAFENESS

Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer (2011) referred perceived parental warmth as affection, care, comfort, apprehension, nurturance, support, or love that children can experience from their parents.

Safeness can be defined as the state in which there is full security and protection to the person from any kind of harm.

In this state he/she is totally free from danger.

Children who can recall better memories of their previous days like first day of his schooling or where his pet passed away- have better sense of self, can form better relationships, and make superior and healthier life decisions in adulthood.

Memories play an important part in how we make sense of the world and how we organize past experiences and judge how we look at future, as a result there are a lot of different ways that our memories of the past can guide us and We found that good memories seem to have a positive effect on health and well-being by reducing stress and helping in maintaining healthy choices and decisions in life. (Chopik, & Edelstein, 2019)

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the current research is to study the impact of early memories of warmth and safeness on the emotion regulation of young adults.

HYPOTHESIS:

There will be a positive significant relation between the cognitive reappraisal facet of emotion regulation with the early memories of warmth and safeness.

METHOD

SAMPLE:

The sample consisted of 200 participants (130 females and 70 males) from Punjab state. The Age Range of the sample lied between 18-25years.

MEASURES:

EARLY MEMORIES OF WARMTH AND SAFENESS SCALE (EMWSS) : This scale was given by (Richter et al., 2009) and designed to measure recall of feeling warm, safe and cared for in childhood and it consisted of 21 statements. The response list had a Likert-type scale in which the participants had to rate how often their childhood applied to the statements. (0 meaning No, never; 1 meaning Yes, but rarely, 2 meaning Yes, sometimes, 3 meaning Yes, often, 4 meaning Yes, most of the time). The scale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.97

EMOTION REGULATION QUESTIONNAIRE (ERQ): This questionnaire is given by Gross & John (2003). This scale consisted of 10 items which was supposed to measure the respondent's likelihood to regulate their emotion in two ways which are (i) Cognitive Reappraisal (ii) Expressive Suppression. Each answer was supposed to be selected on a 7 point likert type scale ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 7 – strongly agree.

PROCEDURE:

The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and the questionnaires were filled through goggle forms. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of the information to elicit their honest responses without any fear or inhibitions. Standardized psychological tests were administered to participants.

RESULTS:

Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlations were used to find out the relation between all the variables.

Table 1: showing Mean and Standard Deviation of all variables.

	TOTAL SAMPLE	TOTAL SCORE OF EMWSS	COGNITIVE REAPPRAISAL FACET	EXPRESSIVE SUPPRESSION FACET
N	200	12052	6057	3612
MEAN	1.350	60.260	30.285	18.060
STANDARD DEVIATION	.4782	16.8360	7.2676	6.2338

Table 2: showing correlation between all variables.

	EXPRESSIVE SUPPRESSION FACET	TOTAL SCORE OF EARLY MEMOREIS WARMTH AND SAFENESS SCALE
COGNITIVE REAPPRAISAL FACET	.494 **	.160*
EXPRESSIVE SUPPRESSION FACET	.494**	-.025

Note. *p<.05. **<.01.

DISSCUSION

A significant positive correlation was observed between Early Memories of Warmth and Safeness and Cognitive reappraisal facet. There was no significant correlation between Early Memories of Warmth and Safeness and Expressive suppression facet. There is a correlation between the early memories of warmth and safeness and the cognitive reappraisal facet of emotion regulation. The correlation coefficient between Early Memories of Warmth and Safeness and Cognitive reappraisal facet was ($r = .160^*$, $p < .05$), indicating a small effect size and there is a significant difference between cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression facet ($r = .494^{**}$, $p < .0.25$). This correlation indicates that as Early Memories of Warmth and Safeness increases, Cognitive reappraisal facet tends to increase. Hence the hypothesis that Early Memories of Warmth and Safeness will have a positive impact on the Cognitive Reappraisal of Emotions of Young Adults is proved true, which reveals that the more Warmth and Safeness and positive experiences a child gets in his childhood would impact his ability to Cognitively Reappraise emotional situations during his adulthood which would make him better capable to handle stressful situations much more efficiently. Reappraisal, which involves “rethinking the meaning of affectively charged stimuli or events in terms that alter their emotional impact” (Ochsner & Gross, 2008), has been revealed to have positive effect on well-being. As there have been many researchers in the past which tells us how much our childhood experiences has an impact on our later life’s multifarious components such as an individual’s personality, managing daily stressors, individual differences and the list goes on. “We found that good memories seem to have a positive effect on health and well-being, possibly through the ways that they reduce stress or help us maintain healthy choices in life,” (Chopik, 2019). “The most surprising finding was that we thought the effects would fade over time because participants were trying to recall things that happened sometimes over 50 years ago. One might expect childhood memories to matter less and less over time, but these memories still predicted better physical and mental health when people were in middle age and older adulthood (Chopin, 2019) But there are very few studies which study the impact of our positive memories of childhood on the emotion regulation component of the individuals. As Reappraisal is in favor of Warmth and Safeness in childhood and Reappraisal is an important element in well-being of individuals as it helps in handling stressful situations in a better manner, and examining the possible outcomes in advance leading to a better overall management of emotional regulation and behavior followed by it.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to study the impact of early memories of warmth and safeness on the emotion regulation of young adults. It was hypothesized that there will be a positive significant relation between the cognitive reappraisal facet of emotion regulation of individuals with the early memories of warmth and safeness and was conducted on 200 individuals. The Standardized measures of Early Memories of Warmth and Safeness and Emotional Regulation were used. As the Emotional Regulation had further two variables to be studied which were cognitive reappraisal of emotions and Suppression Expression of emotions, this research revealed that early memories of warmth and safeness have a positive significant relation with the cognitive reappraisal facet, thus proving our hypothesis true. Although the field of regulation of emotions have previously been studied with aggression, depression and other aspects, there has been very few researches on what factors influence in building better cognitive reappraisal of emotions in adults and this study verifies that the positive memories of childhood is directly and positively linked with better cognitive reappraisal in adulthood. However this research found only one component which impacts cognitive reappraisal of emotions in later life, there is still a need for finding out other variables which determines the factors of better reappraisals of emotions and strategies to be adopted for improving this skill so that everybody can pass through their turbulent time period in an efficient and smooth way.

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