

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation and Self Esteem among School Going Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

Background: Adolescence is a transitional phase of growth and development between childhood and adulthood. This phase of development is difficult and challenging for those who have difficulties in emotion regulation skills. **Aim of the study:** The present study aimed to examine the difficulties in emotion regulation and self esteem among school going adolescents. **Methods & Materials:** 30 school going adolescents falling between the age ranges of 13-17 years from schools based in Ranchi, Jharkhand fulfilling the criteria of the study was included. A school based exploratory study; using purposive sampling method was conducted. Procedure of the study was explained to them and informed consent was taken. Further, assessment was done using Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS) and Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (SES). **Results & Discussion:** The results suggested a significant relationship between difficulties in emotion regulation and self esteem of adolescents. **Conclusion:** This study provided the evidence of both emotional and psychological consequences associated with emotion regulation skills in adolescents. Application of various behavior techniques can increase the general effectiveness of the treatment and also in achieving a greater degree of normalization of other related psychological symptoms and a greater stability of academic results over time.

Keywords: *Adolescents, Emotion Regulation, Self Esteem*

Adolescence is a developmental period characterized by elevated stress, heightened risky behaviors and increase in psychopathology. For adolescents this phase of emotions is more labile than the emotions of children or an adult which may be because phase of adolescent itself is a challenging time. Emotion regulation during adolescence is even more challenging as compared to the overall development of the human life span.

Emotion regulation (ER) is conceptualized as the process of “shaping which emotions one has, when one has them, and how one experiences or expresses these emotions” (Gross, 2014). It is one of the complex process that involves initiating, inhibiting, and modulating one’s mental state and behavior in response to an external or internal stimulus. Emotion

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regulation involves maintaining thoughts, behaviors and expressions within a socially acceptable range.

A study on psychosocial well-being in adolescence was focused on analyzing whether or not emotion regulation strategies were associated with well-being of adolescents (Verzeletti et al., 2016). ER strategies are related to several well-being indicators, such as affect, loneliness, psychological health, and life satisfaction, showing different patterns of associations between those indicators and each one of the strategies.

Rey et al. (2011) examined the relationship between perceived emotional intelligence, self-esteem and life satisfaction in a sample of 316 Spanish adolescents (179 females and 137 males), ranging in age from 14 to 18.

Silk et al. (2003) examined links between emotion regulation and adjustment in a sample of 152 adolescents in Grades 7 (Mean age=12) and 10 (Mean age=15). It was found in their study that adolescents who reported more intense and labile emotions and less effective regulation of these emotions also reported more depressive symptoms and problem behavior. Taylor et al. (2000 & 2008) on the basis of his study findings suggested that high levels of self-esteem are protective against adverse mental health outcomes and are considered an important resilience factor. On the other hand Silverstone & Salsali (2003) highlighted that low levels of self-esteem are attributes of nearly all psychiatric diagnoses, majorly depression and eating disorders.

Kling & Gentile et al. (1999, 2009) did meta-analyses on gender differences in self-esteem. Findings of the study revealed that in terms of sex differences men reported higher global self-esteem than women.

Researches revealed that lack of emotional regulation induce difficulties in controlling emotional reactions, mood variation which leads to depression as a major psychopathology among adolescents and familial transmission play a vital role in this process (Hilt, Hanson & Pollak, 2011; Mason, Schmidt, Abraham, Walker & Tersyak, 2009).

Dhal,et al.,(2007) conducted a study to examine the levels of self-esteem and loneliness across age and gender, attachment styles and the relationship between self-esteem and loneliness among adolescents. In their results it was found that early adolescents had significantly higher self-esteem than late adolescents. Also high self-esteem was associated with secure attachment style; while preoccupied and fearful attachment styles were associated with low self-esteem and self-esteem was significantly negatively correlated with loneliness. In a study by Orth, et al., (2008) on low self-esteem prospectively predicts depression in adolescence and young adulthood after cross-lagged regression analyses indicated that low self-esteem predicted subsequent levels of depression, but depression did not predict subsequent levels of self-esteem.

Research conducted in the Indian context suggests that socio-emotional problems like loneliness,adjustment difficulties with parents & interpersonal conflicts are relatively common in adolescence, and a contributor for impaired feelings of self-esteem (Parmar & Rohner; 2008).

Theurel & Gentaz in 2018 conducted a study on regulation of emotions in adolescents: age differences and emotion-specific patterns. As the findings of the study they highlighted the

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need to determine which regulation strategies are more effective in different contexts and for which specific emotions/disorders in order to teach adolescents in prevention programs, more particularly in the period of middle adolescence, to use them flexibly in their everyday lives. It was also highlighted that emotion regulation (at least reappraisal) is more effective in 15-year-olds. On the other side, the selection of regulation strategies in everyday life is not more effective than that of 12-year-olds.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

A variety of studies have been done on various constructs of emotion regulation difficulties such as: depression, anxiety, self-esteem and its impact on academic performance. It has been found that balanced emotion regulation strategies can help to improve self esteem and if neglected then adolescents may develop issues related to self esteem which might increase the risk for internalizing problems among them.

Thus, the present study is an attempt to study the difficulties in emotion regulation and level of self-esteem among school going adolescents.

Objectives of the study

1. To study difficulties in emotion regulation among school going adolescents.
2. To study relationship between difficulties in emotion regulation and self-esteem among school going adolescents.
3. To study self-esteem and difficulties in emotion regulation among school going adolescent girls and boys.

Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant difference between school going adolescent girls and boys on self-esteem.
2. There will be no significant difference between difficulties in emotion regulation and self-esteem among school going adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

Venue of Study - The proposed study was conducted at Ranchi Institute of Neuro-Psychiatry and Allied Sciences (RINPAS) Ranchi, Jharkhand.

Design of the Study - A school based exploratory study was conducted for school going adolescents.

Sample

A total of 30 school going adolescents from the various schools of Ranchi, Jharkhand between the age range of 13 to 17 years fulfilling the inclusion and exclusion criteria was selected for the study.

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Adolescents who fall within the age range of 13 to 17 years.
2. Adolescents with average level of intellectual functioning.
3. Adolescents of both genders.
4. Adolescents who will be able to understand Hindi/ English.
5. Adolescents whose parents will give informed consent.

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Exclusion Criteria:

1. Adolescents having history of psychiatric condition, neuro-developmental disorder, organic condition and epilepsy.
2. Adolescents having history of organic condition or head injury.
3. Adolescents having history of substance abuse.
4. Adolescents having history of severe physical illness or disability.
5. Adolescents having history of severe emotional difficulties who were diagnosed with emotional and behavioural disorder according to ICD-10.
6. Adolescents who are living in broken families.

Tools

This section includes description of tools and apparatus for various psychological parameters along with clinical data sheet, Self report format and teacher's report format which will be used for the pre & post treatment and follow up assessment in the proposed study. The psychological tool and data sheet are below:

1. Socio-demographic and Clinical data sheet
2. Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS; Gratz & Roemer, 2004)
3. Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg,1986)

RESULTS

Table-1: Results showing independent t-test on difficulties in emotion regulation scale (DERS) and self esteem

Variables	Mean (n=30)	SD	U	Z
Self esteem	12.7000	2.94958	97.000	-.651
Total DERS	78.9000	7.80959	86.000	-1.102
Non-acceptance	11.2000	2.24990	98.500	-.598
Goal Direction	12.1333	2.28539	97.000	-.661
Impulse Control	13.1333	2.58288	105.000	-.316
Emotional Awareness	17.9333	3.19410	81.000	-1.329
Emotion Regulation	13.4000	2.91961	78.000	-1.441
Emotional Clarity	11.1000	2.09021	82.000	-1.291

Table-2: Correlation between DERS and Self-esteem

		Self Esteem	Total DERS	DERS Non Acceptance	DERS Impulse Control	DERS Emotional Awareness	DERS Emotion Regulation	DERS Emotional Clarity
Self Esteem	Pearson Correlation	1	-.184	.020	-.214	-.361*	-.072	.078
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.330	.918	.257	.050	.706	.680
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Total DERS	Pearson Correlation	-.184	1	.484 ⁸⁸	.758 ⁸⁸	.779 ⁸⁸	.565 ⁸⁸	.174
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.330		.007	.000	.000	.001	.357
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

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Table-2: Correlation between DERS and Self-esteem

		Self Esteem	Total DERS	DERS Non Acceptance	DERS Impulse Control	DERS Emotional Awareness	DERS Emotion Regulation	DERS Emotional Clarity
DERS Non-Acceptance	Pearson Correlation	.020	.484 ⁸⁸	1	.538 ⁸⁸	.357	-.195	.045
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.918	.007		.002	.053	.302	.813
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
DERS Goal Direction	Pearson Correlation	-.214	.758 ⁸⁸	.538 ⁸⁸	1	.669 ⁸⁸	.185	-.060
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.257	.000	.002		.000	.326	.753
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
DERS Impulse Control	Pearson Correlation	-.361 ⁸	.779 ⁸⁸	.357	.669 ⁸⁸	1	.440 ⁸	-.199
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.050	.000	.053	.000		.015	.291
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
DERS Emotional Awareness	Pearson Correlation	-.072	.565 ⁸⁸	-.195	.185	.440 ⁸	1	-.119
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.706	.001	.302	.326	.015		.531
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
DERS Emotion Regulation	Pearson Correlation	.078	.174	.045	-.060	-.199	-.119	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.680	.357	.813	.753	.291	.531	
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
DERS Emotion Clarity	Pearson Correlation	-.029	.317	-.063	.134	.164	.213	-.301
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.881	.087	.741	.479	.388	.259	.107
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
 **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table-3: Results showing significance of birth order on DERS and self-esteem scale

Variables	Girls Mean Rank (N=15)	Boys Mean Rank (N=15)	U	Wilcoxon W	Z
Self-esteem	18.60	12.40	66.000	186.000	-1.953
DERS	13.30	17.20	87.000	287.000	-1.060

DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of self esteem and difficulties in emotion regulation scale.

Table 2 shows the correlation between difficulties in emotion regulation and self-esteem among school going adolescents. The results indicate a significant correlation between the various domains of emotion regulation. The domains scored significant values on non Acceptance, emotion regulation, emotional awareness and impulse control.

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Table 3 shows the significance of birth order on self-esteem and difficulties in emotion regulation among school going adolescent girls and boys. On the analysis of extreme case value approach it was found that the birth order plays a significant role in the difficulties of emotion regulation among girls and boys (Parmar & Rohner; 2008).

It is the well known fact that most often the number of children and birth order might be the reason of that parents give a proper time for the maintaining well being of children. It was also found in results that adolescents whose both parents are working have difficulties in regulating emotions. This reported more by boys in the present study.

One of the findings also suggests a significant and positive correlation with levels of self-esteem and emotion regulation. Garnefski et al. (2004) finding suggests a comparable difference of men and women in a extent to which they use specific cognitive emotion regulation.

The above finding suggests an important implications for mental health prevention of school going adolescents. For this a specific target in intervention programs to guide adolescents to select strategy for emotion regulation process could be planned. Such intervention could coach adolescents to develop their own emotion strategies and to enhance their self esteem

CONCLUSION

The present study was an attempt to explore the difficulties in emotion regulation and self-esteem among school going adolescents. The results indicated that emotion regulation difficulties were one of the co-relating components that can affect the level of self esteem of adolescents. The results also helped to identify the nature of emotion regulation strategies among adolescents.

Further research can be done for the development of emotion regulation module that can help adolescence to manage their own emotions which can improve their academic performance. Techniques targeting emotion regulation skills can be incorporated into both treatment and preventive interventions at school level.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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