Self-Concept as a Predictor of Defense Mechanism Among Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

The present study is about the effect of defense mechanisms and self-concept on the adolescents. Defense mechanisms are behaviors people use to separate themselves from unpleasant events, actions, or thoughts. The idea of defense mechanisms comes from psychoanalytic theory and the self-concept is the concept the individual has of himself as a physical, social, spiritual or moral being. The study will provide a foundation for exploring the effect of these variables on adolescents.

KEY WORDS

INTRODUCTION

Many a time, it is seen that, we often fail at social relationships (family, work romantic or friendship) etc. It is because of the unhealthy use of our defense mechanism which is often an unintentional behavioural pattern. When we are able to identify these behavioural patterns, we become mindful and respond in a healthier way to stress. Defense mechanisms refer to an unconscious automatic psychological process which reduces the anxiety arising from potentially harmful stimuli. Defense mechanisms are usually unconsciously used, i. e., people usually are unaware while using such defense mechanisms. Defense mechanisms should be considered normal until and unless their interference increases to such an extent that it interferes with the maintenance of self-integrity. They can be categorised into maladaptive and adaptive defenses. Maladaptive behaviour is a negative kind of behaviour which harms the individual. It uses coping mechanisms that are not productive. It hinders the

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development of the individual and causes an increment of anxiety and tension. Adaptive behaviour allows individuals to adapt in a positive manner to various situations,It also helps to focus on using adaptive defenses more than maladaptive defenses.

The self-concept is the concept the individual has of himself as a physical, social, spiritual or moral being. Self-concept is generally thought of as our perceptions of our behaviour, abilities, and unique characteristics-a mental picture of who we are as a person.

To have an idea of oneself, one must be conscious of oneself. Self-Concept refers to the beliefs an individual has about various behavioural and social characteristics, physical and cognitive abilities, aspirations and achievements. In both social and humanistic psychology, the term self-concept is important.

Literature Review

Chamundeswari et al. (2014) found a relationship between self-concept, study habits and academic achievement of students. Three hundred and eighty-one students were surveyed for this study. The data was gathered using the self-concept inventory and the study habits inventory, and the student's grades from the prior class were utilised as a measure of their academic achievement. Students' self-concept, study habits, and academic achievement all had a substantial association, according to the findings.

Cramer and Tracy (2005) discovered that a person's employment of mature defences is linked to positive personality traits like empathy, better self-esteem, an internal locus of control, competence, self-confidence, outgoingness, and a stable attachment style. Immature defences, on the other hand, are linked to signs of distress, such as irresponsibility, self-centeredness, unclear "fuzzy" thinking, and worry.

Cooper (1998) reviewing changes in the concepts of defense within psychoanalysis, found that those contemporary thinkers who had strayed from the Freudian viewpoint saw defenses as a method of enhancing or maintaining self-esteem and that rather than being a response to stress or anxiety, they "were seen as part of a set of social and cognitive patterns that emerge from intimate connections with significant persons".

Das (2014) studied the self-concept of adolescents and its relationship with social and emotional adjustment. A total sample of hundred students was selected. The self-Concept Scale by Ahluwalia and Adjustment Inventory for College Students by Sinha & Singh was used. The results revealed that there was a relationship between specific self-concept and achievement. It was also suggested that school-based prevention program is beneficial for improving the academic performance of students who have a low self-concept.

Dixit (2014) studied the role of self-concept on adjustment among middle-aged women. A sample of the study consisted of 120 married women in the age range 30-45 years were selected. Data were collected by using a Self-Concept Scale by Rastogi. The results showed that self-concept influences the adjustment of women positively

Jani (2017) studied the efficacy of gender and age on the self-concept of school students. A total of six hundred and fifty students from which four hundred and twenty-seven were boys and two hundred and twenty-three were girls were selected as the samples for the study. The self-Concept scale by Singh & Singh was used. Results showed that girls had a high self-concept as compared to boys. There was no impact of age on the self-concept of the school students.

Kaur et al. (2017) explored academic achievement and home environment as correlates of self-concept. A total of three hundred students were taken as a sample for the study. Results showed that self-concept is positively correlated with academic achievement and findings also revealed that there is a positive significance between home environment and self-concept.

Khan (2016) aimed to find out if there is any effect of academic stress on self-concept, adjustment and achievement motivation. A total sample of four hundred high school students was selected. Academic Stress Questionnaire by Khan, Self-Concept Inventory by Saraswat, Bell Adjustment Inventory by Mohsin & Shamshad and Achievement Motivation Scale by Deo and Mohan were used for data collection. The results

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showed that their gender does not play a significant role in academic stress and self-concept. Boys were found to be more in adjustment as compared to girls. Girls were more in achievement motivation as compared to boys. No difference was found in university-run school students and private school students on academic stress, self-concept, adjustment and achievement motivation.

Operational Definition of the Variable

As seen, there are two main variables to be studied in this research work, which are:

Defense Mechanism (Criterion Variable)

Defense mechanisms are involuntary and unconscious mental operations that contribute to reducing internal and external stresses. Depending on the conditions and frequency with which the defense mechanism is engaged, it may have healthy or unhealthy outcomes.

Self-Concept (Predictor Variable)

Self-concept refers to a person's collection of thoughts, feelings, and attitudes about oneself. It is a personal endeavour to describe oneself to construct a system that integrates one's impressions, feelings, and attitudes toward oneself (Wollfolk, 1987). Our self-concept is shaped by our interactions with others.

Objectives

To study the relationship between different defense mechanisms viz Turning against object (TAO), Projection (PRO), Principalization (PRN), Turning against self (TAS), Reversal (REV) and Self- Concept among adolescents.

Hypothesis

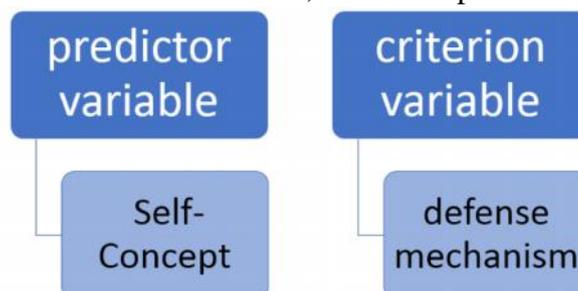The following hypotheses was raised in conformity with the purposes of the study:

H_1: There exists a positive correlation between Turning against object (TAO) defense mechanism and Self-Concept among adolescents

H_2: There exists a positive correlation between Projection (PRO) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents

H_3: There exists a positive correlation between Principalization (PRN) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents

H_4: There exists a positive correlation between Turning against self (TAS) defense mechanism and Self-Concept among adolescents

H_5: There exists a positive correlation between Reversal (REV) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents

Participants

In this study, 30 teenagers aged 13 to 19 years old from the Durg district are involved. The technique of stratified random sampling has been employed.

Research Design

In this proposed research work, a correlational research design will be applied. In this proposed work defense mechanism is the criterion variable. However, Self-Concept is the suspected predictor variable

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Measures
Measures to Assess the Criterion Variable
Defense Mechanism

For measuring defense mechanisms, the Indian adaptation of the Defense Mechanism Inventory constructed by Gleser and Ihilevich (1969), and developed by Mrinal and Singhal (2012) is been used. There are five clusters of defense mechanisms assessed in this inventory which are, Turning against an object (TAO), Projection (PRO), Principalization (PRN), Turning against self (TAS) and Reversal (REV). The inventory contains 10 stories and 200 items.

Measures to Assess the Predictor Variable
Self -Concept

The Self-Concept Questionnaire (SCQ) developed by Saraswat (1992) would be used. It is the Indian adaptation of the Multidimensional Self-Concept Scale (MSCS) constructed by Bracken (1992). The Questionnaire provides six major dimensions of self-concept viz. , Physical, Social, Temperamental, Educational, Moral and Intellectual. It also gives a total self-concept score. The inventory consists of a total number of 48 items. Each dimension contains eight items which were provided with five alternatives. In the study, the variable self-concept would be assessed using the total or global score.

Procedure

The data was collected in a group setting in a classroom. Rapport was established with the participants and were assured that the results would be, kept confidential and the general purpose of the research was not disclosed. The participants were asked to fill the required biographical information in the Performa. After this, they were, asked to read the instructions written on the scales. Necessary clarification if required was provided. The order of administration was random. It was seen carefully that the participants complete all items of all the scales. The order of administration of the measurement devices was random.

Statistical Analysis

For the analysis of the data , correlations were computed.

Result

H_1: There exists a positive correlation between Turning against object (TAO) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents

To test the above hypothesis, Turning against object (TAO) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents was measured. The correlation obtained is presented in the table 1.

Table 1: Values of correlation between Turning against object (TAO) defense mechanism and Self-Concept among adolescents

Particular	N	df	r	Result
Turning against object (TAO) defense mechanism Self- Concept	30	28	0.108	Positive Low correlation

(Source: Primary Data)

From the table I, it can be seen that the obtained 'r' value is 0. 108, which shows a positive low correlation. The proposed hypothesis H_1 is accepted.

Hence it can be concluded that there exists a positive correlation between Turning against object (TAO) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents

H_2: There exists a positive correlation between Projection (PRO) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents.

To test the above hypothesis, Projection (PRO) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents was measured. The correlation obtained is presented in the table 2.

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Table 2: Values of correlation between Projection (PRO) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents

Particular	N	df	r	Result
Projection (PRO) defense mechanism Self- Concept	30	28	0. 060	Positive Low correlation

(Source: Primary Data)

From the table II, it can be seen that the obtained 'r' value is 0. 060, which shows a positive low correlation. The proposed hypothesis H_2 is accepted.

Hence it can be concluded that there exists a positive correlation between Projection (PRO) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents

H_3: There exists a positive correlation between Principalization (PRN) defense mechanism and Self-Concept among adolescents.

To test the above hypothesis, Principalization (PRN) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents was measured. The correlation obtained is presented in the table 3.

Table 3: Values of correlation between Principalization (PRN) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents

Particular	N	df	r	Result
Principalization (PRN) defense mechanism Self- Concept	30	28	0. 200	Positive Low correlation

(Source: Primary Data)

From the table III, it can be seen that the obtained 'r' value is 0. 200, which shows a positive low correlation. The proposed hypothesis H_3 is accepted.

Hence it can be concluded that there exists a positive correlation between Principalization (PRN) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents.

H_4: There exists a positive correlation between Turning against self (TAS) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents.

To test the above hypothesis, Turning against self (TAS) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents was measured. The correlation obtained is presented in the table 4.

Table 4: Values of correlation between Turning against self (TAS) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents

Particular	N	df	r	Result
Turning against self (TAS) defense mechanism Self- Concept	30	28	0.206	Positive Low correlation

(Source: Primary Data)

From the table IV, it can be seen that the obtained 'r' value is 0.206, which shows a positive low correlation. The proposed hypothesis H_4 is accepted.

Hence it can be concluded that there exists a positive correlation between Turning against self (TAS) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents.

H_5: There exists a positive correlation between Reversal (REV) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents.

To test the above hypothesis, Reversal (REV)defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents was measured. The correlation obtained is presented in the table 5.

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Table 5: Values of correlation between Reversal (REV)defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents

Particular	N	df	r	Result
Reversal (REV)defense mechanism Self- Concept	30	28	0.760	Positive High correlation

(Source: Primary Data)

From the table V, it can be seen that the obtained 'r' value is 0.760, which shows a positive High correlation. The proposed hypothesis H_4 is accepted.

Hence it can be concluded that there exists a positive correlation between Reversal (REV) defense mechanism and Self- Concept among adolescents.

Discussion

An adolescent has undergone a dramatic change from their journey from childhood to adulthood, also grooming with all the social skills and enabling their development into an individual of balanced personalities capable of facing any challenge. As seen from the above result, there exists a positive correlation between defense mechanisms and self-concept among adolescents, as defense mechanisms refer to an unconscious automatic psychological process which reduces the anxiety arising from potentially harmful stimuli and self-concept refers to how a person thinks about, judges, or views himself. Knowing the defense mechanism and self-concept of adolescents can be helped to develop healthy relationships.

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