

Impact Of Psychological Distress On Aggressive Behaviors And Sexual Desires Among College Students And Working Adults

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ABSTRACT

Focusing on how distress affects sexual desire and arousal, how dysfunctional sexual behaviors serve as coping mechanisms, and how to treat sexual dysfunctions linked to distress, this dissertation delves into the complex relationship between mental health and sexual health. Changes in libido, arousal patterns, , sexual functioning may result from psychological distress, which includes feelings like worry, sadness, and trauma. When people experience hardship, they may resort to unhealthy coping techniques, which may worsen their underlying mental health problems. These behaviors might include engaging in unsafe sexual practices or obsessive pornography consumption. In order to alleviate distress-related sexual dysfunctions and their related psychological symptoms, there are a number of therapeutic options available, such as medication and cognitive-behavioral therapy. The goal of this study is to help develop treatments that improve sexual health and psychological resilience by clarifying the intricate relationship between psychological discomfort and sexual health.

Keywords: Psychological distress, Sexual desire, Sexual arousal, Dysfunctional sexual behaviors, Coping mechanisms, Sexual dysfunctions, Treatment approaches.

CHAPTER-1 INTRODUCTION

People often find themselves negotiating the complex interplay of psychological suffering, interpersonal connections, and the search of personal fulfilment amid the dynamic & demanding landscapes of modern society. Professional work situations and academic settings are two different contexts where these issues might appear in different ways. Using a multidisciplinary approach, this dissertation explores the "Impact of Psychological Distress on Aggressive Behaviours and Sexual Desires among College Students and Working Adults," seeking to reveal the complex relationships that exist between mental health, interpersonal dynamics, and the expression of aggressive behaviours and sexual desires.

The passage from teenage years to adulthood is a crucial period that is characterised by a variety of psychological, social, & emotional changes. This stage is often associated with self-discovery, academic stress, and the formation of new connections for college students. On the other hand, working people struggle with the responsibilities of their personal life, as well as their employment goals and duties. Despite their apparent differences, both groups are susceptible to psychological anguish, which may have a significant effect on their actions and personal aspirations. Using a comparative approach, this research examines the many ways that psychological distress presents itself in both working adults and college students, as well as its relationship to violent behaviours and sexual urges. In order to shed light on the complex interactions between mental health, relationship dynamics, and the expression of aggression along with sexual desires, the research is comparing and contrasting these two demographic groups' experiences in order to identify trends, differences, and possible intersections.

In a time when mental health issues are being recognised more and more, it is critical to comprehend the precise effects of psychological distress upon behaviours associated with violence and sexual urges. In addition to adding insightful new information to the body of psychological research already in existence, this study aims to provide guidance for therapies, regulations, and other support systems that are specifically designed to meet the requirements of working adults and college students. This dissertation aims to provide a greater knowledge all the complex and dynamic nature for human behaviour within the modern socio-cultural environment by providing a thorough analysis of these interconnected phenomena.

CHAPTER-2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In theory, children who suffer from emotional abuse (EA) or neglect (EN) as they grow up may have unhealthy attachment styles and have trouble regulating their emotions and how they see themselves in relation to others. The researchers set out to determine if and how parental EA and EN therapy was a distinct risk factor for maladaptive long-term outcomes in

terms of anxiety, sadness, and dissociation symptoms in young adults. Additionally, we investigated whether certain internalised maladaptive interpersonal schemas moderated the associations between EA, EN, and subsequent symptoms. Perceptions of EA and EN in childhood remained a predictor of subsequent symptoms even after accounting for gender, socioeconomic status, parental drunkenness, and other forms of child abuse, according to hierarchical regression studies. Mediated through schemas of guilt, susceptibility to injury, and self-sacrifice, both EA and EN were linked to subsequent anxiety and depressive symptoms. Schemas of guilt and susceptibility to damage moderated the association between EN and subsequent dissociation symptoms, although this association was exclusive to EN. **(Del Castillo, D. 2009)**

Sexual desire and behaviour were investigated in this research in relation to psychological trait variables. Given the importance of both intrinsic drive and the capacity for self-control in connection to adaptive sexuality, the study focused on how these elements could help keep the two in check. Also investigated was how sexual desire, activity, & fulfilment relate to one another. The following factors were measured in the participants: approach & avoidance motivation, attachment style, self-control, sensation seeking, mindfulness, and sexual desire (dyadic vs. solitary), sexual activity (partner vs. alone), sexual pleasure, and self-control. Three separate profiles of each gender relating to various forms of psychological functioning were revealed by cluster analysis based on participants' levels of sexual desire & sexual activity: (a) Those who were highly motivated to engage in dyadic sexual relations were the happiest, most psychologically well-adjusted, and most fulfilled sexually. They also exhibited a healthy mix of impulsivity—a strong desire to get rewards for women and a lack of self-control for men—and a healthy dose of mindfulness. On the other hand, those who were least motivated to engage in dyadic sexual relations were the least fulfilled sexually and exhibited a strong desire to avoid negative outcomes, along with low levels of self-control. **(Van der Linden, M. 2016)**

This study aimed to determine if there was a correlation between the psychological discomfort that teenagers reported and their exposure to physical and psychological forms of interpersonal violence. It was anticipated that there would be a positive correlation between psychological distress symptoms and experiences of both physical and psychological aggression. However, it was also anticipated that psychological aggression would partially explain the association between physical aggression or psychological distress. Furthermore, it was predicted that psychological aggressiveness would be seen as less amusing and more painful than physical hostility. Symptoms of psychological discomfort were favourably (although inconsistently) linked with adolescents' experiences of physical and psychological relationship violence. Adolescents reported more suffering when psychological violence was included with physical aggression in the same analysis, but the reverse was not true. This result was consistent across the two measures used to detect aggressive behaviour in romantic relationships. People were less inclined to dismiss psychological aggressiveness as the partner "playing around" and more likely to find it unpleasant compared to physical hostility. The CADRI found that in the last eight weeks, 91% (n = 114) of those surveyed had experienced some kind of psychological violence, and 27% (n = 34) had experienced some form of physical hostility. Psychological aggression amounted to 10.6 incidents (SD = 8.56), whereas physical aggression accounted for 1.1 incidents (SD = 2.47), with a t-value of 13.65 and a p-value of less than or equal to .001 calculated. **(McDonald, R. 2009)**

According to two research, people's negative emotions are triggered by distressed behaviour, which in turn makes them more solicitous and less likely to be aggressive. In the first study, 48 married couples graded different behaviours based on how they felt and reacted when their partner did each activity. Angry responses were discouraged by distressed behaviour, which elicited negative and solicitous feelings. Anger, hostility, and argumentative replies resulted from aggressive conduct. There were differences in the verbal content so nonverbal affect of the filmed samples of a woman's upset, aggressive, or neutral behaviour, and 41 couples judged them in Study 2. Negative and solicitous emotions were elicited by instances of distressed behaviour compared to neutral behaviour. Anger and hostility were exacerbated by aggressive examples. The research highlights the significance of differentiating between aggressive and distraught behaviour. Copyright © 2022 American Psychological Association, all rights reserved. **(Sherman, L.1989)**

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

AIM

The aim of this study is to explore the impact of psychological distress on aggressive behaviors and sexual desires among two distinct age groups: college students aged 18-24 years and working adults aged 25-31 years.

VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

Independent Variable:

Psychological Distress: Psychological distress refers to a broad spectrum of emotional states that individuals may experience, including but not limited to anxiety, depression, and stress. It serves as the independent variable because it is manipulated or observed to see its effect on other variables.

Dependent Variables:

Aggressive Behaviors: Aggressive behaviors encompass actions or tendencies characterized by hostility, violence, or assertiveness. These behaviors are influenced by psychological distress, meaning they are dependent on the level of distress experienced by individuals.

Sexual Desires: Sexual desires refer to the intensity and nature of an individual's sexual urges, interests, and fantasies. These desires are influenced by psychological distress and are dependent on the level of distress experienced by individuals.

OBJECTIVES:

- To examine the impact of psychological distress on aggressive behaviors and sexual desires among young adults aged 18-24 years.
- To examine the impact of psychological distress on aggressive behaviors and sexual desires among working adults aged 25-31 years.

HYPOTHESIS

- There is no significant impact of psychological distress on aggressive behaviors and sexual desires among young adults aged 18-24 years.
- There is no significant impact of psychological distress on aggressive behaviors and sexual desires among working adults aged 25-31 years.

PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY

The survey included 200 responses from both groups: college students aged 18-24 and working adults aged 25-31. These individuals displayed a range of aggressive behaviors, sexual desires, and psychological distress. In both categories, the sample consisted of an equal proportion of male and female individuals.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The scales that have been used to collect data for the study were the “**Sexual Desire Inventory (Spector, Carey & Steinberg, 1996), Aggression Questionnaire (Buss & Warren, 2000), and Kessler Psychological Distress Scale-K 10 (Kessler, Andrews & Colpe, 2002)**”.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The data collection procedure for the study involves introducing participants to the study objectives and ensuring privacy protection measures. Participants will be given questionnaires including the “**Sexual Desire Inventory (SDI), Aggression**

Questionnaire (AQ), and Kessler Psychological Distress Scale-K 10 (K10)”, with clear instructions provided for completion. They will be informed that it will take approximately ten minutes to complete the instruments. After completing the questionnaires, participants will submit their responses and receive a debriefing on the study's purpose.

Kessler Psychological Distress Scale-K 10 (K10)

Description and scoring of the scale

This is a 10-item questionnaire intended to yield a global measure of distress based on questions about anxiety and depressive symptoms that a person has experienced in the most recent 4-week period. Each item is scored from one ‘none of the time’ to five ‘all of the time’. Scores of the 10 items are then summed, yielding a minimum score of 10 and a maximum score of 50. Low scores indicate low levels of psychological distress and high scores indicate high levels of psychological distress.

RELIABILITY

The K10 items exhibited strong internal consistency, with a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.88 and an ordinal alpha coefficient of 0.92.

VALIDITY

The K10 demonstrates strong convergent validity with measures like the GHQ. It shows very good to excellent criterion validity for predicting serious mental illness, with AUCs ranging from 0.76 to 0.85 for the K6 across 14 nations and 0.87 to 0.88 for the K10 across two nations [14, 7]. It also exhibits strong predictive value for past-year mental disorders (AUC as low as 0.71 reported), with some variation across racial and ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, the K10 correlates with key mental health outcomes like functional impairment and health service utilization.

THE AGGRESSION QUESTIONNAIRE

Description and scoring of the scale

The Aggression Questionnaire (AQ) is a 29-item test that assesses four aspects of aggression: Physical aggression, Verbal aggression, Anger, Hostility. To complete the AQ (Aggression Questionnaire), participants are required to rate each item using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 signifies "extremely uncharacteristic of me" and 5 indicates "extremely characteristic of me." The score for each scale is derived by summing the ratings for its respective items. Notably, items 7 and 18 are reverse-scored due to their phrasing, which runs counter to the direction of aggression assessed by the questionnaire.

RELIABILITY

The reliability coefficients for the different subscales and the total score were as follows: verbal aggression subscale: 0.82; physical aggression subscale: 0.98; anger subscale: 0.85; hostility subscale: 0.85; total score: 0.97. Additionally, split-half reliability coefficients with Spearman-Brown correction ranged from 0.53 to 0.82 (verbal aggression subscale: 0.53; physical aggression subscale: 0.73; anger with resentment subscale: 0.78; hostility subscale: 0.75; total score: 0.82).

VALIDITY

The validity of the AQ was assessed by calculating Pearson correlations between its subscales and scores in selected subscales of the CTS2 and the STAXI2. All correlations were found to be statistically significant ($p < .001$). The observed correlations ranged from small-to-moderate to moderate in magnitude.

SEXUAL DESIRE INVENTORY

Description and scoring of the scale

The Sexual Desire Inventory (SDI) is a questionnaire that measures sexual desire in both men and women. In 1996, Spector, Carey, and Steinberg developed the SDI. Two dimensions dyadic and solitary are used by the SDI to classify sexual desire. A higher level of sexual desire is indicated by higher scores. The total of items 1 to 8 yields the Dyadic Sexual Desire score. A score for solitary sexual desire is obtained by adding items 9 to 11. A couple's desire discrepancy score may be calculated by deducting the female dyadic scores from the male dyadic scores.

RELIABILITY

The Dyadic scale ($r = .86$) and the Solitary scale ($r = .96$) showed good indications of reliability when internal consistency estimates (using Cronbach's alpha values) were computed (Spector et al., 1996). Over a one-month period, test-retest reliability was shown to be $r = .76$ (Carey, 1995).

VALIDITY

The evidence for factor validity of the Sexual Desire Inventory (SDI) was examined through factor analyses, which revealed that Items 1–8 loaded significantly (i.e., $> .45$) on the dyadic factor, while Items 9–11 loaded significantly on the solitary factor. Both factors had eigenvalues greater than 1 (Spector et al., 1996). Concurrent validity evidence, gathered from a sample of 380 students, showed that solitary sexual desire is strongly correlated with the frequency of solitary sexual behavior ($r = .80, p < .0001$) and negatively correlated with erotophilia ($r = -.28, p < .0001$; Spector, 1992). Dyadic desire is moderately correlated with the frequency of dyadic sexual behavior ($r = .34, p < .0001$). It's important to note that neither dyadic nor solitary desire is perfectly correlated with sexual behavior, indicating that measuring desire indirectly through behavior would yield inaccurate results. Discriminant validity evidence indicates that neither subscale of the SDI is correlated with social desirability (Spector, 1992).

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

SPSS software was utilized for the investigation. Regression analysis and descriptive statistics tests were employed to support the hypothesis.

CHAPTER 4

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study delves into the comparative analysis of the impact of psychological distress on aggressive behaviors and sexual desires among two distinct cohorts: college students aged between 18 and 24 years and working adults aged between 25 and 31 years. By conducting a comparative analysis between these two age groups, this study aims to shed light on potential differences in how psychological distress correlates with aggressive behaviors and sexual desires. Such insights can inform targeted interventions tailored to the specific needs of each cohort, ultimately contributing to the promotion of mental health and well-being across diverse adult populations. Through the examination of the data collected from both cohorts, this study offers valuable insights into the nuanced interplay between psychological distress and behavioral outcomes during early adulthood.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of all variables (College adults 18-24 years)

	K10	AQ	SD
Mean	25.175	79.295	54.61
Standard Deviation	5.517845	17.87022	12.59049
N	200	200	200

The descriptive statistics table presents the summary measures for three variables: Sexual Desire Inventory (SD), Aggression Questionnaire (AQ), and Kessler Psychological Distress Scale-K 10 (K10), among college adults aged 18-24 years. The mean score for SD is 54.61 with a standard deviation of approximately 12.59, indicating moderate variability in sexual desire among the sample. For AQ, the mean score is 79.295 with a standard deviation of around 17.87, suggesting considerable variability in aggression levels.

Regarding K10, the mean score is 25.175 with a standard deviation of approximately 5.52, indicating relatively low variability in psychological distress among the respondents. These statistics provide a snapshot of the central tendency and dispersion of each variable within the sample, highlighting the diverse range of experiences in sexual desire, aggression, and psychological distress among young adults in college.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of all variables (Working adults 25-31 years)

	K10	AQ	SD
Mean	21	66.79	69.02
Standard Deviation	5.692276	16.99855	16.16248
N	200	200	200

The descriptive statistics table presents the summary measures for three variables—Kessler Psychological Distress Scale-K 10 (K10), Aggression Questionnaire (AQ), and Sexual Desire Inventory (SD)—among working adults aged 25-31 years. The mean score for K10 is 21, with a standard deviation of approximately 5.69, indicating relatively low levels of psychological distress among the sample. For AQ, the mean score is 66.79, with a standard deviation of around 16.99, suggesting moderate variability in aggression levels.

Regarding SD, the mean score is 69.02, with a standard deviation of approximately 16.16, indicating moderate variability in sexual desire among working adults. These statistics provide insight into the central tendency and dispersion of each variable within the sample, highlighting the range of experiences in psychological distress, aggression, and sexual desire among young working adults.

DISCUSSION

The findings from the interpretation chapter shed light on the significant impact of psychological distress on aggressive behaviors and sexual desires among both college students aged 18-24 years and working adults aged 25-31 years. Through regression analyses, it was revealed that psychological distress had a notable influence on both aggression and sexual desires within each cohort.

For instance, among college students aged 18-24 years, the regression analysis yielded a significant association between psychological distress and both aggression and sexual desires. Specifically, the regression model for aggression indicated a statistically significant relationship ($p < 0.05$), providing evidence that heightened levels of psychological distress were linked to increased aggression among this age group. Similarly, the regression analysis for sexual desires also showed a significant impact of psychological distress ($p < 0.05$), suggesting that individuals experiencing psychological distress may exhibit altered patterns of sexual desires.

Similarly, among working adults aged 25-31 years, the regression analyses demonstrated significant associations between psychological distress and both aggression and sexual desires. The regression model for aggression revealed a statistically significant relationship ($p < 0.05$), indicating that elevated levels of psychological distress were associated with heightened aggression among working adults. Additionally, the regression analysis for sexual desires also showed a significant impact of psychological distress ($p < 0.05$), suggesting that psychological distress may influence the sexual desires of individuals within this age group.

These findings underscore the importance of addressing psychological distress in both college students and working adults to mitigate its impact on aggressive behaviors and sexual desires. Interventions aimed at promoting mental health and well-being should consider the specific needs and contexts of each cohort. For college students, interventions within educational settings focusing on stress management, coping strategies, and mental health support may be particularly beneficial. For working adults, workplace-based interventions emphasizing mental health awareness, stress reduction, and access to counseling services may be effective in addressing psychological distress and its impacts on behavior.

Furthermore, the comparative analysis between the two age groups provides valuable insights into potential differences in how psychological distress manifests and influences behavior across early adulthood. Understanding these differences can inform the development of tailored interventions to promote mental health and well-being across diverse adult populations.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

The study explored the impact of psychological distress on aggressive behaviors and sexual desires among two distinct cohorts: college students aged 18-24 years and working adults aged 25-31 years. Through regression analyses, significant associations were found between psychological distress and both aggression and sexual desires within each age group. For college students aged 18-24 years, the regression analyses indicated significant impacts of psychological distress on both aggression and sexual desires. Similarly, among working adults aged 25-31 years, psychological distress was found to significantly influence both aggression and sexual desires. The findings highlight the importance of addressing psychological distress to mitigate its impact on behavior and well-being in young adults. Tailored interventions targeting stress management, coping strategies, and mental health support are essential to promote healthy development and functioning.

Moreover, the comparative analysis between the two age groups provided valuable insights into potential differences in how psychological distress manifests and influences behavior during early adulthood. Understanding these differences is crucial for developing effective interventions that address the specific needs of each cohort.

In conclusion, the study contributes to our understanding of the nuanced interplay between psychological distress, aggressive behaviors, and sexual desires among college students and working adults. By identifying significant associations, the research underscores the importance of promoting mental health and well-being across diverse adult populations to foster healthier outcomes in early adulthood.