

Studying the Role of Anxiety and Depression in Predicting the Characteristics of Borderline Personality Disorder with Psychological Pain Modulator

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Extended Abstract

Aim

The purpose of this study was to examine the moderating effect of mental pain on the relationships between symptoms of depression, anxiety, and borderline personality disorder (BPD). In fact, BPD is a severe psychological disorder characterized by emotional dysregulation, rapid mood swings, unstable interpersonal relationships, and fragile self-image (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders–Fifth Edition, 2013).

Methodology

This study was descriptive and correlational in nature. This descriptive-correlational study included all students at Shahid Beheshti University (Tehran, Iran) in 2021 as its statistical population. As a research cohort, 310 male and female students were selected using stratified random sampling. Participants conducted the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), Orbach and Mikulincer's Mental Pain (OMMP) Scale, and the Personality Assessment Inventory–Borderline (PAI–BOR) Scale. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to analyze the data. Hierarchically examined data were subjected to multiple regression analysis using SPSS-26 software.

Findings

The results indicated that anxiety, depression, and mental pain significantly predicted BPD symptoms. In addition, the mutual effect of depression and mental pain was a significant predictor of BPD symptoms, whereas the mutual effect of mental pain and anxiety was not. Thus, mental anguish can moderate the association between depression and BPD symptoms.

According to research evidence, BPD symptoms are correlated with the occurrence of different various comorbid psychological disorders, e.g., mood disorders and anxiety disorders, are associated with the presence of BPD symptoms, as demonstrated by research. The most prevalent co-occurring psychological disorder with BPD is a mood disorder. The prevalence of major depressive disorder (MDD) is significantly higher among BPD patients than among individuals with other personality disorders, according to the findings of this study. Patients with BPD experience depression in qualitatively and quantitatively distinct ways. For instance, these patients exaggerate their depression status compared to the specialized estimation, indicating that their mental experiences with depression differ. Over fifty percent of BPD patients also suffer from anxiety disorders. Compared to patients with other personality disorders, those with BPD experience greater apprehension.

Conclusion

According to the research literature, individuals with BPD symptoms experience depression and anxiety differently. Their experiences differ in terms of intensity. Regarding this, there is a significant concern about what factors can influence the relationships between BPD symptoms and depression and anxiety. Mental pain (also called emotional pain or mental pain) is a factor that can be considered when attempting to explain BPD symptoms. Mental anguish encompasses a broad spectrum of mental experiences characterized as the perception of negative self-changes and negative function variations. These experiences differ from other negative and emotional states like depression and anxiety in that they are accompanied by intensely negative emotions. According to some researchers, multifaceted mental anguish can exacerbate behavioral and interpersonal symptoms of BPD. However, this symptom has received less attention than the others. Given the significance of mental pain and emotional experiences in BPD patients, as well as the diversity of depression and anxiety experiences, the purpose of this study was to examine the moderating function of mental pain in the relationships between depression, anxiety, and BPD symptoms. In other words, the purpose of this study was to examine the interplay between depression, anxiety, and mental anguish and BPD symptoms.

This conclusion can be explained by the notion that dissatisfaction of intrinsic and interpersonal needs results in increased levels of mental anguish. If these requirements are not met, a patient will have a more negative self-image and experience further negative emotions or greater mental pain. In addition, higher levels of mental anguish will be accompanied by additional BPD symptoms, including emotional instability, identity confusion, and self-harm.

Keywords: Anxiety, Borderline Personality, Depression, Mental pain.