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The Causal Relationship between External Shame, Self-Criticism and Fear of Self-Compassion and Self- Injury in Students: The Mediating Role of Depression and Family Emotional Involvement

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Extended Abstract

Aim

The instinctive human desire to safeguard oneself and avert damage, suffering, injuries, and wounds is inherent. Self-injury and pain are averted by humans, but diverse types of self-injury have existed since the dawn of time (APA, 2013). Non-suicidal self-injury behaviors are one of them. The injury is deliberately inflicted, and the individual is cognizant of this. This behavior ultimately damages a body part, causing discomfort, hemorrhaging, or bruising, and it is not considered socially acceptable. Self-injury seems to be a prevalent behavior driven by the desire to control negative emotions, exact revenge on oneself, or establish connections with or influence others (Andover et al., 2012). Social-emotional adaptation is deficient; the individual resorts to self-injury as a means of adjusting (Siegel, 2020). On the other hand, empirical evidence suggests that self-criticism and aversion to self-compassion have both direct and indirect associations with the extent of self-injury (Gilbert et al., 2010). Depression is an additional factor that is associated with non-suicidal self-injury indulgence (Madge et al., 2011). Self-injury behaviors can be influenced by family factors and the psychological milieu of the family environment, among other variables; emotional involvement in the family is one such factor (Singh & Behmani, 2018). According to the study, the one-year prevalence of intentional self-injury among primary and secondary school pupils in Europe, encompassing seven participating countries, ranged from 2.7% to 7.3%. Although suicide attempts and non-suicidal self-injury occur simultaneously, numerous studies distinguish between the two phenomena on the grounds that their mechanisms of action and fatality rates are dissimilar (Selby et al., 2012). Numerous international studies have examined the correlation between self-injury and psychological variables; however, none have investigated the mediating effect of depression or family emotional involvement on the ad hoc association between self-injury behaviors and external shame, self-criticism, and fear of self-compassion. Given the significant role that self-injury behaviors play, identifying the predictive factors associated with these symptoms can constitute a crucial stride in the development of interventions to address them. The objective of this research was to examine the causal connection between self-injury behaviors, external humiliation, self-criticism, and fear of self-compassion. Depression and family emotional involvement were also considered as potential mediators in this relationship.

Methodology

The objective of this research was to investigate the causal relationship between external shame, self-criticism, dread of self-compassion, and self-injury behaviors with depression and family emotional

involvement serving as mediators. The study was conducted among students enrolled at Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz. The statistical demographic comprised every student enrolled at Ahvaz's Shahid Chamran University. In 2019, a sample of 258 individuals (133 males and 125 females) was chosen from the available samples to assess the research hypotheses. Gross et al. External Shame Scale (ESS), Thomson and Zuroff Self-Criticism Scale (LSCS), Gilbert et al.'s Fear of Self-Compassion Scale (FSCS), Beck Depression inventory (BDI) and Family Emotional Involvement Scale of shields et al. (FEICS). Data analysis was performed using Utilizing SPSS-24 and AMOS-24, statistical analysis software SPSS-24 and AMOS-24. In order to assess the proposed model, structural equation modeling (SEM) and bootstrap are employed.

Findings

As demonstrated by the outcomes, the ultimate model was an excellent fit. The findings additionally indicated that there were significant direct effects of external shame, self-criticism, and dread of self-compassion on depression and family emotional involvement ($p < 0.05$). . Involvement of family members emotionally and depression had direct positive effects on self-injury. The bootstrap results indicated that depression and family emotional involvement mediated the relationship between external shame, self-criticism, and fear of self-compassion with self-injury ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion

The findings of this study failed to substantiate the direct correlation between self-injury and external shame, self-criticism, and dread of self-compassion. Based on the findings that depression and family emotional involvement mediate the indirect effects of external shame, self-criticism, and fear of self-compassion on self-injury, it can be inferred that predictor variables have an indirect influence on self-injury behavior. In order to mitigate the prevalence of self-injury behaviors, it is advisable to implement educational initiatives targeting students and their families, given the pathological significance of self-injury predictors and mediators. According to the findings, predictor variables play a significant role in self-injury behaviors; therefore, to prevent the occurrence of self-injury behaviors and improve the mental health of students, workshops and life skills courses should be conducted to enhance students' capacity to manage stress in daily life. Furthermore, in light of the findings of this research concerning the influence of familial emotional engagement on educational authorities, it is recommended that they conduct brief yet beneficial seminars on parenting styles and life skills, such as assertiveness, for families, particularly those from low-society classes.

Keywords: External Shame, Fear of Self-Compassion, Depression, Family Emotional Involvement, Self-Injury Behaviors.

Ethical Considerations

Informed and voluntary participation in the research, confidentiality of personal information, providing comprehensive explanations about the research objectives to participants, freely withdrawing from the study, and obtaining written consent were observed in this study. This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz under the code EE/98.3.02.78305/scu.ac.ir.

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Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest in this article.

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