



THE IMPACT OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA ON SELF-ESTEEM

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ABSTRACT

The experience of trauma in early life can powerfully shape children's sense of self, at a time when the brain is still forming its wiring and making connections between events and feelings. In this way then they are both the result of trauma and low self-esteem. This study was designed to explore the effects of different types of trauma on children and their impacts on self-esteem in adolescence and adulthood. Childhood Trauma Questionnaire short form (CTQ-SF) by Bernstein D.H., Fink L. (1998). & the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) By Rosenberg M. (1979). including that it was given to 30 subjects aged between 13 and 25. These raw scores were then analyzed using a t-test. This study has demonstrated that childhood abuse is negatively correlated with self-esteem. Consistent with the independent regression analyses, childhood abuse predicted much of self-esteem. This would show us that the self-esteem levels of the participants would decrease as childhood abuse increases. Interventions and support systems for people who have experienced childhood abuse are vital. This practice can lead to improved and balanced mental health outcomes and shape policies designed to safeguard the welfare of vulnerable children.

KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION

According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, witnessing a traumatic event that poses an actual or threatened risk of death or serious injury can be distressing. For young children or babies specifically, this is even more important — their sense of safety hinges entirely on how safe they feel like those closest to them are. Exposure to any form of traumatic event at a young age, however — meaning exposure in childhood or adolescence rather than adulthood — is unique as opposed to experiencing other mental health and emotional conditions because it can also set the foundation for health that lasts a lifetime. This research examines different dimensions of childhood trauma such as physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and emotional and physical neglect among others.

Physical abuse involves intentional physical harm, such as slapping, pinching, choking, and inappropriate use of physical restraints or drugs. Emotional abuse consists of non-physical behaviors aimed at controlling, isolating, or intimidating the person, and withholding emotions. Continued disregard of feelings. Sexual abuse refers to any non-consensual sexual activity, including undesirable touching, forced/nonconsensual oral sex, or rape. It's important to know and understand that survivors of sexual abuse are not at fault for the assault. Physical neglect takes place when a caregiver, guardian or parent fails to or willingly doesn't provide the child with basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, education, and medical care. Emotional neglect refers to a pattern in which an individual's emotional needs are consistently ignored or invalidated by a significant individual.

Self-esteem is only one component of the self-concept, which Rosenberg defines as the "Totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings concerning himself as an object." It contains a person's physical self-image, perception of their achievements and abilities, and their values as well as their perceived success in meeting those values. Further, it includes how others perceive and respond to that individual. The more positive the overall perception of these qualities and characteristics, the greater the individual's self-esteem. A high level of self-esteem is vital for mental well-being and overall success is believed to be an important part of mental health, whereas low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness are common depressive symptoms.

Review of Literature

1. Sarah A. Reiland, Dean Lauterbach, 2008 - Effects of Trauma and Religiosity on Self-Esteem

Childhood trauma is associated with lower self-esteem, but high religiosity may reduce this effect. It examines the relationships between religiosity, self-esteem, and childhood exposure to trauma, finding that those who experienced childhood trauma had lower self-esteem, but that high religiosity was associated with higher self-esteem even among those who experienced childhood sexual abuse.

2. N. Ozdemir, Ş. Şahin, 2020 -The Impact of Childhood Traumatic Experiences on Self-esteem and Interpersonal Relationships

Childhood trauma negatively impacts self-esteem and interpersonal relationships. The summary of this paper is that childhood traumatic experiences hurt self-esteem and interpersonal relationships in adulthood.

3. Ö. Karakuş, 2012 - Relation between childhood abuse and self-esteem in Adolescence

Childhood abuse, including emotional abuse, is negatively associated with self-esteem in adolescence. This paper is that it analyses the relationship between childhood abuse and self-esteem in adolescence, and finds that there is a significant negative correlation between childhood abuse and self-esteem, with emotional abuse being a major determinant of self-esteem.

4. Yichu Li, Yiming Liang, 2023 -The effect of childhood trauma on complex posttraumatic stress disorder: the role of self-esteem.

Childhood trauma predicts complex PTSD and self-esteem somewhat mediates this relationship. Childhood trauma predicts complex PTSD and self-esteem partially mediates this relationship. This paper is that it examines the role of self-esteem in the relationship between childhood trauma and complex posttraumatic stress disorder (CPTSD), finding that self-esteem partially mediates this relationship and has a greater effect on the disordered self-organization dimension of CPTSD than the PTSD dimension.

5. Suat Ekinici, H. Kandemir, 2015 -Childhood trauma in the lives of substance-dependent patients: The relationship between depression, anxiety and self-esteem

Childhood trauma is associated with lower self-esteem, higher depression, and higher anxiety in substance-dependent patients. This paper is that it examines the relationship between childhood trauma, self-esteem, depression, and anxiety in substance-dependent individuals compared to healthy controls.

6. C. Baydemir, A. Acikgoz, Dilek Denince, Y. Kaya, E. Ongun, H. Kok, 2014 -The Effect Of Childhood Trauma Life On Self-Esteem In School Of Health Students In A Province Of Western Turkey

- Childhood trauma is negatively associated with self-esteem in nursing students. This paper summarizes that it examines the relationship between childhood trauma and self-esteem in nursing students in Turkey, finding that male students, students with poor or low family income, non-nuclear/ big family types, high number of siblings, and authoritarian fathers experienced more childhood trauma and had lower self-esteem as seen in the results of the research.
7. Justyna Kucharska, 2017 -Sexual and Non-Sexual Trauma, Depression and Self-Esteem in a Sample of Polish Women. A Cross-Sectional Study.
Recent sexual trauma is associated with higher depression and lower self-esteem in women compared to non-sexual trauma. The objective of this study was to investigate the psychological impact of traumatic events on women. Based on the research, it is proven that women are more prone to mental health issues that follow traumatic experiences. This increased vulnerability can be attributed to the higher prevalence of sexual trauma among women, which tends to have more profound and enduring negative effects.
 8. Andreia Pereira, J. P. Santos, Pedro Sardinha, J. Cardoso, C. Ramos, T. Almeida, 2021 The impact of childhood abuse on adult self-esteem and emotional regulation
Childhood abuse is associated with lower self-esteem and poorer emotional regulation in adulthood. Abstract Introduction The circumstances of traumatic experiences in childhood can lead to a disruption in the development of secure internal representations, with a negative impact on self-esteem.
 9. Emily L. Barnum, K. Perrone-McGovern, 2017 Attachment, Self-Esteem and Subjective Well-Being Among Survivors of Childhood Sexual Trauma
Childhood sexual trauma is associated with lower sexual self-esteem and subjective well-being, while attachment security predicts higher sexual self-esteem and well-being. The study is a quantitative exploration of the relationships between attachment security, childhood sexual trauma, sexual self-esteem, and subjective well-being. It was predicted that higher levels of secure attachment, lower presence of childhood sexual trauma and higher levels of sexual self-esteem would contribute to higher levels of subjective well-being.
 10. M. Daemen, T. van Amelsvoort, Ulrich Reininghaus, 2023-Momentary Self-esteem as a Process Underlying the Association Between Childhood Trauma and Psychosis: Experience Sampling Study
The impact of childhood trauma, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect, on the relationship between self-esteem and psychotic experiences in daily life is the focus of this study. The objective is to explore how exposure to childhood trauma (such as physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as physical and emotional neglect) influences the connections between self-esteem and psychotic experiences in individuals with psychotic disorders, their immediate family members, and a control group.
 11. A. Shen, 2009-Self-Esteem of Young Adults Experiencing Interparental Violence and Child Physical Maltreatment.
Experiencing both interparental violence and physical maltreatment during childhood has a detrimental impact on adult self-esteem. Research results demonstrated that experiencing both interparental violence and physical maltreatment during childhood have long-term and detrimental impacts on adult self-esteem. The impact was independent of other factors. Those who experienced dual violence in childhood had lower self-esteem. Males with dual violence had lower self-esteem than females. Parental and peer relationships mediated the impact of interparental violence and physical maltreatment on adult self-esteem. nd physical maltreatment on adult self-esteem.
 12. Huiping Zhang, Weiwei Wang, Shiqin Liu, Yali Feng, Qingong Wei, 2022-A Meta-Analytic Review of the Impact of Child Maltreatment on Self-Esteem: 1981 to 2021
Child maltreatment, including physical abuse, is significantly and negatively associated with self-esteem. The meta-regression results suggested that the aggregated associations between child maltreatment and self-esteem were not inflated by publication bias, but they were moderated by age and culture. General and subtypes of child maltreatment are associated with decreased self-esteem. Evidence-based and culturally sensitive child maltreatment prevention and intervention programs should be developed and enforced as early as possible.
 13. Ling Xu, Mei Zhao, Yuqing Zhang, 2024-The Association between Childhood Maltreatment, Self-esteem, and Attachment in Adult Women Based on Data Analysis
Childhood emotional neglect and physical abuse negatively impact self-esteem and positively impact attachment avoidance and anxiety in adult women. The results show that self-esteem had a significant negative correlation with childhood maltreatment, while attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety were significantly positively correlated with all types of maltreatment.
 14. Nurul Nabilah Abdul Razak, Asma Perveen, 2024- The relationship between childhood maltreatment and its effects on self-esteem among youth.
Childhood maltreatment, especially emotional neglect, has a strong negative correlation with self-esteem among youth. The study highlights the negative impact of childhood maltreatment on self-esteem, emphasizing the importance of healthy relationships within families for children's well-being.

Research Methodology

The relational or Correlational Research method has been applied to conduct descriptive research in this study. Correlational studies are used to assess if a relationship exists between two variables. The two variables in this study are self-esteem and childhood trauma which were measured using the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) and found a negative correlation using Karl Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient.

Hypotheses

- 1) The self-esteem in individuals who have childhood trauma is lower compared to those who have no child trauma.
- 2) there are variations in female and male trauma levels

Participants

Quantitative approaches were used to conduct the online survey method to collect data on the relationship between childhood trauma and self-esteem among 30 individuals, 18 females and 12 males between the ages of 13 to 25.

Tools Used

Each participant received a questionnaire comprising three sections: 1) screening; 2) Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ); and 3) Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES). In the screening section, the questions were asked whether the respondents have experienced mistreatment such as physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, and emotional neglect during childhood and whether the respondents are orphans or have been adopted. The Screening section included age, gender, and education level. RSES consists of 10 items that measure individual sense of worth of self-esteem based on their characteristics. Each question has a 4-point scale response option, ranging from 1 which would be 'strongly disagree' to 4 which would be 'strongly agree.'

RESULT & DISCUSSION

After analyzing the collected data, both variables' mean values and standard deviations were obtained. We examined the independent and dependent variables aligned with the study's objectives to reveal the mean and standard deviation results. For the level of self-esteem among 30 participants, the correlation between sexual abuse and self-esteem is -0.138; a correlation of -0.138 indicates a very weak negative relationship between the two variables. This means that as one variable increases, the other variable tends to decrease slightly, but the relationship is not strong. The correlation between physical neglect and self-esteem is -0.339; A correlation of -0.339 shows a moderate negative correlation between the two variables. This means that as one variable increases, the other variable tends to decrease, but not strongly. The correlation between emotional neglect and self-esteem is -0.330; a correlation of -0.330 suggests that there is a moderate correlation where one variable decreases as the other will increase, but the relationship is not strong. The correlation between denial/ minimization and self-esteem is 0.205 correlation. The value 0.205 tells us that indicates that there is a weak positive correlation between the two variables, self-esteem and denial. This means that as one variable slightly increases, the other variable will slightly increase too.

		Sexual Abuse	Physical Neglect	Emotional Neglect	Minimization / Denial
Self-esteem	Pearson Correlation	-.138	-.339	-.330	.205

Group Statistics					
	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value
PHYSICAL ABUSE	Male	12	9.17	5.078	0.055
	Female	18	9.28	5.676	
EMOTIONAL ABUSE	Male	12	12.50	3.849	0.042
	Female	18	12.56	3.399	
SEXUAL ABUSE	Male	12	6.42	3.476	2.719**
	Female	18	12.17	6.724	
PHYSICAL NEGLECT	Male	12	7.83	3.538	0.854
	Female	18	6.94	2.182	
EMOTIONAL NEGLECT	Male	12	13.58	5.316	0.830
	Female	18	12.22	3.687	
SELF-ESTEEM	Male	12	15.67	1.231	1.118
	Female	18	16.28	1.602	

**Significant at 0.01 level

The scores of 9.17 for males and 9.28 for females relate to a measure of the impacts of physical abuse, this suggests that both groups report a relatively high level of the variable being measured.

The scores of 12.50 for males and 12.56 for females relate to a measure of the impacts of emotional abuse; this suggests that both groups report a relatively high level of the variable being measured.

Females have a higher mean 12.17 compared to males 6.42. This tells us that, on average, females in the sample have reported higher levels of sexual abuse as compared to males. Males have reported lower levels of sexual abuse; This difference might show a greater significance of sexual abuse reported by females in the study compared to males.

The difference between the means 7.83 and 6.94 might indicate that males report more physical negligence compared to females in this study.

Males reported an average emotional neglect score of 13.58, presenting a higher level of emotional negligence as compared to females in the study. Whereas, females reported an average score of 12.22, suggesting slightly lower levels of emotional negligence.

The average self-esteem score for male participants is 15.67. The average self-esteem score for female participants is 16.28. These mean scores indicate a trend where females in the study have shown a slightly higher average self-esteem compared to males.

CONCLUSION

As per the findings of this study, it is proven that individuals who have undergone significant childhood trauma tend to exhibit lower levels of self-esteem, while those who have not experienced such trauma generally demonstrate higher levels of self-esteem. The second hypothesis has been substantiated by the evidence, demonstrating variations in the levels of trauma experienced by males and females.

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