

EXPLORE COLLECTIVE STRESSORS OF YOUNG ADULTS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Aims. The purpose of the present study was to explore the collective stressors of young adults. **Method.** The data was taken from 5 university students from both government and private universities. Purposive sampling technique was used to recruit the sample. Semi-structure interview was used to explore the different stress related factors among young adults. **Result.** This study used thematic analysis and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach. Result revealed major themes of young adults such as; perception and experiences, peer pressure, family expectation, psychological stressors, university environment, academic competition, social stressors and coping strategies for stressors. **Conclusion.** This study concluded that different levels of collective stressors badly effect educational, social and psychological life of young adults. Therefore, there is highly need to make some new counselling policies and coping strategies to reduce the stressors of young adults.

Keywords: Collective Stressors, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), Young Adults.

INTRODUCTION

Young adulthood is a critical developmental period, during which people explore different life paths, develop a sense of self, and acquire the skills needed to engage in satisfying careers and relationships (Arnett, 2000; Havighurst, 1972). At the same time, young adulthood is characterized by an enhanced vulnerability to external stressors (Biddle et al., 1990) and environmental influences (Bleidorn, 2015) that shape the course of young adults' psychological and social development. Research suggests that young adults are especially sensitive to the impacts of environmental variations (Bleidorn, 2015). Under the best circumstances, young adults select into supportive social networks, initiate trusting long-term relationships, and find their occupational calling (Havighurst, 1972).

However, missed opportunities, obstacles, and stressors that occur during this period can set young adults onto a less fortunate path (Biddle et al., 1990). It is well established that the regular experience of stress is negatively associated with adaptive psychological and social functioning, including subjective well-being, health, and social well-being (Cohen et al., 2007; Slavich et al., 2010). Through the daily challenges, we can discover the successful adaptation mechanisms in order to confront these difficulties (Ong et al., 2006). Thus, interest and research have increased in the concepts of positive psychology (Wigtil & Henriques, 2015) which focus on positive aims, protection and adaptation abilities (Masten, 2011) and their clear connection with health and prosperity results (Gupta et al., 2017).

This concept is characterized by complexity, having many aspects and having many meanings (Joyce et al., 2018; Rodriguez et al., 2013) while others defined this concept as being the

ability to stay unfunctional stability and good health despite continuous pressures (Bonanno, 2004). Psychological problems (depression, anxiety and stress) are very serious issue among university students. In Malaysia, there were 95% of patients seeking treatment for emotional disorder (depression, anxiety and stress) aged 17 years old and above. There are also some significant culture, social and family aspects which strongly impacted student's educational life. Therefore, this study aims to explore the collective stressors of young adults.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Qualitative research design used in present study. This design helps the researcher to study how the factors can be explored for the research purpose (Leavitt, 1991). The aim of the present study was to explore the collective stressors of young adults. Therefore, the research design of the current research was qualitative research design.

Sample

The target population of the research included young adults in Lahore, Pakistan.

Sample Size and Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling technique was utilized to recruit sample. The sample of current research was five university students.

Demographic Questionnaire.

Demographic sheet was established by the investigator to gather demographic data about the members. The detail comprised material about, age, gender, education, semester, family system, parental education and family background etc.

In-Depth Interview

The In-Depth interview was used in order to collect data. The in-depth semi-structured interview is an interview method which employs open ended questions with additional probes required. Probing techniques might be used to clear the ambiguous and incomplete answers. Probing was used to get additional statistics (Merriam, 1998). According to Marshall (1996) qualitative in-depth interviews are plenty extra like conversations than formal occasions with predetermined response categories. The researcher used the In-depth interview for data collection and took deeper information regarding study variables. The intensive interview was devised by the researcher containing specific areas regarding collective stressors.

RESULT

Ideography Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is a method with the investigation of human lived experience. Through, IPA the researcher was trying to make sense of how others make sense of their own experiences, also known as double hermeneutic (smith et al., 2009). The purpose of IPA was selected to discover what collective stressors and it related problems are or how university students perceive and experience this.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics and Information of Participants

| Name | A.K | M.S | Z.A | M.U | S.A |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Age | 23 | 18 | 24 | 22 | 23 |
| Education | MPhil | BS | MPhil | MPhil | BS |
| Semester | 3 rd | 3 rd | 3 rd | 1 st | 6 th |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Siblings | 4 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Birth Order | 3 rd | 2 nd | 2 nd | 1 st | 1 st |
| Gender | Female | Female | Female | Female | Male |
| Mother Education | Intermediate | Intermediate | Bachelor | Bachelor | Primary |
| Father Education | Intermediate | Primary | Intermediate | Bachelor | Bachelor |
| Father Occupation | Business | Business | Business | Business | Private Job |
| Family System | Nuclear | Nuclear | Joint | Nuclear | Nuclear |

Table 1 showed the demographic characteristics and information of participants. Results showed that majority of participant’s were MPhil students and mostly participants were female students. Findings also showed that mostly participant’s fathers have their own business and majority of participants were belonged to nuclear family system.

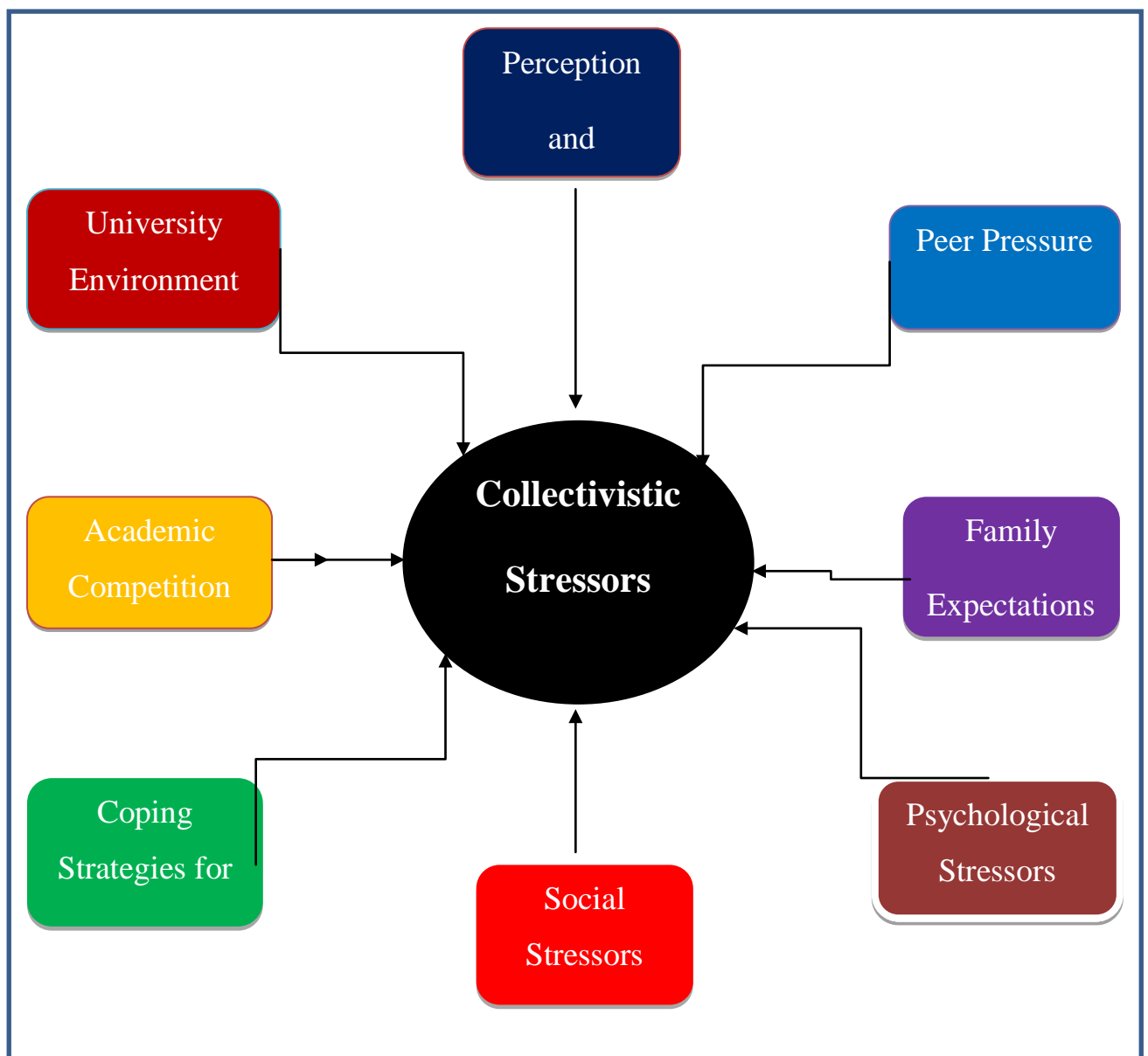


Figure 1. Thematic Analysis of Collective Stressors

Figure 1 described the thoughts of students about experiencing collectivistic stressors. Results showed major themes of young adults about collective stressors such as; perception and experiences, peer pressure, family expectation, psychological stressors, university environment, academic competition, social stressors and coping strategies for stressors. The participants reported that after the experience of collectivistic stressors they are confused and worried about their future, some of the participants stated that they don't feel comfortable or they don't feel happy having these stressors more especially they have difficulties to deal with psychological issues regarding their education.

DISCUSSION

This study found that the collective stressors of this study were perception and experiences, peer pressure, family expectation, psychological stressors, university environment, academic competition, social stressors and coping strategies for stressors. Overall, our findings suggest that intense stressors can act as a bad event that disrupt affective well-being and social functioning during a critical developmental period in life. The finding that the collective stressors had negative consequences for people's affective and social functioning is consistent with previous research, indicating negative effects of the pandemic on people's mental health (Aknin et al., 2021) and social functioning (Overall et al., 2022; Schmid et al., 2020). Auxiliary analyses indicated that psychological-related concerns might partly explain the greater affective impairment but could not explain the greater social impairment. Rather, the present data suggest that the accumulation of stressors disrupted the normative social experiences of young adults in Pakistan.

Instead, the constant presence of stressors requires continuous adaption and effort, cutting normative development. Individuals have to react to the immediate stressors (e.g., moving to another place because of severe wildfires) and have to live with the new conditions (e.g., participating at social gatherings via online channels). This strengthens the theoretical assumption that development is a continuous and complex interplay between individual processes and environmental conditions (Infurna, 2021). Young adulthood is a particularly critical period for this interplay, because environmental constraints and limited opportunities may conflict with the growth and exploration pursuits of young adults. This study has several strengths including a qualitative research design with interpretative phenomenological analysis. However, the study is not without limitations.

First, we examined young university students, limiting the generalizability of these findings. Second, as noted above, young adults faced several stressors, and the unique effects of individual stressors could not be isolated. We examined the role of social and psychological-related concerns but were unable to examine concerns about other stressors (i.e., wildfires, financial tension, and political developments), which would have complemented the picture. Future research may be able to address this limitation to test how preexisting vulnerabilities, such as insecure attachment styles, may interact with stressors (Overall et al., 2022; Vowels et al., 2022).

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