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Self-Confidence In Relation To Level Of Defense Mechanism In College Going Students

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between self-confidence and defense mechanisms in college-going students. The data was collected through a self-reported questionnaire. The sample consisted of 30 college-going students, aged between 18-25 years of age. Out of 30, 15 were high and 15 were low defense mechanism users. The test used for the study were defense mechanism style (DMS) by Dr. N.R. Mrinal & Uma Singhal and self-confidence inventory by Dr. Rekha Gupta. The data was analyzed using mean standard deviation, standard error, and t value. The study suggested that the level of defense mechanism has no significant difference on self-confidence among college-going students as the t value calculated was ($p < .05$). There was no significant difference found between level of self-confidence among males and females based on their defense mechanism usage. These findings suggest that defense mechanisms do not play an important role in shaping self-confidence among college-going students.

Index Terms - **Defense-mechanism, self-confidence, self-report questionnaire, standard deviation, t value.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Defense Mechanism

Defense mechanisms are psychological strategies or behaviors that individuals employ unconsciously to protect themselves from anxiety, distress, or emotional discomfort. These mechanisms operate at an unconscious level and help individuals cope with various internal and external stressors, conflicts, or threats.

Sigmund Freud, a renowned psychoanalyst, first introduced the concept of defense mechanisms as part of his psychoanalytic theory. According to Freud, defense mechanisms serve to manage the conflicts between the demands of the unconscious mind (which contains repressed or unacceptable thoughts, desires, or memories) and the conscious mind (which seeks to maintain a sense of balance and harmony). Defense mechanisms work by distorting, modifying, or redirecting thoughts, emotions, or impulses, often resulting in a partial or complete denial of reality. They can manifest in different ways and serve various purposes. Some common defense mechanisms include:

Repression: Unconscious exclusion of distressing thoughts, feelings, or memories from conscious awareness.
Denial: Refusal to acknowledge or accept a painful or threatening reality.
Projection: Attributing one's own unacceptable thoughts, feelings, or motives to others.
Rationalization: Creating logical or acceptable explanations to justify or minimize one's behavior or actions.
Displacement: Redirecting emotions or impulses from their original target to a less threatening or more acceptable substitute target.
Regression: Reverting to a childlike or immature behavior to cope with stress or anxiety.
Sublimation: Channeling unacceptable or socially inappropriate impulses into socially acceptable activities or pursuits.

These defense mechanisms can provide temporary relief or psychological protection, allowing individuals to cope with challenging situations or maintain a sense of psychological well-being. However, when used excessively or maladaptively, defense mechanisms can hinder personal growth, impair relationships, and contribute to psychological difficulties.

Understanding defense mechanisms can offer valuable insights into how individuals manage their emotions, protect their self-esteem, and navigate interpersonal dynamics. It also has applications in psychotherapy, counseling, and self-awareness, as exploring and addressing defense mechanisms can facilitate personal insight, growth, and improved psychological well-being.

Self confidence

Self-confidence refers to a person's belief in their own abilities, worth, and value. It is an essential component of one's self-perception and plays a significant role in shaping thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and overall psychological well-being.

Self-confidence encompasses a sense of self-assurance, self-belief, and self-esteem. It involves having faith in one's capabilities, skills, and knowledge, as well as a positive evaluation of oneself. Individuals who possess self-confidence tend to have a realistic and balanced perception of their strengths and weaknesses.

Self-confidence influences various aspects of life, including personal relationships, academic and professional success, goal attainment, decision-making, and resilience in the face of challenges. When individuals are confident in their abilities, they are more likely to take on new opportunities, persevere in the face of setbacks, and engage in assertive and proactive behaviors.

Developing self-confidence is a dynamic and lifelong process. It can be influenced by various factors, such as personal experiences, social interactions, upbringing, achievements, and feedback received from others. Positive experiences and accomplishments can enhance self-confidence, while negative experiences or critical feedback can undermine it.

Building and maintaining self-confidence involve self-reflection, self-acceptance, and self-care. It requires recognizing and challenging self-doubt, negative self-talk, and limiting beliefs. Engaging in self-development activities, setting achievable goals, seeking support from others, and celebrating successes can also contribute to strengthening self-confidence.

A healthy level of self-confidence is important as it provides a foundation for personal growth, resilience, and overall well-being. However, it is important to note that self-confidence should be based on realistic self-perceptions and achievements rather than exaggerated or grandiose beliefs.

Relevance

Self-confidence is a crucial aspect of an individual's psychological well-being and success in various domains of life. Investigating the relationship between defense mechanisms and self-confidence can provide insights into the factors that influence self-confidence levels in college students. College is a significant transitional period in a person's life, characterized by new challenges, academic pressures, social adjustments, and personal identity development. Examining defense mechanisms and self-confidence specifically in college students can shed light on the unique experiences and psychological processes during this period.

Self-confidence plays a vital role in determining one's overall psychological well-being. Understanding the factors that contribute to self-confidence, such as defense mechanisms, can inform interventions and support programs aimed at promoting positive mental health among college students.

Defense mechanisms are adaptive strategies individuals employ to cope with stress, anxiety, and conflicts. Exploring how defense mechanisms relate to self-confidence can provide insights into the effectiveness and impact of different coping strategies employed by college students.

Research findings from this study can inform counsellors, therapists, and educators in developing effective interventions and support systems for college students. Understanding the relationship between defense mechanisms and self-confidence can guide the development of targeted interventions that address self-esteem, emotional regulation, and coping mechanisms.

Self-confidence is closely linked to personal growth and development. By examining the relationship between defense mechanisms and self-confidence, the study may offer insights into the potential barriers or facilitators of personal growth among college students, aiding in their overall development and success.

This research is relevant for understanding the psychological well-being, coping mechanisms, and personal growth of college students. The findings can contribute to interventions, support programs, and counselling approaches aimed at enhancing self-confidence and promoting positive mental health outcomes in this population.

The results of the study could potentially contribute to a better understanding of how defense mechanisms and self-confidence interact in the context of college students, which could have implications for counseling, support, and interventions aimed at improving self-confidence and overall psychological well-being.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To examine the relationship between self-confidence and defense mechanisms among college students

The study aims to explore how the level of defense mechanisms used by students influences their self-confidence levels.

The study seeks to investigate whether the utilization of defense mechanisms by college students affects their self-confidence.

III. HYPOTHESIS

Self-confidence will be influenced by the level of defence mechanism in college students.

IV. METHODOLOGY

4.1Population and Sample

The purposive sampling method was used to create a research sample of 30 participating individuals. The sample was divided based on their use of defense mechanism i.e., high, and low use in equal ratio. All the participants were tested on their use of defense mechanism and level of self-confidence.

4.2 Instruments

Defense mechanism inventory given by N.R. Mrinal and Uma Singhal was used for analyzing high or low use of defense mechanism. The test divides defense mechanism into 5 parts i.e., TAO (turning against object), PRO (projection), PRN (principalization), TAS (turning against self) and REV (reversal). The test consists of ten situations. For each situation there are some options given for participant to choose from as an action in that situation. Second tool used for analyzing the level of self-confidence is Self Confidence Inventory by Dr. Rekha Gupta. The test consist of 56 items and the participant had to choose whether the statement of the item is true or false for them.

4.3 Procedure

To start, a defense mechanism test was applied on a sample size of 50 participants, out of those 50, 30 participants were selected based on their score on defense mechanism inventory. Sample consisted of 15 high and 15 low scorers on the defense mechanism test. All these 30 participants were given a form of self-confidence inventory to fill. The results were analysed and the obtained scores were put into the statistical analysis based on the objective formulated.

V. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Statistical Analysis

Table 4.1: Comparison of self-confidence inventory scores of high and low scorers on Defense mechanism inventory.

Calculations	Self-Confidence of High DM	Self-Confidence of Low DM
Mean value	29.666	26.600
Standard deviation	2.180	1.540
Standard error	0.563	0.397
t value	-0.763	-1.007

Table 5.1compares the t-values of self-confidence inventory scores attained by the participants who scored high on defense mechanism scale with participants who scored low on the same. The t values suggest that the scores on self confidence did not differ significantly between high and low defense mechanism scorers. These findings suggest that defense mechanisms do not play an important role in shaping self-confidence among college-going students.

5.2 Discussion

When conducting the study, it was initially hypothesized that levels of defense mechanisms would be associated with scores on self-confidence among college students. However, the statistical analysis, which employed appropriate measures and tests, failed to support this hypothesis. This indicates that the level of defense mechanisms does not have a significant impact on self-confidence among college-going students. Although the t-scores of the samples showed no significant difference, the mean scores of the high and low scorers had some difference on the self-confidence scale implied. Subjects whose defense mechanism use was on a higher side showed low self-confidence than the ones whose defense mechanism use was lower than the average.

The present study did not find a significant relationship between self-confidence and the level of defense mechanisms among college-going students, but this finding does not negate the importance of either construct. Future research should consider investigating additional variables, such as resilience, coping strategies, or academic self-efficacy, which might contribute to self-confidence in this population.

Furthermore, exploring the moderating role of contextual factors, such as cultural differences, educational systems, or socioeconomic backgrounds, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between self-confidence and defense mechanisms in college students.

5.3 Practical Applications:

While the absence of a significant difference may seem discouraging at first, it is important to recognize that fostering self-confidence remains crucial for the well-being and success of college students. Institutions can focus on creating supportive environments that encourage personal growth, provide mentorship, and offer counselling services to address various psychological factors that influence self-confidence.

5.4 Conclusion:

This research sought to investigate the relationship between self-confidence and the level of defense mechanisms in college-going students but found no significant difference between the two variables. The absence of a significant relationship highlights the complexity and multifactorial nature of self-confidence and defense mechanisms. Future research should explore additional variables and contextual factors to enhance our understanding of these constructs and their impact on college students' well-being and academic success.

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