

The Relationship Between Perceived Chronic Social Adversity and General Well-being of College Students: The Chain Mediating Role of Self-esteem and Resilience

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Abstract: Based on the coping resources theory, a chain mediation model of the relationship between college students' perceived chronic social adversity, self-esteem, resilience and general well-being was constructed to explore the relationship between perceived chronic social adversity and general well-being of college students. A questionnaire survey was conducted on 1264 college students with perceived chronic social adversity, self-esteem, resilience and general well-being scale. The results showed that: (1) Perceived chronic social adversity was negatively correlated with general well-being, self-esteem and resilience; (2) Perceived chronic social adversity can indirectly predict the general well-being of college students through the mediating effects of self-esteem and resilience, and can also indirectly predict the general well-being of college students through the chain mediating effects of self-esteem and resilience. This study reveals that the general well-being of college students can be enhanced by reducing their perceived chronic social adversity, as well as improving self-esteem and resilience.

Keywords: Perceived chronic social adversity; General well-being; Self-esteem; Resilience

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1. Research background

College students are in the critical period of physical and mental development and personality shaping, but the continuous face of social competition and other pressures will pose challenges to their mental health and hinder the experience of happiness.

General well-being is a comprehensive evaluation of an individual's life satisfaction and emotional state, which can directly reflect whether an individual is happy or not. According to Self-Determination Theory, individuals need to meet the basic needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy at different stages of development. According to research, the satisfaction of basic psychological needs is positively correlated with individual subjective well-being, and if individuals' basic psychological needs are satisfied, they are more inclined to develop in a healthier direction and feel more happiness. Perceived Chronic Social Adversity refers to an individual's perception of adversity information such as being ignored, rejected and defeated in competition in a social situation. Individuals with high perceived chronic social adversity are prone to experience negative emotions such as depression and anxiety. Reduce emotional connection with others and experience less happiness. Hypothesis H1 is proposed that perceived chronic social adversity has a significant negative predictive effect on the general well-being of college students.

Self-esteem refers to the degree to which an individual likes and affirms himself. Individuals with stable and high self-esteem are more confident in their own abilities, actively cope with setbacks, and have a higher sense of happiness. Believes that self-esteem is an important factor for people to maintain happiness and positive influence. On the contrary, individuals with low self-esteem tend to face adversity with a negative attitude and are more likely to have psychological and behavioral problems such as anxiety, depression and Internet addiction.

According to the Theory of Coping Resources, when people encounter social pressure, they will mobilize all kinds of psychological resources to cope with social adversity, which will help individuals solve or alleviate the negative impact of adversity and improve their resilience and social adaptability. Resilience refers to that an individual can quickly and effectively mobilize psychological resources and recover and maintain healthy psychology when facing adversities such as major pressures in life. Resilience is a protective factor for college students to cope with social adversities. Negative life events not only directly affect the psychological symptoms of individuals, but also reduce the level of mental health by reducing the level of resilience, and can not experience happiness^[1].

Studies have found that college students with high self-esteem are easy to perceive the actual support and kindness provided by others, thus improving their confidence in problem solving and adopting positive problem-solving strategies to deal with stressful events. College students with high self-esteem adopt positive ways to buffer the negative impact of stressful events and show good resilience. However, college students who are in the state of adversity for a long time will experience more negative feelings, and the level of self-esteem will affect the way college students cope with adversity and pressure. Therefore, self-esteem and resilience are important positive psychological qualities for college students to improve their personality and improve their mental health.

2. Objects and methods

2.1 Subjects

A cluster sampling method was adopted to select students from several colleges and universities in Zhejiang Province as the survey objects. A total of 1264 data were collected by using the questionnaire star line survey method. 26 invalid data were deleted according to the short response time, and 1238 valid data were obtained, with an effective rate of 97.94%.

2.2 Research Tools

2.2.1 General Well-being Scale (GWB)

GWB revised by domestic scholar Duan Jianhua (1996)^[2] was adopted. This scale is used to evaluate the participants' statements on happiness, including 6 subscales. The total score is added up according to options 1 to 10. The higher the score, the higher the overall happiness. In this study, the Cronbach's α coefficient of this scale was 0.775.

2.2.2 Perceived Chronic Social Adversity (PCSA)

The scale compiled by Zhang Jingqiu et al. (2017) was adopted, with a total of 28 items. The questionnaire mainly measures the social adversities encountered by individuals in daily life, including three dimensions of social exclusion, excessive control and failure in social competition. Likert 5-point score is adopted, with 1 representing "completely disagree" and 5 representing "completely agree". The higher the score, the higher the level of social adversities perceived by individuals. This scale has good reliability and validity. In this study, Cronbach's α coefficient of this scale is 0.975.

2.2.3 Self-Esteem Scale (SES)

Adopt the self-esteem scale compiled by Rosenberg and revised by Wang Xiangdong et al. There are 10 items in the scale, and Likert is scored with 4 points, with 1 representing "completely inconsistent" and 4 representing "completely consistent". The higher the score, the higher the self-esteem of the subjects. In this study, the Cronbach's α coefficient of this scale was 0.821.

2.2.4 Adolescent Resilience Scale (ARS)

The resilience scale compiled by Gan Yiqun and Hu Yueqin (2008) was adopted. The scale includes 5 dimensions of emotional control, goal focus, positive cognition, interpersonal assistance and family support, and 27 items. Likert 5 points are used to score the scale, with 1 representing "totally inconsistent" and 5 representing "completely consistent". The higher the score, the higher the resilience level of the subjects. In this study, the Cronbach's α coefficient of this scale was 0.878.

2.3 Data Processing

SPSS26.0 was used for correlation analysis, and PROCESS 4.2 plug-in (model 6) was used for Bootstrap path effect size analysis.

3. Results

3.1 Common method deviation test

A total of 17 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted by Harman single factor test. The cumulative interpretation rate of the first factor was 27.75%, lower than the critical standard of 40%. Therefore, it can be inferred that there is no serious common method bias in this study.

3.2 Correlation analysis

Pearson product correlation analysis was conducted on perceived chronic social adversity, self-esteem, resilience and general well-being, and it was found that perceived chronic social adversity was significantly negatively correlated with self-esteem, resilience and their dimensions, and general well-being respectively, while self-esteem, resilience and general well-being were significantly

positively correlated.

3.3 Analysis of intermediary effect

The method of regression analysis was adopted in this study, with gender, only child and family economic level as control variables, and self-esteem, resilience and general well-being as dependent variables to analyze the interaction between variables.

The results showed, perceived chronic social adversity significantly negatively predicted self-esteem ($\beta = -0.572, p < 0.001$). In model 2, perceived chronic social adversity significantly negatively predicted resilience ($\beta = -0.521, p < 0.001$). Self-esteem positively predicted resilience ($\beta = 0.458, p < 0.001$). In model 3, perceived chronic social adversity significantly negatively predicted general well-being ($\beta = -0.452, p < 0.001$). Self-esteem positively predicted general well-being ($\beta = 0.188, p < 0.001$). Resilience positively predicted general well-being ($\beta = 0.348, p < 0.001$).

Furthermore, SPSS PROCESS 4.2 plug-in was used to verify the chain mediation by repeated sampling 5000 times with Bootstrap method. The results show that the mediating role of self-esteem in perceived chronic social adversity and general well-being is -0.107 , 95%CI $[-0.147, -0.071]$ does not contain 0, and the mediating role of self-esteem in perceived chronic social adversity and general well-being is established. The mediating effect of resilience on perceived chronic social adversity and general well-being was -0.181 , and 95%CI $[-0.224, -0.141]$ did not include 0, indicating that the mediating effect of resilience on perceived chronic social adversity and general well-being was established. The mediating effects of self-esteem and resilience on perceived chronic social adversity and general well-being were -0.091 , and 95%CI $[-0.117, -0.068]$ did not include 0. The chain mediating effects of self-esteem and resilience on perceived chronic social adversity and general well-being were established.

4. Discussion

This study reveals the relationship between college students' perceived chronic social adversity and their general well-being, self-esteem and resilience, and its mechanism. The results show that: college students' perceived chronic social adversity is significantly negatively correlated with their general well-being; Self-esteem and resilience play a chain mediating role in the relationship between perceived chronic social adversity and general well-being. This study supports the promotion of mental health and general well-being of college students by reducing the level of perceived adversity and improving the level of self-esteem and resilience.

When college students perceive a higher level of social adversity in their lives, they will produce various negative experiences and negative emotions, but they will not experience happiness. The higher the perceived chronic social adversity, the lower the level of general well-being, which verifies the hypothesis of this study: perceived chronic social adversity is negatively correlated with general well-being. Similar to previous studies, perceived chronic social adversity is significantly positively correlated with anxiety, depression and emotional problems, and significantly negatively correlated with the sense of psychological control and happiness^[3].

5. Conclusions

The theoretical significance of this study is to reveal the chain mediating role of self-esteem and resilience in the relationship between perceived chronic social adversity and general well-being, and deepen the mechanism of perceived chronic social adversity affecting individual physical and mental health. At the practical level, as an exploratory study, this study provides a reference for college students to pay attention to mental health and improve their happiness in social life.

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