



ISSN: 0976-3031

Available Online at <http://www.recentscientific.com>

CODEN: IJRSFP (USA)

International Journal of Recent Scientific Research
Vol. 10, Issue, 01(F), pp. 30667-30670, January, 2019

**International Journal of
Recent Scientific
Research**

DOI: 10.24327/IJRSR

Research Article

DEFENCE ORIENTED REACTIONS OF OCD & GAD PATIENTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijrsr.2019.1001.3100>

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 10th October, 2018
Received in revised form 2nd
November, 2018
Accepted 26th December, 2018
Published online 28th January, 2019

Key Words:

Defence Mechanisms, OCD and GAD.

ABSTRACT

The present study has tried to explore the defence oriented reactions of the patients suffering from OCD and GAD. For this data was collected on 100 patients equally divided into OCD and GAD patients. They were further classified equally on the basis of gender (OCD, M=25, F=25) and (GAD, M=25, F=25). Mrinal and Mrinal's (1998) Defense Mechanism Inventory was used to assess defence oriented reactions of OCD and GAD patients. The results have revealed that 1. GAD patients were found to use more Principalization and Projection while OCD patients were found to use more Reversal than GAD patients. 2. Boys as compared to girls were found to use more Turning against Self and Reversal while girls were found to report more Turning Against Object. 3. No significant interactions were found on any of the dimensions of defence mechanism.

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INTRODUCTION

Defence Mechanism has been one of the most elusive concepts in Psychology. The concept of defence mechanism was proposed by Freud (1946). He defined it as a tactic developed by the ego to protect against anxiety. Defence Mechanisms aim primarily at protecting the self from devaluation and disorganization of the individual involved (Khokher, 2004). A defence mechanism is an unconscious psychological mechanism that reduces anxiety arising from unacceptable or potentially harmful stimuli (Daniel, 2011). Defence mechanism may result in healthy or unhealthy consequences depending on the circumstances and frequency with which the mechanism is used (Utah Psycho, 2010). Defence mechanisms are thought to safeguard the mind against feelings and thoughts that are too difficult for the conscious mind to cope with. When stress situations are handled in competent manner, our behavior tends to be task oriented, but when our feelings of adequacy and worth are threatened by stress situation, our reactions tend to be defence oriented aimed primarily at protecting ourselves from devaluation and relieving painful tension and anxiety (Gupta, 2014).

Arousal is the activation of the brain and body. When one is aroused, body and brain are in state of readiness so that we are prepared to engage in adaptive behavior. Several adaptive behavior comes into operation automatically rather than a

deliberate choice, although admittedly society may influence them (Gupta et al, 2006). Sex and cultural differences are found in using the various Defense mechanism. People respond differently in different types of situations that might be frustrating and anxiety evoking. The immediate reactions to frustration illustrate general technique that children adopt in order to solve their problems.

These attempts at solutions may become habitual. The ego is fighting a continual battle to stay on top of the warring reactions of the mind. But occasionally this conflict results in anxiety that threatens the ego. The anxiety becomes a signal that detects the ego marshal any of an array of defense mechanisms (Gupta & Joshi, 2007). Defense mechanisms have been studied scientifically (Pollock & Andrews, 1989) to confirm the potential importance of these coping styles for the personality of the individuals.

Since, Defence mechanisms are used under anxiety providing situation so the present study has tried to explore how people suffering from different anxiety disorder use various defense mechanisms. The present study has tried to explore the use of defense mechanisms among OCD and GAD patients. Since both are anxiety disorder it would be very interesting to compare the frequency and types of Defense mechanisms used by them.

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Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is characterized by distressing, intrusive obsessive thoughts and/or repetitive compulsive physical or mental acts (Greenberg, 2017). The DSM-V (2013) defined OCD as it is the presence of obsession, compulsion or both and the individual attempts to ignore or suppress each thought or urges with some other thoughts or actions. Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is excessive anxiety and worry occurring for at least 6 months, about a number of events or activities and the individual finds it difficult to control the worry. According to Butcher *et al* (2014) most of us worry and get anxious occasionally. Anxiety is an adaptive emotion that helps us plan and prepare for possible threat but for some people anxiety and worry about different aspects of life become chronic, excessive and unreasonable. In these cases GAD may be diagnosed. GAD is also known as free floating anxiety.

Against this background, the present study has tried to explore Defence oriented reactions of OCD & GAD patients.

METHOD

Objectives

1. To explore the use of Defence Oriented Reactions among OCD and GAD patients.
2. To explore gender differences in use of Defence Oriented Reactions.
3. To explore interaction of Psychological Disorders and Gender on various dimensions of defence oriented reactions.

Hypotheses

1. There will be significant differences between defence oriented reactions of individuals suffering from OCD and GAD.
2. There will be significant gender differences on defence oriented reactions of the respondents.
3. There will be significant interaction between psychological disorders and gender on various dimensions of defence oriented reactions.

Design: The present study has utilized a 2x2 factorial design to conceptualize the study and analyze the data. One variable being Psychological Disorders divided into two parts OCD and GAD and the other variable being gender of the respondents divided into males and females.

Tools

Defence Mechanism Inventory: Mrinal and Mrinal's (1998) Defence Mechanism Inventory was used to assess defence oriented reactions of the respondents. The inventory measures five types of defence mechanisms namely: Turning Against Object (TAO), Projection (PRO), Principalization (PRN), Turning Against Self (TAS) and Reversal (REV).

Sample: The data for the present study was collected on 100 respondents, 50 belonging to OCD and 50 belonging to GAD. They were further divided equally into male and females. Few precautions were kept while selecting the respondents. The most important precaution was to control the severity of the disorder. The patients of almost same degree of disease were selected for the study. For this, the patients of both the disorders OCD & GAD were rated by the doctor on a 7-point

rating scale and only those patients were selected for the study who were rated between 3-5 by the doctors. The patients whose disorders were rated either below than 3 and above than 5 were not included in the study. The Mean age of the boys was 24.4 years while it was 20.8 years for the girls in both the disorders.

Procedure: The sample was collected using quota sampling. Respondents were classified into two groups on the basis of their disease. All the respondents were contacted personally. The questionnaire required 15-20 minutes to complete.

Analytic Strategy: The obtained data was analyzed using Mean, SD and ANOVAs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Keeping in view the specific objective of the study Mean, SD and ANOVAs were computed which are shown in Table-1 and Table-2. The obtained results are discussed as under:

Table 1 Mean & SD of OCD & GAD patients on various dimensions of Defence Mechanism:

Defence Mechanisms	OCD		GAD		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1.TurningAgainstObject						
Boys	27.50	3.62	25.55	6.05	26.53	4.83
Girls	33.41	4.21	39.25	4.61	36.33	4.41
Total	30.45	3.91	32.40	5.33		
2.Projection						
Boys	31.62	4.22	40.02	4.51	35.82	4.36
Girls	32.91	3.09	42.06	5.79	37.48	4.44
Total	32.26	3.65	41.04	5.34		
3.Principalization						
Boys	39.95	5.25	42.88	5.72	41.42	5.48
Girls	40.42	4.59	45.79	8.52	43.11	6.55
Total	40.18	4.92	44.34	7.12		
4.Turning AgainstSelf						
Boys	44.32	8.15	45.41	6.62	44.86	7.38
Girls	43.50	6.05	39.42	4.91	41.46	5.48
Total	43.91	7.10	42.42	5.76		
5.Reversal						
Boys	42.25	8.15	42.95	6.28	42.60	7.22
Girls	41.90	7.50	31.28	4.59	36.59	6.04
Total	42.08	7.82	37.12	5.44		

Table 2 Summary ANOVAs:

Defence Oriented Reactions	Gender	Psychological Disorder	G x PD
1.Turning Against Object	4.02*	1.96	1.54
2.Projection	1.26	5.85*	0.93
3.Principalization	3.03	4.98*	1.23
4.Turning Against Self	8.91**	2.34	2.46
5.Reversal	4.80*	7.69**	2.09

*=Significant at .05 level

**=Significant at .01 level

Oriented Defence Reactions among OCD and GAD patients:

As it is evident from the inspection of Table-2 that few dimensions of defence mechanism were found to be used significantly more by the patients suffering from OCD and GAD. These results partially support the first hypothesis stating that there will be significant differences between defence oriented reactions of individuals suffering from OCD and GAD. As it is clear from the inspection of Table-1 that PPO and PRN were found to be used significantly more by the GAD patients while REV was found to be used significantly more by the OCD patients.

PRN deals with conflicts through invoking a general principal that splits off affect from content and represses the former.

Defence such as intellectualization, Isolation and rationalization fall into this category. In PRN, intellectualization works to reduce anxiety by thinking about events in a cold, clinical way. This defence mechanism allows us to avoid thinking about the stressful, emotional aspects of the situations and instead focus on the intellectual components. While PRO is a tendency to place the blames for their shortcomings, mistakes on others and attribute to others their own acceptable impulses, thoughts and desires. PRN and PRO were found to be used more among GAD as compared to OCD patients. The reason may be attributed to the degree of anxiety these patients suffer from. As it is evident that GAD patients are the people who are very anxious, tensionized and stressed than OCD patients. GAD patients because of their intense and extreme level of anxiety are more prone to the diseases such as strokes, heartattacks, heart failures etc. So, these patients are found to use more PRN and PRO because it helps them to relieve and display their anxiety on other objects and persons and so they feel less anxious and relieved.

The use of PRN and PRO helps GAD patients to keep themselves more stable, less anxious and more relaxed. No significant differences were found on the use of TAO and TAS among OCD and GAD patients. This result is contrasted by the findings of Kennedy *et al* (2001) who reported that maladaptive defence style scores were significantly higher in those with major depression, panic disorder, GAD and social phobia and higher at a trend level in the subjects with anxiety and depression.

REV is a positive or neutral response to a frustrating object which might be expected to evoke a negative relation. REV in the present study was found significantly more in OCD patients as compared to GAD patients. In other words, OCD patients use more REV to protect themselves from anxiety arising from unacceptable thoughts and feelings. These defence mechanisms are used to protect ego from feelings of anxiety or guilt which arise because they feel threatened or because our id or superego becomes too demanding. They are not under one's conscious control. The reason for using more REV among OCD patients may be attributed to the fact that OCD patients may try to divert their thought and behavior process to satisfy their ego. They try to switch from one behavior to its opposite to reduce their anxiety.

Gender differences in Defence Oriented Reactions: As it is evident from the inspection of Table-2 that significant gender differences were obtained on few dimensions of defence mechanism. They are TAO, TAS and REV. In other words boys and girls were found to use these defence mechanisms differently. These results partially accept the second hypothesis stating that there will be significant gender differences on defence oriented reactions of the respondents.

As it is evident from the inspection of Table-1 that boys were found to use more TAS and REV than girls while girls were found to report more TAO than boys. These results are supported by the study of Petraglia *et al* (2009) who found that men and women differed in their choice of defence style, defence level and individual defence mechanism. Watson and Sinha (1980) also reported that men and women differed in their use of defence mechanisms. The females in the present study were found to report more TAO than boys. These results

are supported by the findings of Gupta(2014) who also reported more TAO among females. Females generally are found to be more emotional and they are expected to behave submissively in front of males and are expected to use their cognitive skills lesser than males. Hence they deal with conflicts, tension and anxieties through attacking a real or imaginative external frustrating object more than males. Gupta(2013) reported more REV among husbands support the findings of the present study while she reported more TAS among wives stand in contrast with the findings of the present study. REV includes defences that deal with conflicts by responding in a positive or neutral fashion to a frustrating object which might be expected to evoke a negative response. Boys of the present study, as they are living in a male dominated society are expected to carry all the responsibilities of the females. They are considered the prime bread-winner of the family, hence they try to respond in a positive manner in all the adverse situations so that they may handle all the situations well and carry all the responsibilities.

TAS defenses handle conflict through directing aggressive behavior towards the subject himself. Masochism and autosadism are examples of this category. Levit(1991) reported that girls scored higher on TAS, but they failed to exceed boys on REV partially reject this finding of the present study. TAS is generally found more among girls as they are trained not to express their emotions outwardly, but the scenario is changing now. Nowadays boys are also trained and expected to control their emotions and in spite of living in a male dominated society they are not expected and supposed to express their aggression outwardly.

As it is evident from the inspection of Table-2 that no interaction effects were found to be significant on any of the dimensions of defence mechanism. These results reject the third hypothesis stating that there will be significant interaction between psychological disorders and gender on various dimensions of defence oriented reactions.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the findings of the present study it can be concluded that GAD patients were found to use more defence mechanism as compared to OCD patients. Further, boys were found to use more defence oriented reactions as compared to girls. It is evident from the findings of the present study that there are significant gender differences in the usage of defence mechanism. This may help and reinforce psychotherapist to develop treatment plans and therapies that focus on the specific needs of boys and girls. Further patients suffering from different anxiety disorders use defence oriented reactions differently, focuses on the fact that defence mechanisms are the integral part of a person's life because the ego of a person fights continuously a battle to stay on the top of the warring functions of the mind. The results of the present study will provide some light to deal patients of different psychological disorders differently as GAD patients need to be treated with more care so that they can deal and cope with their anxieties effectively.

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How to cite this article:

Neeta Gupta.2019, Defence Oriented Reactions of ocd & Gad Patients: A Comparative Study. *Int J Recent Sci Res*. 10(01), pp. 30667-30670. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijrsr.2019.1001.3100>
