



Impulsive Behavior of Adolescents: A Review of Related Literature

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Abstract

Moeller et al. (2001) states that impulsivity includes readiness to take unplanned and immediate action as a response to internal and external stimuli, with no regard for their negative consequences for themselves or the others. From different perspectives of personality theory, impulsiveness has been identified as a personality trait (Barratt, 1965). A number of factor analytic studies have demonstrated the multi-faceted characteristics of impulsiveness as a personality trait. In the presented research paper, researchers tried to review the opinion and work done by various psychologists of the world in relation to the various aspects such as- factors, reasons and consequences of impulsive behavior of adolescents which came to the fore through the ideas and conclusions given in their research papers and books published.

Keywords: *Impulsive, Behavior, Adolescents, Review*

Introduction

An important part of any research is to review the literature related to it because it helps the researcher from the previous research studies done in that specific area of study, whether it is to decide the plan related to it or to decide the course of action. As well as the previous research studies also help in avoiding pitfalls of studies. Review of related literature helps the researcher from selection of problem to setting objectives, formulation of hypothesis, and selection of right procedure and interpretation of results. In this article, researchers tried to review of related literature of impulsive behaviour of adolescents.

Adolescence is the most complicated stage of human development. The changes taking place from the age of 12 to 18 years provide an important contribution in the formation of

the personality of one's life. In the field of education, this stage has special importance also. This stage is characterized by gender, social, occupational, normative adjustment and the attempt to overcome parental dependence. So, in a literal sense we can say that adolescence is the period which transitions towards maturity.

Because impulsivity is associated with risk-taking behaviors, such as driving violations (Paaver et al., 2006), gambling (Slutske et al., 2005), kleptomania (Bayle et al., 2003) high-risk sexual behaviors (Black et al., 2009), domestic violence (Shorey et al., 2010), and with increased probability of adverse outcomes, such as driving-related injuries (Cherpitel, 1999), increased risk of contracting HIV (Bornovalova et al., 2008), being arrested (Nilsson et al., 2010), and undesired pregnancies (Kovacs et al., 1994), impulsivity represents an important construct contributing to many public health concerns.

Considering a cognitive viewpoint, impulsivity is the inability to inhibit behavioral impulses and thoughts. It considers impulse control as an important component of executive functions. It plays an important role in one's social and personal functioning (Chudasama Y. 2011).

From a social viewpoint of impulsivity, it referred as a learned behavior that is formed inside the family. In family, children learn to react immediately in order to achieve what they desire.

In their book titled- "Recent Advancements in Research on Impulsivity and Impulsive Behaviors" **Wit Harriet de & Jentsch J. David (Editors) (2020)** provided an empirical and conceptual overview of advancements in understanding of impulsivity and impulsive behaviors. They explored that behavioral psychologists and scientists have reviewed the behavior and related phenomena referred to as impulsivity, the defining characteristics of impulsivity, the psychological, neuro-cognitive and behavioral processes that underlie the presence of impulsive behavior within an individual. They have also tried to found the answers of all the questions related to it.

MacDonell ET& Willoughby T (2020) explained that if aggressive behavior becomes normal in a child during this developmental stage i.e. adolescence then it becomes a part of his personality later on and he may continue to do so .More importantly, if aggressive behaviours become prevalent during this developmental stage, they can be escalated and persist

Further, also in the both studies made by **Schmits E, Glowacz F (2019) and Ehrenreich SE, Beron KJ, Underwood MK. (2016)**, it has been submitted that high level of aggression in adolescence results in high level of social cost to the child. Because

situations like crime, imprisonment and unemployment become a part of the lives of such children.

Studies made by various scholars ie. Estévez E, Jiménez TI (2018), Obeid S et al (2019), Schmits E & Glowacz F. (2019), and Wang L, He CZ, Yu YM, et. al.(2014) have indicated that aggressive behaviour was associated with a range of adverse outcomes in adolescence, such as the increased risk of depressive symptoms, delinquency, internet addiction and suicide attempts . At the family level, significant relationships were observed between aggressive behaviour on the one hand and family conflict and low family cohesion on the other.

Evidence from longitudinal researches such as studies by **Ehrenreich SE, Beron KJ & Underwood MK (2016), Sigurdson JF, Undheim AM, Wallander JL, et al (2015)** have demonstrated that adolescents with higher aggression levels are at greater risk of criminal activity and violence, peer victimisation, rule-breaking behaviours, internalizing symptoms, and narcissistic and borderline personality features in the future . Also, research done by Ehrenreich SE, Beron KJ, and Underwood MK. (2016) has shown that high levels of aggression may result in high social costs because a range of services and resources are needed for delinquency, incarceration and unemployment. In previous years studies made by **Huesmann LR, Dubow EF & Boxer P., (2009), .Kokko K, Pulkkinen L, Huesmann LR, et al(2008)**) revealed that adolescents with higher aggressiveness tend to have difficulties in controlling waves of anger in adulthood and have consistently poorer outcomes across life success domains. .

Also, the study conducted by **Lockwood, Joanna et al. (2017)** on adolescence titled “Impulsivity and self-harm in adolescence a systematic review “supported a positive association between impulsivity and self-harm, yet there inconsistencies in methodology and complicated understanding of this relationship was found across studies. This systematic review examined the association between impulsivity and self-harm in community-based adolescents aged 11-25 years. The aim of the study was to integrate findings according to differing concepts and methods- Electronic searches of Psych INFOEMBASE, MEDLINE, CINAHL and PubMed. Relevant reviews identified 4496 articles published up to July 2015, of which 28 met the inclusion criteria. 24 studies reported an association between broadly specified self-harm and impulsivity.

However, findings of this study were varied according to the measure and conceptualization of impulsivity and the accuracy with which self-harm behaviors were specified. Specifically, lifelong non-suicidal self-questioning was found consistently

associated with mood-based impulsivity-related symptoms. However, cognitive aspects of impulsivity such as difficulties in maintaining focus or acting without forethought differentiated current self-harm from past self-harm. These aspects distinguished those with thoughts of self-harm (thoughts) from those who acted on the enactment of the thoughts. The findings revealed that mood-based impulsivity is related to the initiation of self-harm, whereas cognitive aspects of impulsivity are associated with the maintenance of self-harm. Furthermore, behavioral impulsivity is most relevant to self-harm under conditions of negative affect. The findings indicated that different impulsivity aspects confer unique risk factors over a lifetime of self-harm. From a clinical perspective, the review suggests that focusing on reducing rapid reactivity to emotions or improving self-regulation and decision-making may provide the most benefit in supporting those who harm themselves

Through longitudinal research, studies made by Ehrenreich SE, Beron KJ, Underwood MK (2016) as well as Sigurdson JF, Undheim AM, Wallander JL, et al (2015) demonstrated that adolescents with higher aggression levels are at greater risk of criminal activity and violence, peer victimization, rule-breaking behaviours, internalizing symptoms, and narcissistic and borderline personality features in the future.

Bakshani, Noor-Mohammed, (2014) in their research article explain that in research as well as in clinical areas the construct of impulsivity is very important related to risky behavior and some psychiatric disorders. According to him though, numerous studies conducted regarding impulsivity and its related biological -psycho-social variables in recent years, but very little work has been done to integrate comprehensive data in this area. This is mainly because there is no unique and precise definition of impulsivity and there is no consensus yet on its major components. Because of this situation, there has been no comprehensive theory and evidences regarding the development of impulsivity and its interaction with external and internal stimuli. Therefore, to explore how impulsivity causes socially risky behavior in different situations, there is a need to more precisely measure each component of impulsivity and their role in the emergence of risky behavior. Also, more research is needed to design and implement programs to prevent and treat impulsivity. George E. Higgins et al, (2013), conducted a developmental trajectory analysis of "impulsivity and delinquency from childhood to young adulthood in the United States". The purpose of this study was to provide an investigation of the development of Impulsivity through childhood and its link to offending in adolescence and young adulthood in the United States. In this context, Moffitt's (1993, 2003) dual taxonomy provided a framework for understanding this relationship. Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of

Youth (1979), child and young adult surveys (n = 413), George E. Higgins et al, revealed that three trajectory groups of impulsivity and aggression best represent these data. Groups indicate relative stability in impulsivity in childhood and delinquency in adolescence and young adulthood. Furthermore, they also revealed that high levels of impulsivity are associated with high and stable levels of offending.

Chamorro et. al. (2012) conducted a national study to examine the status of impulsivity in the general population in the United States. To do this, they analyzed data from a large national sample of the United States population. Direct survey of 34,653 adults aged 18 and older living in homes during the 2004–2005 period that were diagnosed with mood, anxiety, and substance use disorders as well as personality disorders was assessed by the Interview Schedule-DSM. -The fourth through fourth editions were based on Alcohol Use Disorders and Associated Disabilities. They found through their study that impulsivity was common in 17% of the sample, especially among men and young individuals, and was associated with a wide range of Axis I and II disorders, most notably drug dependence, Cluster B. Dependent and Schizotypal Personality Disorder, Bipolar Disorder and ADHD. It was found associated with behavioral inhibition, attention deficit, and lack of planning. All individuals with impulsivity were more likely to engage in behaviors that could be dangerous to themselves or others, including starting fights, reckless driving, domestic violence, shoplifting, and self-injury or killing. Involves trying. They were at high risk of lifelong trauma and exposed to substantial physical and psychosocial harm.

In a study conducted by Romer et al. (2011) with a community sample of 387 youth aged 10 to 12 years in Philadelphia, found that impulsivity as assessed by acting out without thinking and sensation seeking is one of the earliest forms of problem and risky behavior. There was a strong correlation. They also found that differences in sensation seeking correlated positively with working memory performance, thus, suggesting that one of the more potent sources of risk-taking in adolescence is not associated with deficits in executive function.

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