

A comparison of early maladaptive schemas between students with poor and good sleep quality

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ABSTRACT

Background: Poor sleep is common problem among students. This problem leads to several social and psychological consequences.

Aim: The aim of this study was to compare the early maladaptive schemas in two groups of students with poor and good sleep quality.

Methods: In this descriptive – comparative study a statistical sample were selected among students of Islamic Azad University branch of Buin Zahra (N = 1009). Sampling method was multi-stage cluster. By this method 182 participants were selected (poor sleep quality =119 and good sleep quality=63). The participants completed basic scale on insomnia complaints and quality of sleep (BaSIQS) and Yang maladaptive schemas questionnaires (YSQ). Data analyzed through multivariate variance (MANOVA).

Results: comparing two groups of good and poor sleep quality indicate higher level of maladaptive schemata domains i.e. Emotional deprivation, mistrust/mistreatment, and social isolation/alienation, vulnerability to harm and illness, entitlement/grandiosity, arrogance /insufficient self-discipline, obedience, negativity/pessimism among students with poor sleep quality.

Discussion: Based on findings of this study it is concluded that the early maladaptive schemas plays a role in the quality of sleep. They may experience different sleep quality depending on the mental state of students.

Keywords: quality of sleep, students, early maladaptive schemas

INTRODUCTION

Sleep quality is important at all ages. Poor sleep quality especially at a young age may lead to serious psychological conditions (1-4). Approximately 60% of students suffer from poor sleep quality and 27% of them are at risk of at least one sleep disorder. Estimated about 7.7% and 24.3% of students suffer from insomnia and nightmares, respectively (5, 6). In fact, students at the age of university start (adolescence to adulthood) are one of age groups with lowest sleep duration (7). Because they experience several important changes . academic or non-academic factors and activities (9-10). Beyond academic considerations, sleep problems in college students are often linked to mental health issues. Sleep quality and mental health affect each other. The poor sleep pattern disturb academic life (11,12-13), mood disorder, fatigue and academic performance (14,15-16). Deprivation of good sleep increases the secretion of catecholamine, blood pressure, the amount of oxygen required by the heart

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and ultimately increases the burden on the heart and causes systematic disease (17, 18). On the other hand, adverse childhood experiences are associated with self-reported sleep disorders in adulthood (19).

Maladaptive schemas are stable relational patterns that develop through harmful childhood experiences and primary caregivers. The early maladaptive schemas are structure related to personality and interpersonal processes, which are defined as "a broad and pervasive pattern, consisting of memories, emotions, cognitions, bodily sensations, regarding the individual's relationships with others(20). They are developed during childhood or adolescence. Early maladaptive schemas are significantly inefficient trait-like characteristics that develop through the interaction between temperament and adverse childhood experiences, when one or more basic emotional needs in childhood (secure attachment to others, freedom in expressing needs, and healthy emotions, self-management and spontaneity) are not satisfied(19). The schemes proposed by Yang developed based on unsatisfied emotional needs consisted five domains i.e. disconnection and rejection, impaired autonomy and performance, impaired limits, other-directedness over vigilance and inhibition (20). Schemas are active at the deepest level of cognition, usually are unconscious and they make a person vulnerable to psychological diseases such as anxiety and depression, ineffective communication and unhealthy behavior patterns (21,22-23). The schemas formed during childhood is related to healthy and unhealthy behaviors such as eating behavior (24) or tendency to abuse substances (25).

Many researches confirmed mental illnesses related to the early maladaptive schemas such as: depression (27), eating disorder (28), psychotic symptoms (29), bipolar (30), anxiety disorders (31,32,33-34), and paranoia (35). Meanwhile, sleep quality found in relationship with paranoia and psychosis (36,37,38,39-40), depression (41,42-43), anxiety (44, 45) and stress (46, 47). Rodrigues et al. reported higher level of the early maladaptive schemas in students with poor sleep quality compared to students with high sleep quality (48).

Considering the importance of sleep disorders, students should be aware of the consequences of poor sleep quality and proceed to change their unhealthy behaviors (1). The students are vulnerable to various risk factors of sleep quality (49) and over time the quality of their sleep is getting worse (50). However, there are only a limited number of studies about relationship of sleep quality and early maladaptive schemas. Due to the limited background, the aim of the present study was to compare between early maladaptive schemas based on poor and good sleep quality of Iranian students.

According to previous studies, clinical practice and experimental evidence regarding role of personality characteristics (51,52-53) and adverse childhood conditions (54) in sleep problems. In this study, it is assumed that students with poor sleep quality will show more maladaptive schemas. Therefore this study aimed to compare the early maladaptive schemas between students with poor and good sleep quality.

Methods

This descriptive study was conducted through comparative causal method.

3.1 Statistical population, sample and sampling method

The statistical population includes all undergraduate students humanities faculty of the Islamic Azad University, branch of Buin Zahra, during 2022 year. The samples was selected by multi-stage cluster sampling method. Among all undergraduate students humanities faculty of the Islamic Azad University, branch of Buin Zahra. The

psychology, law, physical education, accounting and foreign language subjects selected randomly (N=1009). The online form link including demographic information, basic scale on insomnia complaints and quality of sleep (BaSIQS) and Yang maladaptive schemas questionnaires (YSQ) sent for students. A total of 721 participants completed the questionnaires, 182 of them were selected based on criteria. They were free from drug abuse and health problems. The selected cases divided into two groups of poor sleep quality (N=119) and good sleep quality (N=63).

3.2 Demographic information

Participants of this study were adults with no children, free from health problems and no medication use. The mean age of the participants was 25.38. Approximately 68% were female and all were undergraduate student. 5% were living in a hostel with a shared room and 27% were married.

3.3 Tools

Questionnaire of demographic characteristics: It included questions about the degree and field of study, marital status, age, gender, health problems, drug use, and place of residence.

Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Questionnaire: This questionnaire was developed in 1989 by Boyce and his colleagues at the Pittsburgh Psychiatric Institute. This questionnaire includes 19 statements. The answers of these items are four-point Likert from 0 to 3 in 7 subscales i.e. Subjective Sleep Quality, Sleep Latency, Sleep Duration, Habitual Sleep Efficiency, Sleep Disturbances, Use of Sleep Medication, and Daytime Drowsiness. The Pittsburgh questionnaire showed reported validity was 0.83. This scale showed high reliability and validity in several studies (55). In this study, the instrument showed good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.81).

Early Maladaptive Schemas Questionnaire (YSQ-SF): This self-report questionnaire was developed by Young. YSQ-SF includes 90 items with five domains of early maladaptive schemas i.e. disconnection and rejection (abandonment/instability, mistrust/misbehavior, emotional deprivation, deficiency/shame, social isolation/alienation), impaired autonomy and performance (dependence/incompetence, vulnerability to injury or illness, entrapment/underdeveloped self, and failure), impaired limits(entitlement / high-handedness / insufficient self-discipline), other-directedness(obedience, sacrifice and attention-seeking), hypervigilance and inhibition (negativity/cynicism, emotional inhibition, stubbornness/extreme blameworthiness, and punishment) (56). In this study, the validity of the questionnaire according to Cronbach's alpha method for the whole test was 0.93 and subscales were between 0.44 - 0.82.

3.4 Information analysis method

The data was analyzed in spss26 software by multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The sleep quality groups was independent variables and schema domains considered as dependent variables.

RESULTS

In order to evaluate the relationship between sleep quality and schemas in the domain of disconnection and rejection (abandonment/instability, mistrust/misbehavior, emotional deprivation, deficiency/shame, social isolation/alienation) MANOVA was performed. Results showed a statistically significant difference between groups of poor and good sleep quality (Wilks' Lambda = 0.881, $F(5.176) = 4.576$, $p = 0.001$, $r^2 = 0.119$). Table 1)

Table 1. Disconnection and rejection domain schemas in groups of sleep quality (poor sleep quality versus good sleep quality)

Sleep group(quality)	Poor N=119		Good N=63				
YSQ-S3	M	SD	M	SD	F	P	η^2
Emotional deprivation	13.9239	5.24146	10.4514	5.15600	18.283*	0.000	0.092
abandonment/instability	13.3128	5.79434	10.9672	5.66567	6.854	0.010	0.037
mistrust/misbehavior	13.4013	5.08886	10.7079	4.70449	12.148*	0.001	0.063
social isolation/alienation	12.6237	4.98084	9.7723	4.52258	14.369*	0.000	0.074
deficiency/shame	13.7850	4.73828	12.0667	5.29619	4.989	0.027	0.027

* $p < 0.005$

In Table 2 the results for impaired autonomy and performance (dependence/incompetence, vulnerability to injury or illness, entrapment/underdeveloped self, and failure) showed a statistically significant difference between groups of poor and good sleep quality {Wilks' Lambda = 0.923, $F(5.177) = 3.668$, $p = 0.007$, $r^2 = 0.077$ } (Table 2)

Table 2. Impaired autonomy and performance in groups of sleep quality (poor sleep quality versus good sleep quality)

Sleep group(quality)	Poor		Good				
	N=119		N=63				
YSQ-S3	M	SD	M	SD	F	P	η2
failure	13.5271	4.12208	11.9669	4.73231	5.319	0.022	0.029
Dependence/ incompetence	11.8967	4.53457	10.6596	4.09452	3.274	0.072	0.018
vulnerability to injury or illness	12.1003	4.96779	9.8795	4.39739	8.895*	0.003	0.047
entrapment/underdeveloped self	11.5812	4.77807	9.8977	4.93268	5.001	0.027	0.027

* $p < 0.005$

A MANOVA was performed to evaluate impaired limits (entitlement / high-handedness / insufficient self-discipline) in poor and good sleep quality groups and results showed significant difference in impaired limits of two groups {Wilks' Lambda = 0.934, $F(2,179) = 6.292$, $p = 0.002$, $r^2 = 0.066$ } (Table 3).

Table 3. Impaired limits in groups of sleep quality (poor sleep quality versus good sleep quality)

Sleep group(quality)	Poor		Good				
	N=119		N=63				
YSQ-S3	M	SD	M	SD	F	P	η ²
entitlement	16.7620	5.30877	14.2301	5.98822	8.566*	0.004	0.045
high-handedness	14.8317	4.94204	12.1753	5.35056	11.234*	0.001	0.059
/insufficient self-discipline							

* $p < 0.005$

In order to analyze the difference of other-directedness (obedience, sacrifice and attention-seeking) in poor and good sleep quality groups a multivariate MANOVA test revealed statistically significant difference {Wilks' Lambda = 0.939, $F(3,178) = 3.884$, $p = 0.010$, $r^2 = 0.061$ } (Table 4).

Table 4. Other-directedness in groups of sleep quality (poor sleep quality versus good sleep quality)

Sleep group(quality)	Poor		Good				
	N=119		N=63				
YSQ-S3	M	SD	M	SD	F	P	η^2
obedience	14.0352	5.65995	11.3486	5.79424	9.13*	0.03	0.048
sacrifice	17.9426	5.84564	16.5120	5.92795	2.44*	0.120	0.013
attention-seeking	15.0723	6.23980	13.4017	5.30433	3.26	0.072	0.018

* $p < 0.005$

A MANOVA was conducted to evaluate the difference of hypervigilance and inhibition (negativity/cynicism, emotional inhibition, stubbornness/extreme blameworthiness, and punishment) in groups with poor and good sleep quality. The results showed a statistically significant difference between groups {Wilks' Lambda = 0.927, $F(4.177) = 3.488$, $p = 0.09$, $r^2 = 0.073$ }. (Table 5)

Table 5. Hypervigilance and inhabitation in groups of sleep quality (poor sleep quality versus good sleep quality)

Sleep group(quality)	Poor		Good				
	N=119		N=63				
YSQ-S3	M	SD	M	SD	F	P	η^2
Emotional inhabitation	13.4233	6.17575	12.1554	5.65691	1.838	0.177	0.010
stubbornness/extreme blameworthiness	19.8290	5.94364	17.7595	6.44650	4.708	0.031	0.025
negativity/cynicism	16.2825	6.22510	13.2588	5.23555	10.808*	0.001	0.057
punishment	13.8014	5.92435	12.5607	6.50641	1.687	0.196	0.009

* $p < 0.005$

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the difference of the early maladaptive schemas based on sleep quality. The students with poor self-reported sleep quality were expected to report higher maladaptive schemas. Overall, the results confirmed the study hypotheses.

Students with poor sleep quality presented higher scores in the early maladaptive schemas. There was observed difference between eight early maladaptive schemas of students with poor and good sleep quality. However, some maladaptive schemas (punishment, emotional inhabitation, attention seeking, and dependence/incompetence) does not showed difference in sleep quality groups. The scores of early maladaptive schemas in domain of disconnection and rejection (abandonment/instability, mistrust/misbehavior, emotional deprivation, deficiency/shame, social isolation/alienation), impaired autonomy and performance (vulnerability to injury or illness, entrapment/underdeveloped self, and failure), impaired limits(entitlement / high-handedness / insufficient self-discipline), other-directedness(obedience and sacrifice), hypervigilance and inhibition (negativity/cynicism and stubbornness/extreme blameworthiness) significantly was higher among students with poor sleep quality comparing good sleep quality.

Emotional deprivation is one of the most common schemas seen in clinical work and it is related to rejection and cutting. Emotional deprivation categorized to deprivation of affection, lack of affection or attention, deprivation of empathy (not being understood by others) and deprivation of support (no source of power and guidance). People with these schema are unaware and often referee to therapist due to depression, hopelessness and loneliness. On the other hand, sleep disorders are one of the most common symptoms of depression (41, 42)(43), feelings of sadness(57) and loneliness (58).

One of the main schemas of early maladaptive schemas is the mistrust. People with this schema unconsciously expect others to betray them (59), steal their property, humiliate, insult, or abuse them. They believe that no one can be trusted unless proven. They are suspicious of others and always keep distance with peoples (59). In their most optimistic state, they believe that everyone is thinking of themselves. In their negative state, they think that people are annoying and evil (60). As a result, people with mistrust and abuse schemas do not have close relationships with others, and they do not express their feelings to others (61). They do not share their thoughts and opinions because they believe that they will deceive others before they deceive others(62). They think that this strategy is preventive (63). Those with mistrust and abuse schemas constantly they assess the trustworthiness of others and shows paranoid traits. This means that pessimism (64) and doubt (65) are an integral part of their relationship (66). Mistrust/misbehavior alone can explain many of the problems of paranoid personality disorder. The expectations of this schema are completely consistent with the main characteristic of paranoid patients, which is long-lasting skepticism and mistrust of all people. Because people with paranoid personality disorder believe that others are intentionally not meeting their needs(67,68-69). It should be noted that paranoid is not limited to psychosis illness and is reported in more than 30% of the general population (70-71). Also, research shows a strong relationship between sleep disorders, insomnia and paranoia (37,38,39-40).

Social isolation is the belief that a person is different from others(19), and does not belong to a group. Also, poor sleep quality is related to feelings of loneliness (58) and social isolation (72). In the domains of autonomy and impaired functioning, as expected, was higher in poor sleep quality cases. Individuals with an injury and illness

vulnerability schema believe that they lack internal control to cope with an impending health disaster, which is experienced with stress and anxiety. Meanwhile studies have shown, stress (44, 45) and anxiety (46,47) are related to sleep quality.

In the field of impaired limitations entitlement and high-handedness /insufficient self-discipline they were significantly higher in the group with poor sleep quality. People with entitlement/secretary grandeur schema believe that they are special and better than others and feel they have special privileges. It is common to try to impose one's point of view or control the behavior, without empathy or concerning needs of others. This schema is often an overcompensation for emotional deprivation and defect/shame schemas (73). The high entitlement in poor sleep quality can be explained by the overcompensation schema of emotional deprivation. Also, data referring to entitlement/grandiose schemas showed link between aggression (74, 75) and low conscientiousness (52, 76, 77,78-79) with sleep variables (i.e., sleep problems, insomnia, sound sleep, and sleep quality).

People with high self-control/insufficient self-discipline schema get tired early, don't feel doing special work, don't have a specific plan and can't continue their plans as they feel insufficient self-control. In order to achieve success in life, one must put aside short-term pleasures and goals in order to achieve long-term goals. These people are not able to ignore immediate enjoyable activities. They do not follow a regular routine in their lives and cannot regulate their emotions (19).The sleep deprivation can have a negative effect on self-control (80) and impulsivity. There a relationship with sleep quality (77,81-82).

No significant difference was found between attention-seeking and self-sacrifice of students with good and poor sleep quality. However, other orientation was associated with poor sleep quality. In order to avoid being punished by others, people with a submissive schema let others to dominance them (19). These people ignore their needs and emotions to take care of the needs and emotions of others. They think that their desires have no value and needs of others are important.in explaining higher schema of other orientation in participants with poor sleep quality found association between sleep quality and anger (76-77) and internalization (83).

Hypervigilance and inhibition schema was higher in students with poor sleep quality, however, in punishment no significant difference was found in high and low sleep quality cases. When a person has a schema of pessimism, he only emphasizes the negative aspects. Even when his life is going well, he still emphasizes the negative aspects. They spends a lot of time in worry, rumination, and trying to avoid mistakes that could have disastrous consequences (19). Findings related to this schema are consistent with previous research on the relationship between rumination (83-84), worry (84-85) and harm avoidance (82)with sleep disturbances and insomnia.

Limitation

This study has limitations and should be considered in the interpretation of the results. As this study was cross-sectional, results dose not means there is certain relationship between early maladaptive schemas and sleep quality. Although schemas can be considered as vulnerability factors for poor sleep quality. Second, in psychological research using internet for data collection (86) involves risks such as multiple submissions and self-selection biases. Although the high number of reports containing poor sleep quality rejects the hypothesis of the existence of social desirability biases. However, considering the scope of the questionnaire limited probability of multiple submission. The participants in group with good quality sleep reported appropriate sleep through questionnaire. This cannot reject the probability of sleep disorders exist. There is need for further examinations to

found sleep disorders. Third, majority of participants were females this may limit the generalizability of the findings to male. Although we should consider domination of female gender frequency in universities of Iran (87-88)

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest in this study

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