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Title of the Thesis: Big five personality factors, parenting style and peer pressure as predictors of health risk behaviour

Abstract

Key Words: Adolescents, Big Five Personality, Peer Pressure, Parenting Style, Health Risk Behavior.

There is a growing literature which showed that many adolescents (10-19 years) die unexpectedly because of accidents, suicide, violence, gravidity associated complications and many other illnesses that can either be prevented or treated (WHO, 2019). According to the National Mental Health Survey (2017) in India, 13.5% youth reported substance use, among which tobacco consumption is commonest. Risky sexual behaviour is also very common in India. The results of previous studies indicate consistent relations between personality traits, dysfunctional parenting, peer pressure, and health risk behaviors (Jaigarun, Corte, McCreary, Finnegan, Hughes, and Thorkildsen, 2018; Maglica, 2011, 2009; Litchfield and White, 2006; Gibbons and Gerrard, 1995).

Thus, the aim of the present study was to identify whether big five personality, parenting style and peer pressure are the predictors of health risk behaviour. Further, it has also been investigated whether gender moderates the relationship between predictor (Big five personality, parenting style and peer pressure) and outcome variable (health risk behaviour).

A total number of 589 (13-19 years) male and female adolescents from different schools in Delhi NCR were served as a sample of the study.

Tools used in the present study are a) Demographic Sheet b) Measure of Health Risk Behaviour by Suri and Jahan (2018, unpublished). c) The Big Five Inventory (BFI) by John

and Srivastava, (1999). d) Measure of Parental Styles was developed by Parker, Roussos, Hadzi-Pavlovic, Mitchell, Wilhelm and Austin (1997). e) Peer Pressure Scale by Singh and Saini (2010).

The study was conducted in two phases. In the first measure of health risk behaviour (MHRB) was administered and 292 participants were screened out with health risk behaviour. In the second phase, scale of parenting style, peer pressure and big five personality were administered on adolescents (292) with health risk behaviour to analyse whether they are predictors of health risk behaviour. Further, gender was taken as a moderator for the relationship between the predictors and criterion variables. The data was analysed using IBM SPSS-21 and PROCESS-HAYES version 3.0.

These findings provided the justification that health risk behaviour in adolescents are influenced by the three major psychological factors which are big five personality, parenting style and peer pressure. The different types of personality impacted the indulgence in various health risk behaviour. Also, the dysfunctional parenting styles of both parents have their crucial effect on the health risk behaviour of adolescents. It is also found that peer pressure has predicted the health risk behaviour but only in tobacco use and unintentional injury and violence. Additionally, moderating role of gender was found to have significant impact on the relationship between predictors (big five personality, parenting style and peer pressure) and outcome i.e., health risk behaviour. The findings of the current study is encouraging from the viewpoint of mental health care professionals, school counsellors and parents to understand and identify the factors of health risk behaviour in adolescents and accordingly help in planning the management and preventive strategies. As, the indulgence in health risk behaviour mainly starts during the early adolescents, so, understanding the factors behind it would help in taking the preventive measures to reduce such behaviours in later ages.