

HUMILIATION, EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES AND EMOTION REGULATION PROCESSES IN ADOLESCENTS

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INTRODUCCION

Humiliation is an emotion often linked to suffering and to conflicting interpersonal relationships, which can lead to behavioural restriction or isolation, causing a harmful impact on the individual's growth and development. This emotion may be related to other relevant concepts (negative emotional experiences and emotion regulation strategies) that can influence it positively or negatively.

OBJETIVES

Explore the association between humiliation, shame, bullying experiences and compassion for oneself and for others. Investigate gender differences, and age effect. Compare the study variables in participants attending public schools and the ones in foster care. Analyse the set of variables that predicts humiliation in adolescence.

METHOD

Participantes

The sample included 200 adolescents (91 boys and 109 girls, including 49 adolescents in foster care and 151 in public schools) with ages between 12 and 19 years old ($M = 14.5$; $SD = 2.19$). The schooling years varied between 7 and 12 years ($M = 8.72$ and $SD = 1.95$).

Foster homes are social structures aimed at receiving children and young people at risk who are deprived of the family environment, guaranteeing them adequate assistance for a harmonious and global growth.

Instruments

Participants completed the Peer Relationships Questionnaire (PRQ; Rigby & Slee, 1993), the Humiliation Inventory (HI; Hartling & Luchetta, 1999), the Others as Shamer (OAS; Goss, Gilbert & Allan, 1994) and the Compassionate Attributes and Action Scales for self and others (CAAS; Gilbert et al., 2017).

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RESULTS

- Humiliation showed a positive association with shame ($r = .77$, $p < .001$) and with the tendency to be victimized - PRQ ($r = .57$; $p < .001$). Also it showed a negative association with the self-compassionate actions ($r = -.36$; $p = .001$).
- Female subjects exhibited significantly higher values of humiliation ($t = 4.57$, $p < .001$) and shame feelings ($t = 2.31$, $p = .022$), as well as compassionate attributes for others ($t = 4.00$, $p < .001$) and compassionate actions for others ($t = 4.81$, $p < .001$), when compared to male subjects.
- Comparing the two groups, the participants in the foster care showed significantly higher values in humiliation ($t = 3.31$, $p = .001$), shame ($t = 2.09$, $p = .038$), predisposition to provoke others ($t = 6.11$, $p < .001$) and propensity to be victimized ($t = 3.72$, $p < .001$) scores. In addition, this group presented lower scores of compassion to others (attributes and actions), when compared to adolescents attending public schools ($t = 4.18$, $p < .001$; $t = 2.32$, $p = .021$, respectively).
- Hierarchical multiple regression r including shame, the three interpersonal relations dimensions (to bully others; to be victimized by others and to relate to others in a prosocial and cooperative manner), and compassionate attributes and actions for self and others, revealed that shame and the tendency to be victimized were statistically significant in predicting levels of humiliation (Beta = .64; $p < .001$ and Beta = .19, $p = .001$). The model explained 63% of humiliation variance.

DISCUSSION

- ✓ Adolescents presenting higher levels of humiliation perceive themselves as more devalued, unable, and incompetent in the eyes of others, also showing a greater tendency to provoke others and to be victimized by others. It is also worth noting that they seem to be less warm, tolerant and friendly towards themselves.
- ✓ Young people in foster care appear to have more psychological difficulties, suggesting that special attention would be recommended.
- ✓ An early assessment and intervention based on the development of emotion regulation skills, for example, compassion focused approaches would be useful and desirable for adolescents.

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