



Examining the Structural Model of the Relationship between Childhood Trauma and Death Anxiety with the Mediating Role of Uncertainty Intolerance in Female Students from Cultural Perspective

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Abstract

This study was aimed to examine the relationship between childhood trauma and death anxiety with the mediating role of uncertainty intolerance in female students from cultural perspective. The statistical population was particular to all female students of Karaj Islamic Azad University in 2024 academic year. 249 participants were selected via convenient sampling procedure. The research method was descriptive-correlational by utilizing the structural equations model. All the subjects responded to Collet-Lester Death Anxiety Questionnaire (1969), Freeston and colleagues Intolerance of Uncertainty Questionnaire (1994) and the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire by Bernstein and colleagues (2003). SPSS software was used to measure the correlation between variables and Amos software to analyze the mediating variable. The findings indicated that childhood trauma directly impacted uncertainty intolerance. And uncertainty intolerance directly affected death anxiety while childhood trauma impressed death anxiety indirectly through uncertainty intolerance. Uncertainty intolerance had positive relationships with the both variables. The results also revealed that childhood trauma reducing indirectly led to decreasing of death anxiety and uncertainty intolerance played a significant role in this case. It could be concluded that culture oriented intervention improves uncertainty intolerance and decreases childhood trauma impact.



Extended abstract

Introduction: Death is an unavoidable reality that elicits varied reactions, frequently triggering death anxiety, a profound emotional condition of uneasiness or fear arising from the perception of a real or imagined threat to one's life). This anxiety is deeply rooted in human psychology, impacting diverse aspects of daily life and psychological well-being. Childhood traumatic experiences, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and neglect, significantly contribute to the development of death anxiety. These traumas form complex networks of fear and memories, leaving lasting impacts on individuals' lives. Intolerance of uncertainty, the inability to bear the distress caused by ambiguity, is a potential mediator in the relationship between childhood trauma and death anxiety. Empirical studies showed a link between childhood trauma and increased intolerance of uncertainty, which in turn amplifies anxiety. Given the human inclination towards certainty, individuals with traumatic childhoods may struggle more with unpredictable situations, thus heightening death anxiety. While research explored these connections, there remains a need to understand the mediating mechanisms, particularly intolerance of uncertainty, in non-western, diverse cultural contexts. This study focuses on women in the Iranian cultural context. Accordingly, this study was aimed to examine the relationship between childhood trauma and death anxiety with the mediating role of uncertainty intolerance in female students from cultural perspective.

Method: The statistical population was particular to all female students of Karaj Islamic Azad University in 2024 academic year. Two hundred and forty-nine participants were selected via convenient sampling procedure. The research method was descriptive-correlational by utilizing the structural equations model as main statistical analyzing procedure. All the subjects responded to Collet-Lester Death Anxiety Questionnaire (1969), Freeston and colleagues Intolerance of Uncertainty Questionnaire (1994) and the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire by Bernstein and colleagues (2003). SPSS software was used to measure the correlation between variables and Amos software to analyze the mediating variable.

Results: The findings indicated that childhood trauma directly impacted uncertainty intolerance. And uncertainty intolerance directly affected death anxiety while childhood trauma impressed death anxiety indirectly through uncertainty intolerance. Uncertainty intolerance had positive relationships with the both variables. The results also revealed that childhood trauma reducing indirectly led to decreasing of death anxiety and uncertainty intolerance played a significant role in this case. It could be concluded that culture oriented intervention improves uncertainty intolerance and decreases childhood trauma impact.

Conclusions: The findings of this study supported the hypothesis that intolerance of uncertainty mediates the relationship between childhood trauma and death anxiety. To explain such results, it could be mentioned that individuals with traumatic childhood experiences tend to exhibit higher intolerance of uncertainty, which in turn increases their death anxiety. These results align with previous research emphasizing the long-term psychological impact of childhood trauma. The mediating role of intolerance of uncertainty highlights the importance of addressing this factor in therapeutic interventions. Psychological culture oriented interventions focusing on enhancing tolerance of



uncertainty and mitigating the effects of childhood trauma may effectively reduce death anxiety. The study underscores the necessity for culturally sensitive approaches in understanding and addressing the psychological consequences of childhood trauma. In summary, the results of this study demonstrated that traumatic childhood experiences have a direct effect on increasing intolerance of uncertainty, which in turn increases death anxiety. Emphasizing the key mediating role of intolerance of uncertainty, the findings of this research highlight the importance of psychological, cultural oriented and educational interventions to reduce death anxiety and improve the quality of life for individuals who have experienced traumatic childhood experiences. Therefore, it is recommended to use psychological interventions that focus on improving tolerance of uncertainty and reducing the effects of childhood trauma to decrease death anxiety.

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