Impact of Stress and Personality on Moral Cognition

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Abstract. With the development of society and the progress of science and technology, people's living standard is getting higher and higher. As people become richer in material life, their pursuit of the spiritual level is even greater. When there is material and spiritual inequality, people experience stress, which increases as the two dimensions of life become more and more unbalanced. Some people will suffer from mental illness such as depression, which will seriously affect their normal life and cognition, and even prompt them to make unethical decisions. Therefore, this article will study how stress and personality affect moral cognition. Through previous experiments can be analyzed, stress and personality have different degrees of influence on moral cognition. Of course, previous experiments also have shortcomings, and future studies can be more rigorous in terms of control variables. To conclude, by reviewing previous research, this study provides suggestions for individuals to reduce stress and avoid antisocial personalities.

Keywords: Stress, personality, moral cognition.

1. Introduction

Now a days, people have more and more stress in their daily life. Public might make some ridicules choices when they are really stressed. Also, different person has different personalities. Some people who have antisocial personality may commit crime and influence the society.

With the progress of society, people's material life is satisfied, at this time their spiritual needs will gradually reveal. Some humans resort to extreme measures to ease their feelings when they are not satisfied with what they want. Some choose to commit crimes. Obviously, humans' morals are not as good as we think. Many of these people commit crimes of passion because they are under extreme stress or negative emotions at the time. And after the crime is over, they tend to repent and panic.

What may cause them to commit crimes is that they have been hurt in daily work and life, which often leads to extreme stress. So, the present study speculate that these pressures may temporarily lead them to make decisions that violate their moral judgment.

Moral cognition is not only influenced by stress, but also by other factors such as personality. Different people have different personalities, which will naturally lead them to have different solutions to the same problems. In this way, when facing moral cognition, people with different personalities will make different moral judgments.

The purpose of this article is to explore how stress and character image moral cognition. As a result, people will have a better understanding of the effects of stress and personality on all aspects of life, as well as the understanding of how people think and perceive in certain contexts.

2. Moral Cognition

Moral cognition is usually used to judge something or other characteristics on morality. The most classic moral cognition is the moral dilemma. People have to choose one way although they might think two ways are impossible and utilitarian. It is a person's choice and judgment on a moral issue. Usually, it can reflect a person's cognitive process and strategy towards events. It can also be seen from a person's choice whether his consciousness and views of good and evil conform to social development. Moral decision-making often has nothing to do with laws and regulations, it can reflect people's moral tendency.

In Rest’s study, he proposed that there are four stages in moral cognition [1]. Including moral cognition, moral judgment, act intention and act. First, people need to know about how they think

and how they will do. Secondly, they have to judge if their choices good or not. Then, they probably generate the intention to do what they have chosen. Finally, people do what their brains tell them to do.

When humans do moral cognition, they use almost their brain parts, like frontal, prefrontal, limbic and sensory [2].

3. Impact factors for moral cognition

3.1. Impact of stress on cognition

Stress is a cognitive and behavioral experience process composed of psychological stressors and psychological stress responses. It usually refers to an event or environmental stimulus that makes a person nervous. It may affect people's behavior in a positive way, and conversely, it may cause people to suffer from mental illness.

There are many different types of stress. But most of them can be divided into two categories: subjective stress and objective stress. Subjective pressure is that people trapped in their own mental internal friction, resulting in fear of things or tension and other negative emotions. Objective stress is forced by some objective conditions. Objective stress leads people to produce negative emotions.

There have been studies done that showed the influence of self-relevance on moral decision-making under time pressure [3]. The researcher recruited 120 undergraduates who were physically and mentally healthy and had normal vision. They were randomly divided into no time pressure group, low time pressure group, medium time pressure group and high time pressure group. And the names in the questionnaire were classified as high correlation, normal correlation, and low correlation. The questionnaire gave the background of the story and asked the participants to save or not to save. The proportion of people choosing to help increases with time pressure, under the same auto correlation. The percentage of people who choose to help also increases with self-relevance under the same time pressure. This experiment fully proves that the main effect of self-correlation is significant, and time pressure is also affected by self-correlation.

In Fang, the author studied the effect of time pressure-based moral dilemma types and personality characteristics on moral decision-making in virtual reality [4]. The authors randomly selected 120 healthy undergraduate or graduate students and extracted their answers under different time pressures and moral dilemmas through questionnaires. The results show that in virtual reality, individuals tend to make utilitarian choices regardless of whether they are in personal dilemma or non-personal dilemma. However, under text conditions, individuals tend to make deontological decisions when making moral judgments and moral behavior choices, whether in personal or non-personal dilemmas. Under time pressure, individuals are more inclined to make utilitarian choice under virtual reality conditions, while under text conditions, individuals are more inclined to make deontological choice. This experiment shows that the introduction of virtual reality technology is beneficial to carry out psychological training and help people in need. Students can establish correct morals, values and world views through virtual reality. However, it is still difficult to apply virtual reality technology to daily moral education. For example, the equipment associated with virtual reality technology is relatively expensive, so families with average incomes may not be able to afford it. In addition, the application of virtual reality technology in moral education also needs to be widely supervised to avoid the distortion of the content of moral education by a small number of groups.

Luo studied the influence of time pressure and moral dilemmas on moral decision-making of college students majoring in physical education and general majors [5]. The author selected 30 college students majoring in physical education and 30 ordinary college students to carry out the experiment. The researcher choose life dilemmas and sports dilemmas as questionnaires for the experiment. Divided into no time pressure group and high time pressure group. The results show that the main effect of time pressure is very obvious. The times of making utilitarian choice in high time pressure condition is significantly higher than that in no time pressure condition. But the main effect of dilemma type is not obvious. The interaction effect of time pressure and dilemma type was significant.

Experiments show that time pressure affects individual moral decision making, and this effect is more obvious in sports dilemma.

Zhao studied the effect of team performance pressure on unethical pro-team behavior of project members [6]. The experiment recruited 189 volunteers with different backgrounds from the whole society. Most of the volunteers were under 30 years old and the least were over 50 years old. The volunteers have different levels of education, but most have bachelor's and master's degrees. The length of work, the nature of the enterprise and the companies of the participants also varies. The experimental results are obtained in the form of questionnaire. The questionnaires include five variables: team performance pressure, moral disengagement, unethical pro-team behavior, team identity and mentality. Team performance stress has a positive effect on project members' unethical pro-team behavior, and the project members' moral disengagement plays a mediating role between the two. The results show that team performance stress has a direct positive effect on unethical pro-team behavior. Team identity of project members can regulate the relationship between team performance pressure and moral disengagement; The bottom-line mentality of project participants moderates their level of moral disengagement and their relationship with unethical pro-team behavior.

These experiments show that moral decision-making can be affected by stress to different degrees under different conditions. And in general, the greater the pressure, the less utilitarian the moral decision.

3.2. Impact of personality on Moral cognition

Personality is also a person's character, different people have different personalities. People's personality affects people's career choice, social relations and so on. Of course, personality also affects moral cognition.

Lawrence recruited 50 volunteers who had received the Canadian Bravery Medal and the Canadian Caring Award. Among them were 25 brave exemplars and 25 caring exemplars [7]. This experiment is divided into two parts: questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire requires filling in demographic information, interpersonal subjective scale and personal struggle list. During the interviews, participants were asked to construct their life stories. The findings suggest that aspects of moral personality help bridge the interpretive gap between judgment and action.

Xiao (2006) collected 855 middle school students and conducted an experiment on the influence of personality traits and family environment on moral judgment ability through questionnaire [8]. The students were asked to fill out the Chinese Personality Inventory and the Family Environment Inventory, and to take a test of adolescent moral judgment. The experiment shows that personality traits and family environment of middle school students show significant differences in gender, grade and region, and parental occupation has significant influence on personality traits. With the rise of the grade, the moral judgment ability of middle school students has a rising trend of development and a wavy development.

Prior study indicated that relationship between sports ethics cognition and aggressive behavior in adolescents: the mediating role of impulsive personality [9]. The researcher conducted the experiment in the form of questionnaire and collected 531 valid questionnaires. The staff is distributed from Grade one to grade three. The results show that, with gender, single child and grade as independent variables and sportsmanship cognition as dependent variables, gender and grade have significant differences in moral intention dimension, moral judgment dimension and total score of sportsmanship cognition. Being an only child did not make a difference. The conclusion is that adolescents' sports ethics cognition can directly predict aggressive behavior, and can predict aggressive behavior through the mediating effect of impulsive personality.

Xie studied the relationship between online moral cognition and online altruistic behavior of secondary vocational students: the mediating role of positive emotion and the moderating role of proactive personality[10]. 724 valid questionnaires were collected in this paper. Among them, there were 360 male students, 364 female students, 115 urban students and 609 rural students. The subjects were aged from 15 to 21 years old. The questionnaire included the network moral cognition Scale,

the positive emotion scale, the active personality scale and the network altruistic behavior scale. According to the questionnaire, positive emotion plays an intermediary role between online moral cognition and online altruistic behavior. The positive prediction of positive emotion on online altruistic behavior was enhanced with the improvement of individual proactive personality level. Compared with individuals with low proactive personality level, positive emotions have a more significant impact on the network altruistic behavior of individuals with high proactive personality level.

These all experiments prove that personality has an indispensable influence on stress. Different personalities have different effects on moral cognition. For example, the moral cognition of people with brave personality and caring personality will be more non-utilitarian.

4. Discussion

4.1. Suggestion

Previous articles indicate that stress and personality have significant effects on people's moral cognition. In addition, adolescence has a profound influence on people's moral cognition later in life. Therefore, the moral education in the youth period is extremely important.

Schools and teachers need to fulfill the obligation of education. They need to educate and pay more attention to individuals who violate moral tendencies. Both to prevent them from spreading their wrong ideas to other students and to prevent them from sinking deeper into the mire of wrong. Of course, schools also need to conduct moral cognition education for teenagers in advance to guide students on the right path. Teachers need to prevent the tendency of students to violate moral tendencies.

According to the previous study, the occupation and personnel composition of parents in the family environment have a significant impact on teenagers' moral cognition [4]. Therefore, family education and family environment also play a decisive role in teenagers' moral cognition. Parents need to pay more attention to their children, communicate often, and guide teenagers to have a correct moral cognition in their daily communication.

In order to prevent people from making wrong moral cognition under excessive pressure, people can relax through appropriate stress relieving strategies. Such as listening to light music, deep breathing, reasonable vent and so on. As a result, people can make more favorable decisions when stressful events occur.

In addition to the intervention of external factors such as school and parents. Teenagers themselves should also have correct moral and moral tendencies. Teenagers need to have the right idea.

4.2. Limitation

All of the experiments mentioned in this article have limitations. The sample chosen for the experiment may be underrepresented. All of the people selected for the experiment were physically and mentally healthy and did not examine groups with mental and physical problems. Most of the subjects in the experiments were college students, and the volunteers were mostly in one province or state. The experiment was not extended.

In some experiments, the study of some variables is insufficient, which is accidental.

Gender was not used as a variable in all the data in the experiment. But gender may also affect moral cognition.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, both stress and personality have different degrees of influence on moral cognition.

This study discusses the influence factors of moral cognition from stress and personality. The results showed that, other factors being almost equal, stress had a major effect on moral cognition. The greater the pressure, the more people's moral cognition tends to be non-utilitarian. The influence

of personality on moral cognition is reflected in that different personalities have different decisions on moral cognition. People with courageous or caring personalities, for example, make better decisions that benefit others when faced with moral dilemmas. In conclusion, this study believes that the influence mechanism of moral cognition involves many aspects.

Based on the complexity of the influence mechanism of moral cognition, this study puts forward the following suggestions for future research and practice: Based on the complexity of the mechanism affecting moral cognition, this study puts forward the following suggestions for future research and practice: First, there are many factors affecting moral cognition, and future experiments need to consider more factors in terms of control variables. Second, more representative subjects can be selected for future experiments. For example, volunteers with distinct personality characteristics can be recruited when exploring the influence of personality on moral cognition. This can make the research more accurate and relevant. Third, future experiments could study the influence of different personality and stress on moral cognition to different degrees.

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