

A Matter of Time: A Study on Emotional Character Growth Following Adversity in Syrian Origin Young Adults in the Netherlands

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Scientific objectives: 1) To examine how character develops following adversity in young adults of Syrian origin who seek or have refugee status in the Netherlands across different time-scales: as long-term, relatively stable tendencies, as everyday...

Ethical review	Approved WMO
Status	Recruiting
Health condition type	Other condition
Study type	Observational non invasive

Summary

ID

NL-OMON48599

Source

ToetsingOnline

Brief title

Character growth following adversity in Syrian Young Adults

Condition

- Other condition

Synonym

nvt

Health condition

no diseases, but a vulnerable group

Research involving

Human

Sponsors and support

Primary sponsor: Universiteit Utrecht

Source(s) of monetary or material Support: The John Templeton Foundation

Intervention

Keyword: adversity, character, emotions, refugees

Outcome measures

Primary outcome

Study variables at the macro-level focus on adversity (including life events and post-migration difficulties), tendencies towards specific emotional experiences, also known as emotion dispositions, and character strengths.

Study variables at the meso-level are concerned with everyday experiences of both stressful and uplifting events, emotions, and character.

Finally, study variables at the micro-level focus on real-time behaviours (i.e., stressful and uplifting social interactions, emotions and character) as measured using the sounds of everyday life.

Secondary outcome

not applicable

Study description

Background summary

Around the world, the number of people who seek or have refugee status is increasing. Within Europe, over 500,000 individuals sought asylum in 2014, and this number grew to more than 1.2 million in 2016. Within the Netherlands, there are at least 200,000 people with refugee status, many of whom are young adults of Syrian origin. Young adults who seek or have refugee status are

likely to have been exposed to major, life-changing adversity. Although adversity is linked to unfavorable outcomes, it is also thought to promote character growth. Yet, little is known about how adversity generates strength of character through emotions. This work will contribute to our fundamental scientific knowledge, with findings from this project offering insights regarding the development of character in the aftermath of adversity. Additionally, moving beyond previous literature that has only focused on negative experiences of individuals who seek or have refugee status, this work will advance representations of Syrian youth in the Netherlands by broadening the focus to include character and uplifting experiences. Moreover, it will provide crucial knowledge on the specific needs of Syrian origin young adults who have recently resettled in the Netherlands as they continue to grow and build communities.

Study objective

Scientific objectives:

- 1) To examine how character develops following adversity in young adults of Syrian origin who seek or have refugee status in the Netherlands across different time-scales: as long-term, relatively stable tendencies, as everyday experiences, and as real-time behavior.
- 2) To examine the role that people's emotional experiences may have in explaining the link between adversity and character growth.

Societal objective:

- 3) To foster a partnership with young adults of Syrian origin in the Netherlands in the form of participatory research that focuses on the sharing of knowledge, community, and personal experiences.

Study design

Longitudinal design, including ecologically valid methods (e.g., experience sampling and the Electronically Activated Recorder).

Study burden and risks

The extent of burden and risks associated with participation in the proposed study are minimal, with no risk for any serious adverse event. Members of our team, Drs. Eva Alisic, Trudy Mooren, and Marieke Sleijpen, are trained clinical psychologists that have extensive experiences with working with this population, both in clinical practice and in research. Both PI*s have extensive experience in working with large adolescent and young adult cohorts for longitudinal research (Drs. Joanne Chung and Odilia Laceulle). Moreover, there is broad expertise on the constructs covered in this project: on positive traits/character (Chung/Laceulle/Dr. Jennifer Stellar), emotions (Chung/Stellar), stress and trauma (Alisic/Laceulle/Mooren/Sleijpen) and young

adult mental health (Chung/Laceulle). It is important to note that all research team members have incorporated the methods featured in the proposed research, including cross-cultural methodology, longitudinal design, experience sampling, and the EAR. In our experience, we have not encountered a situation in which a participant reported adverse events due to participating in our studies.

Additionally, although answering questions about negative events can cause discomfort by making the participant think about the event, but this is very different from actually experiencing the event, and in some cases, can even benefit the participant. Furthermore, the following protective actions will be taken to ensure that participants will feel as comfortable as possible.

Research team members will come to quiet locations that are well-known to participants, with at least one team member Arabic speaking present at the first assessment of data collection. In later assessments, at least one team member who is Arabic speaking will be present at each assessment if the participant indicates that he, she, or they have a preference for it.

We will begin each measurement occasion with an hour-long face-to-face session with members of the research team, such that opportunities for communication, data collection, and clarification are provided. Specifically, members of the research team will be present to answer any questions posed by our participants, to administer the macro-level portion of the study on electronic tablets, and to show participants how to participate in the meso- and micro-level portions of the study.

The meso-level and micro-level study variables will be assessed immediately following each face-to-face session. At the meso-level, we will ask participants to complete brief surveys (~2 minutes) on a smartphone up to 5 times a day for 7 days, a methodology in which co-principal investigators Drs. Odilia Laceulle, Joanne Chung, and research team member Jennifer Stellar hold expertise. This will enable us to better understand the everyday experience of events, emotions, and character in young adults of Syrian origin. At the optional, micro-level, we will use the Electronically Activated Recorder via the smartphone application the iEAR to record sounds in the participants' environments every 5-and-a-half-minutes for 30 seconds for 2 days. The EAR has been shown to reliably assess behaviors that reveal social interactions in the form of stressful and uplifting events, emotions and character in everyday life and has been successfully implemented in the work of our research team member Dr. Eva Alisic's research on children who are coping with trauma. Members of the research team will lend smartphones for participants to use during the meso- and micro-level portions of the study. Participants who borrow a smartphone will be provided a self-addressed, stamped envelope in which to return the smartphone at the conclusion of the meso-and micro-level portions of the measurement occasion.

Contacts

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Trial sites

Listed location countries

Netherlands

Eligibility criteria

Age

Adults (18-64 years)

Elderly (65 years and older)

Inclusion criteria

- 1) must be between the ages of 18 and 35 years;
- 2) must be from Syria;
- 3) must be in the Netherlands between 6 and 60 months at start of study;
- 4) must be able to read and write in Arabic;

Exclusion criteria

- 1) incapable of answering questionnaires in Arabic;
- 2) estimated low intelligence-level;
- 3) participant expects that they will not be able to handle emotional reactions

that may occur as a result of participation.

Study design

Design

Study type: Observational non invasive

Masking: Open (masking not used)

Control: Uncontrolled

Primary purpose: Basic science

Recruitment

NL

Recruitment status: Recruiting

Start date (anticipated): 04-02-2019

Enrollment: 300

Type: Actual

Ethics review

Approved WMO

Date: 23-10-2018

Application type: First submission

Review commission: METC Universitair Medisch Centrum Utrecht (Utrecht)

Approved WMO

Date: 11-01-2019

Application type: Amendment

Review commission: METC Universitair Medisch Centrum Utrecht (Utrecht)

Approved WMO

Date: 31-07-2019

Application type: Amendment

Review commission: METC Universitair Medisch Centrum Utrecht (Utrecht)

Approved WMO

Date: 24-06-2020

Application type: Amendment

Study registrations

Followed up by the following (possibly more current) registration

No registrations found.

Other (possibly less up-to-date) registrations in this register

No registrations found.

In other registers

Register	ID
CCMO	NL66459.041.18