

Review 2

Review of “Collective Stressful Events and Adolescents’ Future-Thinking: A Qualitative Study

This study employs a qualitative approach to explore adolescents' future-thinking concerns and coping strategies in the context of collective stressful events, addressing a topic of significant contemporary relevance and theoretical value. The research design is sound, and the methodological description is clear. However, there remains room for improvement in areas such as sample representativeness, the granularity of methodological details, and the depth and structure of the results presentation.

RESPONSE: Dear Reviewer,

We sincerely thank you for your comments and suggestions. We have carefully considered your observations and have addressed them as outlined below.

1. While the discussion notes the negative implications of avoidant coping, it does not explore its potential adaptive value in the short term. It is recommended that the discussion provide a more balanced evaluation of the functions this strategy might serve at different stages of coping.

RESPONSE: We thank the reviewer for this insightful comment. We have addressed it.

Pag. 10., Lines 386-396.:

“The third category is avoidance, defined as disengagement from or denial of stressors. Although it may provide temporary emotional relief, avoidance is generally considered maladaptive in the long term [36, 47], as it typically does not address the root of stress and may exacerbate psychological distress. From a future-thinking perspective, avoidance may serve as a short-term protective function by reducing emotional overload and limiting ruminative thoughts about an uncertain future. This temporary distancing from future-related concerns may allow adolescents to focus on immediate tasks and proximal goals, which are closely linked to their future goals. At the same time, prolonged reliance on avoidance may hinder long-term future-thinking by reducing engagement with future planning and proactive coping, consistent with finding linking avoidant coping to anxiety and depressive symptoms.”

2. The discussion section focuses heavily on interpreting the findings but does not clearly articulate how this study extends or contributes to existing theoretical frameworks, such as Life Course Theory or Social Cognitive Theory. The theoretical implications should be strengthened.

RESPONSE: We have revised the Discussion section to explicitly articulate the theoretical implications of our findings.

Pag. 10., Lines 415-427.:

“Overall, the present study offers an in-depth understanding of adolescents’ fears and future-thinking in the context of collective stressful events. The findings indicate that such events significantly shape not only adolescents’ personal expectations and life planning but also their broader concerns about societal well-being. From a theoretical perspective, these results extend the Life Course Theory [27], by illustrating how social and historical context influence adolescents’ life trajectories, affecting both personal and societal domains. The coping strategies identified reflect the several ways in which adolescents attempt to manage the psychological impact of these events in their future. Indeed, according to Social Cognitive Theory [6], developing future-oriented thoughts and beliefs serve as a crucial psychological resource, particularly in challenging circumstances, highlighting the importance of adopting effective coping strategies. The results highlight the importance of equipping adolescents with

adaptive coping mechanisms and ensuring access to support systems, especially during collective stressful events. Based on these findings, several practical implications emerge.”

3. The practical implications outlined in the discussion are somewhat general (e.g., "the need to equip adolescents with adaptive coping mechanisms"). It is suggested that more targeted recommendations be proposed, grounded directly in the study's specific findings.

RESPONSE: We have revised the Discussion section to provide more targeted practical implications,

Pag. 11., Lines 427-433:

“Based on these findings, several practical implications emerge. Programs should encourage active and informed coping strategies, such as problem-solving and information-seeking, to help adolescents maintain a sense of control and plan for the future. Strengthening social support networks can provide essential emotional resources. Finally, interventions should address maladaptive avoidance, guiding adolescents to replace temporary disengagement with adaptive coping strategies.”