

Optimism-Pessimism and Wellbeing

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Abstract— The Life-Orientation Test- Revised (Scheier, Carver and Bridges, 1994) and measure of Wellbeing were administered to 80 college students and statistical analysis was don't' was calculated. The group showed negative orientation (pessimism) and good wellbeing which did not support earlier findings and there was significant difference between girls and boys orientation and wellbeing and between the courses they studied.

Index Terms- Optimism, Pessimism, Wellbeing, Adolescence

I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a very critical and important stage in the development of human being. The physiological, psychological and social changes during this period lead to various physical, psychological and social problems. They face dangers which are more complex than the previous ones. Hence it is a period of struggle and turmoil. They try to make adjustment to these changes. The adjustments to these factors are determined by many factors. Of these personality is one of the major factors. It consists of various traits and constructs. One such construct is life orientation i.e. optimism and pessimism. This study aims to study whether there is any significant difference in life orientation and wellbeing among demographic variables.

Optimism and Pessimism

Life orientation [Optimism and Pessimism] is positive and negative life expectancies of life are important area in positive psychology. It is good v/s bad and the outcome is striving v/s giving up [Carver, C. S., & Scheier, M. F]. These expectancies predict individual's behavior, his reaction to stressful situation [Blankstein, Flett & Koledin], the kind of coping strategy the individual is going to adopt i.e. emotional coping or problem solving. They also predict physical and psychological health aspects.

Psychological well-being

Wellbeing is defined as a subjective feeling of contentment, happiness, satisfaction with the life experiences and of one's role in the world of work, sense of achievement, utility, belongingness, dissatisfaction or worry etc., it is an essential component of mental health.

Review of literature

Many studies have proved the relationship between optimism, pessimism and well-being. Studies of Schweizer, Beck, Seuffer & Schneider (1999) show that optimism influence individual sense of wellbeing. Avia (1997) suggest that positive emotions are essential to overall well-being. Research carried out by Carver, C. S., & Scheier, M. F. (1998), Blankstein, Flett & Koledin 1991, show that optimistic expectation leads to better subjective frame of mind to face stressful situation.

The reviews of Ciro Conversano & et al correlate optimism and pessimism with health aspects, mortality and mental health. Man Yee Ho & et al study optimism as mediator in promoting well- being. Schulz and et al (1996) showed that pessimistic cancer patients show lower survival rate. Burke & et al reported that optimists compared to pessimists show better physical health.

The aim and objective of the study is to find the difference between the orientation of life and well-being along with demographic variables. The significance of the study is that the findings may help the adolescents to develop necessary behavior to attain good mental health.

Methodology

Problem: to study whether there is any significant difference in life orientation [pessimism & optimism] and well-being of adolescence

Hypothesis

A null hypothesis was framed that

H1: There will be no significant difference in orientation and wellbeing among girls and boys.

H2: There will be no significant difference in orientation and wellbeing among arts and commerce students.

Variables

Independent variables: Demographic variables

- a) Arts and commerce students
- b) Girls and boys.

Dependent Variables: life orientation [optimism & pessimism] and well being

Method Sample

Using random purposive design a sample of 80 adolescents aged between 18-20 studying arts and commerce course 40 in each were taken for the study. It contained 53 girls [66.3%] and 27 boys [33.8%] the sample was collected from government college, Tiptur. The students who were studying in final year were selected for the study.

Tools used

1. Personal information schedule
2. LOT ®
3. General Well-Being questionnaire

Description of tools

Personal information schedule: It consists of information regarding name, gender, age, and course

Life Orientation Test: In the present study LOT-R is used to measure personality variable optimism and pessimism. It was published by Schier M F, Carver C S and Bridges M W (1994, 1985,1982).It is a brief self-reporting measure having 10 items out of which only 6 are used to derive optimism and pessimism score and remaining 4 items are fillers (item no 2, 5, 6 and 8) i.e. the fillers make the content of the text less obvious and the fillers are not used in analysis.

Out of six items three are keyed in positive direction (optimistic direction) and three are in negative direction. (Pessimistic direction). It is measured on 5 point rating scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The subjects are asked to state their level of agreement or disagreement. Items 3, 7 and 9 are reverse coded before scoring so as to avoid response bias.

Scheier et al. (1994) report that item-scale correlations range from .43 to .63. Cronbach's alpha for all six items was .78, reflecting an acceptable level of internal consistency. Test-retest reliability was reported to be .68 (4 months), .60 (12 months), .56 (24 months), and .79 (28 months). LOT has demonstrated with reliability and validity.

General well-being scale

Originally Dr. H Dupuy of USA developed a general well-being schedule. Wig, Pershad and Verma 1974 reconstructed this test to suit Indian conditions and it measures various aspects of adjustment. This test is a 20 item scale. A score of 1 is given to the item the subject has tick marked.

Procedure

A total of 80 adolescents were selected and they were administered personal information schedule, LOT® & general well-being questionnaires. The obtained responses were scored according to scoring key and norms and statistical technique was adopted to find out whether there is any significant difference between demographic variables.

Statistical analysis: Mean, standard deviation and 't' test is applied and the results are analyzed to find out the level of significance between demographic variables.

Results

Table 1 and table2 show the descriptive statistics for the LOT [opt/pessi] and general wellbeing for the group and demographic variables. The results show the mean, standard deviation and N of the group related to gender, and the course being studied. They indicate that there are differences between the demographic variables of adolescents that is gender and courses being studied. But table3 shows the 't' values. this shows that at 0.01 level 't' is significant for groups LOT and general wellbeing scores and 0.05 level 't' is significant for boys LOT[opt/pessi] and general wellbeing and with rest of the demographic variables 't' is not significant . This shows that the results do not support the null hypothesis that there is significant difference between the scores of girls and boys and the course in which they study [i.e. Arts and Commerce course]. The Pearson correlation was computed [-0.97]. The result showed that there is

negative relationship between optimism/pessimism and general wellbeing of the group. The obtained correlation does not support the previous findings that optimism leads to better wellbeing and pessimism leads to poor wellbeing.

CONCLUSION

The group showed negative orientation [pessimism] and good wellbeing. This does not support earlier findings. With regard to groups LOT and PWB scores and boys LOT and GWB scores ‘t’ is significant and with rest of the demographic variables ‘t’ is not significant. Thus null hypothesis is rejected and concluded that there is significant difference between girls and boys LOT and GWB and between the courses in which they study.

Limitations of the study

The sample was restricted to Government College only. The size of the sample would have been increased. Equal number of girls and boys could be selected.

Implications of the study

Since the sample has shown the negative orientation towards life, measures can be taken to improve their orientation towards positive life expectations. The findings of the previous studies have proved the effect of positive orientation on health and wellbeing and coping strategies.

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: optimism/pessimism

girls/boys	commerce/arts	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Girls	Arts	10.4400	3.66379	25
	Commerce	9.5000	1.75330	28
	Total	9.9434	2.83125	53
Boys	Arts	9.5333	2.79966	15
	Commerce	10.9167	2.99874	12
	Total	10.1481	2.91816	27
Total	Arts	10.1000	3.35735	40
	Commerce	9.9250	2.25761	40
	Total	10.0125	2.84402	80

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: psychological well being

girls/boys	commerce/arts	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Girls	Arts	15.3200	2.86822	25
	Commerce	14.6071	2.96072	28
	Total	14.9434	2.91162	53
Boys	Arts	15.6667	2.74296	15
	Commerce	12.6667	4.45856	12
	Total	14.3333	3.84308	27
Total	Arts	15.4500	2.79147	40
	Commerce	14.0250	3.53363	40
	Total	14.7375	3.24425	80

Table: 3 showing the ‘t’ values for demographic variables

		‘t’ values
Group [N=80]	LOT & Wellbeing	2.39*
LOT [G=53,B=27]	Girls & Boys	0.76
Wellbeing [G=53,B=27]	Girls & Boys	0.42
LOT [Arts=40,Com=40]	Arts & Com	0.78
Wellbeing [Arts=40,Com=40]	Arts & Com	0.06
Girls [53]	LOT & Wellbeing	1.38
Boys [27]	LOT & Wellbeing	3.76**

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