

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OPTIMISM, RESILIENCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL- BEING IN YOUNG ADULTS

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ABSTRACT

The fast pace life has already influenced human life and for sure much worse than the better. This has made people to focus on negative than the positive of the counterpart. Therefore, once again, to catch up or to foot into the healthy life style one should have a high resilience (an individual's ability to successfully adapt to life tasks in adverse conditions) to cope up and visualize the positive side- optimism (a general tendency to expect positive outcomes out of an individual which includes better mental as well as physical health, personal relationships, motivation and performance) of the situation. The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between optimism, resilience and psychological well-being among young adults. The sample consisted of 100 participants (50 males and 50 females) and the tools used were Optimism Index (Dr. Padmakali Banerjee); Connor- Davidson Resilience Scale (Connor KM & Davidson JR) and Ryff's scale of Psychological Wellbeing (Carol Ryff). The results show a significant and positive relationship between all the variables.

Keywords: Optimism, Resilience and Psychological Well-Being

INTRODUCTION

Optimism refers to the general tendency to expect positive outcomes out of an individual which includes better mental as well as physical health, personal relationships, motivation and performance. Optimists show more tenacity and more approach-focused ways of overcoming with short and long term stressors. Carver, Scheier, and Segerstrom (2010) explained that the degree to which people carry generalized convenient expectancies for their future reflects the level of optimism in them and individual differences among their peers. Optimism plays a crucial role in accommodating to stressful situations. Even though the progress of an individual's state is slow and difficult, optimists show more resilience when confront a challenge as said by Synder and Lopez in 2002.

The very term “*dispositional optimism*” was coined by Scheier and Carver (2010) which has been characterized as the ways through which an individual deals with his/her situations related to past, present and future. In a study they observed that optimistic individuals have elevated resilience towards approaches of handling stress and used suitable coping mechanisms.

Optimists presume that positive events in their life are more stable as compared to negative events (Peterson & Seligman, 1987). Also they feel that they can prevent problems occurring in daily life and are able to cope up more easily than pessimists. Earlier studies have shown that there is an inverse correlation between optimism and symptoms of depression, and suicidal ideation. Optimism also plays an important moderating role in the association between feelings of hopelessness and suicidal ideation. In relation to which, Van der Velden et al. studied the alliance between ‘dispositional optimism’ and depression in victims of a natural disaster. The results of this research show that pessimists were more at risk for depressive and anxiety disorders, with subsequent impairment of social functioning and quality of life as compared to people with high optimism.

Resilience means bouncing away from unmanageable situations. It is the process wherein an individual adapts well to any hardship, suffering or any notable sources of stress. Many studies have shown that affectionate and encouraging relationships within and outside the family are the primary factors in resilience. Also relationships that generate affection and trust, reassures and helps bolster an individual’s resilience.

Hall, Murray and Zautra, (2010) elucidated resilience as an individual’s successful adaptation to unfavorable circumstances. Resilience process is determined by personal characteristics if they lead to healthy outcomes after stressful situations. There are various characteristics which are interconnected with resilience. Some of them are:

- The capacity to be practical and take decisions.
- A worthwhile view of oneself and confidence in one’s strengths and capacity.
- Skills in communication and problem solving.
- The potential to control strong feelings and instincts.

Many studies exhibit the relation between resilience and optimism. Seligman in 1991 found that optimists have high resilience which helps them to achieve success in their life and live a better lifestyle.

Psychological well-being is defined as an individual’s life satisfaction, self- growth and happiness which characterize the most important aspects of efficient and effective psychological functioning. Researches by Huppert (2009) and Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) reveal that individuals

who are happy experience the benefit of good physical health, better relationships and high-level performance throughout their life. Psychological well-being is generally known as amalgamation of positive affective states such as happiness and functioning of an individual and his/her social life with optimal effectiveness. (Deci & Ryan 2008).

Klonhien in 1996 said that people with high resilience have an optimistic, zestful and dynamic approach towards life. Also they are open to new experiences and are identified as individuals with high positive emotions. As stated by Ong, Bergeman & Chow (2010) individuals with high resilience show elevated responsiveness to daily positive experiences and engage more in positive events. Kaplan (2002) suggested that highly resilient people use adaptive coping strategies and are likely to engage in health promoting behaviors.

According to Connor and Davidson (2003) resilience integrates personal qualities of an individual which help them to succeed even in the conditions of adversity. Charney (2004) found that resilience fosters an individual's adaptation to stressful situation by psychological physiological and response.

Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) have found that individuals with high resilience rebound from traumatic experience rapidly and effectively. They further investigated that resilient people work on their positive emotions to bounce back from stress and find positive meaning in weary situations.

Vaillant (2007) mentioned that optimism is an important internal resource of resilience. Kumpfer (1999) too, found that optimistic thinking makes a person resilient.

According to Seligman (1991) individuals who are optimistic are resilient and hence are able to achieve success in their life.

Psychological well being is a malleable concept which signifies an individual's feelings relating to daily activities. These feelings might range from positive mental health to negative mental states (Jahoda, 1958; Warr, 1978).

Ryff (2005) reported that dimensions of psychological well-being have brief conceptual base despite of ample of literature on the contours of positive functioning. These dimensions derived from the literature on self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth were functioning. Three hundred and twenty-one men and women, divided into three categories i.e. young, middle aged and older adults rated themselves on these dimensions along with six instruments i.e., affect balance, life satisfaction, self-esteem, morale, locus of control, depression. Results revealed that positive relations with

others, autonomy, purpose in life, and personal growth were not strongly tied to prior assessment indexes.

From Coward and Reed (1996)'s viewpoint, psychological well-being is referred to a sense of feeling healthy and leading to awareness of personal integrity which includes spiritual elements of life.

Ryff and Singer (2003) argue that resilient individuals with high resilience are generally able to maintain their physical and psychological health and have the capacity to recover more quickly from traumatic events.

OBJECTIVE

- To measure optimism among young adults using optimism index.
- To measure resilience among young adults using Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale.
- To measure psychological well being of young adults using Ryff's Mental Well Being Scale.
- To determine if there exists any relationship between the three variables.

HYPOTHESIS

- **H₁**: There is a significant and positive correlation between optimism, resilience and psychological well being.

METHODOLOGY

Sample:

The sample was selected based on purposive random sampling method. This consists of 100 young adults both males and females attending university programs. The participants were between the age range of 18-25 years. All the participants were hostellers and reported no major medical complaints.

Tools of Data Collection:

1. **Optimism Index (Dr. Padmakali Banerjee, 2016):** "PEROMA" is a word which has been coined by Dr. (Prof.) Padmakali Banerjee. PEROMA comprises of Positive Emotions: Affect, Engagement: Involvement, Relationship Network, Optimism, and Meaningfulness: Purpose and Accomplishment/ Achievement. The idea behind this concept is to develop an index on 'Optimism'. This index rate the 'Optimism' factor of

the organization, group or an individual which will facilitate to know how focused and well directed the approach is to bring well being and happiness to life.

2. **Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (Connor KM& Davidson JR):**The scale consists of 10 items and is structured as a 5-point Likert scale (0 = never to 4 = almost always).the test is reliable and valid.
3. **Ryff’s Scale of Psychological Wellbeing:** The scale had 42 items that are designed to measure 6 distinct dimensions of wellness. The reliability (Cronbach’s α) ranged from .71 to .88. The test is highly valid.

PROCEDURE

The permission for the scales was taken and samples were collected by informing the respondents about the aim of the study. The research was administered on the sample by giving them instructions for all the questionnaires. They were asked to fill the questionnaires as honestly as possible. Confidentiality of the study was emphasized. They were informed that the data will be used for research purpose only.

The scores of all the scales were entered and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

RESULTS

In the light of the formulated objectives of the study descriptive statistics has been computed (Mean and S.D.) followed by Bivariate Correlation. The outcome of the same has been shown in the following table:

TABLE 1: Shows descriptive statistics and correlation among the variables

	Optimism	Psychological Well Being	Resilience
Optimism	1	.60**	.46**
Psychological Well Being		1	.41**
Mean	22.76	17.36	26.25
S.D.	2.85	3.09	1.77

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

The above table shows the values of mean and standard deviation of the variables. The mean value of optimism, psychological well being and resilience is 22.76, 17.36, 26.25 respectively. The standard deviation values for the same come up to be 2.85, 3.09, 1.77 respectively. The table

also shows that there is a positive significant correlation between optimism and psychological well being (.597) and optimism and resilience (.463). There is also a positive significant correlation between psychological wellbeing and resilience (.409). All the correlations are significant at 0.01 level of significance.

DISCUSSIONS

The results of the study indicate that there is a significant positive relation between optimism, resilience and psychological well being. Therefore; hypothesis **H₁** of the study which states that there is a positive and significant relation between optimism, resilience and psychological well being is proved.

It means that individuals with high ability to bounce back from traumatic events are highly optimistic and have a positive approach towards their life. A study by Fallon (2010) shows similar findings and investigated the relationship between academic optimism of school students and academics resilience in urban latino high school students. The results of the study explain that there is a significant positive relationship between academic optimism and academic resilience of school students.

It might also be elucidated that higher the optimism level in adults, the better will be their psychological well- being and approach towards life. These results are in accordance with the study done by Ho, Cheung and Cheung (2010) who examined the relationship between meaning in life, optimism and well being among 1807 adolescents. The results showed that both meaning in life and optimism are significantly correlated to well being. Individuals with high resilience have comparatively less stress and tend to overcome their traumatic events as early as possible. This leads to a healthy and sound mind and body. The findings are in congruence with a study done by Momeni, Karami and Rad(2013), who showed the relationship between spirituality, resilience and psychological well being among students of Razi University of Kermanshah. The results indicated a positive relationship between resilience, spirituality and psychological well being.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the present study was to seek a relationship between optimism, resilience and psychological wellbeing in young adults. Due to fast paced life and so many stressors around an individual's environment, it is necessary that an individual hold a positive approach towards life and is able to bounce back from stressful situations as early as possible so that he/she has a positive and healthy mental state of mind. Therefore, as the results show that there is a significant positive relation among the variables it can be concluded that high optimism and high

resilience leads to a healthy psychological well being of an individual. The hypotheses of the study were proved.

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