

Psychological Capital as Predictor of Psychological Well Being

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Psychological well-being is the subjective feeling of contentment, happiness, and satisfaction with life's experiences. It may be maintained in adverse circumstances and conversely may be lost in favorable situation. The study was conducted on a sample 250 students having age range from 18 to 25. Four questionnaires were administered namely P.G.I. Health Questionnaire, Optimistic-Pessimistic Attitude, Self-Efficacy Scale, Locus of Control. It has been observed in the findings that positive Self-efficacy, optimistic attitude and Locus of Control affect the well being in a meaning full way and revealing the correlations of (-.13*), (-26**), and (.16*) respectively.

Keywords: Psychological Capital, Well Being, Optimism.

Psychological well-being is the subjective term that means different meanings to different people. Psychological well-being resides within the experience of the individual (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976). It is person's evaluative reaction to his or her life—either in terms of life satisfaction (Cognitive evaluations) or affective balance or the extent to which the

Level of positive affect outweighs the level of negative affect in someone's life (Andrews & Withey, 1976; Campbell et al., 1976; Diener, 1984). Along with contextual influences psychological capital shapes the perception of well being. Operationally psychological capital can be defined as: "An individual's positive psychological state of development and is characterized by: Having confidence (self efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; Making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; Persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resilience)

to attain success." (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007).

Self-efficacy is the belief about people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances. Bandura's contention that self-efficacy beliefs touch virtually every aspect of people's lives—whether they think productively, self-debilitating, pessimistically or optimistically; how well they motivate themselves and persevere in the face of adversities; their vulnerability to stress and depression, and the life choices they make.

For this reason, how people behave can often be better predicted by the beliefs they hold about their capabilities than by what they are actually capable of accomplishing, these self-efficacy perceptions are helpful in determining what individuals do with the knowledge and skills they have (Bandura, 1997). People who regard themselves as highly efficacious act, think, and feel differently from those who perceive themselves as inefficacious. They produce their own future, rather than simply foretell it (Pajares, 2006).

A strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well being in countless ways. People with a strong sense of personal competence approach take difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. They have greater intrinsic interest and deep engrossments in activities, set themselves challenging goals and maintain strong commitment to them, and heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of failure. Moreover, they more quickly recover their sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks, and attribute failure to insufficient effort or deficient knowledge and skills, which are acquirable. High self-efficacy, on the other hand, helps create feelings of serenity in approaching difficult tasks and activities.

Conversely, people with low self-efficacy may believe that things are tougher than they really are, a belief that fosters stress, depression, and a narrow vision of how best to solve a problem. They have low aspirations and weak commitment to the goals they choose to pursue. When faced with difficult tasks, they dwell on their personal deficiencies, on the obstacles they will encounter. All kinds of adverse outcomes rather than concentrate on how to perform successfully, they slacken their efforts and give up quickly in the face of difficulties. They are slow to recover their sense of efficacy following failure or setbacks (Bandura, 1994).

Self-efficacy beliefs have been found related to clinical problems such as phobias (Bandura, 1983), addiction (Marlatt, Baer, & Quigley, 1995), depression (Davis & Yates, 1982), social skills (Moe & Zeiss, 1982), assertiveness (Lee, 1983, 1984); to stress in a variety of contexts (Jerusalem & Mittag, 1995); to smoking behavior (Garcia, Schmitz, & Doerfler, 1990); to pain control (Manning & Wright, 1983); and to health (O'Leary, 1985).

Optimism is an outlook on life such that one maintains a view of the world as a positive place. Optimists generally believe that people

and events are inherently good, so that most situations work out in the end for the best. It can be defined as expectations of positive outcome. It means having hope and a strong belief and confidence to deal with situations. Optimists are life's big winners. Negative thinkers perform more poorly in school, work, and play, than those who cheerfully face obstacles. Pessimists have poorer resistance, weaker immune systems, are more susceptible to depression, and age physically faster than the optimists (Clark & Min, 1997). There are various personal and social outcomes of optimistic approach, which may include more achievement in any task and goal, higher level of Life Satisfaction, better health, more friends, and feeling of control over life, easier to make decisions. Optimism plays an important role in the adjustment to stressful life events (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 2001). Greater optimism has been found to be associated with less mood disturbance in response to a variety of stressors (Carver et al., 1993; Scheier et al., 1989).

Optimists cope more effectively with their stressors than do pessimists. There is substantial evidence that optimists use different coping strategies to cope than do pessimists and that these coping differences contribute to the positive association between optimism and better adjustment & well being. (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989; Scheier, Weintraub, & Carver, 1986; Stanton & Snider, 1993). Optimists possess more extensive and supportive social networks, and report longer friendship than do pessimists and social networks influence psychological well-being by operating as a stress buffer (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Individuals who report that members of their social networks would provide them with emotional, instrumental, and informational resources if and when needed display lower levels of distress and depressive symptoms in response to stressful life events than those who do not (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Lin et al., 1986; Thoits, 1995).

Locus of control refers to whether or not individuals believe that the events of their lives are related to their own behavior. It means the effects of reward or reinforcement on preceding behavior depend in part on whether the person perceives the reward as contingent on his own behavior or independent of it" (Rotter, 1966).

An individual who believes that an outcome or reinforcement is a function of fate or chance, under the control of others, or unpredictable may be described as having an external locus of control. The person who expects an outcome or reinforcement to be contingent upon his or her own behavior (e.g., amount of effort he or she expends; amount of preparation/training) may be described as embodying an internal locus of control.

Internals are more likely to work for achievements, to tolerate delays in rewards and to plan for long-term goals, whereas externals are more likely to lower their goals. After failing a task, internals re-evaluate future performances and lower their expectations of success, whereas externals may raise their expectations. Internals are better able to resist coercion. Internals are better at tolerating ambiguous situations. There is also a lot of evidence in clinical research that internality correlates negatively with anxiety, and that internals may be less prone to depression than externals, as well as being less prone to helplessness. Perhaps not surprisingly, those with an external locus of control are more susceptible to depression as well as other health problems, and tend to keep themselves in situations where they will experience additional stress, feeling powerless to change their own circumstances, which just add to their stress load. (Elizabeth, 2007).

Objectives:

1. To assess the psychological well being among youth.
2. To examine the relationship between optimism and psychological well being.

3. To see the relationship between self efficacy and psychological well being.

4. To study the relationship between locus of control and psychological well being.

Method

Sample:

The present study was conducted on a sample of 250 students. The sample was comprised of both males and females having age range from 18 to 25. The sample was collected from the state of Haryana.

Measures:

PGI Health Questionnaire (Verma, 1985): PGI Health Questionnaire contains 38 items. The questionnaire was designed for the assessment of physical distress as well as psychological distress. The test retest reliability coefficient is .88 and the split half reliability of the test is .86. It was found that the total score of the PGI Health Questionnaire was highly correlated with similar trait of other scales.

Optimistic-Pessimistic Attitude Scale (Parashar, 1998): The scale consists of 40 questions, which assesses the optimistic and pessimistic attitude of adults and adolescents aging from 13 to 25. The test retest reliability coefficient of the test is .74 and according to K R formula it was found to be .62. The validity coefficient of the optimistic attitude is .72 and for the pessimistic attitude is .68, face validity comes out to be .77.

Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer, 1981): The scale contains 10 items and is a four-point scale. The scale was created to assess a general sense of perceived self-efficacy with the aim in mind to predict coping with daily hassles as well as adaptation after experiencing all kinds of stressful life events. The scale is designed for the general adult population, including adolescents not below the age of 12. Reliability coefficient ranged from .76 to .90. Criterion-related validity is documented in numerous correlation studies

where positive coefficients were found with favorable emotions, dispositional optimism, and work satisfaction. Negative coefficients were found with depression, anxiety, stress, burnout, and health complaints.

Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966): Rotter's locus of control is a generalized measure of internal vs. external locus of control, which assess the perceived control in adolescents and adults. It is a 29-items scale. All the items are forced choice items. One choice reflects an internal locus of control orientation while the other reflects an external locus of control orientation. There are 23 items in scale-designed to measure the locus of expectancies, and 6 are filler items. The Rotter has reported satisfactory test retest reliability coefficients.

Results and Discussion

Table-1 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD
Well Being	12.48	9.25
Optimism	29.16	4.18
Self Efficacy	28.61	4.55
Locus of Control	7.89	3.65

Table-2 Inter Correlation Matrix

Variable	WB	O	SE	LC
Well-Being	-	-.261**	-.13*	.16*
Optimism		-	.33**	-.15*
Self Efficacy			-	-.23**
Locus of control				-

Table I depicts the descriptive information about all the variables. The mean of the well-being is 12.48. The mean values of optimism, self-efficacy and locus of control are 29.16, 28.61 and 7.89 respectively. Findings mentioned in table no. II reveal that optimism is inversely related with the variable of well being (-.26) here the low score on well-being is the indicator of better well being. The finding is in the accordance of hypothesis, which states that optimistic attitude shall be responsible for better well-being. The self-

efficacy measure depicts the correlation of (-.13) with the variable of well-being and support the notion that persons having high self efficacy level tend to be better on well being. The correlation between locus of control and well-being is (.16) which proved the hypothesis that internal locus of control is positively related with well being and external locus of control is negatively related with well being.

The present research suggests that optimists exhibit improved psychological well-being and better adjustment to stressful life events, people with high score on optimism display higher level of contentment, low level of distress, anxiety and depressive symptoms. Optimistic are more achievement oriented in any task in their life, feel easy in taking decisions, and take better solution in handling life problems. Optimistic people report a higher quality of life and have lower risks of all-cause death (Powers, 2004), and less likely to develop physical ill health or suicidal tendencies when they face major stressful life events than individuals with a pessimistic style (Carr, 2004). Optimists generally believe that people and events are inherently good, so that most situations work out in the end for the best.

The present research has continued to confirm the relationship of well being & self efficacy and depicts that people with high self efficacy report better psychological well being. They are more confident, assertive, have high aspirations and strong commitment to the goals they choose to pursue. High self-efficacious people manage & cope with their threat experience than inefficacious people who distress themselves and impair their level of functioning in stressful situations. Individuals with stronger general self-efficacy reported higher level of subjective well being (Tong, Song, Shanggui, 2004). Self-efficacy beliefs to manage positive and negative emotions and interpersonal relationships contribute to promote positive expectations about the future, to maintain a high self-

concept, to perceive a sense of satisfaction for the life and to experience more positive emotions. (Vittorio & Steca, 2006).

The present research reveals that people with internal locus of control show positive relation with well being. High internally people have better control of their behavior, more active in seeking information and knowledge concerning their situation than do externals. Externals are less willing to take risks, to work on self-improvement and to better themselves through remedial work than internals. Internals derive greater benefits from social supports. Internals make better mental health recovery in the long-term adjustment to physical disability than external. Internals find solving their own bouts of depression easier. Likewise, they are less prone to learned helplessness and serious depression. Internals experience more anxiety and guilt with their failures and use more repression to forget about their disappointments.

Conclusion

The present research reveals the role of positive attribute in maintaining the well being among youth. Having the positive perception towards the self, situation, and possible outcome is meaningfully linked with the psychological well being of the students. Future researches are required to further strengthen and generalize the findings and also to find out the role of mediating variables.

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