
Dimensional Analysis of Life Orientation in Higher Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

This study tried to find the existence of any significant difference in the dimensions of the construct Life Orientation, in higher secondary school students. For this purpose, the Life Orientation Test – Revised (LOT –R) for college students prepared by Scheier, M. F., Carver, C. S., & Bridges, M. W. (1994) was administered on 100 urban girl students of class XI of a junior college in Banjara Hills of Hyderabad city, Telangana, India. For data analysis, measures like mean, standard deviation were used. As part of the use of inferential statistics, paired t test was carried out and the level of significance was chosen to be 0.01, using SPSS ver.20. Significant difference was found between the dimensions of life orientation construct.

Keywords: Life Orientation, Dimensions in Life Orientation, Higher Secondary School students.

INTRODUCTION

Based on the Control theory of behavioural self regulation in humans (Scheier and Carver, 1982), a most commonly used tool to measure dispositional optimism was prepared, namely, the Life Orientation Tool, LOT (Scheier and Carver, 1985). According to these researchers, the construct optimism is a global stable generalized tendency to believe that “good rather than bad things will happen in a person’s life” (Scheier & Carver, 1993, p.26).

The Control Theory postulates that a person continues to persevere in order to reach the goal, even amidst obstacles, if his or her expectancies of eventually achieving success are sufficiently favorable. This is optimism. Every step ahead towards the goal, promotes optimism. Excessive doubts in the face of adversity, caused by delays or stagnation in achieving the goals, can lead to the person quitting midway. This is the facet of pessimism.

In this way, optimism plays a significant role in the self regulation of actions in individuals, especially during the difficult times of life (Anderson, G., 1996) and is found to be present in individuals in varying degree (Peterson, C., 2000).

Several studies have established that the revised LOT-R tool, to measure dispositional optimism (Scheier, M. F., Carver, C. S., & Bridges, M. W., 1994), is bi-dimensional (consisting of optimism and pessimism), in adults (Mroczek, D.K., Spiro, A., III., Aldwin, C. M., Ozer, D. J., & Bosse, R., 1993), in adolescents (Creed, Peter A., Wendy Patton, and Dee Bartrum, 2002) and in mental disorder patients too (Herzberg PY, Glaesmer H, Hoyer J., 2006). Also, these dimensions are found to be independent in many studies (Chang, Maydue-Olivares & D’Zurilla, 1997; Lai, 1994; Mroczek, Spiro, Aldwyn, Ozer & Bosse, 1993).

According to research studies in Neuroscience, optimism is associated with the left hemisphere of the brain and pessimism is linked with neuro-physiological processes in the right-hemisphere (Hecht, D., 2013).

The present study tries to find the presence of any significant difference between these dimensions of the construct life orientation. Very little is known about the presence of any significant difference between the dimensions of this construct, in Indian context and hence this study.

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Dispositional Optimism: It is a global expectation that more good (desirable) things than bad (undesirable) will happen in the future (Scheier and Carver, 1993,p.26).

Life Orientation: According to the Western Cape Department of Education (WCED, 2004, p.3), Life Orientation can be defined as “the study of self in relation to others and to society”.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Dimensional Analysis of Life Orientation in Higher Secondary School Students.

Research Objectives

- To study the presence of any significant difference between the dimensions of the construct life orientation in secondary school students.

Research Hypotheses

- **H₀:** There is no significant difference between the dimensions of life orientation in higher secondary school students.

Population for The Study

The population for this study is the higher secondary school students of government and private junior colleges or higher secondary school students in urban area of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits.

Sample for the Study

The samples selected for this study are 100 XIth class students from Sultan Ul Uloom Junior College, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad.

Tool used in the Study

Measuring Life Orientation

Life Orientation is measured using the 10 items of the Revised Life Orientation Test prepared by Scheier, Carver and Bridges (1994). The 10 items reflect a variety of students' optimism and pessimism.

The participants are instructed to indicate the extent to which they agree to each of the 10 self descriptive items or sentences in the instrument on a four point likert scale (0 = strongly disagree, 1 = disagree, 2 = neutral, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree). The items 1, 4 and 10 measure optimism. The items 3, 7, and 9 measure pessimism and are reverse scored. The purpose of the test is disguised from the participants by using the items 2, 5, 6, and 8 as fillers. They are not calculated as part of final score. Scores range from 0 to 24 with higher scores implying greater optimism (19-24 high optimism, 14-18 moderate optimism, 0-13 low optimism).

In the original version of the tool (Scheier and Carver, 1985), the Cronbach's alpha was reported to be 0.76 and a test-retest correlation was 0.79 over a 4-week period.

For the revised version (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges,1994), the researchers reported the *Cronbach's alpha for the total six items of (LOT – R) as 0.76 on college students*. The revised scale shared five items in common with the original scale and had a correlation of 0.95 between them (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994).

Sampling Method

Simple random sampling technique is used by the investigator while selecting a sample of 100 students from Sultan-Ul-Uloom Junior College, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad.

Data Collection

Formal permission to administer the tests for data collection was provided by the Principal of Sultan-Ul-Uloom Junior College.

The researcher collected data on the Life Orientation tendencies of the subjects by administering the 10 item Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R, (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994) on them.

RESULTS

Table1. Descriptive Statistics of the Dimensions

Dimension	Mean	N	Standard Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Optimism	3.15616	100	0.614746	0.061475
Pessimism	1.83612	100	0.858429	0.085843

Interpretation: The mean of the dimension optimism is higher than the mean of the dimension pessimism. Also, the two dimensions are very weakly correlated ($r = -0.032$) which proves that optimism and pessimism are two independent dimensions of life orientation construct.

Table2. Testing The Hypothesis Using Paired T -Test

Difference of Mean, Standard Deviation and Significance of the Dimensions Optimism and Pessimism when taken as Pairs							
N	df	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-critical	t-calculated	*Sig.	Result
100	99	1.320040	1.071930	2.63	12.315	Yes	H_0 : Rejected

*For level of significance 0.01 (2-tailed), degree of freedom 99 and p-value 0.000.

Interpretation: A paired sample t test was conducted to evaluate whether a statistically significant difference existed between the dimensions of the construct life orientation. The results of the paired sample repeated measures t test were significant $t(99) = 12.315$, $p < 0.05$, indicating that there is a significant difference between the dimensions of the construct life orientation, with a difference of their means being 1.320040 and standard deviation 1.071930 when measured on 100 urban students, at a level of significance of 0.01. The null hypothesis is thus rejected.

CONCLUSION

Greater optimism in an individual predicts greater success in career, better social relations, better health and thus placement of more efforts to reach the desired goals in life (Scheier and Carver, 2014).

The present study tried a thorough analysis of the measures of the dimensions of life orientation construct. The study found a significant difference between the dimensions of this construct in adolescents as mean of the dimension optimism is higher than the mean of the dimension pessimism in the adolescent subjects.

Dispositional optimism trait can receive promotion through life-skill activities and physical education in schools and colleges. Further conclusions can be drawn when there is sufficient literature on the topic in the future in Indian context.

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