



A STUDY OF OPTIMISTIC-PESSIMISTIC ATTITUDE AMONG ADOLESCENTS

DR. KAVITA MITTAL ¹

¹ PRINCIPAL, DESH BHAGAT COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, BARDWAL, DHURI, DISTT. SANGRUR, PUNJAB.

ABSTRACT:

Attitudes play a pivotal role in shaping human behaviour. Attitudes can be described as the way we evaluate something or someone. An attitude refers to a set of emotions, beliefs, and behaviours towards a particular object, person, thing, or event. Such dispositions can be positive or negative. Our positive and negative attitudes can have a powerful influence on our behaviour in various situations. Optimists have a built-in positive attitude to be hopeful and consider the possibilities of good things happening in life while pessimists display a negative attitude towards life situations and describes a general expectation that bad things will happen. They tends to be associated with less favourable outcomes. This study compares optimistic-pessimistic attitude of adolescents across their gender and locale. A sample of 200 adolescents studying in 11th and 12th classes in schools of Sangrur district was taken for the study. Optimistic-Pessimistic Scale by Parashar (1998) was used to collect the data. The data was analyzed by employing t-test. The results of the study showed no significant gender differences in optimistic-pessimistic attitude of adolescents. Also there was no significant difference found in optimistic-pessimistic attitude of adolescents belonging to rural and urban areas.

KEYWORDS:

OPTIMISTIC-PESSIMISTIC ATTITUDE.

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INTRODUCTION

Optimistic attitude means positiveness in the thinking of an individual. It means to accept the problems of life positively. An optimistic person has positive goals and positive outlook towards life and is one who accepts the change. It means the tendency to expect misfortune or the worst outcomes in any circumstances. Optimistic people see difficulties as a chance to improve themselves. They take any problem as a challenge and accept it, and find solutions on it. Optimism is directly related with mental health and physical health, also happiness, satisfaction with life, effectively encountering pressure, good in problem solving, self- motivated and motivate to others also.

Pessimism is a tendency to give attention only on negative or unfavourable things and a dejected viewpoint. Pessimistic attitude persons think about dark side of anything, have a complaining nature and speak about only possibility of failure of anything. This type of person avoids things that shows the reasons of failure. Pessimist person see only difficulties in any situation, they show their incapability to do anything.

Scheier and Carver (1985) defined dispositional optimism and pessimism as generalized outcome expectancies of good vs. bad outcomes in one's life. Individuals who hold positive expectations for the future are assumed to believe that good things will occur in their lives, and tend to see

desired outcomes as attainable and to persist in their goal-directed efforts. In contrast, individuals who hold negative outcome expectations for their future are assumed to expect bad things to happen, and tend to withdraw efforts more easily, become passive and finally to give up on achieving their goals (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Scheier and Carver (1985) also suggested that outcome expectancies are the best predictors of behavior, rather than the basis from which the expectancies are derived. In other words, it is not important why people expect good things to happen in their lives (e.g., having good luck, being favoured by God, working hard); what is important is the generalized optimistic or pessimistic orientation itself (Scheier & Carver, 1987). Further, Scheier and Carver (1987) suggest that these generalized expectancies are relatively stable across time and in different contexts, and that they form the basis of an important personality trait (Scheier & Carver, 1985; Scheier et al., 1994).

Cohen, et.al. (1989) and Dalton et al. (2002) viewed that optimists and pessimists differ in their health habits, their physiological response to stimuli, and in their overall behaviour e.g., coping strategy, use of social support networks, attribution style, and mental health. Seligman identified, after 25 years of research, three of the primary factors that separate optimists from pessimists.

They are permanence, pervasiveness and personal blame.

Optimism is always about having a good and positive attitude about almost everything in life. Therefore, an optimistic person sees life in a more colourful way. On the contrary, pessimism is always about having a bad or a negative attitude about life and things in life, therefore, for a pessimist, life is very dull, evil and meaningless. An optimistic person embraces challenges in life while a pessimistic person always avoids challenges in life. An optimistic person sees obstacles as those that make them stronger and wiser and help them to reach their destination. On the other hand, a pessimistic person sees obstacles as curses or a burden that makes them weak and helpless. Also, optimists have future plans and are not scared to dream since they always see hope in everything whereas pessimists are reluctant to have future plans and are scared to have dreams since they don't see hope in anything.

Attitude offers great possibilities for successful achievement as well as failure in life. They are important motivator of behaviour and affect all human values. In order to achieve success in life, one should have optimistic attitude. Life in itself is neither positive nor negative. We are free to make it either of the two. Optimistic attitudes can make a person stronger whereas pessimistic attitudes are exhausting.

Research studies have shown a significant negative relationship between optimistic attitude and anxiety (Singh & Jha, 2013; Rajinder, 2015) whereas optimism has been found to have a significant positive relationship with academic achievement (Singh & Jha, 2013), emotional intelligence (Rajinder, 2015), and psychological well-being (Parveen et al, 2016). The findings of the studies revealed significant difference in mean scores of optimistic & pessimistic attitudes of boys & girls (Lata, 2014; Rajinder, 2015; Vijayshri, 2015; Khan et al., 2016). Lata (2014) found that optimistic and pessimistic attitude has positive but not significant relationship with parental encouragement.

Optimism and pessimism are found to be significant predictors of Life Satisfaction among elderly especially males (Vijayshri, 2015). Kaur, M. (2004) in her study on Optimistic and pessimistic attitude in relation to extraversion and neuroticism in senior secondary school students found that there exist no significant relationship between optimistic and pessimistic attitude in relation to extraversion and neuroticism in senior secondary school students. Joshi and Other (2006) conducted a study "Depression in relation to optimistic pessimistic attitude among adolescent boys and girls" and found that the respondents having pessimistic attitude were reported to have felt more depression than the respondents having optimistic attitude.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Descriptive survey method was employed to conduct the study. School students of Sangrur district have been taken to find out the Optimistic-Pessimistic Attitude. A sample of 200 students studying in 11th and 12th class from these schools was selected with randomization technique of sampling. Optimistic-Pessimistic Attitude scale by Parashar (1998) was used to collect the data. 't'-test was employed to compare optimistic-pessimistic attitude of male and female adolescents and adolescents belonging to rural and urban areas.

RESULTS

The table 1 shows that 31 % of the boys and 36 % of the girls show neutral attitude, that means they show neither optimistic attitude nor pessimistic attitude. Only 15 % of boys and 14% of girls show optimistic attitude while just 1 % of boys and 3 % of girls show high optimistic attitude. On the other hand, 27% of the boys and 33 % of the girls show pessimistic attitude while 26% of the boys and 14% of the girls show highly pessimistic attitude. It is found that 50% of the sample of adolescents show pessimistic attitude while only 16.5 % of the sample of adolescents show optimistic attitude.

TABLE 1: SHOWING THE PREVALENCE OF OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM AMONG ADOLESCENTS.

Interpretation (As per Manual)	Score As per Manual (For boys)	No. of boys in sample	Score As Per Manual (For girls)	No of girls in sample
High optimistic	33 and above	01	31 and above	03
Optimistic	28-32	15	26-30	14
Neutral	23-27	31	21-25	36
Pessimistic	18-22	27	16-20	33
High pessimistic	17 and above	26	15 and above	14
		100	Total	100

Table 2 shows that mean score of male and female adolescents on Optimistic-Pessimistic Attitude scale is

21.05 and 20.79 respectively and their S.D is 5.52 and 5.30 respectively. The value signifying the difference between

the means of Optimistic-Pessimistic Attitude scores of male and female students is 0.34 which is not significant even at 0.05 level of significance.

TABLE 2: SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MEANS OF OPTIMISTIC-PESSIMISTIC ATTITUDE SCORES OF MALE AND FEMALE ADOLESCENTS

Groups	N	Mean	S.D	S. Ed	t-value
Male	100	21.05	5.52	0.76	0.34 NS
Female	100	20.79	5.30		

It shows that Male and female adolescents do not differ significantly on their attitude towards Optimism and Pessimism.

Table 3 shows that mean score of rural and urban adolescents on Optimistic-Pessimistic Attitude scores is 21.32 and 20.52 respectively and their S.D is 4.49 and 5.33. The value signifying the difference between the means of Optimistic-Pessimistic Attitude scores of rural and urban students is 0.52 which is not significant even at 0.05 level of significance.

TABLE 3: SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANS OF OPTIMISTIC-PESSIMISTIC ATTITUDE SCORES OF RURAL AND URBAN ADOLESCENTS.

Groups	N	Mean	S.D	S.Ed	t-value
Rural	100	21.32	4.49	0.69	1.16 NS
Urban	100	20.52	5.33		

It shows that Rural and urban students do not differ significantly on their attitude towards Optimism and Pessimism.

DISCUSSION

The study reveals no significant difference in the optimistic-pessimistic attitude of adolescents across gender and locale. Various factors play important role in developing optimistic and pessimistic attitude among adolescents. Optimism plays an important role in achieving success and a place of honour in one's life. So parents and teachers must be careful and should make efforts to develop optimistic attitude among adolescents.

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