

Optimism-Pessimism among Adolescents In Relation To Their Socioeconomic Status

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Abstract

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 one who accepts the change. Positive thinking or optimism is crucial to how we perceive life. On the other hand pessimistic attitude denotes a belief that the experienced world is the worst possible. It describes a general belief that things are bad and tend to become worse or that looks to the eventual triumph of evil over good. It means the tendency to expect misfortune or the worst outcomes in any circumstances. It stands as the belief that man is imperfect. The attitude that evil and pain are universal in this world and that life is essentially unhappy. The main objective of the present study is to find out whether there exist significant relationship between the optimistic-pessimistic attitude and socioeconomic status of adolescents. In the present study the sample comprises of 100 adolescents, 50 males and 50 females. Optimism-Pessimism attitude Scale by D.S.Parasar is used to measure the attitude of optimism-pessimism of adolescents. The results of the present study shows that there exists significant difference between the male and female adolescents with regard to their attitude towards optimism-pessimism. The study also finds out there exists no significant difference between the rural and urban adolescents with regard to their attitude towards optimism-pessimism. The present study also concludes that there is significant negative relationship between optimism-pessimism attitude and socioeconomic status of adolescents.

Introduction

Throughout the lifespan of human being one encompasses significant advancement. He passes through various stages of growth and development from infancy to childhood and from adolescence to late adulthood. At each stage of his life he witness distinct and unifying character of growth and development, as well as learning is at its pinnacle. Adolescents create their own lives with their own ideas and actions which can lead to great success and achievement or to frustration and disappointment. This success or disappointment in life is greatly influenced by one's attitude. Attitude is defined as a readiness of the psyche to act or react in a certain way (jung, 1921).

When a person is kindly agreeable, tolerant, friendly, and generally outgoing, he is considered to have desirable attitude. The concepts of optimism and pessimism – or how an individual generalizes positive and negative experiences to predict future outcomes – have been under study by psychologists and psychiatrists for at least two decades. ([Scheier & Carver, 1985](#); [Wiebe & Smith, 1997](#); [Peterson and Seligman, 1984](#); [Peterson et al., 1988](#)) Positive thinking or optimism is crucial to how we perceive life. On the other hand pessimistic attitude denotes a belief that the experienced world is the worst possible. It describes a general belief that things are bad and tend to become worse or that looks to the eventual triumph of evil over good. It means the tendency to expect misfortune or the worst outcomes in any

circumstances. The practice of looking the dark side of things. Pessimism is the tendency to emphasize the most unfavourable view of situation or actions, opposed to optimism and philosophically. It stands as the belief that man is imperfect. The attitude that evil and pain are universal in this world and that life is essentially unhappy.

Optimist is somewhat protective against adolescent health risks the strongest effect was seen against the onset of new depressive symptoms. Its protective effect against heavier substance use and antisocial behaviour was modest and only for the highest categories compared to the lowest. Promoting optimism along with other positive aspects of psychological and emotional style has a role in mental health promotion that is likely to be enhanced if an intervention also addresses risk and protective factors in an adolescent's social context.

Most studies that have examined the effects of optimism on adolescent health have been cross-sectional and generally considered single health outcomes. Evidence also suggest, that young children (i.e., four to five years of age), in comparison to their older peers, have a tendency to be less accurate in the assessment of their abilities, frequently overestimate what they can do, and can remain optimistic and confident even in the face of negative feedback (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Guthrie, 1997). Murphy (1987, p. 94) sees the four to five year old, with his/her "zest for growth and pride in mastery as a propitious stage for resilience." One recent prospective study of more extreme pessimism found that a perceived likelihood of early death predicted a range of health and behavioral outcome in young adulthood. In our study, we prospectively examine the association between optimistic thinking styles and the socioeconomic status of adolescents.

The epoch of adolescence is characterized by significant advancement and transitions in attitude formation, personality characteristics and adjustment patterns, making this phase radically stressful and chaotic. But how well the adolescents cope up and overcome these taxing experiences depend largely on their perception of the world or their attitude towards life that can be positive or negative or in other word we can say one can be optimistic or pessimistic respectively. Optimism and pessimism are two different outlooks on life that dictate how you deal with most situations and your expectations of the world. Optimism is defined as having hopefulness and confidence about the future or successful outcome of something.

Socio-Economic status plays an important role in the development of values of an individual. The socioeconomic status of parents influences the values of a child as a whole. Socio-Economic status affects the value of the individual, family standard, cultural, income. Possessions, material, and participation in group activity of the community it has been consider in the sense of parental occupation, parental education and education of brothers and sisters, economic index, income material possessions, cultural level house type of the family and tendency towards conservation or progressivism concept of social prestige, belief in casts system etc. Socio economic status is an economic status is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a students work experience and of an individual or family's economic and social position relative to other based on income, education and occupation.

Significance of the study :-

Socio Economic Status plays an important role in determining the success of an individual various studies have been conducted on it. But Researchers could not find any studies related to optimism-pessimism attitude of adolescents. So, the present study is required in the face of the fact that there is a need to study the effect of gender and socio-Economic status on optimism-pessimism attitude of adolescents.

Objectives

1. To study the level of optimism-pessimism attitude among adolescents.
2. To study and compare optimism-pessimism attitude of male and female adolescents.
3. To study and compare optimism-pessimism attitude of urban and rural adolescents.
4. To study the relationship between optimism-pessimism attitude and socioeconomic status of adolescents.

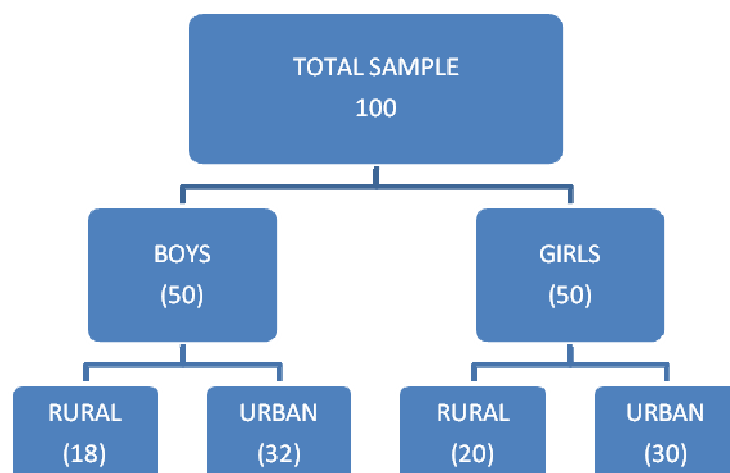
Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between male and female senior secondary school adolescents with regard to the feeling of optimism-pessimism.
2. There is no significant difference between rural and urban senior secondary school adolescents with regard to feeling of optimism-pessimism.
3. There is no significant relationship between optimistic-pessimistic attitude and socio economic status of senior secondary school adolescents.

Method

Sample

Sample of the present study consist of 100 adolescents between the age group of 16 to 18 years, studying in senior secondary schools, selected randomly from six schools of District Sonipat, Haryana.



TOOLS

The selection of the tools is very important in research. The following are the tools to collect information from the adolescents:

1. Socio- Economic scale standardized and developed by R.L Bharadwaj.
2. Optimism- pessimism attitude scales by D.S. Parasar.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 Number of Adolescents at Various Levels of Optimistic-Pessimistic Attitude

Components of Attitude	Males	Females
Very Optimistic	14	12
Optimistic	20	21
Average	10	11
Pessimistic	5	6
Very Pessimistic	1	0

The table 1 depicts the various levels of attitude towards optimism-pessimism of adolescent studying in senior secondary schools. It shows that there are more males and females in number in case of optimistic level where as in case of very optimistic and average the number of males and females is less. Even it can be depicted that there are few males and females in the category of pessimism.

Table-2 Shows Mean, S.D. and 't' Value Of Optimistic-Pessimistic Attitude of Males and Females Studying in Senior Sec. School

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	S. Ed	t-value	Level of Significance
Males	50	26.76	3.44	0.70	2.45	Significant
Females	50	25.04	3.50			

Table 2 shows mean scores, S.D., and t- value with regard to the feeling of optimism-pessimism of senior secondary school males and females. Mean and S.D of males are 26.76 and 3.44 respectively while mean scores and S.D of females are 25.04 and 3.50 respectively, 't' value is 2.45 which is more than the table value at 0.05 and 0.01 level

of significance. It implies that there is a significant difference between optimistic-pessimistic attitude of males and females studying in senior secondary schools. So the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that males and females both differ in their attitude towards optimism-pessimism. Hence, it can be declared by the senior secondary school males are more optimistic than females.

Table 3 Shows Mean, S.D and ‘t’ Value Of Optimistic-Pessimistic Attitude of Rural and Urban Studying in Senior Secondary Schools

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	S.Ed	“t”value	Level of significance
Rural	38	29.52	3.98	0.78	1.88	Not significant
Urban	62	28.05	3.44			

The table 3 shows the mean scores, S.D., t- value with regard to the feeling of optimism-pessimism of senior secondary school adolescents studying in rural and urban area. The Mean scores and S.D of senior secondary students studying in rural area are 29.52 and 3.98 respectively while mean scores and S.D of senior secondary students studying in urban area are 28.05 and 3.44 respectively, ‘t’ value is 1.88 which is less than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. It implies that there is no significant difference between rural and urban senior secondary school adolescents with regard to the feeling of optimism-pessimism . Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted and it means that rural and urban adolescents do not differ in their attitude towards optimism-pessimism.

Table- 4 Showing Co-relation between the Optimistic-Pessimistic Attitude and Socio-Economic Status of Senior Secondary School Adolescents

Variables	N	R
Optimistic-Pessimistic	100	-0.47
Socio-Economic Status		

The table 4 depicts the value of correlation between the optimistic-pessimistic attitude and socio-economic status of males and females studying in senior secondary schools. The value of correlation between the optimistic-pessimistic attitude and socio-economic status is -0.47, which shows that there is negative correlation between both the variables. As, the calculated value is $r = -0.47$ which is more than the table value (at $.05 = .205$ and at $.01 = .267$). Thus, it can be concluded that there exist significant relationship between both the variables.

Conclusion

It is found that the mean scores of males regarding the attitude of optimism-pessimism is higher than females. This can be concluded that there is significant difference between males and females. This finding is supported by Jacobsen (2008) that men are more optimistic than women over time and across countries. The other finding is that there is no significant difference between the rural and urban adolescents studying in senior secondary schools. This may be due to the fact of increasing education in India. This shows that the adolescents irrespective of their locality enjoy enriching environment which has inculcated an optimistic attitude among them. Also it can be concluded that there is negative but significant relationship between optimistic-pessimistic attitude and socio-economic status of adolescents studying in senior secondary schools. It means both the variables are not related to each other.

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