

IMPACT OF OPTIMISM & RESILIENCE ON SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING IN ILL INDIVIDUALS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Ahmad Bilal

Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Psychology,
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Bahawalpur, Pakistan
ahmadbilal4@gmail.com

Saira Aslam

MPhil Scholar, Department of Applied Psychology,
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Bahawalpur, Pakistan
sairaaslam253@gmail.com

Sana Masood

BS (Hons) Scholar, Department of Applied Psychology,
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Bahawalpur, Pakistan
sana.masod777@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to examine the impact of optimism and resilience on subjective wellbeing of those individuals who were suffering from any medical illness during COVID-19 pandemic. For this purpose, survey via questionnaire was conducted on different age groups from 16 to 25 years and a total of 405 responses were received in which 60% were women and students were major portion of sample size. Results showed that there was a weak to moderate significant positive correlation between the three variables. Also, the resilience and optimism significantly predicted the subjective wellbeing. Results also showed that men had better sense of wellbeing as compared to women. This research helps in understanding the effects of pandemic on already ill patients and how these variables impacting their lives and helping them to cope with their illness and pandemic.

Keywords: Pandemic, Optimism, Resilience, Wellbeing, Illness.

INTRODUCTION

Background of pandemic

Coronavirus, the 21st century pandemic (COVID-19) has been first reported from China. The first reported occurrence littered with COVID-19 was November 17th 2019 (Kang et al., 2020). Ever since, the occurrence is ever increasing worldwide. For risk management, WHO has issued some precautionary measures like washing hands at regular intervals, wearing mask and there are some restrictions on nation level for every country like lockdowns were imposed and restricting the public movement and arrival and departure of foreign nationals. COVID-19 resulted in extremely high number of cases and confirmed deaths, and as a result of that general public all around the world came across various psychological issues including stress, depression and anxiety (Burke & Arslan, 2020; Kang et al., 2020; Xiang et al., 2020; Yıldırım et al., 2020).

Optimism

Optimism is defined as degree of any person's recognized talent and capability for achieving one's ambitions with positive state of mind (Snyder, 2000). On the other hand, will power defines any person's inspiration to start or keep going along the way toward his passion, while the power to keep going along this path shows the person's capability to make ways for successfully achieving his goal. Optimism can be defined in terms of degree that involves emotions, a psychological method that involves force or a gel that allows people to be flexible and helps to overcome difficulties (Fredrickson et al., 2003).

Optimism being related to higher chances of healthy life, a life which is of good quality, and healthy daily routine. Analysis of previous studies gives the idea that there is anti-relationship

between optimism and health issues related to psychology. Increased optimism being linked with low amount of stress and regressing depressive symptoms (Waynor et al., 2012), life quality becomes good (Hawro et al., 2014), rooting for positive outcomes (Warber et al., 2011), there is a positive change in daily routine (Gelkopf et al., 2013). Optimism has vital results which defines satisfaction in life, and positive effect on health (Muyan-Yılık & Demir, 2020). People with higher levels of optimism demonstrate bigger determination in seeking for their goals, that successively may results in outcomes that are successful and these are achieved by levels higher of subjective well-being (Snyder, 2000) and fewer issues related with psychology, like depression, anxiety (Arnau et al., 2007).

Resilience

Past studies done on patients with heart failure suggested that there are gloomy indicators which are regarded as poor health standing risk factors. But, the intermittent relation between gloomy indicators and negative psychology was resilience, highlighting the magnified the degree of resilience and how it will educate the level of psychology between depression and coronary failure in patients (Liu et al., 2015). Strategies that involve getting through additionally have own powerful reference to psychological health. It is therefore believed that positive psychology is essential for better health (Yu et al., 2013).

Resilience can be seen as person's will power to "bounce back" or to recover from anything negative in life, fight against ill health to adjust to different things to take care of their mental wellbeing (Smith et al., 2008). Even though it could be usually utilized to construct among totally opposite school of thoughts, researchers couldn't reach an agreement regarding relevance of the theory because of the different ways it is defined and measured. Past studies are in accordance with the fact that because of the resilience there are positive changes in outcomes of one's mental health and wellbeing (Arslan, 2019; Belen & Yildirim, 2020; Yildirim & Tanrıverdi, 2021). A study was conducted by (Yıldırım & Solmaz, 2020) found that resilience was completely associated with satisfaction with life, positive effect overall, have an effect on balance, and flourishing, which negatively connected with negative effect on. It's additionally been instructed that negative effects of distressing circumstances can be buffered by the resilience (Lee et al., 2014). What is more, the wellbeing of a person is directly proportional with one's resilience and also it serves as a mediating factor between wellbeing and surviving. (Li et al., 2016).

Wellbeing

In the field of positive psychology one of the most leading variable these days is subjective wellbeing. It is operationalized being a varied form, built by psychological feature and emotive parts like life contentment, effect that is positive, and negative affect (Xu & Roberts, 2010). As psychological feature side life contentment it is referred to as processes of judgement. But, subjective wellbeing emotive side is represented by positive and negative effect, and it represents states of emotions and moods. Number of proofs are there to counsel that subjective wellbeing represents a good vary of triumphant results together with magnified durability of health, and functions of psychology (Arslan & Coşkun, 2020; Diener & Chan, 2011). Contented folks likely to be additional fortunate in multiple domains of life and they are more healthy, have socio-economic relationships, their physical wellbeing is good, their prosocial engagement behavior is good, and they are very good in their ability of problem solving (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). As far as relation between wellbeing and hardships with resilience, there is an opposite relation between essential variables and resilience like depression, anxiety and loneliness (Arslan, 2016). In relevance with optimism, proof suggests that optimism incorporates a vital direct result on bigger SWB, consequently, permits people to deal with a nerve-racking state of affairs like up the recovery method of individuals with negative psychological issues (Werner, 2012). Mental stability here is highlighted because the degree of the mind state that is built into associate degree best described by adapting emotional, mental and physical states with others (Sun et al., 2020). There are certain observed studies that highlights that there are numerous characters moving psychology. The most scathing factors that indicate poor psychology of a healthy person are depression and anxiety, whereas psychological capitals like optimism and resilience will facilitate higher psychological and mental state (Walsh et al., 2017).

Objectives

The objective of this study was to find out the impact of optimism and resilience on the subjective wellbeing of ill patients during COVID-19 pandemic and to find out the gender differences in optimism, resilience, and subjective wellbeing.

Hypothesis

The study hypothesized that:

1. Both optimism and resilience would significantly predict subjective wellbeing.
2. The males would be higher in optimism, resilience, and subjective wellbeing than females.

METHODOLOGY

A survey based cross sectional research design was used in this research. The total sample size was $n=405$, and the age group was between 16 to 55 years involving both male and female patients irrespective of their professions as shown in Table 1. The purposive sampling was used to recruit the sample from different segments of the society. Due to COVID-19 lockdown in the country, Google Form based questionnaire containing informed consent, demographic variables sheet and 3 scales for assessing optimism, resilience, and subjective wellbeing was administered through social media platforms. The 10 item Optimism Scale was used to assess optimism (Pedrosa et al., 2015). The Optimism Scale had Cronbach Alpha of 0.84. The Brief Resilience Scale containing 6 items was used to assess resilience (Smith et al., 2008). The BBC Subjective Wellbeing Scale containing 24 items was administered to assess subjective wellbeing (Pontin et al., 2013). The BBC SWB scale had an overall Cronbach Alpha of 0.94. All the three scales were standardized locally for the present study (Table 2). The data was analyzed through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, v 25. The descriptive statistics was expressed by frequency and percentages. For hypotheses testing, correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, and t test were computed. The study met all ethical considerations including informed consent and confidentiality.

RESULTS

Table No. 1 Description of Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N=405)

Characteristics	<i>f</i> (%)
Age	
16-25	288(71.1)
26-35	91(22.5)
36-45	15(3.7)
46-55	11(2.7)
Gender	
Men	163(40.2)
Women	242(59.8)
Profession	
Student	278(68.6)
Government employee	47(11.6)
Private employee	48(11.9)
Businessman	32(7.9)

Table 1 shows that majority of participants were between the ages of 16 to 25. There were 60 % women with majority of the sample being students. Most participants (69%) were students.

Table No. 2 Psychometric Properties of Instruments showing Mean, Standard Deviation and Cronbach's Alpha (N=405)

Variables	K	M	SD	α	Range	
					Potential	Actual
Optimism Scale	10	20.51	3.41	.78	6-30	9-30
Brief Resilience Scale	25	125.82	21.96	.90	25-175	27-175

Subjective well-being Scale	5	23.04	6.52	.79	5-35	5-35
-----------------------------	---	-------	------	-----	------	------

Table 2 shows that all scales of Optimism, Resilience and Subjective well-being has strong reliabilities when standardized locally.

Table No. 3 Correlation matrix for Scales of Optimism, Resilience and Subjective well-being among Ill Individuals (N=405)

Sr #	Variable	1	2	3
1	Optimism	-	.30**	.19**
2	Resilience		-	.44**
3	Subjective Wellbeing			-

Note. ** $p < .01$

The Table 3 shows that optimism, resilience and subjective wellbeing have significant positive correlation with each other.

Table No. 4 Multiple Regression Analysis with Optimism and Resilience as Predictors and Subjective wellbeing as an Outcome (N=405)

Variables	Subjective Wellbeing	
	β	SE
Optimism	.19***	.09
R		.19
R ²		.03
F		15.29***
Resilience	.44***	.01
R		.44
R ²		.20
F		101.68***

Note. *** $p < .001$

The Table 4 shows the results of multiple regression analysis to predict subjective wellbeing from optimism and resilience. The model significantly predicted the outcome. Both the optimism and resilience significantly predicted subjective wellbeing.

Table No. 5 Independent Sample t-test showing Gender Differences on Scales of Optimism, Resilience and Subjective well-being (N=405)

Variables	Men (n=163)		Women (n=242)		t(403)	P	95% CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL	
Optimism	20.19	3.32	20.73	3.46	-1.54	.12	-1.21	.14	-.15
Resilience	125.90	23.40	125.76	20.98	.06	.95	-4.24	4.51	.00
Subjective well-being	23.92	6.12	22.45	6.72	2.28	.02	.20	2.74	.22

Table 5 shows that there was significant gender difference in subjective well-being that is, men had better subjective well-being as compared to women. While optimism and resilience did not show any gender differences.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the relationship between variables like resilience, optimism, precautionary behaviors, and subjective well-being, among ill patients throughout different stages of this pandemic. The present study hypothesized that optimism has a close relationship with resilience, subjective well-being along with psychological health of ill patients. In previous studies mediation

model was used and that model showed that resilience and subjective wellbeing are directly linked with optimism, and these have positive psychological effects on mental health of patients. This research indicated, if patients have optimism and resilience they can bounce back from disagreeable things and have a strong subjective wellbeing. It also indicates the power of optimism that it will absolutely influence resilience, subjective well-being as in accordance of past studies (Hawro et al., 2014; Li et al., 2016). Optimism being one of the pillars of positive psychology indicates that people with higher level of optimism tends to be goal oriented and create ways to reach the goals they want to achieve. The effects of positive psychology will facilitate patients, so that they can subdue disagreeable things, make them a resilient person, up their morale, which leads to higher optimism, which in turn leads to good health (Arslan 2016; Fredrickson et al., 2003; Snyder, 2000).

This research confirms and shows, how resilience being a big prognosticative factor in subjective wellbeing of patients. Previous studies showed that psychological health and wellbeing of patients is directly proportional to resilience (Gao et al., 2017; Yildirim, 2019). More significantly, link between optimism and subjective well-being, suggesting that the underlying mechanism among the two factors optimism and subjective well-being the intermittent link is resilience. from Disagreeable things can be recuperated with the help of resilience (Smith et al., 2008). Individuals having loads of resilience will simply adjust in dynamical setting. As such, people with greater optimism possess high ability to endure disagreeable things that successively permit them to own larger subjective well-being. That is, people with high dispositional optimism have a robust motivation and a capability to arrange different routes once came face to face with difficulties and that they might believe that the current state of affairs and difficulties will be controlled and conquered. Believing in oneself will eventually permit people to have a sound mental health and results in subjective wellbeing.

This study showed that resilience is immediately effect by precautionary behavior, however the factor which is not affected is subjective wellbeing. The survey for this study were managed during the different portions of this pandemic. Though rising in shift was anticipated because every individual was obligatory for interacting adopting precautionary behavior during that phase individuals might be forcedly active, the extent of involvement of in precautionary behavior may not have any effect on subjective wellbeing. Though previous analysis highlighted that engagement in preventive behaviors like maintaining social distances, using hand sanitizers, washing hands with soap are key rules in this pandemic and for physical health safety (Wise et al., 2020).

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The present study did not include other demographic variables like education, and marital status. Future studies could yield significant results related to these variables. Moreover, the inclusion of the individuals from other professions could make the results more generalizable.

CONCLUSION

Research results indicated that the link among two factors first one being optimism and second one is resilience, and these two factors are linked by precautionary behaviors, suggesting that prime levels of optimism might facilitate individuals to interact in preventive behaviors toward virus which might cause larger ability to address challenges. Individuals full of optimism are highly ready to respond troublesome things with resilience ability through preventive behaviors.

REFERENCES

- Arnau, R. C., Rosen, D. H., Finch, J. F., Rhudy, J. L., & Fortunato, V. J. (2007). Longitudinal effects of hope on depression and anxiety: a latent variable analysis. *Journal of Personality, 75*(1), 43–64. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2006.00432.x>
- Arslan, G. (2016). Psychological maltreatment, emotional and behavioral problems in adolescents: The mediating role of resilience and self-esteem. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 52*, 200-209.
- Arslan, G. (2019). Mediating role of the self-esteem and resilience in the association between social exclusion and life satisfaction among adolescents. *Personality and Individual Differences, 151*, 109514.
- Arslan, G., & Coşkun, M. (2020). Student subjective wellbeing, school functioning, and psychological adjustment in high school adolescents: A latent variable analysis. *Journal of Positive School Psychology, 4*(2), 153-164.

- Belen, H., & Yildirim, M. (2020). Psychometric analysis of inflexibility of happiness in undergraduate students: A reliability and validity study. *Journal of Positive School Psychology, 4*(1), 69-78.
- Burke, J., & Arslan, G. (2020). Positive education and school psychology during COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Positive School Psychology, 4*(2), 137-139.
- Diener, E., & Chan, M. Y. (2011). Happy people live longer: Subjective well-being contributes to health and longevity. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being, 3*(1), 1-43.
- Fredrickson, B. L., Tugade, M. M., Waugh, C. E., & Larkin, G. R. (2003). What good are positive emotions in crisis? A prospective study of resilience and emotions following the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11th, 2001. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*(2), 365–376. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.2.365>
- Gao, T., Ding, X., Chai, J., Zhang, Z., Zhang, H., Kong, Y., & Mei, S. (2017). The influence of resilience on mental health: The role of general well-being. *International journal of nursing practice, 23*(3), 10.1111/ijn.12535. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijn.12535>
- Gelkopf, M., Hasson-Ohayon, I., Bikman, M., & Kravetz, S. (2013). Nature adventure rehabilitation for combat-related posttraumatic chronic stress disorder: a randomized control trial. *Psychiatry research, 209*(3), 485–493. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2013.01.026>
- Hawro, T., Maurer, M., Hawro, M., Kaszuba, A., Cierpiałkowska, L., Królikowska, M., & Zalewska, A. (2014). In psoriasis, levels of hope and quality of life are linked. *Archives of Dermatological Research, 306*(7), 661–666. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00403-014-1455-9>
- Kang, L., Li, Y., Hu, S., Chen, M., Yang, C., Yang, B. X., Wang, Y., Hu, J., Lai, J., Ma, X., Chen, J., Guan, L., Wang, G., Ma, H., & Liu, Z. (2020). The mental health of medical workers in Wuhan, China dealing with the 2019 novel coronavirus. *The Lancet Psychiatry, 7*(3), e14. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(20\)30047-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(20)30047-X)
- Lee, J. S., Ahn, Y. S., Jeong, K. S., Chae, J. H., & Choi, K. S. (2014). Resilience buffers the impact of traumatic events on the development of PTSD symptoms in firefighters. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 162*, 128–133. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2014.02.031>
- Li, M. Y., Yang, Y. L., Liu, L., & Wang, L. (2016). Effects of social support, hope and resilience on quality of life among Chinese bladder cancer patients: a cross-sectional study. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes, 14*, 73. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12955-016-0481-z>
- Liu, J. C., Chang, L. Y., Wu, S. Y., & Tsai, P. S. (2015). Resilience mediates the relationship between depression and psychological health status in patients with heart failure: a cross-sectional study. *International Journal of Nursing Studies, 52*(12), 1846–1853. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2015.07.005>
- Lyubomirsky, S., King, L., & Diener, E. (2005). The benefits of frequent positive affect: does happiness lead to success?. *Psychological Bulletin, 131*(6), 803–855. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.131.6.803>
- Muyan-Yılık, M., & Demir, A. (2020). A pathway towards subjective well-being for Turkish university students: the roles of dispositional hope, cognitive flexibility, and coping strategies. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 21*(6), 1945-1963.
- Pedrosa, K., Celis-Atenas, J., Suárez-Álvarez, E., García-Cueto, J., Muñiz. (2015). Cuestionario para la evaluación del optimismo: Fiabilidad y evidencias de validez. *Terapia Psicológica, 33* (2), 127-138. DOI: 10.4067/S0718-48082015000200007
- Pontin, E., Schwannauer, M., Tai, S. et al. (2013). A UK validation of a general measure of subjective well-being: the modified BBC subjective well-being scale (BBC-SWB). *Health Qual Life Outcomes, 11*, 150. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1477-7525-11-150>
- Smith, B. W., Dalen, J., Wiggins, K., Tooley, E., Christopher, P., & Bernard, J. (2008). The brief resilience scale: assessing the ability to bounce back. *International journal of behavioral medicine, 15*(3), 194-200.
- Snyder, C. R. (2000). *Handbook of hope: Theory, measures, and applications*. Academic press.
- Sun, J., Sun, R., Jiang, Y., Chen, X., Li, Z., Ma, Z., Wei, J., He, C., & Zhang, L. (2020). The relationship between psychological health and social support: Evidence from physicians in China. *PloS One, 15*(1), e0228152. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0228152>

- Walsh, Z., Gonzalez, R., Crosby, K., Thiessen, M., Carroll, C., & Bonn-Miller, M. O. (2017). Medical cannabis and mental health: A guided systematic review. *Clinical Psychology Review, 51*, 15–29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2016.10.002>
- Warber, S. L., Ingerman, S., Moura, V. L., Wunder, J., Northrop, A., Gillespie, B. W., & Rubenfire, M. (2011). Healing the heart: a randomized pilot study of a spiritual retreat for depression in acute coronary syndrome patients. *Explore (NY), 7*(4), 222–233. doi: 10.1016/j.explore.2011.04.002
- Waynor, W. R., Gao, N., Dolce, J. N., Haytas, L. A., & Reilly, A. (2012). The relationship between hope and symptoms. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal, 35*(4), 345–348. <https://doi.org/10.2975/35.4.2012.345.348>
- Werner, S. (2012). Subjective well-being, hope, and needs of individuals with serious mental illness. *Psychiatry Research, 196*(2-3), 214-219.
- Wise, T., Zbozinek, T. D., Michelini, G., Hagan, C. C., & Mobbs, D. (2020). Changes in risk perception and self-reported protective behaviour during the first week of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. *Royal Society Open Science, 7*, 200742. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rsos.2007>
- Xiang, Y. T., Yang, Y., Li, W., Zhang, L., Zhang, Q., Cheung, T., & Ng, C. H. (2020). Timely mental health care for the 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak is urgently needed. *The Lancet Psychiatry, 7*(3), 228–229. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366\(20\)30046-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(20)30046-8)
- Xu, J., & Roberts, R. E. (2010). The power of positive emotions: It's a matter of life or death—Subjective well-being and longevity over 28 years in a general population. *Health Psychology, 29*(1), 9.
- Yildirim, M. (2019). Mediating role of resilience in the relationships between fear of happiness and affect balance, satisfaction with life, and flourishing. *Europe's Journal of Psychology, 15*(2), 183.
- Yıldırım, M., Arslan, G., & Özasan, A. (2020). Perceived Risk and Mental Health Problems among Healthcare Professionals during COVID-19 Pandemic: Exploring the Mediating Effects of Resilience and Coronavirus Fear. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, 1–11*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-020-00424-8>
- Yıldırım, M., & Tanrıverdi, F. C. (2021). Social support, resilience and subjective well-being in college students. *Journal of Positive School Psychology, 5*(2), 127-135.
- Yu, Y., Hu, J., Efrid, J. T., & McCoy, T. P. (2013). Social support, coping strategies and health-related quality of life among primary caregivers of stroke survivors in China. *Journal of Clinical Nursing, 22*(15-16), 2160–2171. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.12251>