



The Predictive Role of Life Orientation on Self - Efficacy of Nurses in Chabahar

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Abstract

Objectives: The present study aimed at determining the predictive role of life orientation on self - efficacy of nurses in Chabahar.

Methods: This was a descriptive - correlational study. The statistical population of the current study included all nurses working at hospitals of Chabahar (N = 154). Using Cochran's sample size determination formula, 113 individuals were considered as the sample. Simple random sampling method was applied to select the sample. To collect data, Scheier and Carver's Life Orientation Test (1985) and Jerusalem and Schwarzer's General Self - efficacy Scale (1979) were used. To examine these questionnaires' validity and reliability, respectively, content validity and Cronbach's alpha coefficient were applied, for which the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.75.8 and 0.78, respectively. To assess variables under study, regression analysis, independent t - test, and one - way analysis of variance were used.

Results: The findings indicated that 23% of the variance of the criterion variable (self - efficacy) could be predicted by the predictor variable (life orientation). Moreover, female nurses had greater self - efficacy, however, no significant difference was found considering male and female nurses' life orientation.

Conclusions: Optimism refers to a generalized expectation, upon which when facing a problem, a person feels that positive results will take place. This expectation almost covers all important aspect of individuals' life. Optimism is associated with various psychological traits that can play key roles in one's self - efficacy.

Keywords: Life Orientation, Self - Efficacy, Nurses

1. Background

Former psychologists' research and scientific work were mainly concentrated on negative and destructive aspects of humans' thoughts, beliefs, and feelings and focused all their attempts and efforts on the circuit of challenging aspects of thoughts and pathological dimensions of the human psyche and spent their time and energy on removing and eliminating symptoms of mental illnesses. However, these days, many psychologists, in addition to addressing morbid and pathological aspects of the human psyche, are concerned on the positive aspects of humans' thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors. In the past decade, positive psychologists mostly emphasized on people's abilities, competencies, and assets, and believed that psychology must focus on improving and promoting the level of human life and fostering talents and abilities, which have been endowed in human. Accordingly, positive psychology considers positive aspects of the human psyche, including positivistic, optimism, happiness, creativity, emo-

tional intelligence, wisdom, self - awareness, and the like, and attempts to remarkably highlight the presence of positive factors in various aspects of human life using scientific methods and approaches. In addition, in psychotherapy, positive psychology applies approaches, including positive therapy, hope therapy, and meaning therapy and tends to aid people with focusing on the positive existential and psychological aspects of their life (1).

Optimism is among proposed concepts in positive psychology. Although the prerequisite of optimism is repeating positive and motivating sentences and utterances, such as "I'm always picking up the pace of progress" and "I move towards happiness, prosperity and success everyday", optimism is something more and deeper than these issues and researchers' efforts indicate something beyond these promising statements. Obtained results have demonstrated that optimism roots in the way of thinking and explaining the causes of various events. To attribute a phenomenon to a certain cause, each individ-

ual uses particular trends, referred to as explanatory style (1). Life orientation examines people's optimistic and pessimistic attitude towards life. In fact, people, who have a positive attitude towards life, evaluate what they can gain versus what they are not able to obtain. These people ascribe their social achievements to their internal capabilities and this may lead to an increase in these people's level of self - efficacy (2).

Believing in one's capabilities and strengths is one of the factors associated with each individual's job. It can be stated that self - efficacy is a key factor and a fundamental skill required for a successful performance. Effective performance requires both skills and believing in capabilities needed to use these skills. Management of changing, ambiguous, unpredictable, and stressful situations requires multiple skills (3). Social Learning Theory, which proves the relationship between internal cognition and behavior, asserts that self-control traits, including self - concept, self - efficacy, and self - confidence influence all behaviors. Self - efficacy plays a key role in adoption, maintenance, and perpetuation of behaviors and is considered as the most important personal factor in changing a behavior. Self - efficacy refers to an individual's beliefs in their ability of performing a certain task in a particular circumstance. Moreover, another type of self - efficacy points out an individual's general belief in his/her capacities and capabilities. Self - efficacy theory is based on the assumption that people's beliefs in their abilities and talents has beneficial effects on their behaviors and can be regarded as the most significant determining factor of behaviors. Self - efficacy influences chosen behaviors, making efforts, perseverance, and pursuing objectives and will determine the method of dealing with obstacles and challenges ahead (4). Self - efficacy, in fact, specifies how much time people spend on their work, how stable they are when dealing with difficulties, and to what extent they are flexible when coping with various situations. Moreover, self - efficacy beliefs affect people's thought patterns and emotional reactions (5) and determine how people think, behave, and feel; therefore, people with low self - efficacy may believe that the status quo cannot be solved. This leads to stress and depression and creates a fastidious overview to solve a problem. In risky situations, those, who do not believe in their capabilities, become disillusioned and are less likely to act effectively. Such people are scared of encountering challenges and consequently, and this affects their performance, which in turn increases their sense of inefficacy (4). On the other hand, when approaching a difficult task, high self - efficacy helps people create a sense of easiness (5). Experiences of having mastery over various affairs is the most effective source of creating high self - efficacy. Successes lead to the formation of a strong belief in one's effective-

ness and failures fade out this belief (6). Petersen (2008), in a study entitled "Collective Efficacy and Faculty Trust: A Study of Social Processes in Schools", conducted at a number of schools in the United States of America, concluded that these two constructs are significantly and positively correlated, and faculty trust among educational staff facilitates and improves collective efficacy at schools (7).

According to what was mentioned earlier, the present study sought to determine whether life orientation can predict self - efficacy of nurses working at hospitals of Chabahar.

2. Methods

This was a descriptive - correlational study. The statistical population of the current study included all nurses working full time, contractual, and fixed term employees and trainees at hospitals of Chabahar (N = 154). Using Cochran's sample size determination formula, 113 individuals were considered as the sample. The simple random sampling method was applied to select the sample.

2.1. Materials

2.1.1. Life Orientation Test

Scheier and Carver (1985) developed the brief self - report Life Orientation Test (LOT) to assess natural optimism, which was later revised (8). The type of optimism that is evaluated by LOT is a personality trait, which is characterized by personal favorable expectations for the future. The revised version of the Life Orientation Test (LOT - R) replaced the original test (8). The LOT - R is more brief than the original test (including six items, three items indicating optimism and three items demonstrating pessimism).

Revised Life Orientation Test has a good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70) and a good stability over time. Due to the extensive overlap of LOT and LOT - R, these two tests are highly correlated (8). The LOT includes eight items, which are scored based on a four - point Likert type scale. Options are strongly agree (4), relatively agree (3), relatively disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). Items 2, 5, 6, and 8 are inversely scored.

2.1.2. General Self - Efficacy Scale

The General Self - Efficacy Scale was developed by Jerusalem and Schwarzer in 1979 to assess general and social self - efficacy. The mentioned test includes 20 items and 2 subscales of general and social self - efficacy. In 1981, Jerusalem and Schwarzer revised the test and decreased the number of items to 10. Therefore, the current Self - Efficacy Scale entails 10 items that measure general self - efficacy. Perceived self - efficacy reflects an individual's optimistic attitude towards him/herself.

To standardize the test, Rajabi (2006) conducted a study on a sample of 587 male and female university students, studying at Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz and Azad University of Marvdasht. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this test was 0.84.

2.1.3. Validity and Reliability of These Questionnaires

To evaluate the reliability of these questionnaires, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was applied using the SPSS software.

To this end, a prototype of 30 questionnaires was pretested and then the obtained data was analyzed to assess these questionnaires' Cronbach's alpha coefficient, using the SPSS software. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of Life Orientation Test and General Self - Efficacy was respectively, 0.75.8 and 0.78. The results indicate that these questionnaires are reliable or in other words, they have the required reliability. The following table demonstrates the final result related to these two scales.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Applied to Determine the Reliability of These Two Scales

No.	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
1	Life orientation test	0.75.8
2	General Self - Efficacy	0.78

To assess the variables under study, regression analysis, independent t - test, and one - way analysis of variance were used. All these statistical analyses were conducted on the obtained data using SPSS software version 21.

3. Results

3.1. First Hypothesis: Life Orientation Can Predict Self - Efficacy of Nurses Working at Hospitals of Chabahar

To examine this hypothesis, linear regression analysis was used. In the above table, R represents the correlation between the predictor variable and the criterion variable, which was 0.48 for self - efficacy, and R^2 indicates coefficient determination or the power of predicting changes in the criterion variable (self - efficacy) by the predictor variable (life orientation), which was 0.23. This demonstrated that a one standard deviation change in the variable of life orientation leads to a 23 % standard deviation change in the variable of self - efficacy, which is significant ($P < 0.001$), given the amount of F (33.40). B and β , respectively, represent standard and non - standard coefficients of regression. Moreover, considering the value of T and the significance level, it becomes clear that the impact of life orientation in the regression equation was significant.

3.2. Second Hypothesis: There is a Significant Difference between Life Orientation and Self - Efficacy of Nurses Considering Their Gender

To assess this hypothesis, independent t - test was used, the results of which are presented in the following table.

The results demonstrated in the above table indicate that mean and standard deviation of self - efficacy in female nurses were 29.85 and 2.24 and mean and standard deviation of male nurses were 25.09 and 6.21, respectively. In addition, the results demonstrate that the calculated t, which was 2.83 with the degree of freedom of 111, was significant at the 99% confidence level ($P < 0.01$). Therefore, it can be concluded that the level of self - efficacy of male and female nurses are not alike. Since female nurses' mean score on self - efficacy (29.85) was higher than that of male nurses (25.09), it can be stated that female nurses had higher levels of self - efficacy compared to their male counterparts. However, no significant difference was found between male and female nurses with regards to their life orientation ($t = 0.55, P > 0.05$).

4. Discussion

4.1. First Hypothesis: Life Orientation Can Predict Self - Efficacy of Nurses Working at Hospitals of Chabahar

The results indicated that 0.23 of changes in the criterion variable (self - efficacy) could be predicted by the predictor variable (life orientation). This finding is in line with the results of Karademas (2006) (9), who concluded that there was a significant and positive correlation between life orientation and self - efficacy. In another study, Karademas (2006) examined the mediating role of optimism on self - efficacy, social support, and subjective well - being. Through implementing a structural equation modeling using LISREL, he revealed the mediating role of optimism on other variables. To explain this finding, the author stated that optimists believed in their capabilities and talents in various aspects of life and this belief increased individuals' hope for the future and their self - efficacy.

4.2. Second Hypothesis: There is a Significant Difference between Life Orientation and Self - Efficacy of Nurses, Considering Their Gender

The results showed that the level of self - efficacy of male and female nurses were not alike. Since female nurses' mean score on self - efficacy (29.85) was higher than that of male nurses (25.09), it could be stated that female nurses had higher levels of self - efficacy compared to their male counterparts. No previously conducted study was found for comparison with this finding.

Table 2. Results and Coefficients of Linear Regression Analysis on the Role of Life Orientation in Predicting Self - Efficacy of Nurses

Variables	R	R ²	F	Sig	B	Std. E	β	T
Self - efficacy	0.48	0.23	33.40	0.000	0.87	0.12	0.48	5.78

Table 3. Examining the Difference between Life Orientation and Self - Efficacy of Nurses Based on Gender

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig
Life orientation						
Male	14	8.5714	1.98898	0.556	111	0.579
Female	99	8.0404	3.48442			
Self - efficacy						
Male	14	25.0909	6.21074	2.836	111	0.005
Female	99	29.8571	2.24832			

However, the results revealed no significant difference between male and female nurses with regards to their life orientation ($t = 0.55$, $P > 0.05$). This finding is consistent with the results of a study conducted by Heinonen et al. (2005) (10). In a 21 - year longitudinal study carried out on 509 males and females aged 3 to 24 years old and 6 to 27 years old, respectively, it was revealed that there was no significant difference between males and females considering their optimism. Moreover, a study conducted on 467 high school students indicated no significant difference between male and female students considering their natural optimism. The human mind works like a magnifying glass. When a person mainly focuses on problems and negative aspects of life, these problems and deficiencies seem so huge that they impact every aspect of his/her life. However, when an individual concentrates on pleasant, positive, satisfying aspects of life, including successes, beauty, facilities, and opportunities, he/she feels satisfied and happy in his/her life. In this interpretation, optimism and pessimism are associated with selective attention. Selective attention refers to the fact that humans simultaneously deal with various incentives, comments, data, thoughts, and emotions; however, due to limited processing capacity, they cannot focus on all these incentives at the same time and must select among them. Based on this selection, optimists and pessimists vary. Optimistic people concentrate on elements, events, thoughts, and interpretations, which bring success, desire and pleasure for them. However, pessimistic people mostly focus on elements, things, incidents, and aspects, which bring dissatisfaction and lack of success for them. Optimism refers to a generalized expectation, upon which a person feels positive results will take place when facing a problem. This expectation almost covers every important aspect of an individual's life. Optimism is associated with various psychological traits, which can play key roles in one's self - effi-

cacy. Using an internal and positive attributional style, optimists avoid pessimistic thoughts, which are among the main factors associated with lack of intrapersonal trust and self - efficacy. Applying a more adaptive method of dealing with problems and having hope for a favorable result, these people reduce stress related to lack of self-confidence and self - efficacy.

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