ABSTRACT

This research examined the social correlates of optimism and psychological well-being among undergraduate students. In other words, it aimed at exploring the relationship between optimism and psychological well-being and impacts of social factors such as: education, economic status, family relationships, and religious belief on optimism and psychological well-being.

Six hypotheses guided the research. Using random sampling techniques, two hundred forty students, 19-22 years old, both male and female with different socio-economic and religious background were selected from Government and private colleges in Mysore city.

A structured questionnaire prepared for gathering demographic information and assessing social factors, such as: income, educational level of students’ parents, family relationships, religious belief of students, and economic status of family. To measure optimism and psychological well-being, Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R) (Scheier and Carver, 1994) and Ryff’s psychological well-being scales (1989) were administered respectively.

Frequencies and descriptive statistics were used to describe the variables, and hypotheses were tested statistically using product-moment correlation, multiple regressions, analysis of variance (ANOVA), (ANOVA, one way classification), and t-test.

The findings of the research revealed that students’ level of optimism and pessimism impact their level of psychological well-being; while social factors impact both optimism and psychological well-being. Students who reported high level of optimism had also greater level of psychological well-being.
Furthermore, among social factors affected psychological well-being of students, economic status was the first followed by religious belief and family relationships respectively. Out of social factors that impact optimism, family relationships were the first followed by economic status and religious belief respectively, level of parents’ education was one of the social factors which impact both optimism and psychological well-being.

The results of current study contribute to the literature in three ways. First, it expands the research on the relationship between optimism/pessimism and psychological well-being in undergraduate students or early adulthood. Second, this study explores social factors in conjunction, instead of focusing on one of the social factors, and their impacts on both optimism and psychological well-being. Finally, the current study expands the better understanding of psychological and sociological issues related to characteristic of optimism and psychological well-being.

The discussion supported the previous studies in this area. This study has implications for psychological counselors, social workers, policy makers in educational setting, and family. The suggestions and limitations of present research were offered.