

The Relationship Between Meaning in Life, Self-Control and Resilience Among Young Adults

Asfiya fathima Mohammed^{1*}, Kavitha Sebastian²

ABSTRACT

The study aims to examine the relationship between meaning in life, self-control and resilience among young adults. Participants included 270 young adults aged between 18 to 25 years. Participants completed the meaning in life scale which was designed by Steger (2006), self-control scale which was developed by Tangney et al. (2004) and the brief resilient coping scale which was developed by Sinclair et al. (2004). Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was computed to analyze the results. It was found that there was a low positive significant relationship between the domain of presence for meaning in life and self-control, domain of presence for meaning in life and resilience, self-control and resilience. There was no significant relationship found between the domain of search for meaning in life and self-control, domain of search for meaning in life and resilience.

Keywords: *Meaning in life, Self-control, Resilience and Young adults*

Dezutter et al., (2013) defined meaning in life as people's concerns with the core significance and purpose of their personal existence. According to Frankl, (1992) meaning provides a purpose for our life. It helps us to set standards and values which helps us to judge our actions. It also gives us a sense of control over the events that take place in our life and helps to improve our self-worth. Many research studies show that meaning in life has been strongly linked to physical and mental well-being (Zika et al., 1992; Bano, 2014). Individuals with a high sense of meaning in life were found to have a decreased chance for divorce, being alone, more chances of being connected with friends, decreased risk for developing a chronic disease and obesity, increased chances of adopting positive healthy behaviors such as exercising, eating fruits and vegetables etc. On the other hand, people with a lack of meaning in life are found to feel bored, dissatisfied, empty, have lack of direction and are unable to find pleasure in the activities that used to offer joy. Cultural differences are found with respect to meaning in life (Steger et al., 2008). In individualistic culture meaning in life is perceived as a means for enhancing meaning in life but actively searching for meaning leads to a low self-image. Thus, people living in individualistic culture value presence for

¹Student of II M.Sc Applied psychology, Department of Applied Psychology and Behavioral Research, Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed College for Women, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

²Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Psychology and Behavioral Research, Justice Basheer Ahmed Sayeed College for Women, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India

*Corresponding Author

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meaning in life more than search for meaning in life. In collectivistic culture people give more importance to self-improvement than self enhancement since search for meaning in life is a means to improve self-people in collectivistic culture value search for meaning in life more than presence for meaning in life.

Self control is defined as the ability to override or change one's inner responses, as well as to interrupt undesired behavioral tendencies and refrain from acting on them (Tangney et al., 2004). Various research studies have shown that self-control is associated with meaning in life among adolescents and adults (Bowlin & Baer, 2012; Brassai et al., 2011; Li, Salcuni, & Delvecchio, 2019). These findings show that meaning in life provides a stable foundation for establishing life goals; additionally in order to accomplish those goals one must find alternatives and identify the best way to achieve them using self-control skills (Vazeou-Nieuwenhuis, Orehek, & Scheier, 2017). Hence, self-control gives us the ability to involve in goal-directed behaviors (Hagger, 2013; Rosenbaum, 2000). In line with this notion, Anic and Tončić (2013) found that among young adults self-control has a mediating role between purpose in life and subjective well-being.

According to Dyer and McGuiness, (1996) resilience is a complex phenomenon that refers to the ability to rebound from and positively adapt to significant stressors. Many research studies show that meaning in life helps us to be resilient in stressful times. Cross sectional studies reveal that meaning in life is negatively associated with psychological distress, anxiety and depression (Debates, 1996). Resilience has also found to be positively associated with self-control (Sagar, 2021). Therefore, it can be concluded that resilience can help people develop self-control skills which are important for achieving goals. However, in recent literature few studies have investigated the relationship between self-control and resilience.

METHODOLOGY

Objective of the study

The study aims to examine the relationships between meaning in life, self-control and resilience among young adults.

Hypotheses

There will be no significant relationship between presence for meaning in life and self-control.
There will be no significant relationship between presence for meaning in life and resilience.
There will be no significant relationship between search for meaning in life and self control.
There will be no significant relationship between search for meaning in life and resilience.
There will be no significant relationship between self control and resilience.

Participants

The participants of the study comprised of 270 young adults (232 females and 38 males) aged between 18 to 25 years. The sampling method that was adopted was convenience sampling.

Data Collection

Online questionnaire was distributed to the target audience via Google forms. The goal of the study was indicated in the web form's description. The participants were encouraged to participate voluntarily. Informed consent was taken and confidentiality of the responses was guaranteed.

Research design: This study used a correlation design to assess the relationship between meaning in life, self control and coping resilience among young adults.

Variables of the study

Operational definition:

- **Meaning in life**
 - Meaning in life refers to the people's concerns with the core significance and purpose of their personal existence. (Sherman & Simonton, 2012)
- **Self-Control**
 - According to Tangney et al., (2004) self control is defined the ability to override or change one's inner responses, as well as to interrupt undesired behavioral tendencies and refrain from acting on them.
- **Resilience**
 - According to Dyer and McGuiness, (1996) resilience is a complex phenomenon that refers to the ability to rebound from and positively adapt to significant stressors.

Tools used for the Study:

The Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ)

The meaning in life questionnaire (Steger et.al, 2006) is a 10 item self-survey to assess the dimensions of meaning in life i.e., presence for meaning in life and search for meaning in life. The Participants rated the item on a seven-point likert scale ranging from 1 (Absolutely untrue) to 7 (Absolutely true).

Scoring: The total score was calculated for each individual by summing up the items belonging to both the dimensions of meaning in life. The scores for both dimensions range from 5 to 35. Scoring is kept continuous.

The Brief Self-Control Scale (BSCS)

The brief self control scale is 13 item scale which was developed by (Tangney et.al, 2004) to measure general trait of self control. The participant rated the scale according to the extent to which the statement reflects how they typically are ranging from 1 (not at all like me) to 5 (very much like me).

Scoring: Scores range from 13 to 65. Each individual score is calculated summing up the raw scores from each item. Scoring is kept continuous.

Brief Resilient Coping Scale (BRCS)

The brief resilient coping scale is a 4 item self survey which was developed by (Sinclair et.al, 2004) to measure the tendencies to cope with stress adaptively. The participants rate the statements according to the extent to which it describes their behavior and action. The scale is based on a 5 point likert scale ranging from 1 (does not describe me at all) to 5 (describes me very well).

Scoring: Scores range from 4 to 20, scores between 4-13 indicate low resilient coping, 14-16 indicate medium resilient coping and scores ranging from 17 to 20 indicate high coping resilient coping.

Statistical analysis

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was computed to determine the relationship between meaning in life, self control and coping resilience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table I: Pearson's Product Moment correlation between presence for meaning in life and self control among young adults

Variables	N	Correlation Coefficient
Presence for meaning in life Self control	270	0.21**

** $p < 0.01$

The correlation coefficient between presence for meaning in life and self control among young adults was significant, $r(268) = 0.21$, $p < 0.01$ this indicates that there is a positive, low correlation between presence for meaning in life and self control among young adults which is statistically significant. It can be reasoned that the extent to which a person feels that their life are of meaning is related to a person's ability to control him or herself.

The present study supports the findings by Stavrou et al.,(2020), Li et al.,(2019) which also found a positive significant relationship between presence for meaning in life and self control. Thus, there is some evidence to conclude that there is a significant positive correlation between presence for meaning in life and self control. Therefore, hypothesis 1 which states that "There will be no significant relationship between presence for meaning in life and self control" was not accepted.

Table II: Pearson's Product Moment correlation between presence for meaning in life and resilience among young adults

Variables	N	Correlation Coefficient
Presence for meaning in life Resilience	270	0.16**

** $p < 0.01$

The correlation coefficient between presence for meaning in life and resilience among young adults was significant, $r(268) = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$ this indicates that there is a positive, low correlation between presence for meaning in life and resilience among young adults which is statistically significant. It can be reasoned that the extent to which a person feels that their life are of meaning is related to a person's tendency to cope with stress.

The present study supports the findings by Platitudou & Daniilidou, (2021) which also found a positive significant relationship between presence for meaning in life and resilience. Thus, there is some evidence to conclude that there is a significant positive correlation between presence for meaning in life and resilience. Therefore, hypothesis 2 which states that "There will be no significant relationship between presence for meaning in life and resilience" was not accepted.

Table III: Pearson's Product Moment correlation between search for meaning in life and self control among young adults

Variables	N	Correlation Coefficient
Presence for meaning in life Self control	270	- 0.09NS

NS- Not Significant

The correlation coefficient between search for meaning in life and self-control among young adults was not significant, $r(268) = - 0.09$, NS this indicates that there is no significant relationship between search for meaning in life and self-control among young adults. It can be reasoned that the extent to which a person is motivated to find meaning or deepen their

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understanding of meaning in their lives is not related to a person's ability to control him or herself.

The present study contradicts the findings by Stavrou et al., (2020), Li et al., (2019) which found negative significant relationship between search for meaning in life and self control. Thus difference in results might due to cultural and ethnic differences which exist among the participants of the study. Therefore, hypothesis 3 which states that "There will be no significant relationship between search for meaning in life and self control" was accepted.

Table IV: Pearson's Product Moment correlation between search for meaning in life and resilience among young adults

Variables	N	Correlation Coefficient
Presence for meaning in life Resilience	270	0.09NS

NS- Not Significant

The correlation coefficient between search for meaning in life and resilience among young adults was not significant, $r(268) = 0.09$, NS indicates that there is no significant relationship between search for meaning in life and resilience among young adults. It can be reasoned that the extent to which a person is motivated to find meaning or deepen their understanding of meaning in their lives is not related to a person's tendency to cope with stress.

The present study contradicts the findings by Platsidou & Daniilidou, (2021) which found a low significant positive relationship between search for meaning in life and resilience. Thus, differences in results may be due to cultural and ethnic differences which exist among the participants of the study. Therefore, hypothesis 4 which states that "There will be no significant relationship between search for meaning in life and resilience" was accepted.

Table V: Pearson's Product Moment correlation between self-control and resilience among young adults

Variables	N	Correlation Coefficient
Presence for meaning in life Resilience	270	0.30**

** $p < 0.01$

The correlation coefficient between self-control and resilience among young adults was significant, $r(268) = 0.30$, $p < 0.01$ indicates that there is a positive, low correlation between self-control and resilience among young adults which is statistically significant. It can be reasoned that a person's ability to control him or herself is related to a person's tendency to cope with stress.

The present study supports the findings by Sagar, (2021) which also found a positive significant relationship between self-control and resilience. Thus, there is some evidence to conclude that there is a significant positive correlation between self-control and resilience. Therefore, hypothesis 5 which states that "There will be no significant relationship between self-control and resilience" was not accepted.

CONCLUSION

- There is a significant positive relationship between presence for meaning in life and self control among young adults

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- There is a significant positive relationship between presence for meaning in life and resilience among young adults
- There is no significant relationship between search for meaning in life and self control among young adults
- There is no significant relationship between search for meaning in life and resilience among young adults
- There is a significant positive relationship between self control and resilience among young adults

Implications

According to Frankl (1992) many emotional problems result from a failure to find meaning in life and can only be resolved through finding something to make life worth living. People must be encouraged to find meaning in their life as research studies show that people with a sense of meaning in life have a good relationship with people around them, they are less vulnerable to depression, have lower rates of stress and better coping skills. Some of the ways by which people can realize their meaning in life is to indulge in activities that drive our passion, developing relationships with people that increase our sense of belonging, taking control of our environment by implementing a fixed routine and scheduling time for unexpected tasks, helping others, goal setting and broadening our mind by exploring new ideas and belief that reach beyond our comfort zone. Psychotherapy can aid us in making sense of what happened in our past, what is happening in our present and find healthy way of managing our future.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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