

**Psychological Hardiness, Family Environment and Love of Life:
A study on Youth**

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ABSTRACT

Various scholars and professionals have emphasized the role of psychological hardiness and family environment in one's personality. The present study aimed to examine the relationships of psychological hardiness and family environment with love towards life.

The study was conducted on a random sample of 230 adolescents studying in government and private colleges of India ranging between the ages 18 to 24. The study was based on a correlational design. A significant positive relationship was found between the positive dimensions of hardiness and love of life. However, there was a significant negative relationship between negative dimensions of hardiness and love of life. Also, there was a significant positive relationship between family relationship (family environment) and love of life. Regression analysis revealed that positive and negative dimensions of hardiness and family environment are significant predictors of Love of Life. Further, the analysis revealed that total family environment emerged as a significant predictor of global psychological hardiness among the youth. Implications of the results are discussed.

Keywords: *Family environment, Psychological hardiness, Love of Life.*

Family processes and its effect on human development have been widely studied in psychological literature (Collins & Laursen, 2004; Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Metzger, 2006). In recent studies, associations between dysfunctional family relationships and adjustment problems in childhood and amongst the youth have gained importance (Chedid, Romo, & Chagnard, 2009). With the growing expansion of the field of Positive Psychology, researchers have increasingly investigating the impact of the family on personality traits such as hardiness, resilience, and individual's well-being as a whole. Certain studies show that favourable family interactions and healthy parenting leads to positive conditions like enhanced self-esteem, positive appraisals of stress-producing situations, improved life skills and increased liking towards self and one's life as a whole. Previous research studies have also shown that individuals who are psychologically

hardy and have a positive family environment experience life and the life-activities as interesting and enjoyable.

Psychological hardiness: refers to the coping strategies, attitudes and beliefs that help people work through the stressors of life. These traits tend to fall into three major categories: Challenge, Control and Commitment (Maddi & Kobasa, 1979). These are also referred to as the **positive dimensions of hardiness:**

Control: The control disposition is expressed as a tendency to feel and act as if one is influential (*rather than helpless*) in the face of the varied contingencies of life.

Commitment: The commitment disposition is expected as a tendency to involve oneself in (*rather than experience alienation from*) whatever one is doing or encounters.

Challenge: The challenge disposition is expressed as the belief that change rather than stability (*Rigidity*) is normal in life and that the anticipation of changes are interesting incentives to growth rather than threats to security.

These three traits result in empowerment, confidence and positive thinking to succeed.

Negative dimensions of hardiness:

Powerlessness: a state of mind wherein people feel they have no control over or effect on aspects or occurrences which impact their wellbeing, personal lives, or the culture wherein they live.

Alienation: is the condition of being separated or marginalized from other individuals or some larger segment of society. This can refer to a person's social separation from a greater aspect of society.

Rigidity: refer to the tendency to persevere, which is the inability to change habits and the inability to modify concepts and attitudes once developed.

There are two forms of hardiness - positive (challenge, control and commitment) and negative (powerlessness, rigidity and alienation), where both play a major role in building one's personality, they both have an impact on one's life and personality, and are independent as well as interdependent.

Family Environment: A family consists of people who look after us, play an essential role in upbringing us and teach us the lesson in life. Family environment is considered as a system where the behaviour and relationship among all family members is interdependent. A stimulating physical environment, encouragement of achievement and affection are repeatedly linked to better performance of children. Every individual bears an impact of

the environment in which she is brought up. Family is almost the exclusive environmental factor, which influences the first few primitive years of life.

The child's family environment covers quality of parenting, cognitive stimulation, and quality of the physical family environment. The central characteristic of the family environment is the quality of the relationship between the parents. Another characteristic of the family environment is the mental health of parents. Factors like Absenteeism of father or mother i.e. when the father is absent due to separation, death, illness, work abroad etc, this can associate with the burden on child resulting in the quality of their parent-child relationship.

Love of life: It is defined as a generally positive attitude towards one's own life, a liking for it, and pleasurable attachment to it. On the basis of the published research of the last two decades, it could be concluded that we are in the **Age of positive psychology**.

Love of Life is a broad new concept which may be considered either as a correlate or a theorem-derivative in the domain of wellbeing or happiness. It denotes holding fast to, and grasping at life, and a pleasurable attachment to, and appreciation for, life.

There has been widespread interest in research on happiness, hope, optimism, and satisfaction with life (Argyle, 2002; Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003; Chang, 2001; Diener, 1999; Lopez & Snyder, 2003; Snyder, 2000; Snyder & Lopez, 2002; Veenhoven, 2002). It is supposed that there are individual differences in Love of Life.

On the basis of this assumption, a corollary can be introduced as follows: love of life vis-à-vis hate of life is a continuum or bipolarity. Every person has a position on this continuum. The high score on the latter pole, that is, hate of life, may lead to self-destructive behaviour, such as suicide. Another hypothesis can also be introduced, that LL is positively correlated with happiness, hope, optimism, and satisfaction with life, while it is negatively correlated with negative factors such as anxiety, depression, neuroticism, and so on.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sampling method used was non-random convenient sampling. The sample included 230 students – 115 boys and 115 girls, studying in different colleges in India. The age range was 18-24 years.

Instruments

The data collection was done using 3 tools

1. The Brief Family Relationship Scale: This was measured using ‘A Brief Measure of the Relationship Dimension in Family Functioning’ developed by Henry et al (2014). It consists of 3 subscales -Cohesion, expressiveness and Conflict (9 items each). These subscales measure support, expression of opinions, and angry conflict within a family. The scale consists of 16 items and is a Likert type scale. Internal consistency of was acceptable for Cohesion (.83) andConflict (.80), and for the full scale BFRS (.88) but weaker for Expressiveness (.65).

2. The Dispositional Resilience Scale-II (DRS-II): The DRS-II was constructed by Sinclair et al (2003). It is a focal hardiness instrument consisting of 18 items. It is a 5-point Likert scale.

3. The Love of Life Scale (LLS):The Love of Life Scale (LLS) was constructed by Ahmed M. Abdel-Khalek, (2007). The scale consists of 16 short statements with high internal consistency ($\alpha = .91$) and temporal reliability (.81). Factor analysis yielded three high-loaded factors labelled Positive attitude towards life, happy consequences of love of life, and Meaningfulness of life, with moderate inter factor correlations.

of relationship between Family environment and Love of Life.

Procedure

For the purpose of data collection, both purposive sampling and snowball sampling was used. Data was collected through pen and paper as well as with the help of google forms. Thereafter the data was analysed. Correlation and regression was performed to analyse the data.

RESULTS**Table No. 1 showing Mean and SD's of the variables**

Variables	Mean	SD
Love of Life	66.3304	13.27
Positive Dimensions	34.3174	4.80
Negative Dimensions	25.4696	5.91
Family Environment	23.0783	4.58

Table No. 2 showing correlations of the positive and negative dimensions of hardiness and family environment with love of life

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Love of Life</i>
<i>Positive Dimensions</i>	.639**
<i>Negative Dimensions</i>	-.279**
<i>Family Environment</i>	.295**

** Significant at 0.01 level

Correlational analysis showed that the positive dimensions of hardiness positively correlated with love of life, $r(230)=.639, p<0.01$. A negative correlation was found between the negative dimensions of hardiness and love of life, $r(230)=-.279, p<0.01$. Relationship between family environment and love of life ($r=.295$) was also significant at the 0.01 level.

Table No. 3 showing Regression Analysis**TABLE3.1 Model Summary**

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of Estimate	F	Significance
1	.682*	.465	.457	9.77535	65.36	.000

Predictors: (Constant), BRFs, Positive Dimensions, Negative Dimensions

Table 3.2 Linear Regression Analysis for Love of Life

MODEL	Standard Error	Standardized coefficients (Beta)	t	Significance
Constant	7.152		.820	.413
Positive Dimensions	.137	.596	12.032	.000
Negative Dimensions	.118	-.125	-2.378	.018
Family Environment	.152	.166	3.173	.002

Dependant Variable: Love of Life

It is apparent from Table 3 that the predictor variables of the study viz. positive dimensions of hardiness, negative dimensions of hardiness and family environment, account for 45.7% variance in the criterion variable i.e. love of life. Also, from Table 3.1, it can be observed that all the variables significantly contribute to variance in love of life. Also, positive dimensions of hardiness significantly predict love of life.

DISCUSSION

If family environment is good, peaceful and easy, one will love life more. The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship of Psychological Hardiness and Family environment with Love of Life.

The aim of this study was to draw upon how much of an individual's family environment and psychological hardiness contributes to their liking towards life. Love of life is a variable which is not much studied and is a new construct in the domain of well-being. In today's modern life, there is a need for every individual to develop a positive attitude towards their life and to deal effectively with upcoming daily hassles. Individuals who are psychologically hardy and have a positive home environment experience life and the life-activities as interesting and enjoyable and thus this study will extend our understanding towards the factors which contribute to love towards life.

Analysis of the results reveal a positive relationship between positive dimensions of hardiness and love of life ($r=.639$) significant at 0.01 levels. The three positive dimensions of hardiness are Challenge, Control and Commitment. According to Kobasa, individuals high in hardiness tend to put stressful circumstances into perspective and interpret them in a less threatening manner. As a consequence of these optimistic appraisals, the impact of the stressful events is reduced and they are less likely to be pessimistic towards life. A study by Chamran (2011) had also shown similar results that there was a significant

positive relationship between hardiness (commitment, control and challenge), life satisfaction, hope which in turn leads to more positive attitude towards love of life.

If individuals engage in daily practice of hardiness, they may find themselves not only surviving but also thriving on adversity. Thriving refers to an ability to benefit and grow from a difficult experience so that we are able to function stronger, better and more joyfully than we did prior to facing hardship and develop a positive attitude towards love of life.

The dimensions of well-being directly correlate with an individual's attitude towards love of life. According to Easterlin (2006) & Leikes (2008) good job, better physical and mental health, positive life events, healthy interpersonal relationships, and high income are the significant correlates of high level of life satisfaction. Results of different studies illustrated that positive attitude towards life is determined by good level of health especially mental health, happiness, satisfaction with life, psychological wellbeing, high levels of self-concept and self-esteem in individuals.

The relationship between negative dimensions of hardiness and love of life has been found to be negative and significant ($r = -.279$, $p < 0.01$). Sinclair and colleagues (Sinclair & Tetrick, 2000; Sinclair, Oliver, Ippolito, & Ascalon, 2003) proposed a dual-process view of hardiness, which included the positive and negative poles of hardiness. The dual process model reflects the idea that personality traits include patterns of both positive and negative factors. Thus, people may access either positive or negative patterns (or both) as they go through stressful episodes. Moreover, negative factors such as powerlessness, alienation and rigidity are indirectly proportional to love towards one's own life, supporting the results of the study.

Therefore, people who have courage (hardiness) to simultaneously favour involvement with others and events (commitment), keep trying to influence the outcomes going on around them learning from their influence the outcomes going on around them learning from their experiences, whether positive or negative (challenge), have more fulfilling, satisfying, resilient, and remarkable lives (Maddi et al., 2002).

Analysis of results indicated a positive correlation between family relationship & love of life ($r = .295$) significant at the 0.01 levels. According to Mohandas Gandhi 'where there is love there is life'. Being a part of family means you will learn to love and be loved for the rest of your life. Family relationships are perfect makeup of group cohesion, expressiveness and management of conflicts. Group cohesion is how well people of the

group coordinate with each other and by understanding; respecting and accepting every one happily we learn how to manage our roles with support to family in maintaining love of life.

And expressiveness is a principal pattern of displaying expressions of emotions within the family as a whole (Halberstadt, Cassidy, Stiffer, Parke & Fox, 1995). Having the chance to be expressive in the family strengthens the confidence in public, enhancing one's personality and making them love life more. Previous Research also show that those youths show more success in life who belong to households in which parents are both supportive and are accepting the child's needs for more psychological independence (Olsson et al. 1999; Madhu and Matla, 2004; Powell, 2006; Lee et al. 2006 and Deepshikha and Bhanot, 2011).

Therefore, as a result of healthy family relationships and environment, an individual develops more faith towards life, loving it more in the long run. Thus, it can be concluded that not only do the positive and negative dimensions of hardiness and family environment correlate with love of life, but they also significantly predict the same.

Implications of the study

The findings of the study can help to bring into focus:

- For better mental health of the youth and enhancing their positive mental states, family can play a great role.
- Youth from a warm and supportive family environment and with high levels of control, commitment and challenge as compared with youth from a stressful family environment, characterized by high conflict and control, can adopt more positive mental states.

Limitations of the study

Like all research, this study has its **limitations**:

- .On a standardised Indian sample, scales of foreign authors have been used.
- The results are not free from sampling errors.
- Questionnaire as a tool for data collection is prone to have socially-desirable responses
- Quantitative measures of data collection were used. Qualitative measures like interview, case study method was not used for data collection.

CONCLUSION

The purpose this research was to examine the relationship between psychological hardiness, family environment and love of life among the youth. The research results reveal that hardiness and family environment had a statistically significant relationship with love of life and they accounted for 45.7% variance in love for life. Further study on love of life can open up the possibility of us looking forward to understanding how various factors can change our perspective towards life. High love for life can act as a buffer against the impact of stressful events. Given the link between family environment, psychological hardiness and one's love for life, further research can lead to better intervention efforts to promote their optimal development.

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