



**International Journal of Biology, Pharmacy  
and Allied Sciences (IJBPAS)**

*'A Bridge Between Laboratory and Reader'*

[www.ijbpas.com](http://www.ijbpas.com)

---

---

**THE MEDIATORY EFFECT OF OPTIMISM ON THE DIFFICULTY HANDLING  
OF EMOTIONS AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS AMONG FEMALE  
STUDENTS HABITUATED IN THE DORMITORIES OF ISFAHAN UNIVERSITY**

**FARZANEH MANZAREE TAVAKOLI**

Department of Psychology, Baft Branch, Islamic Azad University, Baft, Iran

(Email: Farzanehmanzaree.t@Gmail.com)

**ABSTRACT**

The present study aims to determine the mediatory effect of optimism on the difficulty handling of emotion and the symptoms of psychological disorders among the students.

The instruments employed here are the questionnaire of psychological disorder symptoms (SCL90), the questionnaire of the difficulty handling of emotions (DERS), the questionnaire of optimism LOT-R (Clever and shear, 1989). The indirect effect (the mediatory variable) was tested by using Preacher & Hayes' (2004) Bootstrap method on Marco SPSS. The research method employed the Correlation of Statistical population, which included all the fresh women students habituated in the Shohada Dormitory Complex in Isfahan University on 2013, of which 200 students were selected at simple randomness.

The results showed that the difficulty handling of emotions among the students with psychological disorders is influenced the theoretical and interactional optimism ( $P < 0.01$ ). Further, the optimism intermediates the relationship between the difficulty handling of emotions and the symptoms of psychological disorder.

**Keywords: optimism, the difficulty handling of emotions, the symptoms of psychological disorders, the dormitory students**

**INTRODUCTION**

Over recent years, psychopathology has confronting the complications and issues of accredited a great importance on the ways of life to improve the physical, mental, and

social health of the individuals; and, it introduces the cognitive ability as a best way of handling the emotions [1].

The cognitive guideline model of emotions is among the prominent models of the roles of neurotic systems to control the emotions. These models incorporate the different cognitive processes effective on the emotional actions. The cognitive emotional control can be defined as managing the data from provoked emotions with the help of conscious cognitive guidelines [3]. The emotional control refers to the processes we use to control whether emotions to experiences, when to experience them, and how to express them [4]. Also, it is assumed as a great structure which includes some control processes such as handling the emotions, and includes some fundamental and basic properties of the emotions such as physiological, social, behavioral, and cognitive processes [3].

According to the results by Martin & Dahlen (2005) the individuals afflicted with depression and anxiety often take inefficient strategies such as ruminative thinking, disastrous treatment, and self-reproach in confrontation with the unappealing events. In the view of these researchers, these strategies enhance and enlarge the effect of depression;

in the other hand, positive assessment establishes a reverse relationship with depression; and, optimism, being a compatible qualification and a positive assessment, has attracted a great deal of the attention of the psychopathologists. Then, it is assumed that optimism or the ability of adhesion to and agreement with a positive recognition of the present and future events is something which is experienced by the majority of the humans. Although, optimism is a common humane experience but, it adopts different forms due to individual and social conditions.

To sum up the theoretical and research principles, it can be said that the difficulty handling of the emotions causes lots of negative consequences that can endanger the individual's mental health. In addition, in the studies by Fisher (2003), Hirtell (2004), Attar (2005), Fromm (2000), Besharat (2010), Taylor & et al (2000), they have shown that correct handling of the emotions shows negative relationship with the symptoms of psychological disorders; also, in different studies by Tahmasbiyan & Kakabraee (2011), Hercul (2007), Vilimas (2005), Yar Ahmadi (2011), Attari (2008), Paskar & et al (2009), Mercolla (2008)..., they have shown that positive qualification of optimism is able of

assuring the mental health and welfare of the individual [7]. Also, on the researches carried out by Heydari & Eghbal (2011), Aghae & et al (2007), Jamali zavaree (2008), Scheer & Carver (2006), Carver & Scheier (2005), Mccee & Plant (2009), Argail, translated by Anaraki & et al (2003), Robinson (2007), the hypothesis has been confirmed that the optimistic individuals are more able to handle and manage their emotions compared to the pessimistic individuals.

The importance of the present study aims at two points: First, in this study, the direct relationship between the difficulty handling of the emotions and the symptoms of psychological disorders is tested. But, besides this direct relationship, the present study using the mediatory process aims to determine how the handling of emotions leads in the decrease or increase of psychological disorders. In the other hand, due to the increased figures of attending the Counseling Centers for students over recent years that is indicative of the presence of mental, social and educational problems and disorders, and unhandled and uncontrolled emotions among them; since, the students majoring in different fields will be responsible of securing and improving the health level of the society, they must be treated closely in order for them to be

able to play their roles effectively as the educated and expert force work [8]. And , since there has not been conducted a previous research in this area in Iran, so the main aim in this study is to determine the relationship between the difficulty handling of the emotions, the psychological disorders ,and the mediatory optimism among the students.

### METHODOLOGY

This study uses correlation method. The difficulty handling of emotion is innate variable, the optimism is the mediatory variable and the psychological disorders are the final outward variable.

The data were analyzed with Pearson's correlation coefficient in order to testify the hypotheses of the mediatory relationships in the study, Baron & Kenny's (1986) presumptions [9] were evaluated. Baron & Kenny declared that M variable is mediatory provided that: 1) X variance (the independent variable) predicts significantly the M variance (in fig. 1,  $a \neq 0$ ), 2) M variance predicts significantly the Y variance (the dependent variance) (in figure 1,  $b \neq 0$ ), 3) upon controlling the path between a and b, the relationship between X and Y is decreased or is insignificant. To determine the level of significance, the effect of the indirect independent variable on the dependent

variable through the mediatory variable, Preacher & Hayes' bootstrap method on Macro program was employed. So, in this study Preacher & Hayes' (2004) macro program in SPSS was employed.

In this study, the statistical samples were all the fresh women students habituated in Shohada Dormitory complex in Isfahan University on 2013, of which 220 students were selected at a simple randomness. To measure the sample body Kokran formula was adopted; and, considering the sample size and the variance of one the variables, the sample size was calculated to be 220 people. After the distribution and recollecting of the questionnaires of the study, there were 200 analyzable questionnaires (the return percentage equaled 89). It should be noted that the samples aged between 18-22 years of old.

### **The study Instruments**

To gather the information of the different variables of the study 3 types of questionnaires were employed: 1) the questionnaire of symptoms of psychological disorders (SCL90), 2) the questionnaire of the difficulty handling of emotions (DERS), and 3) Carver & Scheier's (1989) questionnaire of optimism LOT-R. Every one of these scales is described in the following lines.

### **The questionnaire of Difficulty Handling of Emotions (DERS)**

This questionnaire is an index of self-reporting that is more comprehensive than the present tools for the evaluation of the difficulty handling of emotions. It includes 36 phrases and 6 sub-scales. The subscales include: 1- unresponsive to emotions 2- problems to approach purposeful behavior, 3- difficulty handling of impulses, 4- lack of emotional awareness, 5- limited access to processes of handling emotions 6- the transparency of emotions, every responses from the tested are appointed for in a 5 scale of: 1- Almost never, 2- sometimes, 3- Nearly half of the time, 4- most of the time, 5- Always, in which scoring higher scores is indicative of more difficulties of handling the emotions. The results in this study showed a high inward parallelism for total scale (SD=17, 78, and M=91.31  $\alpha$ = 0.86) of an Iranian population. In this study, the mean, the standard deviation, and the perpetuity scores are 84.0702, 21.53563, and 0.93, respectively.

### **The Questionnaire of optimism LOT-R**

This instrument was defined by Carver & Sheier (1989), the authors of LOT-R, and it includes 10 items. To obtain the optimism score, 6 items are used. 3 items pointed at a

positive direction; while, 3 items pointed at a negative direction. It is scored in Licker's scale of 5 values: from 0- I completely disagree, to 4-I agree completely. The negative expressions of the items (3, 7, and 9) are encoded in a reverse manner prior to scoring and are added up to the tested scores of the items (1, 4, and 10) in order to calculate the total score of optimism. Then, the scores are arranged in a range of 0-24. Crown Bach's  $\alpha$  for all the six items is 0.78, which is indicative of the fact that LOT-R shows a relevant level of internal parallelism and correlation. The mean score, the standard deviation, the justifiability and perpetuity scores in this study questionnaire were 13.3041, 3.72605, 0.443, and 0.66, respectively.

#### **The questionnaire of the symptoms of the psychological disorders (SCL90-R)**

Since the diagnosis of the ill from the healthy requires a short and valid instrument, then the questionnaire of the symptoms of the psychological disorders (SCL90-R) is an instrument to help with identification and screening of the afflicted individuals with psychological disorders. Now, it includes 90 questions in 9 sub-scales of incarnation, obsession, sensitivity, mutual relationships, depression, anxiety, aggression, the phobias,

paranoid feelings, and psychosis. The questionnaire measures the disorders in a 5 scale of zero "null" to 4 "severe". This questionnaire has been employed broadly. The perpetuity of this questionnaire in different studies has been variously reported to be from 0.77 to 0.98; and, it enjoys high justifiability. Drugotis, Rickles and Rock (1976) have reported that it shows 9 dimensional synchronous perpetuity coefficients with the Minnesota Multi-Dimensional questionnaire (MMPI) except for the forceful obsession scale of 36% to be 73%; which, all were significant on the 1% level of significance ( $p>0.01$ )[11]. Drugotis, Moro, Feting, and Patman (1983-1984) conducted an epidemiological survey of psychological disorders in several centers for cancer studies using this test (SCI-90R) as a screening instrument. The results of the study indicated the strong fitness of the test in the diagnosis of the afflicted. The mean score and the standard deviation of this questionnaire are 87.4637, and 53.25610, respectively. Crown Bach's  $\alpha$  was calculated to be 0.98.

#### **RESULTS**

The mean score, the standard deviation, and the correlation of the variables in the study are presented in table1. As it can be observed, the handling of emotions shows a

significantly negative relationship with optimism and the symptoms of the psychological disorders ( $p < 0.01$ ). Then, the difficulty handling of the emotions with optimism and the psychological disorders is confirmed.

The direct and overall effects of the study variables, which are necessary for the mediatory analysis, by using Preacher & Hayes' (2004) method, are presented in table 2. In the table, the 3 necessary regression scores, which Baron & Kenny determined as effective in the determination of the mediator, can be evaluated. As it can be noted from table 2, the difficulty handling of the emotions with unstandardized coefficient of 0.36 can significantly predict the symptoms of the psychological disorders ( $p < 0.01$ ). Then, the provision of the c path to be significant is observed. The difficulty handling of emotions with unstandardized coefficient of -0.05 predicts significantly the optimism. Then, the provision of the a-path to be significant is observed. Also, optimism with the unstandardized coefficient of 0.52 and the level of significance 0.0001 predicts the symptoms of psychological disorders. Then, the provision of the b path to be significant is

observed. As it has been presented in table 2, when the effect of optimism on the difficulty handling of emotions and the symptoms of psychological disorders is controlled, the unstandardized coefficient will be -0.165 ( $c'$  path). This coefficient path is less than C but still reveals significance.

To evaluate the effect of mediatory optimism on the relationship of the difficulty handling of the emotions and the symptoms of psychological disorder and the significance of the indirect method, Preacher & Hayes' (2004) Bootstrap method on Macro program was adopted. The results from Bootstrap are presented on **Table 3**. As it has been shown on table 3 the lower and upper bounds are -0.156 and 0.027, respectively. The confidence distance is 99; and, the number of sample reselection from Bootstrap equals 1000. The absence of zero in this distance indicates the significance of this indirect path. Then, according to the significance of this indirect path, the main hypothesis is confirmed. Since, the result for  $a \times b \times c'$  is positive, the mediator is called complementary mediator [12]. The model of this indirect effect and the unstandardized coefficients for these paths are illustrated in **Figure 2**.

**Table 1: The internal correlation between the study variables and their level of significance**

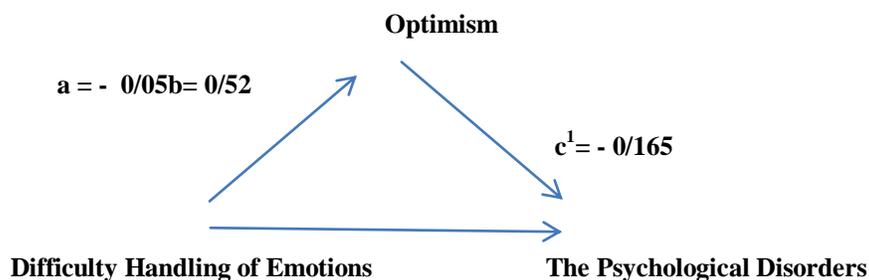
	Mean	Standard deviation	1	2	3
1-the difficulty handling of emotions	88.00	14.95	1.00	-	-
2- optimism	15.67	8.26	-0.44**	1.00	-
3- the symptoms of psychological disorders	82.63	17.66	-0.41**	0.59**	1.0

**Table 2: The direct and overall effects of the study Variables**

	B coefficient	Standard deviation	T-test	The level of significance
<b>c path</b> (the direct effect of the difficulty handling of emotions on the symptoms of psychological disorders)	-0.36	0.056	-4.61	0.0001
<b>a path</b> (the direct effect of the difficulty handling of emotion on the optimism )	-0.05	0.014	-3.62	0.0005
<b>b path</b> (the direct effect of optimism on the symptoms of psychological disorders)	0.52	0.343	-4.73	0.0001
<b>c' path</b> (the direct effect of difficulty handling of emotions on the symptoms of psychological disorders with optimism)	-0.162	0.054	-3.20	0.0017

**Table 3: The Bootstrap result for the difficulty handling of emotions → optimism → symptoms of psychological disorders**

Data	Bootstrap	Directedness	Standard deviation	Upper Bound	Lower Bound
-0.085	-0.085	0.0001	0.029	-0.027	-0.156



**Figure 1: The Final model of the study (the indirect effect of the difficulty handling of emotions on the symptoms of psychological disorders through optimism)**

---

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This study aimed to determine the effect of the difficulty handling of emotions on the symptoms of psychological disorders and optimism. The study results indicate that the handling of emotions shows a positive relationship with optimism; either, optimism is in a significantly negative relationship with the symptoms of psychological disorders. Then, optimism can be regarded as a mediator variable between the difficulty handling of the emotions and the symptoms of psychological disorders. The finding of this study is in accordance with the findings by Tahmasbiyan & Kakabraee (2011), Hecell (2007), Vilimas (2005), Atari (2008), Pasar & et al (2009), Mercolla (2008), Ahmadi (2001), Heydari & Eghbal (2011), Aghae & et al (2007), Jamali Zavaree (2008), Scheer & Carver (2006), Carver & Scheier (2005), Mccee & Plant (2009), Argail, trans by Anarki & et al (2003), Rabinson (2007), Hirtell (2004), Fisher (2003), Atari (2005), Froom (2000), Besharat (2010), Taylor & et al (2000). These general conclusions are presented: individuals with weaker cognitive methods such as ruminative thinking, phobias, and self-reproach are more endangered with emotional damages and they are more probable to be afflicted with

different psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety and obsession compared to other people. While as, people who use more favorable methods such as positive assessment, they are less likely to be afflicted with psychosis and psychological disorders [13]. The positive assessment is a cognitive method to handle the emotions, involving adopting mental processes in order to reduce the emotional pressures in potential moments of invoked emotion, resulting in the decrease of expressive behaviors and less negative emotions [4]. Also, optimism, as a positive qualification and cognitive guideline, can lead to the handling of correct emotions. Optimism, in general, involves prosperity in the course of events. These events being the out come of fixed variables are regarded as innate and overall. The optimist use the guidelines of altering the controllable aspects of the pressure factors, the data search, planning and positive reconstruction; while the pessimists use these guidelines: postponing their duties, abiding, avoiding, desertion, self-reproach, blaming others, or drug abuse [14].

So, considering the above mentioned results, instructing cognitive guidelines concentrating on planning, positive concentration and reassessment on regular terms is a necessity

for handling the emotions and augmenting the positive personal qualifications in order to increase the physical, mental, and social health of the students.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Taylor, M. Psychological separation and adjustment to college. *J counseling Psychol* 2009; 3: 286-94.
- [2] Bagby.H.K. implementing a psychological using construct and control stress of the trantheoretical Model to predict classes. *Annual of Behavioral medicine*.2010, 40(2): 150-163.
- [3] Ellia, K.P & Kelin,o. Neural correlates of conscious self-regulation of emotion. *J Neurosci*; 2009, 21(18): RC165.
- [4] Ahmadi, A, Relationship between Emotion regulation and mental health.*Knowledge and Research in Psychology*;2013, 33: 117-30. [Persian]
- [5] Moss, J& Shefer. *Handbook of Emotion Regulation*. New York: Guilford Press. Individual Differences. 2009, 30, 1311- 1327.
- [6] Ross, B., Kohen, J. M. The relation of depression and anxiety to life stress and achievement in students. *British Journal of Psychology*, 2007, 95, 509-521.
- [7] Forro, G. Recent developments in alexithymia theory and research, *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 2000, 45, 134-145.
- [8] Shahidi, A. Relationship between spiritual well-being and mental health.*Knowledge and Research in Psychology*; 2009, 43: 157-70. [Persian]
- [9] Ansaree, A., Bahrami, B. The Investigation of the Relationship between Personality Traits and Marital Satisfaction and Mental Health among the Women Seeking Divorce in the Guilan Province. *J. Basic Appl. Sci. Res* , 2008, 2(3): 2385-94. [Persian]
- [10] Baron, R. M., & Kenny, D. A. The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1986, 51, 1173-1182.
- [11] Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. SPSS and SAS procedures for estimating indirect effects in simple mediation models. *Behavior Research*

- Methods, Instruments, and Computers, 2004, 36, 717-731.
- [12] Palatcion, P & Ellison, N, Spritrial well-being variable distinction in social psychological research, hgu journal: 1983, 34, 3, 12-10.
- [13] Elison, J & Smith, p. optimism and control strees may protect against heart disease. Psychosomatic medicine. 1995, 82, 102-111.
- [14] Zhao, X., Lynch, J. G., Jr, & Chen, Q. Reconsidering Baron and Kenny: Myths and truths about mediation analysis. Journal of Consumer Research, 2010, 37, 197-206.
- [15] Ahmadi M, Spritrial well being-Pessimism and Coping Strategies: Prediction of Psychological Adjustment in Adolescents. IJPCP; 2011, 12 (4):380-89. [Persian]