



Relationship between psychological Hardiness and Emotional Control Index: A Communicative Approach

¹Alma Azarian, ²Ali Asghar Farokhzadian and ³Elahe Habibi

¹MA in General Psychology, Payame Noor University, Rezvanshahr, Iran

²PhD Candidate of Psychology, Department of Literature and Humanities, Lorestan University, Iran

³BA in General Psychology, Payame Noor University, Rezvanshahr, Iran

ABSTRACT

Psychological hardiness is considered an effective component on multiple levels of emotions and self-conscious excitements. Objective: This study was conducted with the aim of investigating the relationship between psychological hardiness with four indicators of depression, anxiety, anger, positive affect in women 20-35 years old residing in Rezvanshahr, a city in Guilan province, Iran. The present study was cross-sectional and it was conducted in the framework of a causal-comparative design in 2015 on a sample of 70 subjects ($N = 70$). The random sampling method was used to select subjects, and according to the nature of this research, the data collection method was a survey approach and in order to gather data the psychological hardiness questionnaire (response rate = 90%) and emotional control scale (response rate = 89%) were used. The Pearson correlation test was also used to analyze the data. Findings: The data analysis showed that there is a negative correlation between psychological hardiness and three components of depression, anxiety and anger and there is a direct correlation between psychological hardiness and the index of positive affect. The findings of this study are in line with the research literature shows the significant role of the psychological hardiness index in explaining the variance of feelings of anger, anxiety and depression. These findings can be useful in planning efficient interventions and paving the way for taking preventive measures.

Key words: Psychological hardiness, emotions, anger, aggression, anxiety, depression

INTRODUCTION

Hardiness is one of the new psychological factors that psychologists have been interested in it and have studied it in various fields [11]. Psychological harness first was considered by Kobasa and it was recognized as collection composed of personality characteristics that in confrontation with stressful events of life can act as a source of resistance, such as a protective shield and those who are endowed with it can efficiently confront with problems and pressures in their life [6] And it has been introduced as a moderator of the relationship between stress and disease [9]. Using theories of existence, he describes hardiness a mixture of beliefs about self and world that is composed of the three components of commitment, control and confrontation and at the same time is a unit structure that is formed through the coherent and synchronous interplay of these interrelated elements [14] Confrontation is a belief that considers the changes of life as natural and positive. The person who is endowed with this believe, considers the positive or negative changes that are in need of readjustment as an opportunity to learn and grow more rather than a threat to his/her security and comfort, this kind of belief brings about cognitive flexibility and endurance of ambiguous and uncomfortable events and situations. Confrontation is the opposite point of threat or feeling of danger [23] Psychological hardiness is a general orientation toward self and the surrounding world and includes three components of commitment, control and confrontation. From the perspective of Kobasa, an individual has three public characteristics: A) A belief that he/she is able to control or influence events (control). (B) The ability to feel deep intersection or commitment to activities that he/she does (commitment). (C) The expectation that change is an exciting fight for further growth and knows it as a normal aspect of life (confrontation) [2]. From an evolutionary

standpoint, Kobasa explains that childhood experiences and positive interaction with parents and caregivers could result in a hard personality. Stewart and colleges suggest that in order to develop hardiness in children the environment including family should be organized and predictable, in a way that their attempts would lead to success and they also have the right to choose. Although there are apparently differences between women and men in terms of hardiness, the results of some studies show that men are harder than women and hardiness in women unlike men prevents the negative effects of stress. However, other studies have rejected such findings.

One of the associated constructs with psychological hardiness is the control of emotions. Emotions constitute an essential part of human life. Characteristics and change of emotions, the way of the formation of emotional relationships and understanding and interpreting other's emotions play a crucial role in growth, organization of character, moral development, formation of identity and the concept of "self" [13]. All humans experience their emotions and feelings in their life and this is exactly natural. But intense and negative emotions and affects have destructive and harmful effects [18]. Fluctuation in experiencing emotion leads individuals towards maladjustment, aggression, anger, enmity and anxiety, and seriously threatens their mental and emotional health. On the other hand, we can never escape from negative feelings; therefore, instead preventing the emergence of emotions it is better to reduce the effects of their reactive effects in order to have enough time for better decision making, foresight, creativity [20].

Anger is a complex feeling that is expressed in emotional and physical modes. Anger is the natural reaction of the organism considering the conditions and situations in which we fail and feel threat, or we believe that we will be injured or another person has made a mistake about us.

On the other hand, depression is a reaction to an external factor that the person is aware of that and consciously recognizes its poverty. In neurotic disorder, depression also, often the depriving external factor such as the loss of a relative or failure in life, career, etc. can be seen. But this kind of reaction is different from two points of view with the natural reaction of depression; one is that the state of depression in a neurotic person is disproportionate with the external stimulus in terms of intensity and severity, and the second is that some individuals because of their specific personal characteristics have the background and readiness to develop this depression [21]. In this regard anxiety is also a stressful experience that results from the real threats to security. Intensity of anxiety reduces an individual's efficiency and its low level may increase performance. In definition of anxiety, "Horney" the famous American psychiatrist says that the cause of anxiety is: every social situation that endangers and threatens an individual . Anxiety is an unpleasant emotion that is expressed with terms such as: anxiety, panic, fear. Regarding other emotional states, the positive affect can be cited. Generally "positive affect" shows that to what extent a person has passion about life and how much he has the sense of agency and consciousness. Positive affect indicates to high-energy, full focus and enjoyable employment, while "negative affect" refers to sadness and lethargy. According to what has been said and given the importance of the concept of psychological hardiness in explaining the self-conscious emotions, in this study we try to investigate the relationship between the index of psychological hardiness and the emotional factors such as anger, anxiety, stress and positive affect.

The sample size

With regard to the fact that the research method in the present study was a correlational one and in the correlational studies the size of sample should be between 5 to 20 subjects regarding each variable (Homan, 2010); therefore, by assigning fourteen subjects regarding each of the five research variables, 70 subjects were sampled in this study.

$$N = 5q = 5 \times 14 = 70$$

Ethical considerations

In this study, informed consent took place without any coercion, threat, enticement and seduction and the individuals were respected whether to refuse or accept to participate in the study. It was tried that the research method did not be in contradict with religious and cultural principles of the subjects and research participants in all stages of design, implementation and reporting of the study to be protected in terms of human dignity, respect and physical and mental integrity.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present research was a causative comparative and correlational study in terms of descriptive designs. The study population included all 20-35 year-old students residing in Rezvanshahr. The data in the present study were collected using a survey method and through questionnaires and clinical interviews in 2015. For this purpose, seventy (N = 70) students were selected through random sampling method. The collected data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and t-test. In the first phase by obtaining permission and informing the students about the overall

objectives of the study, the mentioned questionnaires were given to them. Then they were asked to complete the questionnaire carefully and. After completing the questionnaires, they were accredited due to their participation in this research.

Research instruments

Psychological Hardiness questionnaire: This questionnaire has been made and validated by Kiamarathi, Najarian Mehrabizadeh Honarmand [10] with the aim of providing a scale to measure psychological hardiness in Shahid Chamran University. This scale consists of 27 items and each item has four options as the following: "never", "rarely", "sometimes" and "often". In scoring for each item the values of 0, 1, 2, and 3 has been applied, respectively. The score range in this questionnaire is from 0 to 81. Gaining a high score in this questionnaire shows a high psychological hardiness in person. Kiamarathi et al. calculated reliability coefficients of the questionnaire in two ways of test-retest and Cronbach's alpha as 84% and 76%, respectively. Ghafuri et al. [4] calculated the validity of this test by synchronous validation with the three criterion scales of public anxiety, depression questionnaire and self-actualization of Maslow. Coefficients were 65%, 67% and 62%, respectively. The reliability was calculated at the same time with definition of the construct of "psychological hardiness" that the obtained reliability was satisfactory.

Emotions control scale: Scale of controlling emotions is a tool used to measure individual's control over their emotions. This scale has 4 sub-scales namely anger, depressed mood, anxiety and positive emotion. Internal and test-retest reliability of this test for the total score scale were, respectively, %94 and %78; for subscales of anger, %72 and %73; for subscale of depressed mood %91, %76; for subscale of anxiety %89 and %77; and for subscale of positive emotion %84, %66 calculated on a sample of undergraduate students. Also its discriminant and convergent validity has been reported to be desirable [1].

Data analysis

In this study with regard to the nature of study and reviewing the previous researches and with the aim of investigating the extent of correlation between psychological hardiness and emotion control and with regard to type of scales, the parametric test of Pearson correlation was used.

RESULTS

Statistical indexes

As shown in Table 1, regarding the demographic information about subjects in this study, the highest frequency in terms of educational level is at the level of diploma, 35.7 percent, and the lowest frequency is related to the graduate (Master of Art/ Science), 7.1 percent. The highest frequency of women's age in the range of 20 and 24 years old is 35.7 percent and the lowest frequency of women's age in the range of 35 to 39 years old is 11.4 percent. The obtained variation range from the highest frequency and lowest frequency of age in women is 17 that the highest frequency is 25 and the lowest frequency is 8 as shown in the Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic information regarding the variables of education and age

Variable	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Level of education	Diploma	25	35.7
	Associate	16	22.9
	Bachelor	24	34.3
	Master	5	7.1
	Total	70	100
Age range	20-24	25	35.7
	25-29	21	30.0
	30-34	16	22.9
	35-39	8	11.4
	Total	70	100

Table 2: Distribution of frequency and percentage of female group based on the variables of psychological hardiness and emotion control

Variable	Rate	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std. D
Psychological hardiness	High	11	15.7	2.37	0.749
	Medium	22	31.4		
	Low	37	52.9		
Total		70	100		
Emotion control	High	42	58.6	1.41	0.496
	Medium	29	41.4		
	Low	0	0		
Total		70	100		

As the results in Table 3 show, the amount of $r = -0.347$ has been calculated that represents a negative and reverse correlation, that is, the higher the score of a subject in psychological hardiness test, the lower his score will be in the test of emotions control. According to the meaningfulness of the relationship, it can be said with a 95% confidence that there is an inverse relationship between psychological hardiness and emotions control.

With regard to the relationship between hardiness and anger control the amount of $r = -0.081$ has been calculated that there is a direct correlation, i.e., the higher the score of a subject in test of psychological hardiness, the higher his/her score will be on the test of anger control, according to the meaningful correlation, it can be based with the 95% confidence that there is a relationship between psychological hardiness and anger control. As Table 3 shows, the results, the amount of $r = -0.263$ has been calculated that shows a negative and inverse correlation, i.e., the higher the score of a subject in the test of psychological hardiness, the lower his scores will be in the test of depression control, according to the meaningful relationship it can be said with 95% confidence that there is an inverse relationship between psychological hardiness and depression control.

With regard to the relationship between psychological hardiness and anxiety control the amount $r = -0.333$ has been calculated that shows the correlation is negative, i.e., the higher the score of a subject in the psychological hardiness test, the lower his/her scores will be in the test of anxiety control. According to the meaningful relationship, it can be said with 95% confidence that there is an inverse relationship between psychological hardiness and anxiety control.

Table 3: The results of correlational test regarding the relationship between psychological hardiness and the scale of emotion control

Group	Variables	Number	Mean	Std. D.	Correlation	Level of sig.
Women	Psychological hardiness	70	49.93	10.88	- 0.347	0.002
	Emotion control	70	153.6	25.49		
Women	Psychological hardiness	70	49.93	10.88	0.081	0.254
	Emotion control (anger)	70	31.60	6.41		
Women	Psychological hardiness	70	49.93	10.88	- 0.263	0.014
	Emotion control (depressed mood)	70	28.34	6.67		
Women	Psychological Hardness	70	49.93	10.88	- 0.331	0.003
	Emotion control (anxiety)	70	40.44	9.55		
Women	Psychological hardiness	70	49.93	10.88	- 0.294	0.007
Women	Psychological hardiness	70	49.93	10.88	- 0.294	0.007
	Emotion control (positive affect)	70	46.07	9.711		

As the results in Table 3 show, the amount of $r = -0.294$ has been calculated that the represents a negative and reverse correlation, that is, the higher the score of a subject in psychological hardiness test, the lower his score will be in the test of positive affect control. According to the meaningfulness of the relationship, it can be said with a 95% confidence that there is an inverse relationship between psychological hardiness and control of positive affect.

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted with the aimed of investigating the relationship between psychological hardiness and four indexes of control of emotions, anger, anxiety, depression and positive affect. The results showed there is a significant correlation between the construct of psychological hardiness and the mentioned components. These findings in line with previous research show the importance of adjustment is adjusting self-conscious emotions. In this regard, Afra (2013) in a study investigated 143 young people who had left home due to military service. The results showed that young individuals whose psychological hardiness was lower, in comparison with those who had higher level of this character had more emotional problems. Nakana (1990) with conducting a research on Japanese women obtained a significant and negative relationship between hardiness and depression. In this regard Najarian et.al (1988) concluded that there was a positive relationship between psychological hardiness with mental health and academic performance. Kiamarathi (1985) in his study obtained a negative correlation between psychological hardiness and subscale of somatization of SC190 scale. Ismail Khani (1988) also in his research concluded that there was a positive relationship between self-actualization and psychological hardiness among students of Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz. Kalantar (1988) also concluded that there is a negative relationship between psychological hardiness and mental illnesses. That is the higher the hardiness in person, the person is less likely to develop mental illness and the lower the score of hardiness, the more likely he will become ill. Yarali (2000) in his study that was conducted upon 153 female teachers at high school levels in Shooshtar concluded that hardiness and its three components have a negative and significant correlation with psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression and somatization. In recognition of the importance of psychological hardiness as a crucial component in mental health, Lee (1991) in his study showed that long-term social adjustment had positive correlation with hardiness. Sheppard and Kashani (1991) in studying 150 adolescents showed that in stressful situations, adolescents who have higher hardiness, fewer psychological symptoms of illness are reported. Hard individuals mainly consider their life events

as interesting, varied, instructive and challenging. They consider life events realistically or with a kind of generosity and for this reason, are more optimistic regarding the total life events. Perhaps it is the presence of optimism that has made hard individuals resistant in the face of traumatic and unexpected events and diseases. In other words, it can be said that psychological hardiness is a sign of individuals' mental health. In a non-aligned finding Kozaka showed that the relationship between hardiness and sub-scale of stress is unknown. However, Kobasa, believes that hard tenacious individuals in comparison with non-tenacious individuals use supportive sources. Also, Bagian Koleh Marz and his colleges (2013) conducted a research entitled self-regulated academic approaches and control of emotions in predicting students' risky behaviors that its results showed that control of emotions has a crucial role in intensifying and reducing students' dangerous behaviors. Whatever had been said is an attempt to investigate the role of psychological hardiness index in explaining emotional components, as it was explained there was a significant correlation between the mentioned indexes, these findings can be effective in planning preventive and interventionist perspectives.

Limitations of this study

The present study like the other humanistic studies had its own limitations such as the following: 1) lack of knowledge available scientific resources, 2) Despite a lot of effort, the researcher failed to find a research that directly had considered this issue, and 3) the low sample size precludes generalization of results to the larger community.

Research suggestions

In the following several suggestions have been provided in order to be taken in the future studies: 1) our suggestion is that organizations such as ministry of education, council of parents and trainers and broadcasting agency that are in contact with families and also psychologists and consultants that in creation of situations that results in growth of hardiness educate families and emphasize their importance in nurturing children, 2) similar investigations with larger samples and other population need to be conducted, 3) in the future researches some of the annoying and affective factors should be controlled as much as possible, 4) in the future researches the variable of hardiness should be studied with regard to the variable of family performance.

REFERENCES

- [1] Dahesh, Z. (2009). The combined effectiveness of behavioral and emotion-focused effect on controlling emotions among adolescent girls in Rafsanjan Kashkooyeh. Master's thesis, Islamic Azad University of Marvdasht.
- [2] Delahaj, R., Gaillard, W.D., & Dam, K.V. (2010). Hardiness and the response to stressful situations: Investigating mediating processes. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 49, 386-390.
- [3] Faiz, A., Taher Neshat Doost, H., Naeli, H. (2012). Investigating the relationship between psychological hardiness and coping methods with stress. *Journal of Psychology*, Volume III, Issue 20, pp. 315- 303.
- [4] Ghafari Varnosfaderani, M.R., Kamali, M., Nouri, A. (2008). The relationship between achievement motivation and psychological hardiness with sensation-seeking and responsibility. *Knowledge and research in psychology*, number thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth, pp. 188-165.
- [5] Gorbani, N. (1995). Hardiness, internal structure of personality. *Psychological Research Journal*, Volume III, Issue 4, 3, pp. 38-21.
- [6] Hagigi, j., Attari, E., Rahimi, S., & Soleimani Nia, L. (2014). (The relationship between hardiness and its components with mental health in undergraduate male university students. *Journal of Education Science and Psychology*, Shahid Chamran University, Ahvaz. 4) 3), pp. 181.
- [7] Ismail Khani, F. (1994). Construction and Validation of a Scale to measure self-actualization and investigating its relationship with hardiness, A Master's Thesis in General Psychology, Islamic Azad University, Ahvaz Branch.
- [8] Kalantar, J. (1998). Investigating the simple and multiple relationship of variables of psychological hardiness of type A personality and mental stresses with male students' diseases in the third year of the new course in Ahvaz, a Master's thesis in Educational Psychology, University of Shahid Chamran.
- [9] Karami, J., Sharifi, Kh., & Beshlideh, K. (2013). Examining the relationship between family performance and psychological hardiness in high school students in Kermanshah. *Journal of the psychological achievements (Psychology)*, Fourth Period, year XVI, No. 2, pp. 188-167.
- [10] Kiamarthy, A., Najarian, B., Mehrabi Zadeh Honarmand, M. (1998). Construction and Validation of a Scale to measure the psychological hardiness. *Journal of Psychology*, Issue 3.
- [11] Kobasa, S.C., Maddi, S.R., & Zola, M.A. (1983). Personality and social resources in stress resistance. Type A and hardiness. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*. 6, 41-51.
- [12] Lee, E.N(1991). The relationship between hardiness and psychological adjustment of persons with colostomies. *Kanho-hakhoe-chi*, 21(3), 218-229.
- [13] Lotfabadi, H. (2010). *Applied Developmental Psychology of Adolescent and Youth*. Third edition, Tehran: National Youth Organization.

-
- [14] Maddi, R.S., Wadha, P., & Haier, J.R. (2010). Relationship of hardiness to alcohol and drug use in adolescents. *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, 22,247–257.
- [15] Maddi, S. R. Khoshaba, D.M. [Hardiness and Mental Health. *Journal of Personality Assessment*].2012, 63:2. PP: 244-65.
- [16] Naderi, F., & Husseini, M. (2010). The relationship between life expectancy and psychological hardiness in male and female students in Azad University of Gachsaran. *Quarterly Journal of women and society*. 2) 1), pp. 1-431.
- [17] Nakano, K(1990). Type A, hardiness and psychological stress. *Journal of behavioral*,9,537-548.
- [18] Qadiri, MH (2005). Anger Management. *Ma'refat Magazine*, Issue 14, pp. 106-93.
- [19] Shokrkon, H. (2013). Sources of resistance in front of mental stress. *Proceedings of the first seminar on stress and mental illness*.
- [20] Sharifi Daramadi, P. and Aghayari, S. (200). Emotional intelligence and developing relationships with self and others. The second edition, Esfahan: Sepahan Publication.
- [21] Shamloo, S. (2004). *Mental Trauma*, Tehran: Roshd Publication.
- [22] Yarali, Kh. (2010). Simple and multiple relationships of psychological hardiness and social support with female teachers' mental and physical health in Shushtar, a Master's thesis in General Psychology, Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz.
- [23] Zhang, L.F. (2010). Hardiness and the Big Five personality traits among Chinese university students. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 21(1), 109-113.