Purpose Discovery and Age as Predictors of Positive Affect among Psychotic Teenagers in Port Harcourt, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this paper was to examine how the discovery of one's life purpose and age and may predict positive affect outcomes among psychotic teenagers in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Two hundred and seventy-nine teenagers aged between 13 to 18 years (M = 15.40; SD =1.11) were purposively sampled using the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire developed by Eysenck and Eysenck (1975). The participants comprised of 194 males and 85 females. They were administered with the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MILQ) by Steger, Frazier, Oishi, and Kaler, (2006) and the International Positive Affect and Negative Affect Schedule - Short Form by Thompson (2007). The study employed the cross-sectional survey for data collection while the hierarchical multiple regression analyses on SPSS Version 20 was used to analyse data collected. Findings showed that age did not significantly predict positive affect scores among psychotic adolescents in Port Harcourt *(β = .037, p>.05, t = .535)*. However, purpose discovery significantly predict positive affect scores among psychotic adolescents in Port Harcourt *(β = .822, p<.05, t = 23.92).*The study recommends that since psychotic teenagers have an increased positive affect when they have a presence of meaning in life, they should be encouraged to become engaged and focused with positive goals that they enjoy doing.

Keywords: Meaning in Life, Port Harcourt, Positive Affect, Psychotic Teenagers, Purpose Discovery.

INTRODUCTION

Positive Affect (PA) has been identified as a factor related to happiness and engagement (Watson & Naragon-Gainey, 2014). PA refers to active pleasure and joy one finds in life (Gencoz, 2000) and feelings that reflect a level of pleasurable engagement with the environment, such as happiness or joy (Ader, 2007). PA can be brief, longer lasting, or more steady trait-like feelings (Cohen & Pressman, 2006). Individuals with high level of positive affect are more involved in events around them and as a result are more appreciative of happenings in the environment. Lee (2016) pointed out that several studies had shown higher levels of PA to be related to making more money (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002), better physical health (Chida & Steptoe, 2008; Dockray & Steptoe, 2010), improved problem-solving (Erez, & Isen, 2012), enhanced working memory (Yang,Yang & Isen, 2013), and a wide range of performance on cognitive tasks (Erez, & Isen, 2012).

Individuals' level of positive affect could be related to some personality dimensions though research on this is sparse. Psychoticism (P) is a personality dimension that is

characterized by aggressive behavior and interpersonal hostility. It is also referred to as tough mindedness (Eysenck & Eysenck,1975). The P dimension is viewed as an unspecific vulnerability in which individuals are predisposed to varying degrees of psychosis (Eysenck & Eysenck,1985) or a continuum, ranging from altruistic and empathic tendencies at one end to impulsive, aggressive and other near-psychotic states at the other (Eysenck, 1997).In the Eysencks' personality dimensions, psychoticism constitutes the third personality dimension in addition to extraversion and neuroticism.

Being tough minded could influence how individuals see life as pleasurable and engage with their environment. Likewise, discovering one's purpose in life is likely a precursor of positive affect. Purpose discovery refers to the presence of meaning in life. It is an individual's realization of the sense of direction which his/her life is expected to follow. Meaning in life is an evolving concept rooted in existential psychology and addressed frequently in studies related to modern positive psychology (Işık & Üzbe, 2015).

The definition of meaning in life has varied considerably due to its very nature. Meaning in life is a basic motive that every person innately possesses. Meaning in life then, as a concept, is not associated with certain subjects but all life events; every experience in life is related to meaning at varying levels, and thus should be explored (Frankl & Batthyány, 2010).

According to Baumeister (1991), meaning in life refers to lasting affects that help to build self-worth in a person's life. Wong (2010) defines the structure and functions of meaning in life as purpose, understanding, responsible action, and enjoyment/evaluation and argues that it encompasses motivational (purpose), cognitive (understanding), ethical/moral (responsibility), and affective processes (enjoyment).

Meaning in life is also described as a fundamental motivation containing individual goals and beliefs that reflects people's general perception of and attitude toward life, themselves, and others around them (Park, 2010; Steger, 2009). Steger emphasizes that the presence of meaning refers to a state of being in which people fully realize themselves and the world, find their unique purpose, and endeavour to achieve something important.

Based on these depictions, meaning in life should not be viewed as a fixed concept, but rather a dynamic one that transforms according to experience. Studies on affects (Gencoz, 2000; Joiner, Catanzaro, & Laurent, 1996; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) illustrate that affects involve two separable fundamental components: one negative and one positive.

Studies about the concept of meaning in life and personal affects (King, & Hicks 2009; King, Hicks, Krull, & Del Gaiso, 2006) suggest that positive affects provide the primary contributors to the perception of meaning in life, and that situations characterized by positive affects could serve as a natural habitat for meaning in life. They also imply that negative affects are triggered when individuals' needs for meaning in life are not satisfied (Maddi, 1970; Pan, Wong, Joubert, & Chan, 2007).

Researchers, educators and parents are concerned about the short and long-term consequences that come from teenage negative behaviour (both externalizing and internalizing behaviours) for decades. Among these concerns are questions about the effect that negative behaviours have on education, drug use and family relationships.

While many studies try to focus on the children who engage in negative behaviours and search for the reasons why they engage in these behaviours, it is important to understand why there are teenagers, and in this case psychotic teenagers, who may be engaging in positive and not negative behaviours. It is also important to understand the long term consequences of these behaviours both in the long and short term.

Statement of the Problem

Being satisfied with life can encourage teenagers to easily discover themselves irrespective of their ages. This is the theoretical hunch that ignited the interest in this study. It is worth noting that some previous studies (e.g. Ryff, 1989; Rathi & Rastogi, 2007; Steger, Kashdan, Sullivan, & Lorentz, 2008) had concentrated on the relationship between positive affect and antisocial behaviours among psychotics, just as in the case of Fridja (2004) who observed that individuals display a wide range of anti-social or generally disruptive behaviours due to emotional states such as hostility and sadness which prepares and primes the individual for action. However there is a paucity of studies as to whether positive affect can predict adolescent's ability to have a purpose in life.

Furthermore, positive affect has also been looked at as a factor which varies with age. Various studies (e.g. Ferring & Fillip, 1995; Ryff, 1989, Smith & Baltes, 1993) had shown mixed outcomes on the relationship between positive affect and age without stating a clear line as to how affect is determined by age. Contrary to findings concerning negative affects, positive emotions have been shown to predict positive behaviours toward others (Argyle, 2001) and also increased sensitivity to rewarding social situations (Lucas & Diener, 2001) and presence of meaning in life has been shown to influence the moods of individuals.

Focusing on the Nigerian perspective, this study aims to fill the gap existing in these previous studies related to positive affect by ascertaining the predictability of the discovery of life's purpose and age on positive affect. Therefore, this study is focused at ascertaining the above factors in relation to positive affect within a different cultural context – Port Harcourt, Nigeria, so as to be able to reinforce findings across other cultures in this evolving topic.

Purpose of the Study

The general focus of this paper is to examine the discovery of one's life purpose and age predict positive affect outcomes among psychotic teenagers in Port Harcourt.

Specifically, the researcher sets out to find:

1. if purpose discovery predicts positive affect outcomes among psychotic teenagers in Port Harcourt, and

2. if age predicts positive affect outcomes among psychotic teenagers in Port Harcourt.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Positive Affect and Meaning in Life

There is empirical evidence that meaning in life contributes to well-being (Ryff, 1989). Several studies have shown that meaning in life is positively linked to life satisfaction (Zika & Chamberlain, 1992), achievement striving (Steger, Kashdan, Sullivan, & Lorentz, 2008), and self-esteem (Rathi & Rastogi, 2007), and negatively related to depressive and anxiety symptoms (Riichiro & Masahiko, 2006).

King (2006) found in his study that mood has a strong relation to the experience of meaning in life, even relative to a more theoretically derived correlate of meaning, daily goal value and difficulty. The results of his study indicate that meaning in life was more strongly related to mood. Therefore if PA is associated with enhanced meaning in life, then it makes sense that dispositions associated with enhanced PA may also relate to enhanced meaning in life.

Although several theories have been put forth on the role of meaning in life when coping with severe life stressors (Janoff-Bulman, 2004; Yalom, 1980), only recently has empirical research explored this domain.

Research in healthy populations showed meaning in life to be an important factor in optimal functioning. Meaning in life, for example, has been positively associated with psychological well-being in healthy adolescents (Brassai, Piko, & Steger, 2011) and adults (Steger, Kawabata, Shimai, & Otake, 2008; Zika & Chamberlain, 1992). Also, meaning in life seemed to be inversely related to depression (Mascaro & Rosen, 2005).

Although preliminary evidence shows that meaning in life may influence health, current research is often limited by conceptual concerns (Sherman & Simonton, 2012).Steger and colleagues made a successful attempt to remedy this lack of conceptual clarity by distinguishing between two components of meaning in life (Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006).Cohen & Cairns (2012) found unique correlates associated with these two components, suggesting that both play a distinct role in individuals' psychological functioning. More specifically, Presence of Meaning has been found to be positively associated with psychological well-being.

Age and Positive Affect

A number of studies (e.g. Ferring & Fillip, 1995; Inglehart, 1990), both cross-sectional and longitudinal, have given attention to the relationship between age and affect. However, the overall picture drawn by these investigations is vague.

Considering previous work on exclusively elderly samples, Ferring and Filipp (1995) reported longitudinal declines in intensity of positive affect over a year in a sample of old-old people, but no such decline in a young-old sample. They also reported a similar decline in frequency of positive affect in the old-old group, but not in the

young-old group. In another longitudinal study using an exclusively elderly sample, Smith and Baltes (1993) also reported a decline in frequency of positive affect as people aged.

Like Ferring and Filipp (1995), this sample used both young-old and old-old, but no one at mid-life or in young adulthood. Finally, Vaux and Meddin (1987), in a cross-sectional study using another exclusively elderly sample, found no age differences in positive affect.

With regard to negative affect in these same elderly-exclusive studies, Ferring and Filipp (1995) reported higher frequency among the old-old, but no over-time changes. Smith and Baltes (1993), however, found no change in frequency of negative affect with time.

In their cross-sectional study, Vaux and Meddin (1987) reported that their oldest respondents displayed lower levels of negative affect than their young-old counterparts. However, Vaux and Meddin discovered the relationship between negative affect and age disappeared when negative life events were controlled. These three studies using elderly samples are useful, as they hint at what may happen to affect in the oldest segment of the life span. Unfortunately, the portrait they collectively paint raises more questions than answers.

These three studies do not converge on any single pattern for either positive or negative affect. Do studies that use a wider age range intersect on a common result? Several researchers have examined the age-affect relationship while using a broad age range.

Ryff (1989) found that the affect balance (negative affect subtracted from positive) went up across younger, middle-aged, and older cohorts. Younger people were less happy than both middle-aged and older individuals, but those two latter cohorts were not different from one another. In another cross-sectional study, Rossi and Rossi (1990) found that both positive and negative affect showed declines with age in a sample that ranged in age from 19 to 92 years. The decline was steeper for negative affect, however. In a report, Malatesta and Kalnok (1984) found negligible age differences in positive and negative affect using a sample that ranged in age from 17 to 88 years.

Finally, Costa, McCrae and Zonderman (1987), in a 10-year longitudinal study that used multiple birth cohorts born between 1898 and 1947 and found that both positive and negative affect were lower in older birth cohorts. They did not find any longitudinal changes over the 10-year period in either positive or negative affect, however.

In a unique cross-national examination reported by Inglehart (1990), levels of happiness across a wide age range using information from two large databases, the Euro-Barometer Survey and the World Values Survey. His summary was based on 169,776 people in 16 countries and assessed happiness via a well-known single-item measure that is generally considered to index the affective component of well-being (Andrews & Withey, 1976).

Smith and Baltes (1993) found no change in negative affect, nor did Malatesta and Kalnok (1984) for either affect dimension. However, other previous researchers (Costa, McCrae, & Zonderman 1987; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin 1985; Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Ryff, 1989; Vaux & Meddin, 1987) reported that lower levels of negative affect among older respondents lowered negative affect which is indicative of greater happiness among elderly people.

The cross-national report by Inglehart (1990) does not separate negative from positive affect, but this general finding of greater happiness among older respondents is echoed in several nations. The GSS data certainly seem to point to greater happiness among older Americans, at least up to age 77. Taken together, these findings raise the possibility that well-being may actually improve with age, lending support to Carstensen's (1995), Labouvie-Vief and Blanchard-Fields's (1982) assertions.

Hypotheses

1. Purpose Discovery will not significantly predict Positive Affect among Psychotic Teenagers in Port Harcourt.
2. Age will not significantly predict Positive Affect among Psychotic Teenagers in Port Harcourt.

METHOD

Participants

The participants for this study are two hundred and seventy nine teenagers who displayed high level of psychoticism from eight selected government owned secondary schools within Port Harcourt City, River State, Nigeria. The selected schools included National Professional Secondary School, Port Harcourt, Community Secondary School, Abuloma, Port Harcourt, Government Girl's Secondary School, Port Harcourt, Enitonna High School, Port Harcourt, Holy Rosary Secondary School , Ogbunabali, Port Harcourt, Niger Grammar School Port Harcourt, Philps Academy Port Harcourt and Government Secondary School, Borokiri, Port Harcourt. The schools were selected using the convenience sampling techniques while participants were selected using the purposive sampling technique. They comprise of 194 males and 85 females whose ages range from 13 to18 years(M = 15.40; SD =1.11). The participants were selected from SSS1 to SSS3 classes.

Instruments

This study made use of three instruments; Eysenck's Psychoticism Personality Questionnaire (EPQ-P) developed by Eysenck & Eysenck (1975), Presence model of the Meaning In Life Questionnaire (MLQ-P) developed by Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, (2006), and Positive Affect (PA) model of the International Positive and Negative Affect Schedule - Short form (I-PANAS-SF) developed by Thompson (2007).

Generally, the EPQwas developed by Eysenck and Eysenck (1975) to assess the personality traits of a person. The EPQ items are designed to measure four 4 subscales

of personality coded as PENL (P = Psychoticism - the extent of an individual's tough – mindedness, E = Extraversion – Introversion - the extent of an individual's social interaction with other people, N = Neuroticism, the extent of an individual's emotionality; L = Lie, a measure of the extent of which a client has responded truthfully to the other EPQ-P items). EPQ-P, the only subscale used in this study, is a 12 item Yes/No self reported personality inventory which provides 0 or 1 scores for answering Yes or No respectively.

The Meaning In Life Questionnaire (MLQ) was developed by Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, (2006) to assesses two dimensions of meaning in life using 10 items rated on a seven-point scale from "Absolutely True" to "Absolutely Untrue." It can used for educational, therapeutic and research purposes. The MLQ (Steger *et al*., 2006) consists of two separate but interrelated constructs: the presence of meaning in life (5-items) and the search for meaning in life (5-items).The presence of meaning subscale measures how respondents feel their lives are of meaning. The items are measured on a 7-point Likert scale where participants are required to state their agreement with statements ranging from 1 (absolutely untrue) to 7 (absolutely true). Scores on either sub-scale range from 5 to 35 with higher scores indicating the presence of meaning or the search for meaning in life. Items 1, 4, 5, 6, and 9 make up the Presence of Meaning subscale (MLQ-P) while items 2, 3, 7, 8, and 10 make up the Search for Meaning subscale. Scoring is direct but item 9 is reversely scored. Steger (2006) reported Cronbach alpha coefficients ranging from 0.82 to 0.86 for the MLQ-Presence scale in a student sample. Evidence of the reliability and validity of this scale has been reported in Korean (Ju. 2013), Japanese (Steger & Kwabata. 2008), Turkish (Doğan, Sapmaz, Tel, Sapmaz,& Temizel, 2012) and Romanian (Brassai, Piko, & Steger, 2012) samples.Igbokwe, *et. al.,* (2016) provided the psychometric properties for the Nigerian sample and obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .78 for presence and .90 for search.

The International Positive and Negative Affect Schedule - Short Form (I-PANAS-SF), was developed by Thompson (2007) is a self-report questionnaire that consists of two 10-item mood scales which measures both Positive Affect (PA) and Negative Affect (NA). Each item is rated on a 5-point scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely) of which respondents are instructed to indicate to what extent they felt this way during the past few weeks being their usual selves. The original study reported that the positive and negative affect parts of PANAS for overall sample and found the scale to be psychometrically acceptable, with a Cronbach's alpha of .75 for positive affect (PA) and .80 for negative affect (NA).The I-PANAS-SF was validated in Nigeria by Agbo (2016) and reported adequate internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .80 for PA and .70 for NA).

Procedure

After obtaining permission from the selected secondary schools, the researcher introduced himself to the participants who were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The researcher also sought and obtained their consent following laid down procedures. Permission from parents/guardians of selected participants for their wards to participate in the study was also obtained through a consent form given via the students. The participants were also assured of the confidentiality of their responses and that the outcome would not determine their overall school grades.To meet the

selection criteria for the study, a participant was required to score high on psychoticism. To ascertain this, the researcher first identified teenagers from a general population of over 900 students who were available for the study but only selected those who displayed high psychoticism scores of 10 - 12 after being administered with the EPQ-P first in their class rooms. Thereafter the MLQ and I-PANAS-SF scales were administered to the selected teenagers with high scoring P.The results were then collected and the teenagers were properly debriefed.

Design and Statistics

The design used for the study was the cross-sectional survey design while the Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses was used for data analyses.

RESULTS

Table 1: Table of Correlations for Key Variables Used in the Study

	Positive Affect	Age	Purpose Discovery
Positive Affect	1.0		
Age	.037	1.0	
Purpose Discovery	.818**	-.045	1.0

*Note: N = 279, ** = p< .01*

The Pearson correlation for all variables used in the study is presented in Table 1 above. The table show that positive affect had a positive significant relationships with purpose discovery*(r = .818, n = 279, p<.01)* implying that as adolescents' purpose discovery scores increased,positive affect scores increased likewise. However positive affect was not significantly related to age *(r = .037, n = 279, p>.05)* while age was also not significantly related to purpose discovery (*r =- -.045, n = 279, p>.05)*

Table 2: Summary of Results of a Two-Step Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses for Positive Affect on Age and Purpose Discovery

Predictors	***Step1β***	***Step 2 β***
Step 1		
Age	.037	.074
Step 2		
Purpose Discovery		.822
ΔF	.39	572.23**
R^2	.001	.675
ΔR^2		.647
Df	1,277	1, 276
Dublin Watson	1.92	

*Note: N = 279, **p < .01.*

The result of a hierarchical multiple regression analysis as presented in Table 2 above tested the two hypotheses of the study. The overall model of the two step hierarchical regression analysis was not significant for age *[R^2=.001, F (1, 277) = .385, p>.05]* but was significant of purpose discovery *[R^2=.675, F (1, 276) = 572.23, p<.01]*. The overall fit of the model shows that only 67.5% of the variation in positive affect scores has been explained. Also, the Durbin-Watson of 1.92 falls within the accepted range (1.5 < D < 2.5), indicating that there is no auto-correlation problem in the data and that the error term is independent.

In the first hypothesis, age was regressed into the model and it explained only 0.1% of the variations in positive affect scores among psychotic adolescents in Port Harcourt. Age did not significantly predict positive affect scores among psychotic adolescents in Port Harcourt *(β = .037, p>.05, t = .535)*.Therefore, the first null hypothesis is accepted.

Analysis of the second hypothesis showed that purpose discovery explained only 64.7% of the variations in positive affect scores among psychotic adolescents in Port Harcourt. Also, purpose discovery significantly predict positive affect scores among psychotic adolescents in Port Harcourt *(β = .822, p<.05, t = 23.92)*.Therefore, the second null hypothesis is rejected implying that increased level of purpose discovery significantly result to increased positive affect among psychotic adolescents in Port Harcourt.

DISCUSSION

The present study investigated if purpose discovery and age would predict positive affect among psychotic teenagers. Two hypotheses were formulated and stated. The first hypotheses stated that age would not significantly predict positive affect among psychotic teenagers in Port Harcourt. Based on the hierarchical multiple regression statistics, age was found not to be a significantly predictor of positive affect scores among psychotic adolescents in Port Harcourt leading to the acceptance of the first null hypothesis.Supporting the finding of this study as regards to age and positive affect, Ryff (1989) found that younger people were less happier than both middle-aged and older individuals in terms of positive affects. Similarly, Vaux and Meddin (1987) found no age differences in positive affect though their samples consisted of exclusively elderly sample. This finding could be as a result of the perception that younger people are somewhat unaware of life's realities and felt that their dreams, which may seem unrealistic, are not becoming realistic as they grow older.

However, the second hypotheses which stated that purpose discovery will not significantly predict positive affect among psychotic teenagers in Port Harcourt was rejected implying that increased level of purpose discovery significantly result to increased positive affect among psychotic adolescents in Port Harcourt. This corroborates with the empirical findings of King (2006), who found a significant relationship between positive affect and presence of meaning in life. Similarly, Brassai, Piko and Steger (2011) had showed that meaning in life is an important factor in optimal functioning. They posit that meaning in life is positively associated with psychological well-being in healthy adolescents. Having pleasant internal emotional state will likely predispose an individual to experience positive emotions and interact

with others and with life's challenges in a positive way thereby resulting to the individual being focused to discovering personal purpose in life.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher hereby recommends that teenagers be more exposed to life building seminars especially at secondary school levels where the population of teenagers are predominant. These seminars should be focused on guiding them on how to find their life's purpose in other to have a meaningful life, as a discovery of purpose early in life can predict future positive affect.

Teenage psychotics should also be supported to achieve their personal goals so as not to induce frustration which may trigger more negative affects and lead to disruptive behaviours. This could be achieved by conducting more studies in areas concerning how to tilt the moods of psychotics towards the positive lever. They should be encouraged to become engaged and focused with positive goals that they enjoy doing.

Conclusion

The study examined discovery of life purpose and age as predictors of positive affect outcomes among psychotic teenagers in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Two hundred and seventy-nine psychotic teenagers were selected from eleven different secondary schools in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, and were examined by the researcher using the psychoticism model of the Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire (EPQ), the presence sub-scale of the presence of meaning in life and the positive affect sub-scale of the international positive and negative affect schedule - short form scale. The result therefore showed that age does not significantly predict positive affect, while having a presence of meaning in life significantly predicts an increase in positive affect. The researcher therefore concludes that helping psychotic teenagers discover their purpose in life and thus enabling them live meaningful lives would bring about a significant increase in their positive affect, leading to better social interaction and a happier life.

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