



Prediction of psychological well-being based on fundamental values and self-transcendence: The mediating role of the attitude to time

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Abstract

Introduction: This research aimed to predict psychological well-being based on fundamental values and self-transcendence by meditating on the attitude to time.

Materials and Methods: In this descriptive correlation study, 372 students of Bu-Ali Sina University of Hamadan-Iran in the 2018-2019 academic year were selected using the convenient sampling method. The instruments included scales of satisfaction with life, attitude to time, self-transcendence, and fundamental values. We analyzed the data aiding structural equation modeling, SPSS-25, and LISREL software.

Results: The findings presented that the proposed model fits the data well (GFI= 0.92, IFI= 0.93, CFI= 0.93). Also, the effect of self-transcendence and fundamental values on past positive, present positive, and future positive, and the effect of past positive, present positive, and future positive on life satisfaction are significant ($P < 0.05$). In addition, the past positive ($Z = 2.92, P < 0.01$), present positive ($Z = 8.44, P < 0.01$), and future positive variables ($Z = 5.73, P < 0.01$) have a significant mediating role in the relationship between self-transcendence and life satisfaction. Also, past positive ($Z = 3.04, P < 0.01$), present positive ($Z = 8.75, P < 0.01$), and future positive ($Z = 6.18, P < 0.01$) have a significant mediating role in the relationship between fundamental values and life satisfaction.

Conclusion: The results show that when people act based on fundamental values in life, their personal boundaries in the intrapersonal, interpersonal, transpersonal, and temporal domains expand and go beyond their level. This makes their attitude to the past, present, and future more positive; their life satisfaction and psychological well-being increase.

Keywords: Attitude to time, Psychological well-being, Self-transcendence, Values

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Introduction

Psychological well-being is a multidimensional and dynamic construct in which enjoyment of positive experiences and satisfaction of basic needs are considered necessary (1). Psychological well-being has been investigated

from several perspectives, and various academic disciplines have shown interest in this construct due to its impact on individual performance, satisfaction levels, or interpersonal interactions (2). Psychological well-being includes mental, social, and psychological dimensions, health-

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related behaviors, and practices that give meaning to a person's life and allow him/her to reach his/her maximum potential (3). Most researchers agree that well-being is a sign of favorable psychological functioning that improves a person's life experience. Therefore, it is understood as a set of factors that motivate people to satisfy their expectations (4). With the popularity of positive psychology, many studies have investigated the positive effects of psychological well-being on the individual and social performance of humans and the general factors and specific situations that affect people's psychological well-being in different cultural and social contexts (5). Psychological well-being is a vital aspect of a person's overall health and happiness, in which a person experiences positive emotions, positive psychological functioning, and a sense of meaning and purpose in life (6). Based on this, it is important to examine the predictors of psychological well-being.

Values play a fundamental role in defining good and public interest. They are internalized cognitive structures that guide choices by evoking the feeling of right and wrong basic principles, and they act as general principles that guide behavior (7). Values as psychological structures affect motivational behavior and individual well-being (8). They are defined as the quality of ideal behavior, providing organization and coherence in life and managing purposeful behavior (9). Mental well-being depends on specific personal values. People who define certain values for themselves and care about them have a more positive sense of well-being. Core values include the value of harmony (having meaning and purpose in life, openness, and good judgment), warmth (humor, living in the moment, and being kind), connection with nature (respecting nature, having childlike wonder), and intelligence (genius, ability problem solving) (10).

Self-transcendence includes a fundamental change in one's attitude toward life. It means that the person's attitude changes from a selfish focus to caring for others and goes beyond his/her level (11). Self-transcendence is increasing awareness of dimensions greater than oneself and expanding personal boundaries in the intrapersonal, interpersonal, transpersonal, and temporal domains. It involves an attempt to connect to a larger context with a social purpose to more service. Therefore, self-transcendence is a set of values and a state of mind that can

motivate interaction with social activism (12) and lead to adaptive performance and well-being of people (13). Research has shown a positive and significant relationship between self-confrontation and well-being (14,15) and quality of life (16).

Attitude to time refers to positive and negative attitudes to the past, present, and future. For example, a person may have happy memories, feel happy in the present, and have positive expectations for future happiness. Positive attitudes toward the past may be considered a sign of nostalgia, positive attitudes toward the present as happiness, and positive attitudes toward the future as hope or positive expectations, constituting important aspects of psychological well-being. On the other hand, a negative attitude to the past can indicate resentment, a negative attitude to the present can be interpreted as dissatisfaction, and a negative attitude to the future may indicate pessimism or fatalism (17). Research results have shown a relationship between psychological well-being and attitude to time.

Previous research indicates that psychological well-being is a multidimensional structure that includes psychological, positive social, and physical functioning and is related to various factors. As a combination of good feeling and effective performance, this construct can predict mental health, adaptive performance at the individual and social life level, and life satisfaction for people (18). Therefore, it is necessary to identify structures that can explain the psychological well-being of people in life. Because every person wants a healthy, happy, and productive life physically and mentally (19), this research seeks to answer whether the psychological well-being prediction model based on fundamental values and self-transcendence with the mediation of attitude to time is suitable.

Material and Methods

The method of this research was a descriptive and correlational type. The statistical population of the present study consisted of all students of Bu-Ali Sina University of Hamadan-Iran in the 2018-2019 academic year. There are different methods regarding sample size in path analysis and structural equations. For example, because the methodology of structural equation modeling is similar to some aspects of multivariate regression, it is possible to use the principles of determining the sample

size in multivariate regression analysis to determine the sample size used in structural equation modeling. In multivariate regression analysis, the ratio of the number of samples (observations) to the independent variables should not be below 5. Otherwise, the regression equation results will not be generalizable (20). Also, considering 15 observations for each predictor variable in multiple regression analysis with the standard least square method is a good rule of thumb (21,22). Also, it is always emphasized that the sample size should be at most 200 people (21). Therefore, according to the above explanations, 372 people were selected by the convenient sampling method from the faculties of economic and social sciences, basic sciences, engineering, humanities, and agriculture and then completed the scales. The inclusion criteria included the desire to participate and being a student studying at Bu-Ali Sina University in the first half of the 2018-2019 academic year. The exclusion criteria included not wanting to participate in the research, distorted scales, and being educated.

We used SPSS-25 and LISREL software. To analyze the data from the structural equation model, Sobel test, and fitness indices for the developed model, such as Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and X²/df index were used.

Research instruments

A) Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS): This scale was created by Diener et al. based on an 8-point Likert scale (from 0 for completely disagree to 7 for completely agree). Diener et al. reported the reliability and validity of this scale using a test-retest correlation coefficient (0.82) and Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.87) (23). This scale was also validated in Iran. The internal consistency coefficient was calculated using Cronbach's alpha of 0.83 (24). The internal consistency of this scale in the present study was obtained by Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.85.

B) Attitude to Time Scale: This scale was created by Mello and Worrell based on a 5-point Likert scale (completely disagree to agree). This scale measures six types of attitude to times: past positive, past negative, present positive, present negative, future positive, and

future negative, which are subscales of attitude to time scale (25). The reliability was between 0.70 and 0.80 in the sample implemented in America. The reliability of this scale in the Iranian population using Cronbach's alpha similarity coefficient for the past positive component is 0.79, the past negative component is 0.83, the present positive perspective component is 0.83, the present negative perspective component is 0.84, the future positive component is 0.63, and the future negative is 0.72 (26). The internal consistency of this scale in the present study was obtained by Cronbach's alpha coefficient method for past positive component 0.838, present positive 0.898, and future positive component 0.70.

C) Adult Self-Transcendence Inventory (ASTI): This 14-item scale was developed by Levinson et al. based on a 4-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). The reliability has been reported using Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.75 (27). In Iran, the reliability of this scale has been reported using Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.78 (28). The internal consistency of this scale in the present study was obtained at 0.86 by Cronbach's alpha coefficient method for the total scale.

D) Fundamental Values Scale (FVS): This scale has 23 items and was created by Jason et al. based on a 5-point Likert scale. They reported the validity of the scale using Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the components of harmony, warmth, intelligence, and connection with nature as 0.78, 0.75, 0.62, and 0.68, respectively. Also, the reliability of this scale has been reported as 0.62 to 0.78 through retesting (29). In Iran, the validity of the scale has been obtained using Cronbach's alpha of 0.899. Also, its convergent and divergent validity has been reported as suitable (30). The internal consistency of this scale in the present study was obtained at 0.71 by Cronbach's alpha coefficient method for the total scale.

Results

The participants of the present study were 372 students of Bu-Ali Sina University, with a mean age of 24.71 ± 5.62 years. Two hundred forty-nine people (66.9%) were women, and 123 people (33.1%) were men. Thirty people (8.1%) were married, and 342 people (91.9%) were single. In terms of educational status, 220 people (58.8) had a bachelor's degree, 107

people (28.6) had a master's degree, and 45 people (11.6) were at the Ph.D. level. Eighty students were from the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences, 61 from the Faculty of Humanities, 98 from the Faculty of Basic Sciences, 31 from the Faculty of Agriculture, 84 from the Faculty of Engineering, and 13 from the Faculty of Agriculture.

Pearson correlation and structural equation analysis were used for data analysis. First, the mean and standard deviation of the variables were checked.

Also, the skewness and kurtosis statistics of the variables were checked to check the normality of the distribution, and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean, standard deviation, and skewness-kurtosis results

Index	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Life satisfaction	19.90	6.99	-0.08	-0.66
Future positive	18.45	3.84	-0.48	-0.48
Past positive	16.52	4.20	-0.30	-0.30
Present positive	16.36	4.27	-0.39	-0.39
Self-transcendence	45.58	7.24	-0.14	-0.14
Fundamental values	81.21	10.27	0.05	0.05

In checking the normality of the distribution of the variables (Table 1), the range of skewness and kurtosis of the variables is between +1 and -1; this shows that the research

variables have a normal distribution. Next, the correlation between the variables was calculated. Table 2 presents the correlation results.

Table 2. Correlation matrix of research variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	Tolerance	VIF
1. Self-transcendence	-						0.68	1.46
2. Fundamental values	0.47**	-					0.64	1.55
3. Future positive	0.30**	0.36**	-				0.79	1.25
4. Past positive	0.48**	0.49**	0.40**	-			0.51	1.94
5. Present positive	0.37**	0.43**	0.31**	0.60**	-		0.60	1.64
6. Life satisfaction	0.44**	0.42**	0.28**	0.63**	0.41**	-	-	-

**P<0.01, *P<0.05

Table 2 shows the correlation matrix between the variables. There was a significant correlation between all variables. We used The Durbin-Watson test to check the independence of the errors. The results showed no correlation between the errors (W= 2.04, the range between 1.5 and 2.5 is acceptable). Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance were used to check the multiple collinearity between predictor variables. The results showed no collinearity between the variables (VIF range is below five,

and tolerance is acceptable above 0.1). We used structural equation analysis to test the research model. In the first stage, the overall fit of model was analyzed, and then the standard coefficients of the relationships between the variables were analyzed.

The proposed conceptual model of this research was such that exogenous variables of self-transcendence and fundamental values affect life satisfaction through the mediators of attitude to time (Figures 1 and 2).

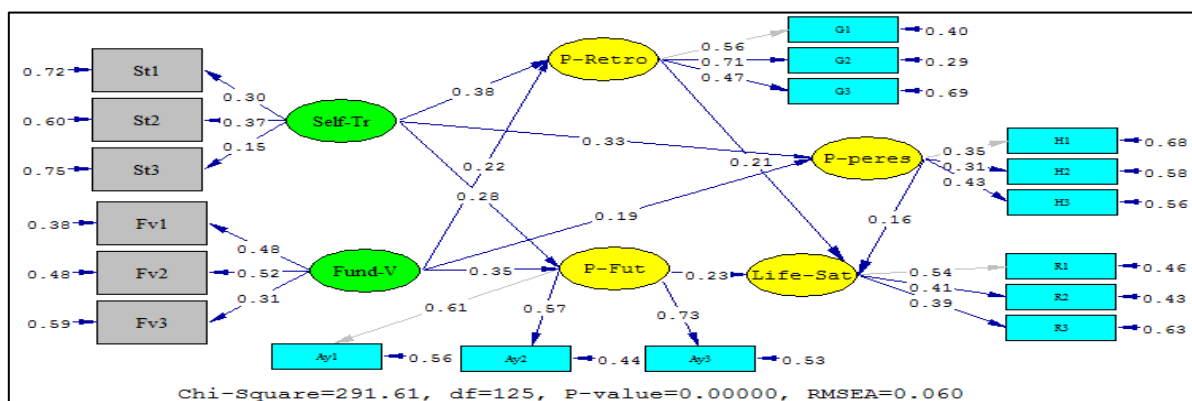


Figure 1. Relationships between research variables in standard mode

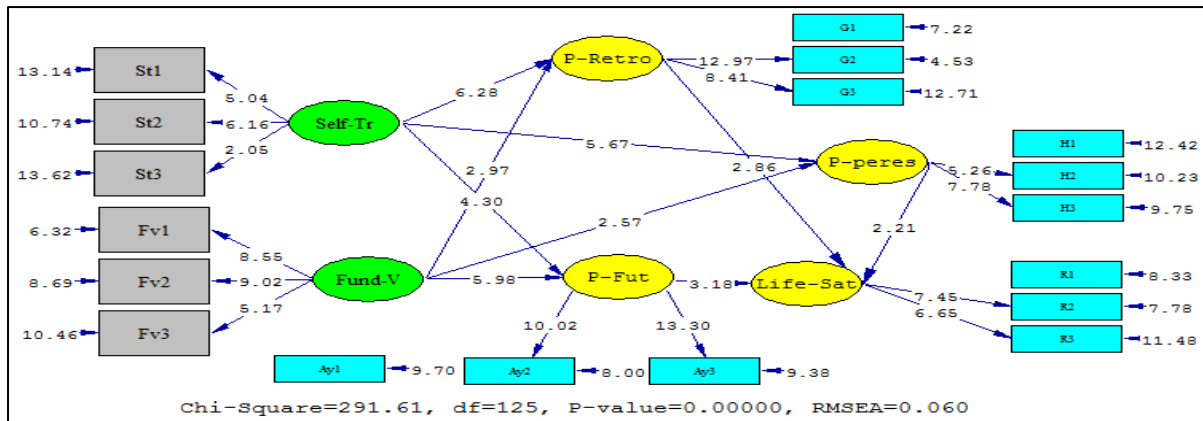


Figure 2. Relationships between research variables in a significant state

First, the fitness index was considered to determine the overall fitness of the model. The fitness indices are presented in Table 3.

For the fitness index X^2/df , values below 5 are suitable, and closer to zero indicates a good fitness of the model. For the GFI and IFI index, CFI, a value close to 0.90 and above, is considered acceptable goodness of fitness. It indicates that the model is good. Regarding the RMSEA index, values close to 0.05 or fewer indicate good model fitness, and a value of 0.08

or fewer indicates a logical error of approximation; a value higher than 0.10 indicates the requirement to reject the model. The fitness indices showed the good fitness of the model (Table 3).

Based on this, the proposed model fits well with the experimental data. The following considers all the effects related to all the different routes in the model, and the standard coefficients of the routes, along with their significance levels, are presented (Table 4).

Table 3. Fitness indices for the model

Model Fitness Indices	X ²	df	X ² /df	GFI	IFI	CFI	RMSEA
Model	291.61	125	2.33	0.92	0.93	0.93	0.060
Accepted Domain	-	-	X ² /df < 5	GFI > 0.90	IFI > 0.90	CFI > 0.90	RMSEA < 0.08

Table 4. Coefficients of the model explaining life satisfaction based on self-transcendence and fundamental values, with the mediation of positive attitude to time

Path	Regression quotation	t
The effect of self-transcendence on past positive	0.38	6.28
The effect of self-transcendence on present positive	0.33	5.67
The effect of self-transcendence on future positive	0.28	4.30
The effect of fundamental values on past positive	0.22	2.97
The effect of fundamental values on present positive	0.19	2.57
The effect of fundamental values on future positive	0.35	5.98
The effect of past positive on life satisfaction	0.21	2.86
The effect of present positive on life satisfaction	0.16	2.21
The effect of future positive on life satisfaction	0.23	3.18

t = 2.98, it is significant at the 0.01 level

The analysis of the data obtained from the standard coefficients of the model (Table 4) showed that the effect of self-transcendence on past positive ($\beta = 0.38, P < 0.01$), present positive ($\beta = 0.33, P < 0.01$), and future positive ($\beta = 0.28, P < 0.01$) was significant. Based on the results, the effect of fundamental values on past positive ($\beta = 0.22, P < 0.05$), present positive ($\beta = 0.19, P < 0.05$), and future positive ($\beta = 0.35, P <$

0.01) was significant. The results showed a past positive effect ($\beta = 0.21, P < 0.05$), a present positive effect ($\beta = 0.16, P < 0.05$), and a future positive effect ($\beta = 0.23, P < 0.01$) was significant on life satisfaction. Also, the Sobel test was used to investigate the mediating role of present positive to time in the relationship between self-transcendence and fundamental values with life satisfaction (Table 5).

Table 5. The results of investigating the mediating role of present positive to time in the relationship between self-transcendence and fundamental values with life satisfaction through the Sobel test

Predictive variable	Criterion variable	Mediator variable	Sobel's test (z)	P
Self-transcendence	Life satisfaction	Past positive	2.92	0.01
Self-transcendence	Life satisfaction	Present positive	8.44	0.01
Self-transcendence	Life satisfaction	Future positive	5.73	0.01
Fundamental values	Life satisfaction	Past positive	3.04	0.01
Fundamental values	Life satisfaction	Present positive	8.75	0.01
Fundamental values	Life satisfaction	Future positive	6.18	0.01

The results of the Sobel test (Table 5) showed that the variables past positive ($P < 0.01$, $Z = 2.92$), present positive ($P < 0.01$, $Z = 8.44$), and future positive ($P < 0.01$, $Z = 5.73$) had a significant mediating role in the relationship between self-transcendence and life satisfaction. Also, the results showed that the variables past positive ($P < 0.01$, $Z = 3.04$), present positive ($P < 0.01$, $Z = 8.75$), and future positive ($P < 0.01$, $Z = 6.18$) had a significant mediating role in the relationship between fundamental values and life satisfaction.

Discussion

This research aimed to predict psychological well-being (life satisfaction) based on self-transcendence and fundamental values with the mediation of attitude to time (past positive, present positive, and future positive) among students of Bu-Ali Sina University. The research findings showed that the proposed model has good fitness. The attitude to time significantly mediates the relationship between psychological well-being, fundamental values, and self-transcendence. Based on this finding, it can be said that the existence of fundamental values (such as having meaning and purpose in life, openness, good judgment, humor, living in the present and being kind, respecting nature, having childlike wonder, genius, ethics, and the ability to solve problems) in life and adhering to them makes people go beyond their level because these values guide people's choices and decisions (31). Fundamental values as external directions guide people's preferences and choices (32). Paying attention to values as a criterion and standard of behavior reduces people's self-centeredness and provides the ground to see phenomena from different perspectives. It means that people can transcend themselves and connect with a larger whole. Their attitude to the past (expressing interest and satisfaction with the past), present (expressing interest in the current and ongoing life), and the

future (optimism to future tense) to become more optimistic and feel inner satisfaction. This makes people feel psychological well-being in their lives. Psychological well-being allows people to master the environment and establish positive relationships with others. Also, psychological well-being is associated with consequences such as self-acceptance, a sense of independence, purpose in life, orientation towards personal growth (33), low anxiety, low depressive symptoms, and a high level of pleasure, energy, and happiness (34).

In line with the findings of this research, DaneshPayeh, Dortaj, and Mazosaz reported that psychological well-being has a direct and significant relationship with wisdom and an inverse and significant relationship with the feeling of social and emotional loneliness. Four hundred nine people participated in this research. The instruments used included Ryff's psychological well-being scale, social and emotional loneliness scale for adults, and the 12-question short form of three-dimensional wisdom (35). Houshmand Kong-Sefali, Moinizadeh, and Tabatabai studied two hundred eleven students and showed that forgiveness and gratitude have a positive and significant relationship with students' psychological well-being. Forgiveness predicts 0.304 of changes in psychological well-being (36).

The findings of Saddoughi and Hesampour's research on two hundred eleven older adults, showed that spirituality, gratitude to God, and perceived social support, especially from the family, increase and predict psychological well-being in the elderly (37). Parchami Khorram, Imani, and Ansari reported a significant correlation between basic needs (autonomy, competence, and connection) and psychological well-being (38). Also, Sharifi and Moltafet assessed three hundred sixty people and showed that gratitude, social support, and self-esteem significantly predict psychological well-being (39). Harding, Lopez, and Klainin-Yubas

concluded that resiliency, mindfulness, family support, and support from other important people are predictors of psychological well-being (40). Ataei, Farhadi, and Rashid studied three hundred sixty-seven people and reported that ego strength affects psychological well-being through the mediating role of positive aspects of attitude to time (41). In addition, Rashid, Alizadeh, and Moradi showed a significant correlation between attitude to time and psychological well-being (42).

As can be seen, the results of the above studies examined the relationship between the variables of wisdom, forgiveness, gratitude, spirituality, gratitude to God, perceived social support, especially from the family, self-esteem, resiliency, mindfulness, family support, and individual support. Another important variable is ego strength and attitude to time, which are related to psychological well-being and explain the prediction of psychological well-being based on these variables. However, the role of self-transcendence variables, fundamental values, and attitude to time in predicting psychological well-being has yet to be investigated. The present study predicted psychological well-being based on fundamental values and self-transcendence with the mediation of attitude to time. The results of the present study indicated that fundamental values and self-transcendence can affect psychological well-being through the mediating role of attitude to time (positive dimensions). One area for improvement of this research is the paper-pencil evaluation of the variables and the limited student population sample. Therefore, it is necessary to be careful when generalizing the results of this research.

It is suggested that future research based on the results of this research and previous research will create an educational and therapeutic program based on the variables of fundamental values, empathy, moral behaviors (forgiveness), spirituality, self-improvement, self-esteem, resiliency, and attitude to time. Also, it is suggested to other researchers design and

implement mindfulness to increase the level of psychological well-being of people and evaluate the effectiveness of this treatment program.

Conclusion

Based on the results of this research, adherence to values and self-transcendence can affect one's attitude toward the past, present, and future and make them more optimistic about the dimensions of time. This increases the possibility of achieving optimal performance at the individual and social levels (psychological well-being). This research showed that the variables of fundamental values and self-transcendence can predict the psychological well-being of people through the mediating role of positive dimensions of attitude to time. Psychological well-being gives meaning to people's lives to achieve their maximum potential. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to people's psychological well-being as a vital aspect of overall health and happiness.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

This study was approved by Bu-Ali Sina University of Hamadan-Iran. The ethical considerations in this research were informed consent, voluntary participation, the right to withdraw from the research, non-disclosure of information, and respect for privacy.

Code of Ethics

IR.BASU.REC.1401.654

Authors' Contributions

The first author (Arezou Delfan Beiranvand) is the main researcher and the supervisor, the second author (Ahmad Bayat) is sponsor, translator, and the article editor.

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