Goal Characteristics and Well-being in a Vulnerable Population

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INTRODUCTION

- Personal goals give facilitate meaning and structure in one’s lives
- Goals are also necessary for understanding and fostering well-being in individuals (Austin & Vancouver, 1996)
- Particularly important for well-being is both accomplishing personal goals and feelings as if one is capable of attaining important goals
- Both the belief in holding attainable goals and actually accomplishing goals are positively associated with well-being
- The association of personal goal characteristics and psychological well-being is less understood in at-risk populations

METHODS

- The final sample consisted of 164 emancipated youth as part of the “Adapting to Aging Out” Study
- Participants were recruited from the California foster care system
- Measurements occurred at baseline, twelve months after baseline, and thirty months after baseline
- Participants were asked to think about goals they would like to achieve over the next year, five years, and twenty years
- Participants rated (on a 1 to 5 scale) the likelihood that they would accomplish each goal
- At a follow up participants reported whether they had actually attained that goal

MEASURES

- Psychological well-being was assessed using three measures
  - Beck Depression Inventory (Beck, Steer, & Browne, 1996)
  - Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)
  - Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, et al., 1985)

CONCLUSIONS

- Because observations were nested within participants, multilevel modeling was used
- In separate models, well-being was predicted by perceived likelihood of attaining goals and the actual attainment of goals
- Gender and time of assessment were added as covariates
- Level One Model: \( Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{Goal Characteristic}) + \beta_{2j}(\text{Time}) + e_{ij} \)
- Level Two Model: \( b_{0j} = Y_{00} + Y_{10}(\text{Gender}) + u_{0j}^2; b_{1j} = Y_{10}^2 + b_{2j} = Y_{20} \)
- Mixed Model: \( Y_{ij} = Y_{00} + Y_{10}(\text{Gender}) + Y_{10}(\text{Goal Characteristic}) + Y_{20}(\text{Time}) + u_{0j} + e_{ij} \)

MEASURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>Self-esteem</th>
<th>Satisfaction with Life</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Model</td>
<td>Success Model</td>
<td>Likelihood Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimate</td>
<td>95% CI</td>
<td>Estimate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fixed Effects</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Intercept, ( Y_{00} )</td>
<td>2.77***</td>
<td>2.37, 3.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Likelihood, ( Y_{10} )</td>
<td>-.14**</td>
<td>-.24, -.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Success, ( Y_{10} )</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time, ( Y_{20} )</td>
<td>.12***</td>
<td>.08, .16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender, ( Y_{01} )</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>.05, .29</td>
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</tbody>
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REFERENCES


