

PURPOSE-IN-LIFE TEST: FURTHER CORRELATES

THOMAS D. YARNELL¹

University of Southern Mississippi

The Purpose-in-Life Test (PIL) was developed by Crumbaugh and Maholick (2) to measure sense of meaning and purpose in life. A low score represents Viktor Frankl's concept of existential vacuum (1), emptiness of perceived meaning in personal existence.

Three validity studies have been reported so far. Crumbaugh (1) found the PIL to discriminate between "normal" and psychiatric groups, and between four "normal" groups ranging from highly successful to indigent subjects. He also found a negative correlation with the MMPI depression scale. Crumbaugh, Raphael & Shrader (3) found a group of trainees of Dominican Sisters to achieve higher PIL scores than motivated business and professional subjects. Furthermore, PIL scores correlated with the proficiency ratings of the trainees. But they did not differentiate between drop-outs and those who remained in the program. Finally, the anxiety scale of the 16 PF correlated negatively with PIL scores. Doerries (4) found students belonging to a number of campus organizations to score higher on the PIL than those who belonged to none or only one.

The purpose of the present study was further to investigate the construct validity of the PIL by studying the relationship between PIL scores and various measures of personality of normal and schizophrenic subjects.

METHOD

Subjects

The *Ss* were 40 Air Force men taking university psychology courses at a base extension center, and 40 hospitalized male schizophrenics at a VA Hospital. The mean age of the normal *Ss* was 28.3 years ($SD = 6.8$ years). Their mean Shipley Vocabulary IQ was 120.3 ($SD = 10.1$). The mean age of the schizophrenics was 43.9 years ($SD = 8.7$ years), while their mean Shipley IQ was 108.7 ($SD = 14.4$).

Materials

The *Ss*—in small groups—were administered the PIL, the Shipley Vocabulary Scale, Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control Scale, the MMPI, the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, the Crumbaugh Seeking of Noetic

¹Author's address: Department of Psychology, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, Miss. 39401.

Goals Test, and the Kuder Personal Preference Record (Personal Form). The MMPI was scored for 5 experimental scales only: ego overcontrol (Eo); social responsibility (Re); ego strength (Es); Factor A: general disturbance; and Factor R: lack of insight (5).

RESULTS

The mean PIL score for the normal group was 110.03 (SD = 12.70); for the schizophrenics 81.88 (SD = 26.47). Table I presents the correlations between PIL and the various personality tests for the normal and schizophrenic groups.

TABLE I. CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PIL SCORES AND VARIOUS PERSONALITY TEST SCORES FOR NORMAL AND SCHIZOPHRENIC SUBJECTS

| | Normal N = 40 | Schizophrenic N = 40 |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|
| Age | + .17 | + .12 |
| Shipley Vocabulary IQ | - .01 | + .01 |
| Rotter Int.-Extern. Locus of Control | - .32 * | - .49 ** |
| MMPI Eo: ego overcontrol | - .04 | + .16 |
| Es: ego strength | - .09 | + .58 ** |
| Re: social responsibility | + .18 | + .38 * |
| Factor A: anxiety | - .34 * | - .58 ** |
| Factor R: lack of self insight | - .30 | + .01 |
| Crumbaugh Seeking of Noetic Goals | - .51 ** | - .33 * |
| Spielberger Anxiety: Present State | - .60 ** | - .37 * |
| Proneness for Anxiety | - .59 ** | - .55 ** |
| Kuder Preference A: for being in groups | + .33 * | - .02 |
| B: for familiar & stable situations | + .40 ** | - .05 |
| C: for working with ideas | - .17 | - .09 |
| D: for avoiding conflict | + .06 | + .39 * |
| E: for directing others | + .09 | - .15 |

* $p = .05$; ** $p = .01$

DISCUSSION

Our mean PIL scores for normals of 110.03 ± 12.70 and for schizophrenics of 81.88 ± 26.47 compare with results of Crumbaugh (1) of 108 ± 17.71 and 96.66 ± 16.12 , respectively. While the results for normals are quite similar, our schizophrenics scored much

lower than Crumbaugh's sample. They came closer to the scores of Crumbaugh's hospitalized non-schizophrenic psychotics of 80.50 ± 17.50 . Our larger variance may reflect a diagnostic difficulty, which would not be unusual.

There was no significant correlation between PIL and age or IQ for either group. This would fit Crumbaugh's finding of no correlation between PIL scores and educational level. It appears then that life can be considered meaningful regardless of age, IQ, or educational level.

There were significant negative correlations for both groups between PIL and Rotter's I-E Control Scale. That is to say, individuals with greater purpose in life see themselves less at the mercy of luck (more in control of the situation) than those with less purpose, both aspects of mental well-being. This is in accordance with results from an unpublished study of the author with 50 male college students, showing an r of $-.47$ ($p = .01$) between the neuroticism scale of the Eysenck Personality Inventory and PIL, and an r of $+.43$ ($p = .01$) between neuroticism and I-E Control.

There were significant negative correlations for both groups between PIL and Spielberger's present State of Anxiety as well as Anxiety Proneness.

On the MMPI, correlations for both groups with Factor A: anxiety, were also negative. The correlations with Factor R: lack of effective self insight, was in the expected direction, $-.30$, but not significant, with the normal group, and zero with the schizophrenics. The expected positive relationship with the Re: social responsibility, was only partially confirmed. It was significant for the schizophrenics, $+.38$ ($p = .05$), but not significant for the normal group, $+.18$. The expected relationship with Es: ego strength, was supported only for the schizophrenics, $+.58$ ($p = .01$), but not for the normals, $-.09$. Clearly, more research regarding Re and Es is indicated.

The Seeking of Noetic Goals Test was developed by Crumbaugh to measure the opposite of PIL. In view of this, the correlations, while in the expected direction and significant, are surprisingly low, $-.51$ ($p = .01$) for the normals, and $-.33$ ($p = .05$) for the schizophrenics.

On the Kuder Preference Record (Personal Form) we find for normal S s that PIL is positively related to preferences for being more active in groups, and for familiar and stable situations. For schizo-

phrenics interestingly a significant correlation with preference for avoiding conflict was found.

SUMMARY

A study with 40 Air Force servicemen and 40 hospitalized male schizophrenics showed that scores on the Purpose-in-Life test are not related to age or IQ. They are, however, inversely related to anxiety and anxiety proneness, and the belief that one is controlled by external forces, as well as to a test designed to measure the opposite of purpose in life. Furthermore significant positive relations were found in the normal group with preferences for being active in groups and for stable and familiar situations, and among the schizophrenics a positive correlation with preference for avoiding conflict.

REFERENCES

1. CRUMBAUGH, J. C. Cross-validation of purpose-in-life test based on Frankl's concepts. *J. Indiv. Psychol.*, 1968, 24, 74-81.
2. CRUMBAUGH, J. C., & MAHOLICK, L. T. An experimental study in existentialism: the psychometric approach to Frankl's concept of *noogenic* neurosis. *J. clin. Psychol.*, 1964, 20, 200-207.
3. CRUMBAUGH, J. C., RAPHAEL, M., Sr., & SHRADER, R. R. Frankl's will to meaning in a religious order. *J. clin. Psychol.*, 1970, 26, 206-207.
4. DOERRIES, L. E. Purpose in life and social participation. *J. Indiv. Psychol.*, 1970, 26, 50-53.
5. ROBINSON, L. A validation of the A and R scales. Paper presented at the Southeastern Psychol. Ass., Louisville, Kentucky, 1970.