

## An Examination of the Relationships Among Nostalgia, Optimism, and Coping Strategies

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Nostalgia has been conceptualized as a sentimental longing for the past (Sedikides, Wildschut, Arndt, & Routledge, 2008), and various studies have explored the psychological benefits and functions associated with nostalgia. This research further explored these potential benefits through an examination of the relationships among a tendency for nostalgia, trait optimism, and coping strategies. The purpose of this research was to expand the literature regarding the potential relationships among these three variables by bringing them all together. Using a correlational method to explore the relationships among these variables, a sample of 95 participants from Brandon University completed a series of self report questionnaires. A tendency for nostalgia was measured using the Batcho Nostalgia Inventory (BNI). Trait optimism was measured using the Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R). Coping Strategies were measured using the Coping Orientations to Problems Experienced (COPE) Inventory, and the coping strategy subscales of this measure were categorised by the researcher as adaptive, maladaptive, and neutral, following previous research. It was expected that there would be a positive correlation between a tendency for nostalgia and trait optimism. It was also expected that a tendency for nostalgia would have positive relationship with adaptive coping strategies. Finally, it was expected that that a tendency for nostalgia as well as trait optimism would each serve as independent predictors of the engagement in more adaptive coping strategies as an outcome. Results showed that a tendency for nostalgia had no relationship with trait optimism, and as per these results the first expectation was not supported. Further, a tendency for nostalgia had a positive relationship with three coping strategies, one adaptive, one maladaptive, and one

neutral. These results partially supported the second expectation, and reevaluation of these three coping strategies revealed that all fell under Carver, Shier, and Weintraub's (1989) emotion focused coping strategies classification, known as an indirect attempt to reduce one's stress by focusing coping on managing one's emotional response to stress. Results of this study also revealed that trait optimism and a tendency for nostalgia each served as significant predictors for various coping strategies, with optimism often being the more important predictor. These results partly supported the third expectation. The findings of this research added to existing literature by identifying relationships among the variables of interest as well as establishing the predictive value of these variables. Findings from the current study aid in building an understanding of the role of nostalgia and optimism in coping strategies, which may have implications for mental health professionals in exploring and identifying individuals' strategies for coping with stress. Future researchers could benefit from further the exploration of the relationship between a tendency for nostalgia and emotion focused coping strategies, as opposed to classifying coping strategies as adaptive and maladaptive.

## References

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