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Psychometric properties of the Existential Scale and the Existential Motivations Test for adolescent population

**Abstract for**

Short Communication

## **Abstract**

According to the World Health Organization (2023), it is estimated that 3.8% of the population experiences depression. More than 700.000 people commit suicide each year. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death in the 15-29 age group.

Current mental health statistics show a significant increase in loss of meaning and existential emptiness, manifested in the symptomatic triad: depression, aggression and addiction. In contrast, meaning in life is positively associated with resilience and psychological well-being.

In young populations, evidence shows that the perception of greater meaning in life is associated with lower reports of anxiety, depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation and associated pathologies (Osorio Castaño et al., 2022). In adolescents, meaning in life is a predictor of subjective well-being (García Alandete et al., 2013), and healthy behaviors (Brassai et al., 2011, 2012).

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in identifying specific factors that may influence health. From humanistic and existential approaches, the meaning of life constitutes one of the fundamental factors for the development of a healthy life.

Research highlights the protective role that meaning of life appears to play in younger populations, which justifies the interest in working with this population.

For Frankl, the central theme was meaning. Längle expanded Frankl's vision and developed a theoretical model called the Theory of Fundamental Motivations of Existence, as well as new psychotherapeutic methods, such as Personal Existential Analysis and the Position-Taking Method.

The structure of Contemporary Existential Analysis is made up of four dimensions, each of which corresponds to what is called fundamental existential motivations. These deep motivations correspond to: finding a foundation for why we are in the world; relating closely to what we experience as our life; being ourselves by finding our own identity and authenticity; and reorienting the constant changes within human existence towards creative developments related to the existential concept of meaning. We are oriented to find and discover the answers to these four categories (Längle, 2015).

The present study aims to determine the psychometric properties of the Existential Scale (Längle, Orgle, & Kundi, 2000) and the Existential Motivations Test (Längle & Eckhardt, 2019) for the adolescent population. The goal is to have valid and reliable instruments for adolescents from Mendoza, which enable the evaluation of the meaning of life and fundamental motivations, in order to be able to make adequate diagnoses and develop programs for health promotion and prevention of pathologies.

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