

PROBABILISTIC ORIENTATION (PO)

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Style of Life

- An individual's Style of life connotes the person's personality, and his/her whole attitude to life and others.
- Faulty style of life produce erroneous conceptions of the world and result in negative style of life.
- Everyone can change with a change in one's life style and bring happiness.

Probabilistic Orientation (PO) - Style of Life

- PO construes a typical style of life.
- The style of life of the saints and seers of Sangam Period in Tamil Nadu, the golden period of civilization of our Tamil population.
- This life style has been labeled as PO by Prof.S.Narayanan (1977).
- This construct of PO found expressed in a poem in Purananooru has been attributed to Kanian Poonkundranar of Sangam age.
- This style of life is founded on a phenomenological perspective of the course of life in the World, the Universe and the Nature.

Assumptions of Probabilistic Orientation

- Nature originated evolved itself as a system from void and follows a systematic evolution in time.

Assumptions of Probabilistic Orientation

- Like the scope of the man sailing a boat towards a destination is governed by the system characteristics of the climatic factors determining the course of the water way and the sail, a man's course of life is determined by the Nature.
- The Man who is sailing in the boat neither can claim the success of reaching the destination as due to his skill, nor he can attribute the success of the journey solely to sources outside him.
- It is a dynamic balance between internal and external forces taking shape within a system from time to time that supplies the truest cause for any event.

Basic tenets of PO

- Since the place of birth is determined by chance decided by the stochastic process you do not have any special claim about your native place.
- All places are equal to us and all men and women are our relatives.

Basic Tenet of PO

- For every event to happen there is a chain of causality existing. Some one may appear to be causing good or harm at a point of time.
- But this should not blind us from recognizing the precedents : Good and Bad can be caused by none.

Basic Tenets of PO

- Sickness and even Death is nothing new in Nature.
- There is no good reason either to rejoice life as sweet or despise life as sour.
- Since status is mediated through a chain of stochastic probabilities, the realized individual neither wonder at the great nor would look down upon the small and the ordinary man.

Postulate of PO

- Nature exists as a Stochastic System : The probability for occurrence of any event is determined by the system characteristics existing at a point of time.
- For instance, we have the chances of various events happening today determined by how the world existed yesterday, and the composite character of tomorrow's world will change depending on the happenings of today.
- This goes as a continuous process since evolution.

The Phenomenological Orientation

- PO is developed on an ideographic phenomenological premise.
- Thanks to the constant evolution, Nature adheres to a stochastic process.
- The probability of occurrence of events at any point of time in a system is determined by the stochastic probability, a function of time.
- An individual cannot induce any change all of a sudden in a system. It is possible to introduce a subtle change in the course of the system.

PO : Sailing Through

- The positive and negative factors concerned with the navigation presents a prototype of course of life.
- The chances that the navigator reaches a destination is mediated by the probability of occurrence of the factors favorable and unfavorable to navigation of the float floating on the water.
- The chain of events determining these factors at one point of time is traceable to the constant changes continuously happening in the universe since evolution.
- As the floating of the float has to accept the balance of the positive and negative factors governing it's sail, one has to accept and organize his life style on the balance of all the negative and positive factors on which his life course hinges.

The Effect of PO

- An individual who is given to the probabilistic orientation does not view anything from personal angle.
- His or her outlook helps viewing all outcomes with equanimity.
- He or she does not resist or instantly accept anything based on any compulsion or obsession due to his complexes resulting from what he already believes and trusts.
- He or she does not attach any value-judgments regarding the outcome.

PO and Locus of Control

- Individual believes that his/her behavior is neither guided by fate, luck, powerful others, chance nor by his/her personal decisions and efforts or other external circumstances
- The individual believes that Nature is a System.
- The System constantly changes in time.
- Every event in the course of Nature is governed by the System Characteristics.
- Changes can be introduced to the System which can alter the System Characteristics in the frame of time.

Factors of Probabilistic Orientation

- Appreciating probabilistic orientation as one of the dominant features of our Indian Culture, Narayanan (1977) developed a questionnaire purporting to obtain a measure of probabilistic orientation.
- The questionnaire contains thirty items in the form of general statements which can be endorsed or rejected by the respondent answering the questionnaire as applicable to him or not.
- A factor analysis of the responses of a large group of elders to the Probabilistic Orientation Questionnaire has yielded seven factors to constitute probabilistic orientation (Narayanan, 1977;1993).

Factors of PO

- Unbounded Expectancy
- Sensing Unlimited Possibilities
- Insight into bias
- Healthy Skepticism
- Unconditional Acceptance
- Appreciation of Chance
- Awareness of Predictability

Factors of PO

- **Factor-I** Unbounded Expectancy.

Predictions are not influenced by stature of a person. Failure and success are not consistent in time; and nature does not have any bias.

- **Factor-II** Sensing Unlimited Possibilities.

This factor emphasizes that it is not possible to enumerate all the possibilities and predict.

- **Factor-III** Insight into Bias.

This emphasizes chance, spontaneity and unbiasedness of Nature.

- **Factor-IV** Healthy Skepticism

This suggests that an attitude for scientific invention tempered with skepticism is a healthy attitude.

- **Factor-V** Unconditional Acceptance

This stresses acceptance of happenings without prejudice and not labeling anything as good or bad.

- **Factor-VI** Appreciation of Chance

This highlights the role of chance and an appreciation of the fact that chance works more than human effort but chances of achievement can be improved by better efforts.

- **Factor-VII** Awareness of Predictability

This emphasizes the awareness of the possibility of prediction even in cases where it is difficult to make any.

Unbounded Expectancy

- This refers to what we call expectancy variable in psychology.
- Unbounded means that the expectation is open to accommodate any surprise.
- It is not fixed and rigid in finer details.
- Expectations are kept as general as possible
- It also emphasizes openness to experience and *Nishkamy Karma*.

Sensing Unlimited Possibilities

- We confine our expectations about what is possible to a very minimum range and do not exhaust the wide range of possibilities possible.
- We are usually guided by our past experience and habit in counting the possibilities of an event taking its course and ending in results. This enumeration of possibilities of happenings is highly biased and influenced by our optimism and pessimism.
- Experience of the past like success or failure, or even the behavior pattern reviewed from research shall not lead to certainty in prediction and solutions may emerge spontaneously themselves.

Insight into Bias

- Bias is the inclination or mind set.
- The concept of set in perception is emphasized here.
- We are led by inclinations in terms of beliefs, opinions, attitudinal disposition etc.,

Healthy Skepticism

- This is against bandwagon effect.
- This emphasis self analysis and rationality.
- Healthy skepticism is logic pure and simple.
- It is followed for establishing a postulate - a truth which should be accepted as basic one without questioning.

Unconditional Acceptance

- Do not use any if and buts in accepting reality
- Reality should be accepted as it is. Hold the bull with its horns.
- This emphasizes that there is no room for pretention, games, defences, etc., complete surrendering to reality, and of course start further processing of the course of life accommodating to the scope available under any adverse condition.

Awareness of Predictability

- Whether one understands or not, the world goes the way it should.
- Nature is large system. The law of inertia of large number operates in Nature.
- In a nation during a particular period a few individuals would have become millionaire and a few might have turned to be pauper. The national income will not change because of individual loss and gain.
- There is statistical regularity. Life will get balance as a whole in the long run. Tragedies might strike and comedies might come and go. Ultimately the quality of life will remain balance for everyone.

EMPIRICAL WORK ON PROBABILISTIC ORIENTATION

PO and Mental Health

- Priya (1997) studied the mental health of a large sample of women college students using the POQ and the Mental Health Questionnaire (Augustine, 1978). The findings of her study reveal that subjects with a high degree of probabilistic orientation have a greater degree of mental health.

PO and Resilience

- The effect of probabilistic orientation on resilience among graduate students and scientists was examined in a study.
- Findings revealed that, as expected, the high group on probabilistic orientation had significantly greater resilience as compared to the low group on probabilistic orientation among students (Annalakshmi, 2007)

PO and Death Anxiety

- Probabilistic orientation and death anxiety were related to one another among elders as found in a moderately large sample study (Narayanan, 1983).
- PO was found to be significantly and negatively related to Death Anxiety.

PO and Job Burnout

- Govindarasu (1988) attempted a motivational analysis of burnout among sport coaches. Findings suggested that probabilistic orientation was significantly and negatively correlated to job burnout.
- Brindha (1997) studied burnout among physicians who are engaged in private practice. Here again, probabilistic orientation and burnout were significantly and negatively correlated.

PO and Security

- Probabilistic orientation is found to be positively related to security (Maslow, 1962) as revealed in a study involving a moderately large sample of adult drivers in a transport corporation (Narayanan & Govindarasu, 1986b).

PO and Alienation

- Trait alienation is reported to be negatively correlated with probabilistic orientation in the case of sport coaches (Govindarasu, 1988).
- The state of alienation is also reported to be negatively correlated with probabilistic orientation in the case of sport coaches (Govindarasu, 1988).

PO and Attitudes

- Probabilistic orientation is significantly correlated with the business attitude of innovation among entrepreneurs (Stimpson, 1990; Balakrishnan, 1985).
- Probabilistic orientation is significantly correlated with the Protestant ethic (Mirels and Garrett, 1971; Balakrishnan, 1985).

PO and Values

- PO appears to be related to a balanced value system with equal value for spiritualism and materialism (Annalakshmi, 2009).
- A study of transport drivers (Narayanan, 1986) reveals that probabilistic orientation is significantly and positively related to Variety and Practical Mindedness.

PO and Climate

- Clerks in a textile mill having a high degree of probabilistic orientation, are more sensitive to perceived organizational climate dimensions of structure, responsibility, reward, risk, warmth, support, standard, conflict and identity.
- Another large study of supervisors in textile mills reveals that probabilistic orientation sensitizes one's perception of the social processes of interaction (Indumathi,1989).

PO and Role Conflict

- Probabilistic orientation is reported to have a significantly negative correlation with Role Conflict among sports coaches (Govindarasu, 1988).

PO and Vocational Personality

- A large study of women entrepreneurs reveal that women entrepreneurs as a whole distinguish themselves from the general population and are having a significantly higher degree of probabilistic orientation (Devi, 1995).
- Another study comparing potential entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs and managers of small scale industries with one another reports that potential entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs are more probabilistically oriented compared to the managers (Balakrishnan, 1985).

PO and Rorschach Variables

- A study involving one hundred Rorschach Protocols (Rorschach, 1921) of male adults reveals that individuals having a high probabilistic orientation have high ego or thinking operation, emotional control, intelligence, interest, perception of reality and the ability to perceive the commonplace.

PO and Other Personality Variables

- Another investigation involving one hundred TAT protocols of adults (Natarajan, 1983) reveals that highly probabilistically oriented individuals are having high achievement, aggression and passivity when compared to the low probabilistically oriented individuals.
- On the other hand low probabilistically oriented individuals have high abasement, dominance, intragression, sex and succorance compared to high probabilistically oriented individuals.

PO and Other Personality Variables

- A large study of adolescents including both boys and girls reveals that a probabilistic orientation is significantly and positively related with intelligence, creativity, extroversion and neuroticism among girls (Natarajan, 1983).
- A study of probabilistic orientation using a sample of male graduates using the MMPI reveals that probabilistic orientation is significantly and negatively related to masculinity/femininity, schizophrenia and social introversion (Narayanan, 1985b).

PO Counseling

- Anuradha (2003) developed a program on PO and delivered it to high school students in 15 sessions. The program promoted PO and also self concept, sense of belonging, leadership, emotional balance, self reliance, honesty, relatedness, relatedness to God, and general awareness of the participants. Similar results were reported in another study on college students by Balakrishnan (2003).
- Studies by Sivaraman (2004), Amsakumran (2004), Chacko (2004) involving delivering of program on po to high school students report findings similar to the one reported by Anuradha(2003). Studies by Shettigar (2005) on engineering college students and by Usha Poduval (2005) on students ofbusiness management have yielded results similar to the ones reported by Balakrishanan (2003) with regard to students of Arts and Science College.

PO Counseling

- Intervention involving techniques based on PO and Sri Aurobindo Ashram Mother's teachings has been quite successful in the case of counseling of adolescent school students and adult cancer patients (Annalakshmi, 2003). The intervention succeeded in reducing anxiety, depression, mental confusion and brooding, undue concern over health, somatic complaints, alienation, mental confusion, sleep disturbances, persecutory ideas, maladjustment, etc. It also enhanced confidence in coping among adolescent students. The intervention reduced anxiety and depression, insomnia, somatic symptoms, helplessness and hopelessness, among the cancer patients.
- In an investigation an attempt was made to use PO as model for counseling (Thomas, 2005). It attempted to professionally help 70 novices using POC. Well being measures derived using TAT protocols of the counselee after they had undergone the POC showed that the POC was efficacious in helping the patients resolve their problems and achieve an enhanced subjective well being.

PO and Resilience

- Efficacy of PO Program radio broadcast in enhancing subjective well-being and resilience was assessed using an experimental group-control group design (Siddharthan, 2010).
- The sample included 130 male and 163 females in the Experimental Group and 80 males and 148 females in the Control Group. They all were students studying in class 11th in various schools.
- The program on PO had enhanced the cognitive and conative appreciation of Resilience in terms of duration of getting back to normalcy, reaction to negative events, response to risk factors (specifically disadvantaged environment in life), Perception of effect of positive negative events, defining problems hope/confidence in coping with future, openness to experience and flexibility.

Probabilistic Orientation Questionnaire (POQ)

A number of statements normally expressed in day to day life are given below. Please read each statement carefully and provide your response against each statement. If a statement is acceptable to you endorse **YES** and if not endorse **NO**. There is no right or wrong answer. Please complete the questionnaire as quickly possible.

Sl. No.	Statement	Response	
1	It is probable in course of time the solution for the current puzzles may become self evident.	Yes	No
2	Nobody can certainly predict anything.	Yes	No
3	Any person can change in course of time.	Yes	No
4	It is probable that predictions made by any person may go wrong.	Yes	No
5	The accidental happenings in life should be accepted without any prejudice.	Yes	No
6	Status of the person will not always be the same.	Yes	No
7	Chance is the pure determinant of success in horse race.	Yes	No
8	Good luck is just accidental.	Yes	No
9	It is possible that there is more than one correct solution for any problem.	Yes	No

Sl. No.	Statement	Response	
10	Since all the plans of the past met with failures, it is not necessary that the future plan should also meet with failure.	Yes	No
11	Since all plans of the past met with success, it is not necessary that the future plan should also meet with success.	Yes	No
12	Even the best effort may fail in practice.	Yes	No
13	All thoughts good or bad may fail in practice.	Yes	No
14	Natural events are unbiased.	Yes	No
15	Some diseases may get cured spontaneously.	Yes	No
16	Chance should favor any effort to make it a success.	Yes	No
17	It is good to expect any unforeseen thing to happen anytime.	Yes	No
18	Whether we understand or not, nature operates on the basis of definite principles.	Yes	No

Sl. No.	Statement	Response	
		Yes	No
19	Even the best judge may err in his judgment.	Yes	No
20	Solution to problems becomes clear incidentally on their own.	Yes	No
21	Chance has a crucial role to play in the game of cards.	Yes	No
22	Things heard and seen may even become false.	Yes	No
23	It is possible that any activity may meet with success or failure.	Yes	No
24	Weather forecasts are made on the best guesswork.	Yes	No
25	Any scientific invention may go wrong.	Yes	No
26	Any thing may happen to anyone in the course of time.	Yes	No
27	Today's success may be failure tomorrow and tomorrow's failure may become a success some other day.	Yes	No
28	Natural events by themselves are neither good nor bad.	Yes	No
29	Event by themselves are just natural ones; we only label them "good luck" or "odd-luck".	Yes	No
30	Any piece of research work can predict only the probabilities of occurrence of an event and not the certainty.	Yes	No

THANK YOU!