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Dolna 17, Warsaw,
Poland 00-773
+48 226 0 227 03
editorial_office@rsglobal.pl

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THE LEVEL OF HOPE-BASED THINKING AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Souad Merghem

Dr., University of Chlef, Laboratory: URDH Setif2, Chlef, Algeria
ORCID ID: 0009-0007-8800-5349

Hassina Yousfi

Dr., University of Sétif 2, Laboratory: URDH Setif2, Sétif, Algeria
ORCID ID: 0009-0006-9320-4599

Malika Benchedda

Prof., University of Oran 2, Laboratory: LRMIT ORAN2, Oran, Algeria
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5763-9855

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to measure the level of hope-based thinking among university students and examine differences according to gender (male/female) and field of study (scientific/humanities). The sample consisted of 140 students selected through convenience sampling. A descriptive research design was adopted, and Snyder et al.'s (1991) Hope Scale was employed for data collection. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 20, with the following findings:

- University students demonstrated a high level of hope-based thinking.
- No statistically significant differences were found according to gender.
- No statistically significant differences were found according to field of study.

KEYWORDS

Hope-Based Thinking, University Students

CITATION

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Introduction and Research Problem

There is no doubt that the university environment represents a space for knowledge and science, a source of intellectual and educational values, and a pathway to progress and development in all aspects of life. University students are considered one of the most important pillars upon which this environment is built. From this standpoint, it becomes imperative to pay careful attention to students in a manner that motivates them to invest their efforts and strengths toward a promising future through which they can achieve both their personal goals and those of their society. This is particularly significant as they are in a formative stage of preparation and qualification, acquiring positive skills and behaviors that help them face challenges and achieve both psychological and social adjustment.

Hope is considered one of the most important positive variables that has recently attracted the attention of researchers within the framework of positive psychology, a relatively new movement in psychology that focuses on the scientific study of the bright aspects of human personality, the development of strengths, and the enhancement of positive traits in order to achieve what is known as well-being, a good life, and optimal functioning.

According to Snyder, hope refers to “the way in which people think about goals, encompassing the individual’s perceived capability to generate one or more workable pathways to achieve these goals, as well as the motivation to initiate and sustain movement toward goal attainment and to reduce psychological problems” (Snyder, 2000, p. 180).

Hope is associated with several positive variables such as happiness, optimism, psychological security, meaning in life, and life satisfaction. In this regard, the study conducted by Joudeh and Abu Jarad (2011) revealed a positive correlation between hope, happiness, and optimism among a sample of university students, and indicated that hope and optimism contributed to the prediction of happiness. Similarly, Yassin, Banna, and Ahmed Ali (2018) found a significant correlation between psychological resilience, hope, and optimism. Parker’s study (2007) also demonstrated a positive correlation between hope, psychological well-being, and mental health.

Furthermore, the study by Al-Momani and Arabiyat (2021), which examined the predictive ability of hope dimensions on life satisfaction among a sample of youth, revealed that life goals and an optimistic outlook toward the future significantly predicted life satisfaction. Specifically, higher levels of life goals and optimism were associated with higher levels of life satisfaction. The study by Ghand and Al-Shammari (2019) also showed a statistically significant correlation between hope and psychological security. Likewise, Raja’a (2016), in her study on the relationship between positive psychological attitudes (faith in God, hope, and optimism) and coping strategies for stress, found a significant correlation between the two variables.

Lazarus (1999) viewed hope as a positive cognitive and conscious stance toward confronting life challenges and achieving desired outcomes, thus emphasizing its cognitive dimension (Lazarus, 1999, p. 7). He further asserted that hope plays a vital role in an individual’s life, as it forms a solid foundation that enhances adaptive capacity and the ability to confront obstacles. Hope is considered one of the basic human needs that contribute to continuity through positive expectations of achieving desires and goals for which individualise strive.

Mental health scholars have emphasized, through accumulated empirical evidence, the importance of hope and optimism in building a resilient individual, free from risks that threaten physical and psychological health. Hope has been shown to be beneficial for both mental and physical health (Scheier et al., 1994, p. 1063).

Based on the foregoing, the importance of studying positive emotions emerges at both the individual and societal levels as sources of strength that help individuals develop and enhance their personalities, improve efficiency, and overcome difficulties. These emotions also contribute to the construction and advancement of society. Échevin this ultimate goal requires special attention to youth, who constitute the backbone of society and its most powerful agents of change in confronting the major challenges facing the world today.

Accordingly, there is a pressing need to study hope as a positive variable among all segments of society, particularly university students, as they are in a stage of intellectual development and professional preparation. Therefore, the research problem of the present study is articulated through the following questions:

1. What is the level of hope-based thinking among university students?
2. Are there statistically significant differences in hope-based thinking according to gender?
3. Are there statistically significant differences in hope-based thinking according to field of study (scientific/humanities)?

Hypotheses

1. The level of hope-based thinking among university students is moderate.
2. Statistically significant differences in hope-based thinking exist according to gender (male/female).
3. Statistically significant differences in hope-based thinking exist according to field of study (scientific/humanities).

Objectives

- To examine the level of hope-based thinking among university students.
- To identify differences in hope-based thinking according to gender and field of study.

Significance of the Study

- Hope is a central concept in positive psychology, promoting mental well-being and life satisfaction.
- University education is a critical stage in preparing students for professional and social life.
- The study provides insights for educational counselors and mental health practitioners to develop programs that enhance positive student behaviors and well-being.

Operational Definition

Hope-Based Thinking: Defined by Snyder et al. as a state of positive affect encompassing:

1. ability: Energy and motivation directed toward goals.
2. Pathways: Planning and strategizing to achieve goals.

Operationally, it is measured via the Snyder et al. (1991) Hope Scale, with scores reflecting students' levels of hope-based thinking.

Delimitations of the study:

- Spatial: Chlef University, OuledFarès Campus, Algeria.
- Temporal: March–April 2024.
- Human: Sample of 140 students.

First: Study Procedures

The Exploratory Study

The exploratory study aimed to calculate the psychometric properties of the instruments and to gain practical experience in their application.

Exploratory Study sample: The study tools were applied to an exploratory sample of (30) students, including 16 females and 14 males, from the Institute of Physical and Sports Activity Sciences, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Faculty of Natural Sciences, and the Faculty of Literature.

Sample: 30 students (16 females, 14 males) from the Institute of Physical Activity and Sports Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Natural Sciences, and Faculty of Literature.

Psychometric Properties of the Hope Scale

1. Discriminant Validity (Extreme Groups Method):
2. After coding the responses and arranging the obtained scores in descending order, a comparison was made between the two extreme groups. The top 27% represented individuals with the highest scores, while the bottom 27% represented individuals with the lowest scores. The results are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Shows the validity of the extreme group comparison between high and low scorers on the Hope Scale using the *T-test*.

Scale	Upper Group Mean	Upper SD	Lower Group Mean	Lower SD	df	t-value	p-value	Significance
Hope	18.50	1.604	27.63	0.916	14	13.975	0.000	Significant

Interpretation: The scale effectively differentiates between high and low scorers, confirming its validity.

It is evident from Table (01) that the calculated *t* value (13.975) and the probability value (0.000) for the Hope Scale are below the significance level (0.01). This indicates that the scale has a discriminative ability between individuals with high scores and those with low scores on the hope-based thinking scale, thereby confirming the validity of the scale and its effectiveness in measuring what it was designed to measure.

2. Reliability

a. Cronbach's Alpha:

The results were as shown in the following table:

Table 2. Shows the reliability results of the Hope-Based Thinking Scale using Cronbach's alpha method.

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Hope	0.60

b. Split-Half Reliability:

As observed in Table (02), the reliability coefficient of the Hope Scale using the internal consistency method, according to Cronbach's alpha formula, was (0.60). This value is considered high, indicating that the study instrument possesses a strong level of reliability. Therefore, the results can be considered dependable and trustworthy.

Scale	Correlation Before Correction	Guttman	Spearman-Brown
Hope	0.69	0.77	0.82

Interpretation: All reliability coefficients are high, indicating that the scale is consistent and reliable for use.

Table (03) shows that the reliability coefficient of the Hope Scale, calculated using the split-half method based on the correlation and the total score of the scale, was approximately (0.69) before adjustment. The correlation coefficient calculated using the Guttman formula was (0.77), and the predictive Spearman-Brown formula for test length adjustment yielded a coefficient of (0.82). This indicates that all reliability coefficients are high, reflecting a strong level of consistency that can be relied upon in the present study.

Second: Main Study:

1-Methodology study: Descriptive

2- Population & Sample: 140 students from Chlef University (scientific and humanities tracks), selected via convenience sampling.

3-Study Instruments:

The study employed the **Hope-Based Thinking Scale** developed by R. Snyder & others (1991). The scale consists of **12 items** distributed across three dimensions:

- **Pathways (or Strategies):** items 1, 4, 6, 8
- **ability and Willpower:** items 9, 10, 12
- **Distractors:** items 3, 5, 7, 11

The scale uses **four response alternatives:** (No), (A little), (Moderate), and (A lot). Scoring is as follows:

- (No) = 0 points
- (A little) = 1 point
- (Moderate) = 2 points
- (A lot) = 3 points

- Statistical Analysis: Percentages, mean, standard deviation, t-test (SPSS 20).

Results and Discussion

Hypothesis 1: Presentations, Analysis, and Discussion of the First Hypothesis:

The first hypothesis stated that the level of hope-based thinking among university students is moderate.

To verify the validity of this hypothesis, the arithmetic mean, the theoretical mean, and the standard deviation were used, based on the following criteria:

If the arithmetic mean is lower than the theoretical mean, the level of hope-based thinking is considered low.

If the arithmetic mean is equal to the theoretical mean, the level of hope-based thinking is considered moderate.

If the arithmetic mean is higher than the theoretical mean, the level of hope-based thinking is considered high.

Table 4. Shows the level of hope-based thinking among university students.

Scale	No. of Items	Mean	SD	Theoretical Mean	t-value	df	p-value	Significance
Hope	12	22.37	4.152	18	63.747	139	0.000	0.01

Interpretation: The mean (22.37) > theoretical mean (18), $t = 63.747$, $p < 0.01$, indicating a high level of hope.

The results presented in the table indicate that the mean score of the study sample on the hope-based thinking variable was (22.37), with a standard deviation of (4.152). To determine whether there were statistically significant differences between this mean and the hypothetical mean of (18), a one-sample t -test was conducted. The obtained t value was (63.747) with (139) degrees of freedom and a probability value of (0.000) at a significance level of (0.01), indicating statistically significant differences in favor of the study sample mean, which suggests that the participants exhibit a high level of hope-based thinking.

This result is consistent with the findings of Al-Salhi (2005), Al-Anzi (2004), and Abu Al-Hassan Mujahid (2019). This finding may be attributed to students' ability to cope with life challenges and to resist the pressures and frustrations they encounter, as well as their level of psychological resilience, which makes them more hopeful, optimistic, and confident in their expectations of success. This interpretation aligns with the humanistic perspective, which emphasizes that individuals are capable of achieving self-actualization and reaching their goals despite facing various hardships and frustrations. Moreover, this result may also be explained by the experiences and knowledge acquired by university students within the academic environment, through exposure to diverse situations that help develop decision-making skills, coping with stress, emotional awareness and regulation. In addition, the rational thinking characteristic of students at the university level may contribute to reducing negative emotions and fostering skills that promote greater achievement and aspirations.

Hypothesis 2: Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of the second Hypothesis:

The second hypothesis states that there are statistically significant differences in hope-based thinking among university students attributable to the gender variable (male/female).

To examine the validity of this hypothesis, an independent samples t -test was applied to determine the significance of differences between males and females. The results were as follows:

Table 5. Shows the differences in hope-based thinking among university students according to the gender variable.

Gender	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Significance
Male	21.15	3.962	138	-1.950	0.514	NS
Female	22.75	4.155				

Table (05) shows that the mean score for males was (21.15), whereas it was (22.75) for females. The standard deviation was estimated at (3.962) for males and (4.155) for females, with (138) degrees of freedom. The calculated t -value for the independent samples t -test was (-1.950), and the probability value ($\text{sig} = 0.514$) was greater than the significance level (0.01).

Based on these results, there are no statistically significant differences in hope-based thinking among university students attributable to the gender variable (male/female). Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted, which states that there are no statistically significant differences in hope among university students due to gender (male/female). This finding is inconsistent with the studies of Rifaat Abdullah Jassim (2015) and Yassin, Banna, and Ali (2018), whose results indicated statistically significant gender differences in favor of females.

The absence of statistically significant gender differences in the level of hope-based thinking may be attributed to the unified university context. In other words, both males and females experience similar academic conditions (such as schedules, the level of material and social university services, and the mode of instruction). In addition, the lifestyle of both genders is similar within the same sociocultural context, and students share comparable responsibilities. Moreover, certain socialization factors, such as appropriate parental rearing practices, may have contributed to eliminating gender differences.

Hypothesis 3: Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of the third Hypothesis:

The third hypothesis states that there are statistically significant differences in hope-based thinking among university students attributable to the specialization variable (scientific/humanities).

To verify this hypothesis, an independent samples *t*-test was applied to determine the significance of differences between scientific and humanities specializations. The results were as follows:

Table 6. Shows the differences in hope among university students according to the specialization variable (scientific/humanities).

Field	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value	Significance
Humanities	22.72	4.431	138	1.108	0.270	NS
Scientific	21.94	3.763				

Table (06) indicates that the mean score for students in the humanities was (22.72), compared to (21.94) for students in scientific disciplines. The standard deviation was estimated at (4.431) for humanities students and (3.763) for scientific students, with (138) degrees of freedom. The calculated *t*-value for the independent samples *t*-test was (1.108), and the probability value (sig = 0.270) exceeded the significance level (0.01).

Based on these values, it can be stated with 95% confidence that there are no statistically significant differences in hope-based thinking among university students attributable to the specialization variable (scientific vs. humanities). Accordingly, the alternative hypothesis is rejected and the null hypothesis is accepted, which states that there are no statistically significant differences in hope-based thinking among university students due to specialization (scientific vs. humanities). This finding contradicts the results of the study by Yassin, Banna, and Ali (2018), which reported significant differences between the two specializations in favor of scientific disciplines.

This result may be explained by the fact that students, regardless of their specialization, possess conviction and motivation to study their chosen field. Moreover, university students are at a stage of intellectual maturity irrespective of their specialization, as their awareness expands toward identifying practical strategies and means to achieve their goals. Consequently, their desire and hope for goal attainment increase, along with their motivation to move toward achieving their perceived objectives.

Recommendations

- Organize workshops to enhance positive psychological traits among students.
- Integrate positive psychology courses in university curricula to promote well-being.
- Conduct experimental and predictive studies to explore hope in relation to other variables, such as self-regulation, rational thinking, and personal commitment.

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