Hope, optimism and academic achievement: Correlationship study among urban school girls

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Abstract
Hope theory integrates the conceptualization of goals, along with the strategies to achieve those goals and the motivation to pursue those goals. Optimism is a form of positive thinking that includes the belief about one's responsibility for own happiness and assurance that superior things will continue to happen in the future. Hope and optimism are the basic component for the expectancies of positive outcome in future. Our purpose of the study was to find out the relationship among hope, optimism and academic achievement. 40 girls of age 12 to 15 years and studying in class 9th participated in the research. The participants were given 2 questionnaires for assessment of their level of optimism and hope and it's correlation with their academic achievement was done. We found that academic achievement was having significant positive correlation with hope and optimism. The study concludes that students who were hopeful and optimistic have high chances of becoming high achievers while the outcome may become vice versa in students having low hope and optimism. Information revealed through such research projects will let institutions to develop programs that aim to help students to improve their academic performance by making them aware of the variables to consider.
Key Word: Hope, Life Optimism, Academic achievement.

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INTRODUCTION

Hope is defined as the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways by C R Snyder, 2002. Snyder also reports that higher hope consistently is related to better outcomes in academics, athletics, physical health, psychological adjustment, and psychotherapy. According to positive psychologist Charles Richard "Rick" and Snyder, 1944, hopeful thinkers achieve more, and are physically and psychologically healthier than less hopeful people.

Hopeful people are able to multiple pathways and establish clear goals, toward those goals and persevere, even when obstacles get in their way. Mental attitude and views about world those interprets the situations as best so the Optimism is a in some way that may not be fully comprehended the present moment is in an optimum state (Scheier and Carver, 1985). This concept is a extend view of the hope that future conditions will interpret as optimal. The term derives from the Latin optimum, meaning "best". Being optimistic, in the typical sense of the word, is defined as expecting the best possible outcome from any given situation this indicates the future situations will work out for the good and best outcomes. A common idiom used to illustrate optimism versus pessimism is that 'An optimist thinks that we're moving towards the best of all possible worlds. A pessimist thinks that we've already arrived.' Optimists explain positive events as having happened because of them. They also see them as evidence that more positive things will happen in the future and in other areas of their live. Conversely, they see negative events as not being their fault. They also see them as being flukes that have nothing to do with other areas of their lives or future

events. (Scott, M.S., 2010) Seligman came to the concept of learned optimism through a scientific study of learned helplessness, the idea that a certain reoccurring negative event is out of the person's control. As Seligman was performing tests to study helplessness further, he began to wonder why some people resisted helplessness-conditioning. He noticed that, while some subjects blamed themselves for negative outcomes, others blamed the experiment for setting them up to fail. Seligman shifted his focus to attempting to discover what it is that keeps some people from ever becoming helpless. The answer was optimism. Using his knowledge about conditioning people to be helpless in the lab, he shifted his focus to conditioning people to be optimists. (Seligman, Martin, 1998) Academic achievement or academic performance is the outcome of education the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. Academic achievement is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are most important; procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge such as facts. Academic achievement is important because not only the good jobs with the satisfactory wages the students would have, but also the higher levels of education to tackle the technologically demanding occupations the working students would need in the future (Brown, 1999) Moreover, the quantity of jobs demanding a university education is predicted to increase more than twice as fast as those not demanding a university education by the next ten to twenty years (Fleetwood and Shelley, 2000; Rentner and Kober, 2001). The students with academic achievement would have more opportunities to choose their future jobs than those with less education.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of study is to explore the relationship between academic achievement, hope and optimism in **school girls.**

Objectives:
1. To find out the difference in hope and optimism in school girls.
2. To find out the relationship between academic achievement**,** optimism and hope in school girls.

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Study Design and Sample Recruitment

The present study is cross-sectional in nature. Purposive sampling method was used for sample selection with the use of standardized assessment tools. For the present study only adolescent girls (aged 12-15) of class 9th were

included. Written informed consent was taken from all the participants and their parents. All the respondents were well versed with English and Hindi language. The present study was conducted on the sample of 68 school girls of class 9th selected from a school of girls in Lucknow city. Total 68 girls were screened for the study but only 40 girls were included in the study while 28 girls excluded because they were exceeding the age or their results were not found as per the set criteria for low and high academic groups as described below.

Measures:

Academic Achievement: Yearly result of 9th class was considered as level of academic achievement of the schools girls. Results of all the evaluation in a whole year was added and then total scores of all evaluations on result cards were taken as the score of academic achievement. For high academic achievement group we made the cut off which was 390/600 (65%) plus scores on report card and cut off for low academic achievement group was taken 270/600 (45%) and those students scoring less than 45% were included in this group.

1. **Children's Hope Scale (CHS)**

The Children's Hope Scale (CHS) for ages 8 to 16constructed by Shenyder, Hoza, *et al*., 1997 was used for evaluation of hope. It includes 12 items and in response to each item is in descriptive phrase from the following 6-option continuum: "None of the time" to "All of the time." Total sore should range between 0-60. In this scale high score shows high hope of children.

2. **Life Orientation Test**

The Life Orientation Test (LOT) was developed to assess individual differences in generalized optimism versus pessimism. The Life Orientation Test (LOT) was designed by Scheier and Carver (1985), and is one of the more popular tests of optimism and pessimism. There are eight measurements (and an additional four filler items), with four positively ("In uncertain times, I usually expect the best") and four negatively ("If something can go wrong for me, it will") worded items. The LOT has been revised twice once by the original creators (LOT-R) and also by Chang, All three are most commonly used because they are based on dispositional optimism, which simply means expecting positive outcomes. It entails 5 point-Likert type scale ranging from 0 to 4. These points indicate the degree of severity from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It has four filler items[2,6,7,10] whose scores had not been added to the final score. Scale is on five point continuum. These points indicate the degree of severity from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Items numbers[3,8,9] and 12 are reverse scored. The total LOT-R score was the sum of the items numbers[1,3,4,5,8,9,11] and 12, with the lowest score being 0 and the highest being 32. The highest score (above 17) indicates pessimistic

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trait of personality and lowest score (below 17) shows optimistic traits of personality.

Data Analysis

Data was obtained using Microsoft Excel 2007 software. Statistical analysis was performed on SPSS version-20. Data was summarized as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation. Continuous variables were expressed as mean and standard deviation, while categorical variables were expressed as percentage. All analyses were two tailed and p values <0.05 and <0.01 were regarded as being significant. Pearson's Correlation Analysis was done between academic achievement, hope and optimism. Student's independent t test was used to compare scores of hope and optimism between the group of low and high optimism scores.

RESULTS

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Profile of the Sample`

		Low academic achievement group (n=20)	High academic achievement group(n=20)	Chi square value, df, t value,	P value
Age (In Years)	12-15	20	20		
	Mean (± S.D)	13.32(± 1.54)	13.57 (± 1.31)		
Family Structure	Joint	09(45%)	11(55%)	χ²= 1.30	p value=0.25
	Nuclear	11(55%)	09(45%)	df=1	
Religion	Hindu	13(65%)	12(60%)	χ²= 0.39	p value=0.53
	Muslim	07(35%)	08(40%)	df=1	
Family Income (per month)	<10,000/-	07(35%)	02(10%)	χ²= 0.41	p value=0.48
	10,000-20,000/-	05(25%)	12(60%)	df=1	
	>20,000/-	08(40%)	06(30%)		

As depicted in the table the mean age of the low academic achievement group was 13.32 (1.54) years and that of the high academic achievement group was 13.57 (1.31) years and there was no significant difference between the groups for mean age (<0.92). Similarly, both the groups were found statistically similar regarding family, religion, family income as per insignificant chi score and their p values.

Table 2: Showing comparison between the two groups on the Hope Scale

Hope Scale	MEAN	SD	Range	t-value	p-value
High Academic group	42.27	6.62	12-53		
Low Academic group	36.30	9.10	10-44	2.34	**0.05***

*P value is significant at 0.05 level

Table 2 shows the comparison of the high academic group and low academic groups on hope scale according to which there was a significant difference in hope level of both the groups.

Table 3: Showing comparison between the two groups on the life optimism test (LOT)

LOT	MEAN	SD	RANGE	T-VALUE	P-VALUE
High Academic group	28.36	5.52	10-30		
Low Academic group	25.13	5.11	9-28	1.32	0.19

Table 3 shows the comparison of the high academic group and low academic groups on life optimism test according to which there was no significant difference in life optimism level of both the groups.

Table 4: Showing correlation between academic achievement children hope and life optimism

Academic Achievement	Children's Hope		Life Optimism	
High Academic Achievement Group	r = 0.63	**p=0.01***	r =0.58	**p=0.01***
Low Academic High Academic Achievement Group	r =0.38	p=0.23	r =0.44	**p=0.05***

*P value is significant at 0.05 level **p value is significant at 0.01 level

Table 4 shows that hope and optimism both are positively correlation with academic achievement of high academic group, but there is no significant correlation between low academic achievements with hope although optimism was found correlated with low academic achievement.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed at studying the relationships between academic achievement, hope and optimism in school girls. To fulfill our aim we made these two objectives first is to find out the difference in hope and optimism in school girls and our second objective was to find out the relationship between academic achievement, optimism and hope in school girls. Purposive sampling method was used in our study. A total of 68 school girls were screened, out of which 40 girls were included in the study, which were divided into high and low academic achievement groups as per the set criteria. Comparison of Hope and optimism was done in both the groups. In our study, the population was comprised entirely of females. We selected females because they may be more likely to view their performance in academic settings as a direct display of their abilities. Researchers who have studied men and women in college settings have found significant differences between the two genders in their college experiences and outcomes. (Whitt, Pascarella, Elkins-Nesheim, Marth, and Pierson, 2003). We applied students "t test" to do the comparison in both the group the data was analysed on SPSS version-20. Our first aim was to do comparison between the high academic group and low academic groups on hope scale. We found a significant difference in hope level of both the groups which indicates that level of hope is different in both the groups that may be a basic reason of the difference in their academic achievements. According to our aim we have done comparison between the high academic achievement group and low academic achievement groups on life optimism test. We found that there was no significant difference found in life optimism level of both the groups which indicates that level of optimism was almost similar in both the groups. According to Lisa M *et al*. (2004) if students are overly optimistic and believe that they can attain their goals through multiple routes (pathways), they may not view their academic performance realistically. The result may be a lower end of term GPA. In terms of academic achievement, it appears that being optimistic and having more than one route to achieving goals has a negative effect on students' academic performance. Rand *et al*., 2011 also found optimism was not found to predict GPA. After doing these comparisons we correlated the high and low academic achievement groups with hope and optimism. Findings of these correlations indicate that high academic achievement is significantly correlated with hope and optimism but low academic achievement did not found significantly correlated with hope. Hope is a cognitive process derived from a sense of agency with goal oriented determination and successful paths meaning that it entails planning in order for one to achieve proposed goals (Snyder C R, Lopez S J 2005). The most accepted view in this regard is espoused by Snyder, Lehman, Kluck, and Mossone and Snyder, Lopez, Shorey, Rand, and Feldman. The definition of hope says that a hopeful outlook by individuals contributes significantly towards overcoming the difficulties and obstacles in daily life, whether in the family, work, school, or community environment (Snyder CR, Harris C, Anderson JR, *et al*. 1991). Similarly life optimism was found significantly correlated with low academic achievement. Previous research indicates that the relationship between optimism and hope is strong but they also found hope to be the most consistent predictor of GPA (David B. Feldman *et al*., 2014). One possible explanation for why optimism may not have predicted academic achievement pertains to its generalized expectancy as described by Scheier *et al*. (2001) and so it may not be a specific indicator for superior academic achievement. Additionally, optimism is an expectancy of positive outcomes irrespective of one's actions. This fact has led some theorists to suggest that, in highly behaviorally controllable situations such as college, hope may be a stronger predictor of performance than optimism (Rand *et al*., 2011). Scheier and Carver (1992) found that optimism was a factor in people's psychological well-being. The current study's results support to the self-regulation model on which Scheier and Carver (1985) based their theory of dispositional optimism. The model suggests that people who expect favorable outcomes to their goals will continually try to achieve those goals (Scheier *et al*., 1992). Hope is very similar to optimism in that people who are high in hope have high agency (belief that they can attain their goals) and high pathways (ability to find numerous routes to those goals), (Snyder, 2002). Studying the effects of optimism and hope on academic achievement is directly linked to the expectations of students. Information that is discovered through research projects such as this one will allow institutions to develop programs that aim to help students improve their academic performance by making them aware of the variables to consider.

CONCLUSION

The goals of this research were to determine if there were relationships between hope, life optimism and academic achievement. The study explored the differences between the level of optimism and hope in low and high academic group of 9th class girls. The findings from this study suggest that there is a relationship between the academic achievement, optimism and hope in the school girls. Hope was found positively correlated with high academic achievement but life optimism was found mildly correlated with low academic achievement. This indicates both hope and optimism are very important factors for

academic achievement. Students who were hopeful and optimistic for their academic achievements have high chance of becoming high achievers while the outcome may became vice versa in students having low hope and optimism.

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