

STUDY ON HOPE: AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The present study aimed at exploring gender differences with reference to dispositional and state hopes. Furthermore the stability of hope irrespective of rewarding and frustrating situation was explored, in which stability of hope, through correlation between dispositional and state hope, in male and female participants separately was also explored. Study was conducted in two sessions. In the first session participants were requested to fill the Dispositional Hope Scale¹. Second session was held after a gap of one day where participants were randomly divided in two groups; reward and frustration. They were given an anagram task of jumble words to be solved with researcher's comment on their performance that act as a source of inducement of feeling of reward and frustration, followed by State Hope Scale². No significant gender difference was found in dispositional and state hope. However, with respect to stability of hope significant positive correlation between dispositional and state hope was found in total sample including male and female-participants. Whereas, stability of hope on the basis of gender, there was a significant positive correlation between dispositional and state hope among males of both reward and frustration group, indicating stability of hope in males irrespective of situation, while there was insignificant correlation in females; positive in reward and negative in frustration indicating the decrease in level of hope in case of facing frustrating situation. Probable reasons for the findings are discussed.

Key words: *Dispositional Hope; State hope; Reward; Frustration; Gender difference; stability*

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¹ Snyder, C. R., C. Harris, J. R. Anderson, S. A. Holleran, L. M. Irving, S. T. Sigmon, L. Yoshinobu, J. Gibb, C. Langelle, and P. Harney. "The Will and the Ways: Development and Validation of an Individual-Differences Measure of Hope." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 60, no. 4 (1991): 570-85.

² Snyder, C. R., S. C. Sympson, F. C. Ybasco, T. F. Borders, M. A. Babyak, and R. L. Higgins. "Development and Validation of the State Hope Scale." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 70, no. 2 (1996): 321-35.

Introduction

“Hope is not about everything turning out all right. It is about life being all right, no matter how things turn out.”³

Hope seems to be a force that makes person not only think positively about future goals but also to look for ways to achieve them. The concept of ‘hope’ has a long historical background. It starts from Greek mythology of Pandora that had hope as the important part of her box to save people from worries⁴ and then concept evolved from hope as multidimensional construct that covers thoughts, feelings and action as described⁵ “...a multidimensional dynamic life force characterized by a confident yet uncertain expectation of achieving a future goal which, to the hoping person, is realistically possible and personally significant.” to hope as unidimensional construct i.e. the perception of achievement of goals⁶

Hope is a cognitive construct that has a dispositional value i.e. that individuals display stable characteristics of hope in different times and situations⁷ as well as state related value that refers to the individual’s thinking at a particular time and in a given situation⁸. Furthermore, state hope may vary over time as a result of significant interventions or life events whereas dispositional hope is not restricted by time barriers while state hope is bound by time and particular situations. However, both types of hopes have two cognitive elements agency and pathways. Agency is the perceived ability in achieving goals while pathways is the perception of being able to generate ways to achieve desired goals⁹

Hope has a great significance in mental health^{10&11} helps in coping from illness like cancer¹² and disability¹³ whereas, absence of hope leads to feeling of hopeless,

³ Jevne, R. F., and D. Reilly-Williams. *When Dreams Don’t Work: Professional Caregivers and Burnout*. Amityville, New York: Baywood Publishing Company Inc., 1998.

⁴ Brewster, S. M. "Hope and Despair: Keys to Sociodynamics of Youth." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 53, (1983): 388-399.

⁵ Dufault, K. J., and B. Martocchio. "Hope: Its Spheres and Dimensions." *Nursing Clinics of North America* 20, no. 379-391 (1985).

⁶ Snyder, C. R., C. Harris, J. R. Anderson, S. A. Holleran, L. M. Irving, S. T. Sigmon, L. Yoshinobu, J. Gibb, C. Langelle, and P. Harney. "The Will and the Ways: Development and Validation of an Individual-Differences Measure of Hope." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 60, no. 4 (1991): 570-85.

⁷ Snyder, C. R., C. Harris, J. R. Anderson, S. A. Holleran, L. M. Irving, S. T. Sigmon, L. Yoshinobu, J. Gibb, C. Langelle, and P. Harney. "The Will and the Ways: Development and Validation of an Individual-Differences Measure of Hope." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 60, no. 4 (1991): 570-85.

⁸ Snyder, C. R., S. C. Sympson, F. C. Ybasco, T. F. Borders, M. A. Babyak, and R. L. Higgins. "Development and Validation of the State Hope Scale." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 70, no. 2 (1996): 321-35

⁹ Snyder, C. R., *Encyclopedia of Mental Health*. American Press, 1998.

¹⁰ Gottschalk, L. "Hope and Other Deterrents to Illness." *American Journal of Psychotherapy* 39, no. 4 (1985): 515-524.

¹¹ Stephenson, C. "The Concept of Hope Revisited for Nursing." *Journal of advanced nursing* 16, no. 12 (1991): 1456-61.

¹² Felder, B. E. "Hope and Coping in Patients with Cancer Diagnoses." *Cancer Nursing* 27, no. 4 (2004): 320-4.

¹³ Unwin, J., L. Kacperk, and C. Clarke. "A Prospective Study of Positive Adjustment to Lower Limb Amputation." *Clinical Rehabilitation* 23, no. 11 (2009): 1044-50.

helplessness and consequently depression¹⁴. Moreover, it is also important to distinguish between “genuine” vs “foolish” hope as both have different consequences¹⁵. Those with foolish hope may anticipate desired outcomes without the strategies and resources that are relevant for those outcomes¹⁶. Foolish hope relies on illusions and daydreams. It is like a mirage whose reality becomes clear much later. On the other hand, genuine hope is more strongly riveted in reality. False hope is a misrepresentation of what is real and genuine. It leads an individual to overlook barriers, while genuine hope is believed to lead that individual to meet head-on with the obstacles and conquer them¹⁷.

Snyder¹⁸ mentioned that his research generally didn't find possible gender differences in hope in adults, however gender differences have found to exist in optimism¹⁹, self efficacy²⁰ and life satisfaction²¹. Since mostly studies on hope conducted in western societies, and research evidences exist that culture, subculture and society have an impact on the personality as a whole, this evoked us to see the dynamics of hope in eastern society. Therefore the present study is an attempt to explore the hypotheses that if any gender difference exists with reference to dispositional hope and state hope, and whether hope remain stable irrespective of rewarding and frustrating situation when encountered in complete sample including males and females participants. We also explored gender based correlation in males and females separately with reference to stability of hope.

Method

Sample

The present study was conducted in two sessions. Informed consent was taken from participants that study would be conducted in two sessions and were ensured that it would lead to no harm. Furthermore, their participation would be voluntary; therefore those who were willing to participate were inducted in the study. The first session had 84 female and 68 male participants, and out of these, 51 females and 50 males returned for the second session. They were from different departments and educational levels at the University of Karachi, Pakistan with age ranged from 19 to 24 years.

¹⁴ Chabrol, H., and M. Choquet. "[Relationship between Depressive Symptoms, Hopelessness and Suicidal Ideation among 1547 High School Students]." *Encephale* 35, no. 5 (2009): 443-7.

¹⁵ Tillich, P. "The Right to Hope." *University of Chicago Magazine* 58, (1965): 16-22.

¹⁶ Wallston, K. A. "Cautious Optimism Vs. Cockeyed Optimism." *Psychological Health* 9, (1994): 201-203.

¹⁷ Jacoby, Rivka. "The Miserable Hath No Other Medicine, but Only Hope': Some Conceptual Considerations on Hope and Stress." *Stress Medicine* 9, no. 1 (1993): 61-69.

¹⁸ Snyder, C. R., *Encyclopedia of Mental Health*. American Press, 1998.

¹⁹ Puskar, K. R., L. M. Bernardo, D. Ren, T. M. Haley, K. H. Tark, J. Switala, and L. Siemon. "Self-Esteem and Optimism in Rural Youth: Gender Differences." *Contemporary Nurse* 34no. 2 (2010): 190-8

²⁰ Poomsrikaew, O., B. E. Berger, M. J. Kim, and J. J. Zerwic. "Age and Gender Differences in Social-Cognitive Factors and Exercise Behavior among Thais" *Western Journal of Nursing Research* (2011).

²¹ Wang, C. W., T. Iwaya, H. Kumano, Y. Suzukamo, Y. Tobimatsu, and S. Fukudo. "Relationship of Health Status and Social Support to the Life Satisfaction of Older Adults." *Tohoku J Exp Med* 198, no. 3 (2002): 141-9.

Measures and material

Adult Dispositional Hope Scale

The Adult Dispositional Hope Scale consists of 12 items to which participants indicate their responses on an 8-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*definitely false*) to 8 (*definitely true*). Four items reflect agency (e.g., “I energetically pursue my goals”), four items reflect pathways (e.g., “Even when others get discouraged, I know I can find a way to solve the problem”), and 4 items are unrelated distracters. By summing the four agency and four pathways items, a total hope score is derived. Cronbach’s alphas for the total score range from .74 to .84, test-retest correlations have been .82 over periods exceeding 10 weeks, and the existence of a two-component model (i.e., agency and pathways) has been supported through use of principal components exploratory factor analysis²²

State Hope Scale

It is a brief six-item index of state hope in order to tap goal-directed cognitions at a given point in time. Like the Dispositional Hope Scale, State Hope Scale is also divided into two subscales of agency (e.g., “At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my goals;” and pathways (e.g., “I can think of many ways to reach my current goals” each consisting of three items. Cronbach’s alphas for the total State Hope score range from a low of .82 to a high of .95, with alphas for the agency subscale varying from .83 to .95 and from .74 to .93 for the pathway subscale²³. Test-retest correlations for the State Hope Scale, expected to vary because of the differing situations in which the scale is taken, range from a low of .48 to a high of .93 when comparing any 2 days across a 4-week study²⁴.

Anagrams

Anagrams were the standardized list of 30 jumble words made up of seven letter common English words

Procedure

Session 1

On the first day, the participants were made to sit in a comfortable lab and they were instructed to fill out the Dispositional Hope Scale. They were requested then to return after a day to continue with the second session.

²² Snyder, C. R., C. Harris, J. R. Anderson, S. A. Holleran, L. M. Irving, S. T. Sigmon, L. Yoshinobu, J. Gibb, C. Langelle, and P. Harney. "The Will and the Ways: Development and Validation of an Individual-Differences Measure of Hope." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 60, no. 4 (1991): 570-85.

²³ Snyder, C. R., S. C. Sympson, F. C. Ybasco, T. F. Borders, M. A. Babyak, and R. L. Higgins. "Development and Validation of the State Hope Scale." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 70, no. 2 (1996): 321-35.

²⁴ Snyder, C. R. (2000). *Handbook of hope*. San Diego: Academic Press.

Session 2

In the second session, all the participants were randomly divided into two groups: reward and frustration. Participants in both groups were given a task that was to be done individually, to solve anagram by rearranging letters into meaningful words as quickly as possible. After 6 minutes of initiation of the task, researchers gave three verbal remarks to the participants individually in both groups after every minute i.e. one remark per minute. In reward group, each participant, while he/ she was solving the list of jumble words was encouraged verbally by giving positive statements like “Good”, “you are doing very well” and “ you have done a good job” regardless of how well or how poor they performed on the task. Similarly, those who were in frustrating group were discouraged no matter how well they performed, with statement such as, “very poor”, “You are not performing up to the mark” and “I think you can’t do this”. In addition to verbal statements, experimenters used non-verbal behaviour including; facial expression, tone and body gestures according to experimental situation. After 10 minutes of initiation of the task, participants were requested to stop solving anagrams by saying that time was over and were given State Hope scale to complete. After the completion of the session, participants were debriefed about the study.

Results

In order to determine gender difference *t*-test was used. However, the stability of hope was determined through the correlation between dispositional and state hope, for which Pearson *r* was applied. Data was analyzed through SPSS version 17.

Preliminary data analysis depicts certain differences between two genders (Table:1). Relatively higher mean, low standard error and standard deviation of female scores suggests that females are strong on hope. However, when explored further to look into statistical significance all the differences of the means were found insignificant.

Table: 1 Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Dispositional Hope					
Total Female/Male	Female	84	49.238	6.597	.719
Under Test	Male	68	46.970	7.580	.919

Exploring through mean differences between females and males an insignificant *t*-test reveals that females and males are equal on dispositional hope (Table:2) and on state hope with insignificant *t*-test for both groups i.e., reward and frustration groups (Table: 3 & 4).

Table: 2 Difference between males and females for Dispositional Hope

Dispositional Hope	Mean	SD	t	Df	p-value
Total hope					
<i>Males</i>	46.97	7.58	1.97	150	0.051
<i>Females</i>	49.24	6.60			
Agency					
<i>Males</i>	24.09	4.85	0.89	150	0.375
<i>Females</i>	24.74	4.16			
Pathways					
<i>Males</i>	22.97	4.56	2.14	150	0.034*
<i>Females</i>	24.50	4.22			

P<0.05*Sig. Males N=68, Females N=84

Results show (Table:2) no significant difference between males and females on total dispositional hope and perception of being able to achieve goals (Agency) except However, on the perceived ability in generating ways to achieve goals (pathways) indicating that females perceives themselves more capable in making ways to achieve goals as compared to their male counterparts.

Table: 3 Gender difference on state hope in reward group

State Hope	Mean	SD	t	Df	p-value
Total hope					
<i>Males</i>	35.18	6.91	0.07	43	0.948
<i>Females</i>	35.30	5.69			
Agency					
<i>Males</i>	17.95	3.77	0.53	43	0.596
<i>Females</i>	17.30	4.36			
Pathways					
<i>Males</i>	17.32	3.98	0.64	43	0.528
<i>Females</i>	18.00	3.18			

Males N=22, Females N=23

Table 3 depicts that in the reward group, when participants were appreciated on the task they were doing, no significant gender difference is found. Besides, means of males and females in total state hope and agency are almost similar; however females' mean is slightly higher on pathways.

Table: 4 Gender difference on state hope in frustration group

State Hope	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Total hope					
Males	33.11	8.09	.49	54	0.624
Females	32.04	8.18			
Agency					
Males	16.50	4.43	.57	54	0.572
Females	15.78	4.95			
Pathways					
Males	16.79	4.49	.39	54	0.702
Females	16.32	4.95			

Males N=28, Females N=28

Similarly in table 4 no significant gender difference in the frustration group is found.

However

means of males is slightly higher as compared to females.

Table: 5 Correlation between dispositional and state hope with respect to reward and frustration groups

Dispositional Hope	State hope (Reward group) N=45			State Hope (Frustration) N=56		
	Total Hope	Agency	Pathways	Total Hope	Agency	Pathways
Hope Total	0.38**			0.31*		
Agency		0.33*			0.11	
Pathways			0.32*			0.42**

*p < 0.01 and **p < 0.05 (2-tailed)

Correlation, shown in table 5, between dispositional and state hope has found to be significantly positive, however the magnitude of correlation is from mild to moderate.

Table: 6 Correlation between dispositional and state hope in reward groups with respect to males and females separately

Dispositional Hope	State Hope (Reward Group) Males N=22			State Hope (Reward Group) Females N=23		
	Total Hope	Agency	Pathways	Total Hope	Agency	Pathways
Hope Total	0.60**			0.22		
Agency		0.53*			0.15	
Pathways			0.29			0.38

*p < 0.01 and **p < 0.05 (2-tailed)

Table: 7 Correlation between dispositional and state hope in frustration groups with respect to males and females separately

Dispositional Hope	State Hope (Frustration Group) Males N=28			State Hope (Frustration Group) Females N=28		
	Total Hope	Agency	Pathways	Total Hope	Agency	Pathways
Hope Total	0.53**			0.13		
Agency		0.37			-0.12	
Pathways			0.53**			0.37

**p < 0.05 (2-tailed)

As shown in table 6 and 7, correlation between dispositional and state hope and their sub-categories in males and females gives an interesting picture. In case of males, relationship between total dispositional and state hope was significantly positively related in both the conditions i.e. reward and frustration. But surprisingly, females did not maintain their hopes after having gone through frustrating situation. The correlation between both hopes in both groups of females was not only insignificant but also its magnitude was quite lesser than males. With reference to the subcategories of the hope the correlation between pathways of dispositional and state hope in both experimental condition and in both genders is positive. Furthermore the correlation between agency (perceived ability in attaining goals) of both types of hopes is positive for all groups in both experimental conditions, with significantly positive relationship in reward group in males, except in females of frustration group where correlation is negative,

Discussion

Hope that could be the source of motivation and action for the attainment of goals, could depend on a person's perception of being hopeful and the circumstances one faces.

Our study revealed that males and females both perceived themselves almost equally hopeful where as females perceived themselves more in the ability of generating ways to reach their goals (refer to table 2) but their level of hope was almost similar to males when they were put into a situation to be handled either rewarding or frustrating, (refer to table 3 & 4). However consistent with Snyder's finding²⁵ males were slightly on the higher side on state hope level especially in frustrating situation (table 4).

Besides in terms of stability of hope, this study reveals almost a significantly positive correlation between dispositional and state hope indicating hope having a dispositional value that does remain stable in different situations, however it varies somehow with respect to gender (refer table 5, 6 & 7). As gender based correlation indicates that males had a more stable level of hope regardless of the situation they faced perhaps because generally males are more problem focused and females are more emotional focused²⁶ and are more optimistic and have better self esteem than females²⁷ and perhaps this could be the reason that females lost hope especially in agency (motivation to achieve goal), when faced frustrating situation.

Differences in means for female and male scores may suggest a difference of gender is present and this can be interpreted accordingly, however, absences or poor statistical significance in tests indicate possible presence of other cultural and/or situational factors playing their role altering the results we have found. If, we consider the co-variability

²⁵ Snyder, C. R., S. C. Sympson, F. C. Ybasco, T. F. Borders, M. A. Babyak, and R. L. Higgins. "Development and Validation of the State Hope Scale." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 70, no. 2 (1996): 321-35.

²⁶ Ptacek, J. T., R. E. Smith, and K. L. Dodge. "Gender Differences in Coping with Stress: When Stressor and Appraisals Do Not Differ" *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* vol. 20, no. 4 (1994): 421-430.

²⁷ Puskar, K. R., L. M. Bernardo, D. Ren, T. M. Haley, K. H. Tark, J. Switala, and L. Siemon. "Self-Esteem and Optimism in Rural Youth: Gender Differences " *Contemporary Nurse* 34no. 2 (2010): 190-8

then all the mean differences with poor or no statistical significance lose their meanings and should be interpreted as no difference.

Research indicates that individuals who judge stressful events as “challenging” rather than “threatening” have been better able to discover a varied range of tactics for coping with those events²⁸. Assessment of events as “threatening,” on the other hand, has been linked with the use of fatalism and wishful thinking in dealing with such events²⁹. Thus, it may be inferred that males perceived the given task as challenging while females thought it was threatening, therefore they couldn’t maintain hope in a frustrating situation. Furthermore, it is generally assumed empirically that the individuals who score high on the Hope Scale³⁰ possess a genuine, rather than false hope. However, Kwon³¹ observed that this is not automatically evident from the content of the Hope Scale items. For instance, an individual endorsing the item “I meet the goals that I set for myself” could possibly depicts false hope that is not stranded in reality, if this were the case the meaning of a particular score on the Hope Scale could vary across individuals. It is tempting to assume that here the female participants might had shown foolish or unrealistic hope rather than genuine hope, which is why they lost hope when faced a challenging situation i.e. solving a list of jumbled words, and could not utilize their coping mechanisms to their fullest and maintain hope. Some previous researches^{32&33} have also shown that high-hopers are out of touch with reality. They use strategies that are inadequate to meet the requirements of situations³⁴. Furthermore, researches indicate that it is usually the females who found to be more depressed^{35&36} which might be a consequence of feeling of hopelessness.

The gender difference pertaining to stability of hope might be the reflection of culture³⁷. Males are usually expected to be strong and persistent especially at the time of

²⁸ Irving, L. M., C. R. Snyder, and J. J. Crowson, Jr. "Hope and Coping with Cancer by College Women." *J Pers* 66, no. 2 (1998): 195-214.

²⁹ McCrae, R. R. "Situational Determinants of Coping Responses: Loss, Threat, and Challenge." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 46, no. 4 (1984): 919-28.

³⁰ Snyder, C. R., C. Harris, J. R. Anderson, S. A. Holleran, L. M. Irving, S. T. Sigmon, L. Yoshinobu, J. Gibb, C. Langelle, and P. Harney. "The Will and the Ways: Development and Validation of an Individual-Differences Measure of Hope." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 60, no. 4 (1991): 570-85.

³¹ Kwon, P. "Hope and Dysphoria: The Moderating Role of Defense Mechanisms." *Journal of personality* 68, no. 2 (2000): 199-223.

³² Beavers, W. R., and F. W. Kaslow. "The Anatomy of Hope." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 7, (1981): 119-126.

³³ Callan, D. B. "Hope as a Clinical Issue in Oncology Social Work." *Journal of Psychosocial Oncology* 7, (1989): 31-46.

³⁴ Kwon, P. "Hope and Dysphoria: The Moderating Role of Defense Mechanisms." *Journal of personality* 68, no. 2 (2000): 199-223.

³⁵ Husain, N., N. Chaudhry, B. Tomenson, J. Jackson, R. Gater, and F. Creed. "Depressive Disorder and Social Stress in Pakistan Compared to People of Pakistani Origin in the Uk." *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, (2011).

³⁶ Muhammad Gadit, A. A., and G. Mugford. "Prevalence of Depression among Households in Three Capital Cities of Pakistan: Need to Revise the Mental Health Policy." *PLoS One* 2, no. 2 (2007): e209.

³⁷ Selvaratnam, S. "Population and Status of Women." *Asia Pac Popul J* 3, no. 2 (1988): 3-28.

challenging situations while females are considered to be weak and less persistent³⁸ our findings might also be the expression of such societal expectations.

Study limitations

This study was conducted in two sessions with a day gap. Participants, however, gave consent to participate in the study, but didn't turn up for the second session due to which sample dropped from 152 to 101. Results might have been different if we had not lost the sample.

The one-day gap might have affected the level of state hope of participants as researchers had no control over their everyday experiences during the one day break.

Most importantly, we have not studied the co-linearity; results suggest that there might be some extra variables transforming the output. Study of such factors in the future researches can help us deduce interpretations that are more complete.

Conclusion

Our study didn't find gender differences on overall dispositional and state hope, except one component in dispositional hope i.e. pathways. This finding indicates being hopeful is not restricted to any specific gender and is also consistent with Snyder's findings^{39&40}. Whereas correlations between dispositional and state hopes were significantly positive irrespective of rewarding and frustrating situations indicating the stability of hope in different situations. However males maintained their hope in both rewarding and frustrating situations while females lost hope in frustrating situation.

³⁸ Du Preez, E., N. Cassimjee, L. E. Lauritz, M. Ghazinour, and J. Richter. "Personality and Mental Health: An Investigation of South African Police Trainees" *Psychological Reports* 108, no. 1 (2011): 301-16.

³⁹ Snyder, C. R., C. Harris, J. R. Anderson, S. A. Holleran, L. M. Irving, S. T. Sigmon, L. Yoshinobu, J. Gibb, C. Langelle, and P. Harney. "The Will and the Ways: Development and Validation of an Individual-Differences Measure of Hope." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 60, no. 4 (1991): 570-85.

⁴⁰ Snyder, C. R., S. C. Sympson, F. C. Ybasco, T. F. Borders, M. A. Babyak, and R. L. Higgins. "Development and Validation of the State Hope Scale." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 70, no. 2 (1996): 321-35.