



Examination of Secondary School Students' Hope Levels in terms of Anxiety, Depression and Perfectionism *

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine hope levels of secondary-school students in terms of perfectionism, depression and anxious. In line with this purpose, the research was designed in the relational-screening model. The sample of study consisted of 508 secondary-school students (287 female/ 221 male) chosen randomly from Lütfi Ege Secondary-School and Basma Sanayi Secondary-School in Denizli/Pamukkale. In research, Personal Information Sheet, Children's Hope Scale, Positive and Negative Perfectionism Scale, State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, and Children's Depression Inventory were used to gather data. All data were analyzed by correlation and multiple regression. The results showed that depression, anxiety and positive perfectionism variables are significant predictors of hope. Implications of these findings are discussed within the context of literature.

Keywords

Hope
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Introduction

Taken the distinctive characteristics of adolescence into consideration, it can be claimed that adolescents experience longer target setting processes, encounter prohibitions more frequently and are more likely to be affected from their negative experiences. One of the concepts that motivates and makes individuals believe that there may be various ways in achieving their goals, and provides them with endurance in overcoming obstacles and problems is "hope" (Atik & Kemer, 2009; Snyder, 2002). The concept of hope, which is considered as positive motivators, was defined by Aldridge (1995) a multidimensional and valuable reaction of individuals related to their every kind of goals in their lives, even when they had the lowest level of motivation. According to Snyder (1995), who defined the concept of hope as a thinking process related to the ways of attaining their objectives along with the motivation to head for their objectives, hope is a dynamic cognitive and motivational system beyond an emotion (Snyder et al., 1991). This system reflects individuals' capacities related to three dimensions. The first dimension defined as goal orienting refers the conceptualization of goals clearly. The second dimension defined as pathways of attaining goals refers to developing certain strategies to attain these goals. Finally the third dimension defines as motivating for goals refers to having and maintaining the required motivation to use these strategies (Snyder, Lopez, Shorey, Rand, & Feldman, 2003). While goal

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theory mostly focuses on the goal based on positive psychological structures such as self-efficacy and optimism and the process of solution ways; the hope theory developed by Snyder (2002) equally focuses on all goal-oriented elements (Snyder et al., 2003). According to hope theory, a goal can be a life-long chase of what individuals want to experience, create, obtain, do or be; or can be something very ordinary (Snyder et al., 1996).

Individuals with high levels of hope are more likely to develop various solutions when they face obstacles, especially when the goals are important, compared to the individuals with lower levels of hope. Individuals with high levels of hope believe that they can find many ways to attain their goals, and can produce more alternative strategies (Snyder et al., 1991). Additionally, these individuals are affected positively from the role models in their environment in learning the different solutions (Snyder et al., 1997). Although motivation and pathways of attaining goals are related to each other, these are not synonyms, and whatever the cognitive tendency is, the strategies developed in the process of attaining goals cannot be used in attaining goals without the required motivation (Snyder et al., 1991). Goal-oriented thinking provides individuals with a cognitive acceleration as "I can do" in the process of attaining goals (Snyder et al., 2002). Even if the conditions change or the obstacles cannot be removed, individuals with high levels of hope that is affected from goal-oriented motivational cognitions are more courageous in testing different pathways (Snyder et al., 1997).

Considering the literature, it has been seen that personality trait has a predictive feature at level of hope among pre-adolescents (Otis, Huebner, & Hills, 2016). One of the personality traits that are expected to play a role in hope is perfectionism. The concept of perfectionism as a personality features was studied with a single-dimensional and negative perspective in the first studies in the related literature (Burns, 1980; Garner, Olmstead, & Polivy, 1983), it is interesting that more recent studies conceptualize it with both negative and positive dimensions (Frost, Marten, Lahart, & Rosenblate, 1990; Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi, & Ashby, 2001). Frost et al. (1990) conceptualized perfectionism in six dimensions: High personal standards, excessive attention to errors, high parental expectation, extreme parental criticism, suspicious behaviour and order. While high personal standards and order reflect adaptive perfectionism; the other four dimensions define maladaptive perfectionism. Slaney et al. (2001) claim that characteristics, such as setting high performance goals, being tidy and meticulous have an important place in the concept of perfectionism. According to Slaney et al. (2001) high performance standards and being tidy are the positive aspects of perfectionism, while the negative aspects are the conflicts between personal standards and performance. Individuals with positive perfectionist personality features are defined as individuals who present functional behaviours, such as having high self-respect, setting realistic goals, being motivated with positive reinforcement, paying high effort but not changing the standards in case of failure. Individuals with negative perfectionist personality features are defined as individuals who are motivated with the anxiety of making mistakes and avoid the sense of shame. As a result of failing attaining the unrealistic goals, individuals with negative perfectionist features may experience negative feelings, such as incompetency, anxiety, and depression (Enns, Cox, & Clara, 2002; Rice & Preusser, 2002).

Adolescence is a process in which ups and downs of emotions and intensities of emotions occur severely (Steinberg, 2005). In this stressful period, emotion states can play a role at level of hope (Kimhi, Eshel, & Shadar, 2013). Accordingly, it is predicted that emotion states of depression and anxiety may play a predictor role at level of hope among pre-adolescents. Depression is an affective disorder, in which individuals feel pessimistic about the future and regrets about the past, don't have life energy, change their activity levels, avoid their desire, feel sadness, loneliness, insomnia and loss of appetite and sometimes attempt suicide with the desire to die (Adiyaman, 2010; Beck & Alford, 2009). Depression is the most common psychiatric problem among individuals, and present itself with some affective, mental, behavioural and physical symptoms, and its prevalence increases during transition from childhood to adolescence. Among the reasons of adolescence depression, which is more common

among male than female, are rejection from the opposite sex, exclusion from friend groups, in-family problems, identity seek, failure at school, humiliation in the classroom, low self-esteem, and failing to adapt with the changes coming along with adolescence (Aydın, 2005; Emiroğlu, Murat, & Bindak, 2011; Hoffman, Baldwin, & Cerbona, 2003; Kulaksızoğlu, 2004). Additionally, the thoughts created by individuals without any real reason like “nobody loves me”, “I will never be successful”, “I am very ugly” can be enough for them to experience this affective disorder (Aydın, 2005). Factors, such as having cognitive skills, strong verbal and communication skills, positive self, conscience, good temper, social support, role models (family, friends, school, religion, etc.), and commitment can make individuals stronger against depression (Monasterio, 2002; as cited in Taşğın & Çetin, 2006, pp. 90-91).

Anxiety refers to arousal that presents itself with physical, affective and cognitive differences, in case of a non-objective danger felt by the individual (Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1970). As a multi-dimensional mood state, anxiety can present itself with physiological symptoms, such as tension of muscle, increase in heart beat rate and sweating, and includes active or passive avoiding behaviours. Additionally, anxiety state, which can be affected from the subjective feelings for a danger, includes cognitive elements related to the nature of danger, possibility of danger, and the capacity of individual coping with the danger. The development of anxiety is affected from the biological and genetic factors, past learning and experiences, situational hints, and cognitive network of the individual (Çağlar, 1996). Spielberger (1966) reported two types of anxiety; state anxiety and trait anxiety. State anxiety, which can be based on a logical reason, is defined as the fear experienced in stressful and dangerous situation; on the other hand trait anxiety, which is a personality feature reflecting inter-personal differences, refers to the tendency to perceive and interpret most situations as stressful and to react to these. State anxiety is defined a normal-temporary anxiety that occurs in case of a dangerous situation. Trait anxiety, which is not directly related with dangerous situations, and is more internal, is the anxiety experienced when individuals feel that their self-values are threatened, and resulting from individuals’ perceiving the situation they are in as stressful (Köknel, 1995).

The present study was conducted among secondary school students. Secondary school education is generally a process that takes place during pre-adolescence development period. In this period, individuals are faced with physiological, cognitive, socio-emotional and academic changes (Santrock, 2014). The effort to adapt these changes can also be considered as a challenge for individuals. The way in which these obstacles are overcome can also be seen as an indication of the level of endurance of the individual in the face the difficulties in the future. Therefore, in the face of the difficulties in this period, resilience, belief and motivation to achieve the goals behind the difficulties, in one sense individual’s level of hope is important. The present study is important in terms of presenting the concept of hope, which is an important way of thinking that shapes many aspects of human life, with the related variables (positive-negative perfectionism, depression, anxiety) and offering insight for other studies on the concept of hope. In accordance with the information provided above, the purpose of the present research is investigating secondary school students’ levels of hope in terms of their levels of perfectionism, depression and anxiety. In accordance with this purpose, the answers to the following questions are sought:

1. Are there significant correlations between hope and positive-negative perfectionism, depression and anxiety levels among secondary school students?
2. Do positive-negative perfectionism, depression and anxiety predict hope at a significant level among secondary school students?

Method

In order to investigate the roles of anxiety, depression and positive-negative perfectionism variables in predicting levels of hope among secondary school students, the present research adopted relational screening model.

Study Group

The universe of the present research consists of all secondary school students studying in the central districts of the province of Denizli. The sample of the study consists of 508 6th (33.3%), 7th (39.8%) and 8th (27%) secondary school students (287 female and 221 male) studying in Denizli/Pamukkale Lütfi Ege Secondary School and Basma Sanayi Secondary School and accepting to participate in the research voluntarily.

Instruments

Children's Hope Scale

Children's Hope Scale (CHS) developed by Snyder et al., (1997) and adapted to Turkish by Atik and Kemer (2009) was implemented in the study in order to collect data about student's perceptions of hope. The scale can be applied to all students, from the secondary school sixth grade students to the secondary school eighth grade students. This scale consisted of six items and was a one-dimensional scale. The scale was a 6-point likert type scale. The minimum score one could get from the scale was 6 and the maximum score was 36. Two sample items include "I am as good as the kids at the same age" and "I can think of many ways to get things that are very important to me in life". Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient was .74. And also test-retest correlation was .57 of the scale. This results indicates that the reliability of the test was sufficient (Atik & Kemer, 2009). In the analysis conducted with the data collected within the scope of this study, the Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency was determined to be .77.

Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children

Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children developed by Spielberger et al. (1970) and adapted to Turkish by Öner and Le Compte (1985) was implemented in the study in order to collect data about student's perceptions of anxiety. Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children consists of 20 items. Ratings are made on a four-point scale from Almost never (1) to Almost always (4). Two sample items include "I usually have no self-confidence" and "I usually get tired quickly". The range of possible score varies from a minimum score of 20 to a maximum score of 80. The higher scores show higher trait anxiety level. Corrected item-total correlations ranged .34 to .72. The adapted scale to Turkish, had KR-20 reliability coefficient between .83 and .87 and test-retest correlations between .71 and .86. The criterion-related validity was found by the positive correlations with other anxiety scales ranging from .58 to .84 (Öner & Le Compte, 1985). In the analysis conducted with the data collected within the scope of this study, the Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency was determined to be .77.

Children's Depression Inventory

Children's Depression Inventory developed by Kovacs (1981) and adapted to Turkish by Öy (1991) was implemented in the study in order to collect data about student's perceptions of depression. The Children's Depression Inventory is a 27-items self-rated, symptom-oriented, a three-point Likert scale. It was found that the scores of the children who received the diagnosis of depression were higher than those who did not receive the diagnosis of depression for the scale. Two sample items include "I always/often/sometimes feel sad" and "Everything always/often/sometimes bores me". The range of possible score varies from a minimum score of 0 to a maximum score of 54. The higher scores show higher depression level. The adapted scale to Turkish, had test-retest reliability coefficient was .80. The criterion-related validity was found positive correlation .61 with another depression scale (Öy, 1991). In the analysis conducted with the data collected within the scope of this study, the Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency was determined to be .84.

Positive and Negative Perfectionism Scale

Positive and Negative Perfectionism Scale developed by Kırđök (2004) was implemented in the study in order to collect data about student's perceptions of positive and negative perfectionism. Positive and Negative Perfectionism Scale consists of 17 items. Ratings are made on a four-point scale. Two sample items include "I want to do everything on time" and "I care for the finest detail so that something is good". The range of possible score varies from a minimum score of 17 to a maximum score of 68. The higher scores show higher perfectionism level. Exploratory factor analysis was applied for factor analysis of the scale. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, a structure of two sub-dimensions was found out. It was seen that two dimensions of the scale explain 37% of the total variance. Positive Perfectionism sub-dimension has .81; Negative Perfectionism sub-dimension has .78 Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients. And also Positive Perfectionism sub-dimension has .75; Negative Perfectionism sub-dimension has .78 test-retest reliability coefficients (Kırđök, 2004). In the analysis conducted with the data collected within the scope of this study, the Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency was determined to be .87 for positive perfectionism; .83 for negative perfectionism.

Data Analysis

The data of the present research were collected from 6th, 7th and 8th grade students on voluntary basis in 2014-2015 school years. Before the procedures, the participants were informed about the purpose of the research, and how to answer data collection tools, and the procedures were implemented by the researcher in the classroom environment. Before the data collected from the data collection tools were analysed, they were checked and the forms with missing information were excluded. Data were analysed on SPSS 16.0 program. Pearson Correlation coefficient was used to test the correlation levels between hope and depression, anxiety and positive-negative perfectionism; and multiple regression analysis was used to test whether independent variables (depression, anxiety and positive-negative perfectionism) predict the dependant variable (hope).

Results

In this part of the research primarily, correlations among hope, anxiety, depression and positive-negative perfectionism are presented in Table 1. Subsequently, it is tested whether variables of anxiety, depression and positive-negative perfectionism predict hope. The results are given in Table 2.

Table 1. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients of the Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1.Hope	-				
2.Anxiety	-.60**	-			
3.Depression	-.61**	.69**	-		
4.Negative Perfectionism	-.37**	.66**	.53**	-	
5.Positive Perfectionism	.59**	-.36**	.45**	-.11*	-
Mean	28.50	41.43	10.88	16.49	31.01
Standard Deviations	5.17	7.49	6.59	5.04	5.91
Skewness Coefficient	-1.00	.58	1.16	.35	-.65
Kurtosis Coefficient	1.09	.12	1.36	-.64	.22

**p<.01 *p<.05

Taking into account results of analysis in Table 1, it is seen that hope was found to be significantly and moderately positively correlated with positive perfectionism ($r=.59$, $p<.01$); was found to be significantly and moderately negatively correlated with anxiety ($r= -.60$, $p<.01$), depression ($r= -.61$, $p<.01$) and negative perfectionism at low level ($r= -.37$, $p<.01$).

Table 2. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results

Predictor Variables	B	SH _B	β	t	p	Results of Regression
Anxiety	-.676	.111	-.294	-6.072	.000*	R = .736
Depression	-.809	.158	-.229	-5.129	.000*	R ² = .541
Negative Perfectionism	-.012	.050	-.010	-.235	.814	F = 148.250
Positive Perfectionism	.553	.051	.379	10.886	.000*	Durbin-Watson=1.94

*p< .01

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to investigate the role of anxiety, depression and positive-negative perfectionism in predicting concept of hope in secondary school students. Results showed that, anxiety, depression and positive perfectionism predicted concept of hope significantly ($F_{\text{Reg}} = 148.250$, $p < .01$). The adjusted R squared value was .541. This indicates that 54% of the variance in hope was explained by anxiety, depression and positive perfectionism. However negative perfectionism did not predict hope significantly ($\beta = -.010$, $p > .01$).

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

The present research investigates secondary school students' levels of hope in terms of positive-negative perfectionism, depression and anxiety variables. According to the findings obtained in the present research, there are negative correlations between hope and anxiety, depression and negative perfectionism, and a positive correlation between hope and positive perfectionism. Additionally, analysis results show that positive perfectionism, anxiety and depression predict levels of hope among secondary school students at a significant level. The variables contributing to this prediction were anxiety, depression and positive perfectionism. In accordance with this finding, it can be claimed that as anxiety and depression levels decrease, and positive perfectionism levels increase; hope levels increase among secondary school students. According to the related literature, the concept of hope is positively correlated with variables, such as subjective well-being (Sarı, Kaya, & Pala, 2012), life satisfaction (Jiang, Huebner, & Hills, 2013), being optimistic (Vacek, Coyle, & Vera, 2010), making realistic plans (Sarı, 2011), self-esteem (Aydoğan, 2010; Snyder et al., 1997; Vacek et al., 2010), psychological resilience (Aydın, 2010) and academic self-efficacy (Carifio & Rhodes, 2002) and negatively correlated with negative variables, such as academic procrastination (Uzun, 2009) and loneliness (Tarhan & Bacanlı, 2015). These findings are in agreement with the findings of the present research.

As stated above, the finding that there is a positive correlation between positive perfectionism and hope indicates that these two variables increase accordingly. As the level of positive perfectionism an individual has increases, it is more likely that their motivation will not decrease, they will re-evaluate their goals, review their pathways to attain their goals, and will not deviate from their goals in case of a failure (Enns et al., 2002; Slaney et al., 2001). Taken that two of three dimensions of the concept of hope is goal-orientation and motivation, this correlation found between positive perfectionism and hope is not surprising. Additionally, individuals with positive perfectionist traits can set more realistic and attainable standards, as they are more aware of themselves and their capabilities. Because attaining realistic and attainable goals is more likely, the happiness and self-confidence coming along with attaining goals will increase the likelihood of seeing future more hopefully increases for these individuals. On the contrary, because the high standards that negative perfectionist individuals set are illogical and overlap with their capacities, they will feel the differences between their performance and standards, and feel anxiety towards themselves (Mobley, Salaney, & Rice, 2005). Negative perfectionist individuals also have low tolerance range, and they lack the ability to evaluate in accordance with the conditions, which develop inferiority complex in these individuals and push them towards hopelessness (Ashby, Rice, & Martin, 2006). In their study conducted on adolescents, Ashby, Dickinson,

Gnilka, and Noble (2011) detected a positive correlation between hope and positive perfectionism; and a negative correlation between hope and negative perfectionism. They also reported that adolescents with positive perfectionism had higher levels of hope than the adolescents with negative perfectionism. Similarly, in their study conducted on university students, Mathew, Dunning, Coats, and Whelan (2014) reported that individuals with positive perfectionist personality traits had higher levels of hope than the individuals with negative perfectionist personality traits.

According to the findings of the present research, there are negative correlations between hope and depression and anxiety. Among the adolescents with depressive affective disorders; self-devaluation, self-blaming, considering suicide, hopelessness, anger and aggression are observed (Işık, 1991). Anxiety state, which is positively correlated with depression according to the related literature (Eldeleklioğlu, 2006; Kashani & Orvaschel, 1998), refers to the sense of unhappiness experienced as a result of individuals' perceiving the situation they are in as threatening. Depression and anxiety states will prevent individuals to have a positive motivation, which is based on the relationships between motivation for goals and seeking pathways to attain goals. In their study, Tarhan and Bacanlı (2015) reported that there is a negative correlation between hope and anxiety; and Mathew et al. (2014), Ashby et al. (2011) reported that there is a negative correlation between hope and depression. These findings are also in agreement with the findings of the present research. As mentioned above, that the concept of hope is negatively correlated with negative variables, and Melges (1969; as cited in Dilbaz & Seber, 1993) reported that the main problem in depression is hopelessness indicates that the related literature is in agreement with the present research. Additionally, while conceptualizing depression, Beck (1979) stated that an individual with depression was hopeless of their future, didn't have long-term goals and couldn't start positive behaviours.

Findings of the present research presented the importance of decreasing anxiety and depression levels and increasing positive perfectionist traits in order to increase levels of hope. This can be realized through guidance and consultation activities conducted at schools. Although this kind of studies are conducted more frequently compared to the past, it would be beneficial to focus more on these concepts, especially with the individuals in the age group of the participants of the present research. The present study has some limitations. Firstly, the study is limited to 508 secondary school students studying in the central province of Pamukkale in Denizli and voluntarily participating in the research. Also, a quantitative method was followed to achieve the purposes of the research. Testing the relationships between the variables in the research with different sample groups and different research methods is important in terms of findings' reliability.

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