

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOPE AND ANXIETY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Ammara Rehman, Sara Rehman, Sobia Razzaq & Aisha Shah Wali

Department of English

University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

The current study was designed to investigate the relationship between Anxiety and Hope among university students. Moreover gender differences in studying variables were also the focus of interest. The convenient sample of the study consisted of 250 students from different departments of University of Sargodha. Sample contained girls (n=125) and boys (n=125). DASS Anxiety scale and THS (Trait Hope Scale) were used in the study. Simple linear correlational analyses revealed that Anxiety and Hope has no relationship. Further t-test demonstrated non-significant gender differences in studied variables.

Keywords: Anxiety, hope.

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is one of the most fundamental of all constructs now-a-days. The concept of anxiety is central in conceptualization of psychopathology, motivation, and personality. Thus, there are wide ranges of points of view and perspectives on anxiety; as normal facilitating, pathological debilitating, negative effect, emotional state or reaction, motivation, personality trait, or disorder and syndrome. So, research on anxiety is one of the most active areas in psychology, and it has been the focus of considerable study especially in the last two decades (see, e.g., Cox & Norton, 2000; Cox, Wessel, Norton, Swinson, & Dierenfield, 1995; Last, 1993; Norton, Cox, Asmundson, & Maser, 1995; Rapee, 1996; Wolman & Stricker, 1994). Among the negative emotions, anxiety is the most widely experienced of all. Almost all human beings have recognized, and have experienced, states of anxiety. Notwithstanding the universality of anxiety, the question can be raised as to whether there are cultural differences pertaining to the nature and level of anxiety. Sartorius (1990) stated that “the analysis of the origin of the words used to describe anxiety can help in understanding how the concept is conceived of in different cultures. In ancient Egyptian language, the word for acute fear is composed of two symbols, one indicating narrowness and the other showing a man prostrate, as if dying. The latter is the same symbol used to describe a severely wounded person. In Arabic, anxiety’s meanings are similar to the Slavic idioms. There are a variety of words used to suggest a state of anxiety – some referring to restlessness, others to constriction of chest or stomach”. (p. 5).

Hope is a particularly interesting attribute that can serve as a motivational factor to help initiate and sustain action toward goals and has also been linked to happiness, perseverance, achievement, and health (Peterson, 2000). An increasing number of empirical studies have found hope to be related to adjustment, both physical and psychological. For example, Snyder et al. (1991) found that college students high in hope utilized more active, approach-related coping strategies, even after controlling for negative affectivity. Similarly, Chang (1998) found that level of hopefulness in college students related negatively to wishful thinking, self-criticism, and social withdrawal. Furthermore, hope appears to be related to grade point average in college students and also to athletic performance in college athletes (Curry, Snyder, Cook, Ruby, & Rehm, 1997). In a study of veterans with visual impairment (Jackson,

Taylor, Palmatier, Elliott, & Elliott, 1998), hope related positively with functional ability ($r=0.31$), sociable and confident coping styles ($r=0.43$ and $.45$, respectively) and negatively to the use of avoidant coping styles ($r=-0.46$). Hope has been found to be negatively related to general maladjustment (Cramer & Dyrkacz, 1998), suicidal ideation (Range & Penton, 1994), and symptoms of depression (Chang, 2003). The impact of hope on depression and psychosocial adjustment was also studied in a group of adults with traumatic spinal cord injuries. Higher hope was associated with less depression and greater overall psychosocial adjustment, even after controlling for the amount of time since injury (Elliott, Witty, Herrick, & Hoffman, 1991). Kwon (2000) also found that hope was negatively correlated with severity of depressive symptoms and that the relationship was moderated by mature defense styles.

Rationale

Many researches are conducted on Anxiety and hope. But most of them are about to measure relationship between hope and anxiety among disaster affected people like survivors of bomb blasting, earth quakes, flood affected people etc. There are very little research history which explores the effect of hope and anxiety among students. In previous studies limitations were concerned. In this study we find the relationship between Anxiety and Hope in the universities students.

Objectives

- To predict the relationship between Anxiety and Hope.
- To find out the gender differences in Anxiety and Hope.

Hypothesis

- There will be a significant negative relationship between anxiety and hope.
- Significant gender differences will exist in anxiety and hope.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

A convenient sample of 250 undergraduate students was drawn from different departments of University of Sargodha. Participants were further divided in to two categories male ($n=125$) and females ($n=125$).

Operational Definitions

Anxiety: Anxiety would operationally be defined as the scores on DASS anxiety scale.

These scores obtained from DASS anxiety scale were an index of Anxiety.

Hope: “Hopeful thinking necessitates both the perceived capacity to envision workable routes and goal-directed thinking” (Snyder et al, 2002). Scores obtained from Trait Hope Scale were an index of Hope.

Instruments: DASS is used to measure anxiety which is a 4 point likert scale ranging from 0 to 3.0 indicates “never” and 3 indicates “most of the time”. Trait Hope Scale is used to measure hope among individuals. It is an eight point likert scale 1 for “definitely false” and 8 for “definitely true”.

Procedures

Participants were selected on the bases of their convenience. Participants were personally contacted in their departments and in different grounds of University. All participants were undergraduates. The participants were briefed about the research purpose and requested to answer correctly. There was no time limit for the completion of the scale for participants. They completed the scale at their own ease. Participants were appraised for their cooperation in the study.

RESULTS

The obtained data from participants were analyzed in statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) 17 V. Two scales DASS and THS (Trait Hope Scale) were used in the study.

Table 1: *Frequency and Percentage of Participants (N=80)*

Demographics	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		
Male	125	50
Female	125	50
Family system		
Nuclear	156	62.4
Extended	94	37.6

Table 1 shows frequency percentage of students with respect to their gender and family system. Results indicated that male and female students were equal in number ($f = 125$, 50%). Students belonging to nuclear family system ($f = 156$, 62.4%) were more in number than students belonging to extended family system ($f = 94$, 37.6%).

Table 2: *Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlation between Study Variables (N=250)*

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2
1-Anxiety	13.86	7.45	-	.053
2-Hope	63.96	9.54		-

* $p > .05$

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation between study variables. Findings are non-significant ($r = .053$, $p > .05$) which indicates that there is no relationship between anxiety and hope.

Table 3: *Mean, Standard Deviation and *t* values for Male and Female Students on Anxiety and Hope (N = 250)*

Variables	Male (<i>n</i> = 125)		Female (<i>n</i> = 125)		<i>t</i> (248)	<i>p</i>	95% CI	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Anxiety	14.01	6.74	13.72	8.09	.313	.75	-1.56	2.15
Hope	62.20	10.36	65.71	8.32	2.94	.004	-5.84	-9.16

Table 3 shows mean standard deviation and *t*-values for male and female students on Anxiety and hope scale. Table indicates that findings are non-significant for Anxiety [$t(248) = .313$, $p > .05$] and significant for hope [$t(248) = 2.94$, $p < .01$].

DISCUSSION

The present study was designed to explore the relationship between Anxiety and hope. It was hypothesized that a significant negative correlation will exist between Anxiety and Hope. Gender differences will exist between study variables was second hypothesis of the study. However, results of the present study are contrary to both hypotheses assumed. Simple linear correlation analysis was run to test the first hypothesis and results revealed that no significant relationship exist between anxiety and hope. Independent sample *t*. test indicated that gender differences also not exist in studied variables.

The results are inconsistent with earlier studies of different researchers who suggested that Anxiety and hope are negatively correlated. In a study of Arnau, Rosen, Finch, et al (2007) they studied the Longitudinal Effects of Hope on Depression and Anxiety. They found that hope has small but negative effect on anxiety. They also revealed that anxiety symptoms had no effect on hope (Arnau, Rosen, Finch, et al., 2007). In this way this study is consistent with the present study. Findings are also inconsistent with the Snyder et al.'s (1991) Agency and Pathway theory of hope. In this theory it is stated that agency and pathway both are the components of hope and have significant effect on depression and anxiety.

STUDY LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The current study used a sample consisting only of Sargodha University students, which limits generalizing our findings to other samples. Accordingly, an important focus of future research should be replication of the current study, utilizing more diverse community samples. As we know that hope and anxiety are important components in prediction of academic achievement so, it is important to replicate this study with a broader sample in order to determine if these relationships can be found with other groups. Furthermore socioeconomic status, education, and birth order of students were not controlled. In future studies all these extraneous variables should be controlled.

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