

IJEMD



INDONESIAN JOURNAL OF EDUCATION METHODS DEVELOPMENT

UNIVERSITAS MUHAMMADIYAH SIDOARJO

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Academic Hope and Psychological Resilience Among University Students

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Abstract

General Background: Academic hope and psychological resilience are central constructs in positive psychology that support students' adaptation and goal attainment in higher education. **Specific Background:** University students frequently encounter academic pressures that require cognitive motivation and emotional regulation to sustain performance. **Knowledge Gap:** Although both constructs are widely studied, limited empirical research has examined their relationship within the context of Iraqi university students. **Aim:** This study aimed to identify levels of academic hope and psychological resilience and examine their correlational relationship among university students. **Results:** Using a descriptive correlational design with a stratified random sample of 400 students, findings indicated that students demonstrated high levels of academic hope and psychological resilience, with no significant gender differences in either variable. A statistically significant positive correlation was found between academic hope and psychological resilience. **Novelty:** The study provides empirical evidence from an Iraqi university context using validated psychometric scales grounded in Snyder's and Grotberg's theoretical frameworks. **Implications:** The findings suggest that fostering academic hope alongside psychological resilience may support students' academic persistence and psychological well-being in higher education settings.

Highlights:

- University students demonstrate high academic hope and resilience.
- No significant gender differences were identified.
- Academic hope is positively correlated with psychological resilience.

Keywords:

Academic Hope; Psychological Resilience; University Students; Positive Psychology; Higher Education

Published date: 2026-02-16

Introduction

A. First: Research Problem:

The concept of academic hope is an educational and psychological concept that has attracted the attention of researchers in educational and psychological sciences due to its connection to numerous psychological processes and its close link to cognitive health outcomes. These outcomes, in turn, lead to the abandonment of negative thoughts such as academic anxiety, psychological stress, learning disabilities, academic pessimism, lack of motivation to learn, and negative self-evaluation. Academic hope is also considered one of the systems and methods of the advanced educational process, aiming to achieve academic and scientific progress among students. It is the process of an individual's thinking about achieving goals, coupled with the motivation to move towards those goals, which plays a significant role in academic achievement [1]. As Snyder in [2] points out, academic hope acts as a key psychological determinant and motivator of reality, which always encourages the establishment of balance and awareness in human life. Individuals who are weak in the academic aspect may fall into many problems [2].

Individuals who decide to pursue their goals and ambitions to achieve their objectives and enhance their capabilities set appropriate goals for themselves, in addition to what they see before them of opportunities to reach their goals, and they develop a sense of academic hope in achieving that when they pursue their goals [3]. Individuals lacking psychological resilience are naturally unable to cope with ambiguous circumstances and their accompanying emotions, leading to negative thoughts and impacting their future thinking [4].

It is worth noting that the concept of psychological resilience is one of the most important modern concepts in the heritage of educational and psychological sciences, as it represents one of the most important components of mental health resilience in an individual's life. Psychological resilience also plays a significant and important role in determining the extent of individuals' ability to adapt and cope with obstacles, difficulties, and situations. The pressure they face in their lives, and that the psychologically healthy individual who possesses psychological and emotional balance, is able to express them according to the nature of the situation.

Therefore, the problem of the current research can be summarized in the following question:

(Is there a relationship between academic hope and psychological resilience among university students?)

B. Importance of the research:

University students are an important elite and the towering foundation of society. They are of great importance because of their scientific knowledge and understanding of the concept of academic hope, as they possess a high level of sensitivity and a sense of social personality that puts them in a state of self-balance and psychological well-being in their lives, and a sense of academic hope. In addition, they possess focus and awareness of life, enabling them to achieve goals and desires according to their abilities to face life's events.

Furthermore, some university students face pressures and problems in the scientific and academic field that limit their activity, hinder their performance, reduce the quality of their work, impede their progress, or may lead to a decrease in their desire to complete their studies. Herein lies the importance of academic hope, which contributes to the process of continuity and overcoming these obstacles [5]. Studies and literature have shown that academic hope is an important and major factor among the important psychological factors that an individual need to enjoy a more balanced and mature personality and the ability to adapt and adjust psychologically. It is also linked to the individual's happiness, making him ready to achieve ambition and success to bring about the next change in his life. Moreover, academic hope employs in the individual effective strategies to overcome the pressures he faces [6]. Also, academic hope is like the individual's perceived ability that provides him with the motivation for achievement to find the means and methods that help him to achieve his academic goals [7].

The importance of the concept of psychological resilience lies in its positive role in developing an individual's mental and cognitive skills, along with their improved academic performance, reduced stress levels, and increased psychological well-being [8]. Furthermore, the concept of resilience can be considered one of the most recent and complex concepts in the psychological and educational heritage, as it is a crucial requirement for mental health and one of the most important qualities that students should possess. This will have a positive impact on university students in terms of their psychological, physical, mental, and social health, and will make them for him. Individuals who are stable and at peace with themselves, their environment, and their community are more likely to develop psychological resilience [9]. Furthermore, an individual's ability to control their emotions and cope with problems, as well as their capacity for flexible thinking, are more likely to possess high levels of psychological resilience [10]. The American Institute for Future and International Studies in the 21st Century defined psychological resilience as improving cognitive and emotional completeness, as well as flexibility in behavioral interactions and performance methods [8].

Since university students represent an important part of society, attention should be paid to the study of academic hope. Because it is essential for acquiring education. It is closely related to the concept of psychological resilience because it indicates the level of mental health and because of its impact on university students, and it is very important to pay attention to and highlight this.

C. Research objectives:

The current research aims to identify:

1. Academic hope to university students.
2. The significance of statistical differences in the level of academic hope among university students according to the gender variable.
3. Psychological resilience among university students.
4. The significance of statistical differences in the level of psychological resilience among university students according to the gender variable.
5. To identify the correlational relationship between academic hope and psychological resilience among university students.

D. Research limitations:

This research is limited to students of Wasit University, morning studies for the academic year (2024-2025), for scientific and humanities disciplines, for the first and third stages, and for both genders.

E. Defining the terms:

1. Academic request:

And everyone who knew him knew him:

- (Snyder 2002) [1], it is the cognitive structure that consists of mutually related components, namely the willpower directed towards achieving academic success and the possible ways to achieve the desired goals.
- (Mirkiani, 2007) [11]: The students' ability to respond and interact with obstacles, hardships, challenges, and pressures at Academic in the and at Study.

F. Theoretical definition:

The two researchers adopted the theoretical definition in [1]. This is because they relied on his theory in the theoretical framework of this study.

G. Operational definition:

It is the total score obtained by the respondent through their answer to the scale instrument (Academic Hope) that the researchers prepared according to the theory of [1].

2. Psychological fitness, technically speaking (psychological fitness Everyone who knew her

- Al-Huwayan (2011): It is the dynamic process that manifests in an individual's positive, adaptive behavior when faced with difficulties, shocks, and hardships, and it is considered one of the characteristics of an individual's positive personality that demonstrates their ability to respond positively.
- Siraj (2020) [12]: The individual's ability to exercise his emotional, mental, social and moral competencies, which are represented in the awareness of his own emotions and understanding the feelings of others.
- Theoretical definition: The two researchers adopted the theoretical definition of Grotberg in 2003 [13] because they relied on his theory in the theoretical framework of this study.
- Operational definition: It is the total score obtained by the respondent through their answer to the scale instrument (psychological resilience) that the researchers prepared according to the theory of Grotberg [13].

Chapter Two

The theoretical framework:

I. First: Academic request:

Academic hope is a modern concept in the field of positive psychology and that. For a long time, psychology occupied a prominent place, focusing on the negative aspects of human nature, until the emergence of positive psychology, which focuses on psychological strengths and positive aspects, and addresses negative aspects by supporting and empowering the individual and developing plans to achieve academic excellence and success.

He confirmed that the motivational system acquired through the desire to progress towards academic success relies on the belief that one possesses sufficient energy to choose multiple paths to achieve academic goals. Furthermore, students who adopt an academic approach and develop adequate plans for academic excellence possess the confidence to achieve their objectives and the ability to solve problems encountered in their academic journey because they demonstrate a broader perspective and more comprehensive thinking to find appropriate solutions to overcome difficulties [14]. As It is your A type of academic motivation, represented by the student's conscious motivation to achieve specific goals within the learning individual's environment, enabling them to achieve academic objectives and interact with it in order to develop the ability to

overcome academic obstacles.

Some researchers have pointed out that students possess a sense of academic perseverance, meaning that they believe they have self-control over their abilities and can choose the best course of action to direct their lives toward their desired goals, even when faced with challenging tasks [15].

It is also noted that academic hope is a cognitive tendency, not an emotion emanating from the individual. Emotions associated with hope are viewed as emotions arising from goal-oriented thinking, with positive emotions reflecting notable success in pursuing goals, and negative emotions reflecting notable failure, academic hope—although it contains influential traits—these traits are not primary in determining whether a person remains attached to a future outcome [16].

J. Theories of Academic Hope:

Snyder (1991) proposed a cognitive model of hope that focuses on achieving goals and also focuses on motivation and planning, which are essential in order to achieve goals specifically. This was intended to motivate people, which is based on a reciprocal sense of success [17]. This theory shows that academic hope is based on the concepts of will and means. Will refers to the level of motivation in heading towards the goal, while means are the planning of the paths leading towards the goal. The two concepts form the basis of Snyder's theory of the concept of academic hope [18].

As Snyder sees [1], academic hope is the individual's willpower, which is the motivational component, i.e., the driving force in his model of hope. It refers to the individual's ability to benefit from personal methods to reach the desired goals. It is the individual's ability to expect to use the means to reach the desired goals. Willpower also reflects a person's thinking and intellectual frame of reference to start moving along the means [1].

Stotland [19] argues that academic hope crystallizes and integrates into a person's character through the acquisition of experiences. It relies on accumulated experiences, which become the reservoir that will enable them to achieve their ambitions and goals. Mistakes, he suggests, are the means by which a person can develop a sound understanding of how to solve problems and correct errors. Through daily life experiences, an individual gains the strength and determination to overcome negative thoughts, despair, and pessimism [3]. Stotland also defines academic hope as an individual's orientation towards a specific, achievable goal. He further indicates that hope is the experience an individual possesses; everyone has ambitions and aspirations they strive to fulfill and attain a prestigious position through their experience [19]. Stotland also points out that an individual who is fearful and anxious cannot achieve their academic ambitions because they are surrounded by the constraints of frustration, fear, and despair. It is difficult to overcome anxiety and confusion for those who lack the necessary ability and courage to confront difficulties. Anyone who aspires to reach a goal must possess a strong character. He discovers his potential that suits his abilities and works to get rid of despair and frustration.

Lazarus in 1980 [20] emphasized the importance of academic hope and its role in life. He considered academic hope to be the foundation for remaining not only positive but also for actively and energetically engaging in life. For this reason, he regarded it as a virtue that we should seek and practice like faith. Lazarus also believed that hope manifests itself in unsatisfactory and threatening situations, where its role becomes crucial in bringing about positive changes in life's circumstances [21]. Lazarus is one of the most important theorists in psychology, as he sees academic hope as a positive cognitive state that directs the individual towards future goals and helps him to face negative life events and enables him to continue life and how to adapt to the environment in a positive way in order for the individual to achieve his ambitions and desires [20].

K. Second: Psychological resilience:

There are many different trends and opinions regarding the concept of psychological resilience, which is one of the concepts whose interpretation varies, such as the ability an individual possesses to control their emotions and the nature of their behavior, and this enables them to be able to deal socially and cognitively with others [22]. The term psychological resilience also emerged as a distinct concept with the rise of positive psychology, which focused on studying and developing personal strengths, abilities, and positive traits by enhancing and activating an individual's awareness of their strengths instead of focusing solely on weaknesses and negative factors.

Psychological resilience, as a concept within modern and positive psychology, refers to flexibility in thoughts, beliefs, and other aspects. This flexibility is reflected in an individual's positive interaction with obstacles, shocks, and difficulties encountered in their life. It can also be described as a process of dealing with two aspects: first, when facing danger or difficulties; and second, the process of adapting and coping in positive and desirable ways. It is also worth noting that psychologists consider psychological resilience to be an individual behavior with characteristics and traits that distinguish one person from another in society. There is also a reference from the American Institute for Future Studies in the 21st Century that psychological resilience is the improvement of emotional and mental integration as well as the flexibility of behavioral interactions [23].

French researchers and psychologists, who offered their own perspectives on the concept of psychological resilience, argued that it is essential for a person to possess certain traits and qualities that help them face life and succeed in it. They also noted that the need for psychological resilience has become urgent in our modern era due to the abundance of problems and conflicts, as well as the focus on self-interest [24]. Neil (2 indicated that psychological resilience is strongly linked to life, acquired optimism, a sense of cohesion, flourishing and growth, a sense of meaning, self-healing, the ability to handle tasks

and limitations, and adaptation. The internal energy, as well as the external energy directed towards a specific behavior in society at certain times, and a specific growth period, and thus a rise in the level of social effectiveness, is consistent with these energies and functions working together in regularity, consistency, and harmony without conflict to create a cohesive personality [25].

1. Motivation.
2. Recognizing one's own emotions.
3. Understanding social skills.
4. Understanding the emotions of others.
5. Regulating and managing emotions.

L. Signs of psychological resilience:

There are a number of signs and indicators that, in light of which we can deduce general indicators of psychological fitness, are as follows [4]:

- **Snyder's theory Snyder Theory:**
- **Stotland Theory :**
- **Lazaros Theory**
- **Ingredients of Psychological Fitness [26] :**
- The realistic individual accepts the limits of his capabilities.
- Feeling happy, flexible, and benefiting from past experiences.
- Emotional balance.
- The ability to cope with frustration.
- Social harmony.
- Personal compatibility.

M. Dimensions of psychological fitness:

1. Vision and Planning versus Impulsiveness: This is a characteristic of a personality whose behaviors stem from a great deal of rational thought and vision, and it means achieving consistency between action and thought.
2. Independence versus conformity: There are some situations in life that require making explicit or implicit decisions. One of the components of psychological flexibility must be the individual's keenness to convince himself and give it great weight. This orientation conflicts with paying attention to other factors.
3. Consistency versus dissonance: It involves the importance of providing a degree of internal consistency, that is, agreement in direction between a number of important components of the personality.
4. Integration versus Individuality: This dimension clarifies the individual's relationship with society through the individual's reflective perspective and the various cultural frameworks that are represented in an unbiased manner.
5. Safety in Dealing with Reality (Social and Psychological Aspects): Safety, in the sense of credibility in dealing, means that the individual in his actions towards the truly effective element or the active elements in the reality in which he lives, whether in the social or psychological reality [27].

N. Theories that explained psychological fitness:

1. The school of psychoanalysis: The Austrian scientist Sigmund Freud is the founder of the school of psychoanalysis, who had a great impact on the studies that followed him, as he focused on the depths of the individual's personality and its components [28]. Psychological flexibility, according to Freud, is represented in facing and controlling instinctive and biological drives in light of the requirements of social reality [29].
2. The behaviorist school: Proponents of this theory believe that psychological resilience is the acquisition by the individual of effective and appropriate habits and practices that help him in treating others in situations that require decision-making [30]. The main criterion in this school is the social environment. According to behaviorists, a healthy and sound personality is represented by an individual who is able to control himself [31]. The Humanistic School: The humanistic approach is considered the third force in psychology, which comes after psychoanalysis and the behaviorist school. The most important thing it pointed to in its ideas is a number of characteristics, including that the individual is good by nature, and that what appears in him in terms of selfishness and hostility are pathological symptoms resulting from obstacles preventing him from realizing himself and his humanity, since psychological fitness lies in the person fully realizing his humanity [32].
3. Existentialist School: It crystallizes this concept. Their view is that the individual should live his existence, realize his self, his abilities and potential, and be free to achieve his goals and able to recognize his weaknesses [33].

Discussion of theories of psychological resilience:

One of the most prominent points Freud made in psychoanalytic theory was the confrontation and control of instinctual and biological drives in light of the demands of social reality. The behaviorist school, on the other hand, generally views

psychological resilience as being represented by the extent to which a person acquires positive habits and their impact on them, compared to negative habits, all of which have a significant effect on an individual's resilience. As for the humanistic school, Psychological resilience is the acquisition by the individual of effective and appropriate habits and practices that help him in treating others in situations that require decision-making. As for the humanistic school, it sees psychological fitness as lying in a person fully realizing their humanity. The existentialist school holds that the individual lives his existence, realizes himself, his abilities and potential, and is free to achieve his goals. With regard to the current research, the two researchers adopted the behavioral theory in its interpretation of the concept of psychological flexibility.

Method

A. Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Procedures

This chapter includes a presentation of the research procedures in relation to the research methodology, how to choose the community and sample, the research tools, and how to verify the validity and reliability of the research tools. At the end of the chapter, the researchers present the statistical methods that were used in processing the research data.

B. First: Research Methodology:

In this research, the researchers followed the descriptive approach (correlational studies), as it is one of the most appropriate approaches for studying correlational relationships between variables and also for revealing differences between variables. The descriptive approach is a suitable approach for the research concept and its objectives, because it relies on studying the phenomenon as it exists in reality, analyzing and interpreting it [34].

C. Second: The research community:

The research community consists of undergraduate students in the morning program at Wasit University. For both sexes (males-females) and also for both specializations (scientific and Humanities) for the academic year 2024-2025 AD.

Third: Research sample: The research sample is defined as a subset of the overall research population that has the same original characteristics. It is selected in an appropriate manner, the study is conducted on it, and then the results of that sample are generalized to the research population, and inferences are drawn about the features of the population [35].

In order to achieve this, the researcher obtained the following steps on a representative sample of the research population:

1. Identifying the original population of the study with high accuracy.
2. Prepare a complete list of community vocabulary.
3. The representative vocabulary for the community was taken from the list prepared by the researcher.
4. Obtaining a representative sample of the original population to be studied [36].

The two researchers relied on a sample that was selected using stratified random sampling in an equal manner. The sample representing the population consisted of 400 undergraduate students, including 200 students from the scientific specialization and 200 students from the humanities specialization, as shown in Table 1.

Total	Student numbers		College	Specialization
	females	Males		
50	25	25	K. Fine Arts	Scientific
50	25	25	your.the sciences	