INTRODUCTION

Over the last 25 years, the comprehensive theories of hope have been established as some of the most important developments in psychology. One of the most well-known theories of hope is by C.R. Snyder (Snyder et al., 1991) who conceptualizes hope as a cognitive set that involves subjective appraisals of one’s ability to bring about desired ends. Hopeful thinking has consistently been shown to predict important variables of overall psychological well-being (Jiang, Huebner, & Hills, 2013; Jovanovic, 2013; Marques et al., 2009; Ciarrochi, Heaven, Davies, 2007; Marques, Lopez, & Pas-Ribeiro, 2013).

More recently, Bernardo (2010) has added to Snyder’s basic hope theory by proposing a model of hope that includes a locus of hope dimension, suggesting that hope can originate either internally, based on appraisals of one’s personal ability to bring about desired ends, or externally, based on appraisals of external agents with the ability to bring about desired ends.

METHODS

Participants: 501 adolescent females with a mean age of 15.6 who attended public school in the South Central United States.

Procedures: The study used a cross-sectional paper and pencil survey. The survey sought to capture participants’ perceptions of external hope in P/G, internal hope, and life satisfaction. The survey was anonymous with the study protocol being approved by the Institutional Review Board of the institution of which the researchers are affiliated.

Measures: The standardized instruments used in this study were as follows:

- **External Locus-of-Hope Scale** (LS): Likert Scale modified from Bernardo’s (2010) original locus of hope scale to capture participants’ perceptions of external locus of hope in P/G’s as agents capable of bringing about children’s goals.

- **Children’s Hope Scale** (CS): Likert Scale designed to capture the adolescents internal hope.

- **Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)**: Likert Scale designed to capture life satisfaction of the adolescents.

**Analysis:** After randomly dividing the data into roughly equal halves, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and principal components analysis (PCA) factors were performed on the first half to determine the scales measured the proposed factors. A subsequent covariance based structural equation model (CB-SEM) was used to test a causal model of external hope in P/G as a driver of life satisfaction mediated by internal hope.

RESULTS

The EFA on the 1st half of the data recovered 3 factors: the external hope in P/G scale, the internal hope scale, and the SWLS scale. One item from the SWLS scale cross loaded with internal hope (“In most ways my life is close to my ideal.”). The EFA suggested that external hope in P/G scale, the internal hope scale, and the SWLS were measuring unique cognitive sets.

Subsequently, the EFA results were used to test a CB-SEM model of external hope in P/G as a driver of life satisfaction with internal hope as a mediator. Multiple models were tested according to commonly used CB-SEM goodness of fit indices. Table 1 suggests that Model 2, which included internal hope as a partial mediator, best fit the data (See Table 1 for a comparison of models.)

Since Model 2 (Figure 1) fit the data best, a bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval was calculated for each of the model’s parameters and for the mediation effect to test their statistical significance. All paths were statistically significant, with the results indicating the indirect effect of external hope — P/G on life satisfaction was also statistically significant (β = .104, Bca CI [.072, .139]). Moreover, model 2 was a robust predictor of variance in life satisfaction (R^2 = 70.8%). Finally, the results of the Bollen-Stine bootstrap analysis indicated that Model 2 was not significantly different (p = .17) from the transformed model that perfectly fit the data, adding additional support for the proposed causal model.

DISCUSSION

The results were consistent with Bernardo’s theory that hope has external dimensions, adding empirical support to the relatively new theory of locus of hope. Moreover, the data was also consistent with Snyder’s suggestions that P/G’s serve as drivers of internal hope. Specifically, Bernardo’s theory was supported by the results of the factor analysis, as both the EFA and CFA indicated that external hope – P/G, internal hope, and life satisfaction were distinct factors. Snyder’s theory of parental involvement being an antecedent of hope was supported by the path model of external hope – P/G as a driver of life satisfaction with internal hope as a mediator.

The overall results of the study have important clinical implications for parents/guardians interested in instilling hope in their children and for clinicians working with families to improve children’s overall well-being. The results indicate the importance of parents being actively engaged in their children’s lives such that the child feels the parents are exercising agency toward the child’s goals. Moreover, although research indicates that children may spend increasingly less time with their parents as the children age (Larson & Verma, 1999), results suggest professionals working with families should communicate to parents their continued importance to their children’s internal hope and life satisfaction into adolescence.

Despite the quality of the results, the study contains important limitations that should be noted. First, the data included only adolescent females. While there is no apparent theoretical reason to think that the model would be different among boys compared to girls, empirical testing of this assumption is needed. Secondly, while CB-SEM path modeling allows for the testing of causal theories, additional testing with longitudinal designs is necessary to provide additional support for the proposed causal model. However, despite the limits of the design, the testing of multiple models, as was done in this study, increases the strength of the results in support for the theorized model.

REFERENCES


- Aristotle, Rhetoric Book II

The young ... are full of passion, which excludes fear, and of hope, which inspires confidence.

"A Structured Equation Model of External Hope in Parents/Guardians as a Driver of Life Satisfaction with Internal Hope as a Mediator"

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