RESEARCH PAPER

Hope and Social Support in High School Students from Urban and Rural Areas of Ankara, Turkey

Gülşah Kemer · Gökhan Atik

Abstract The aim of present study was to investigate the role of specific dimensions of perceived social support from family, gender, and geographic area of residence in predicting hope levels of high school students. Additionally, the factor structure of Turkish Version of the Hope Scale was reexamined due to controversial findings in Turkish literature. The sample was composed of 737 students (407 female, 330 male) from two high schools in rural and urban areas of Ankara, Turkey. Data were collected by administering the Hope Scale (Snyder et al. in J Pers Soc Psychol 60:570–585, 1991), the Perceived Social Support from Family Questionnaire (Güngör 1996), and a demographic information form. The role of independent variables in prediction of hope was investigated via Multiple Regression Analysis. Due to presence of some suppressor variables in the full model, two separate regression analyses were conducted for rural and urban areas. In the regression analysis for rural area students, informational support was the only predictor of hope levels. On the other hand, urban area students' hope levels were predicted by love- and esteem-related support, instrumental support, and gender. Lastly, the factor structure of Turkish Version of the Hope Scale was examined through conducting a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to test how well two-factor model fit to current data. Results of the CFA indicated that two-factor model was confirmed.

Keywords Hope · Perceived social support from family · Rural/urban area · High school students

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1 Introduction

The hope theory built up in the mid-1980s by Snyder has progressed in time, and today it is defined with the components of goals, agency, and pathways (Snyder 1995, 2002). Based on this trilogy, Snyder (1995) described hope as "the process of thinking one's goals, along with the motivation to move toward (agency) and the ways to achieve (pathways) those goals" (p. 355). In order to conceptualize or measure hope, these three dimensions have to be covered together since they are reciprocally related. Hope was established on cognitive appraisals, but it doesn't mean that it ignores emotions. While higher hope levels were mostly related with positive emotional state, the lower hope levels were associated with negative emotional state. Thus, hope is considered as a motivational process (Snyder 1995, 2002).

The hope theory emphasized the importance of hope concept in human life. Hope was found to be related to academic achievement (Adelabu 2008; Curry et al. 1997), better coping strategies and positive adjustment (Snyder 2002; Snyder et al. 1991), sport achievement (Curry et al. 1997), self-efficacy, optimism, general well-being (Magaletta and Oliver 1999), and life satisfaction (Bailey and Snyder 2007).

Hope studies in Turkey are relatively new and were especially initiated with translation and adaptation of the Hope Scales into Turkish. Hope scales, specifically; the Hope Scale (Snyder et al. 1991) by Akman and Korkut (1993), State Hope Scale (Snyder et al. 1996) by Denizli (2004), and Children's Hope Scale (Snyder et al. 1997b) by Atik and Kemer (2009), were translated and adapted into Turkish. Hope has been investigated primarily school-related studies with the samples from graduate, college, high school, and middle school students appeared to be prevalent. For instance, Atik et al. (2008) found that both dispositional and state hope scores were significant predictors of and positively correlated with graduate students' academic self-efficacy beliefs. A study conducted by Denizli (2004) on an undergraduate sample indicated that hope scores negatively related to test anxiety. Atik and Erkan (2009) found that higher hope scores of high school students were significantly associated with higher academic self-efficacy beliefs and better problem solving skills. Similarly, Kemer (2006) examined the role of state and dispositional hope in predicting university entrance examination (UEE) scores of high school students. UEE is a test that Turkish high school students have to take for pursuing their college education. It includes different score areas of quantitative, equally-weighted, and qualitative that every student is required to take the test from her/his own field of study. Both state and dispositional hope dimensions were predictive of and positively related with high school students' achievement in UEE. Recently, Atik (2009) found that increase in hope scores decreased the likelihood of being victimized or being both bully and victimized.

Snyder et al. (1991) claimed that hope is influenced by not only perceptions of individuals related to goals but also external factors. Both agency and pathways thinking start to progress and develop from birth and with role modeling of parents, caregivers, friends, etc. (Snyder et al. 1997a). Thus, hope is thought to be a trait gained from family in early childhood (Snyder et al. 2002) and family becomes one of the crucial factors in promoting and nurturing hopeful thinking during these stages. Likewise, in a few studies perceived social support from families was found to have a buffering effect on hope (Barnum et al. 1998; Hagen et al. 2005; Irving et al. 1997). Barnum et al. (1998) also presented hope to be positively related to perceived social support in adolescents. Similarly, Irving et al. (1997) found that higher hope level of veterans with combat-related Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to be associated with greater perceived social support from family. Controlling for depression and PTSD, authors also presented that perceived social support from

family and friends and hope were related to the use of adaptive coping strategies for symptoms. Most of these studies appeared to focus on global social support and adult populations. In a recent study, Yadav (2010) found satisfaction from emotional support as less of a predictor of levels of hope when compared to informational and tangible social support in HIV/AIDS patients. In the same study, hope was found to be a mediator between perceived social support and quality of life. Similarly, exploration of the role of specific types of family support from the perspectives of adolescents in prediction of hope is considered to be important to the relevant literature. Furthermore, despite findings regarding positive contribution of social support to higher hope levels, both in Turkish and Western literature there is paucity in hope and perceived social support from family research. The studies on this issue were mostly carried out on participants living in Western countries and displaying individualistic values. However, it is deemed to be important to reveal the association between hope and social support from a different cultural perspective based on collectivistic inclinations.

Keeping its collectivist tendencies (Karakitapoğlu Aygün and Imamoğlu 2002; Mocan-Aydın 2000), researchers have been presenting individualistic movements in Turkish society (Çileli 2000; Imamoğlu and Karakitapoğlu-Aygün 1999). This movement was presented as a pattern of family relations that "combines interdependence in the emotional realm with independence in the material realm" (Kagitcibasi and Ataca 2005; p. 320). In most part, these changes were examined and presented for urban samples, but urban–rural differences in terms of perceptions and expectations were implied in several studies (Aycicegi-Dinn and Kagitcibasi 2010; Imamoğlu and Karakitapoğlu-Aygün 2007). Thus, the current study is deemed to be important for examination of the differences and/or similarities between urban and rural area students' hope levels.

Present study also aims at addressing controversial findings for hope levels in terms of gender differences. Research findings pointed out that there is no gender difference in the hope levels of females and males (Carvajal et al. 2002; Snyder et al. 1991, 1996). However, such results are likely to be presented as girls having lower hope levels than boys in adolescence (Gariglietti et al. 1997).

Thus, the aim of the present study was to examine the role of perceived social support from family as well as geographic area and gender in predicting high school students' hope levels. Moreover, the present study examined the factor structure of the Turkish Version of the Hope Scale because Akman and Korkut (1993) and Denizli (2004) found different factor structure of the Hope Scale than the original one. Considering these inconsistent results with the original one, a separate factor analytic study was conducted to obtain further evidence whether the factor structure differed from the original form in the present Turkish sample.

2 Method

2.1 Participants

Participants were 737 students, 407 (55.2%) females and 330 (44.8%) males, 14–19 years old, attending preparatory ($n = 127$), ninth ($n = 304$), tenth ($n = 280$), and eleventh grades ($n = 26$) in an urban high school and a rural high school in Ankara, Turkey. 51.6% ($n = 380$) of the participants were from the rural and 48.4% ($n = 357$) were from the urban areas of Ankara. Participants were selected through convenience sampling method.

2.2 Instruments

2.2.1 Demographic Information

Participants completed a demographic data sheet including questions about gender, grade level, and geographical area of residence.

2.2.2 Dispositional Hope

The Hope Scale (HS; Snyder et al. 1991) was used to assess students' dispositional hope levels. Dispositional hope was defined as a "cognitive set based on reciprocally derived sense of agency and pathways" (Snyder et al. 1991, p. 571). The HS is a four-point Likert scaling (1 = *definitely false* to 4 = *definitely true*) composed of twelve items including four items for pathways and agency subscales each, with additional four filler items. The scale was composed of two factors. The pathways subscale assessed individual's planning of ways to meet goals (e.g. "I can think of many ways to get out of a jam"). The agency subscale assessed goal-directed determination (e.g. "I energetically pursue my goals"). Cronbach alpha coefficients ranged from .71 to .76 for the overall scale, from .71 to .76 for the agency subscale, and from .63 to .80 for the pathways subscale (Snyder et al. 1991).

The HS was translated into Turkish by Akman and Korkut (1993). For the overall scale, an internal consistency coefficient of .65 was obtained, and the retest correlation coefficient was .66 in a 4-week interval. The factor analytic studies with different university samples yielded a single factor structure that explained the 26.23, 17.43, and 16.47% of the total variance. Later, Denizli (2004) also reported a one-factor solution for the Turkish HS named pathways thinking, with an eigenvalue of 2.474 that explained the 31% of the total variance. On the other hand, in a different study, Kemer (2006) found two-factor structure for Turkish version of the HS in a high school sample with the same item-loadings onto the factors as in the original study. Therefore, considering these inconsistent findings between the original factor structure and Turkish version factor structures, a factor analysis was conducted for the Turkish HS with the present sample.

2.2.3 Perceived Social Support from Family

The Perceived Social Support from Family Questionnaire (SSQ-Fa) was prepared by Güngör (1996) in a college sample with age range of 17–29. Five-point Likert type questionnaire (1 = *not true at all* to 5 = *very true*) was composed of 47 items with 11 reverse-coded items. The SSQ-Fa consisted of six factors ("involvement-related emotional support", "love- and esteem-related support", "disclosure- and acceptance-related emotional support", "informational support", "active emotional support", and "instrumental support"). The factor of involvement-related emotional support was related to closeness to and involvement in one's family. Love- and esteem-related support reflected family's love and pride for the person. Disclosure- and acceptance-related emotional support was associated with sharing and acceptance. Informational support referred to getting information and advice when needed. Active emotional support reflected active concern and encouragement. The last factor of instrumental support was related to tangible assistance from family. Split-half and Cronbach alpha reliabilities were found .92 and .82, respectively (Güngör 1996). In this study, the total scores of the subscales of SSQ-Fa were entered into the equation.

2.3 Procedure

The researchers had personal visits to principals of several schools from Çankaya and Haymana districts of Ankara to explain the purpose of the study and request assistance. Two school principals collaborated with the authors and volunteer students from their schools were included in the study. Researchers administered the instruments in classrooms. Information about the study and detailed instructions on how to respond to each instrument was provided while administering instruments. The assurance of confidentiality and anonymity of the responses were presented to the participants. Administration lasted approximately 20 min.

2.4 Data Analysis

To determine the role of perceived social support from family (involvement-related emotional support, love- and esteem-related support, disclosure- and acceptance-related support, informational support, active emotional support, and instrumental support), gender, and geographical area of residence, a standard Multiple Regression Analysis was conducted. Gender (female and male) and geographical area of residence (rural and urban) were entered into the regression model as categorical variables. Due to presence of some suppressor variables in the full model, two separate regression analyses were conducted for rural and urban areas. In addition, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for Turkish Version of the Hope Scale was conducted to test how well two-factor model fit to the current data. Prior to performing multiple regression analysis and CFA, data were investigated through required assumptions for knowing the data better and interpreting the results as safe.

3 Results

3.1 Bivariate Analysis

The intercorrelation among the variables included in the current study were assessed through conducting correlational analysis. As seen in the Table 1, involvement-related emotional support ($r = .20$), love- and esteem-related support ($r = .28$), disclosure- and acceptance-related support ($r = .23$), informational support ($r = .27$), active emotional support ($r = .19$), and instrumental support ($r = .14$) were significantly related to the dependent variable, which means that the students who had higher scores from each dimension of perceived social support from family had higher hope scores.

3.2 Regression Analyses

3.2.1 Analysis of Entire Sample

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the role of SSQ-Fa dimensions (involvement-related emotional support, love- and esteem-related support, disclosure- and acceptance-related support, informational support, active emotional support, and instrumental support), gender, and geographical area of residence in predicting students' hope levels. The multiple linear regression coefficient was found to be significant ($R = .33$, $R^2 = .11$, $F(8, 726) = 11.14, p < .001$) (see Table 2). The predictors explained 11% of the variation in students' dispositional hope. Love- and esteem-related support, informational support, instrumental support, and geographical area of residence significantly contributed

Table 1 Means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations for hope and its predictors

	M	SD	Correlations							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Outcome variable										
1. Hope	22.90	3.63	–							
Predictor variables										
2. Involvement-related emotional support	44.47	8.28	.20**	–						
3. Love- and esteem-related support	34.58	6.62	.28**	.61**	–					
4. Disclosure- and acceptance-related support	31.14	6.51	.23**	.58**	.73**	–				
5. Informational support	27.89	5.32	.27**	.60**	.74**	.74**	–			
6. Active emotional support	19.25	4.21	.19**	.58**	.77**	.72**	.72**	–		
7. Instrumental support	19.77	3.59	.14**	.48**	.66**	.54**	.64**	.68**	–	
8. Gender	–	–	.05	−.04	.04	.10**	−.02	.06	−.09*	–
9. Geographical area of residence	–	–	−.05	.03	.15**	.21**	.12**	.25**	.07*	.01

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

to the explained variance in hope. When one unit increased in love- and esteem-related support and informational support scores, hope scores increased by .27 and .20 units, respectively. In contrast, as one unit increased in instrumental support and being in urban area, hope scores decreased by .11 and .08 units, respectively.

At the bivariate level, the geographical area of residence variable was uncorrelated with the dependent variable but significantly related to the dimensions of social support from family except for involvement-related emotional support. It was also a significant predictor of hope in the regression model. Thus, authors considered geographical area of residence as a possible suppressor variable. To explore if the thought was true, two separate regression models were ran. In the first model, the dependent variable hope was regressed on the dimensions of social support from family and gender. The model was significant and explained 10% of the variance in the hope levels. Love- and esteem-related support ($b = .14$, $t = 4.13$, $p < .001$) and informational support ($b = .14$, $t = 3.28$, $p = .001$) were positive significant predictors of participants' hope levels. In the second model, geographical area of residence was entered into the equation as the only predictor variable. The geographical area of residence did not appear as a significant predictor of the dependent variable ($R^2 = .002$). The standardized regression coefficient (β) was −.05.

Table 2 Multiple regression analysis results for subscales of perceived social support from family, gender, and geographical area of residence predicting hope (N = 735)

Predictor variables	b	SE (b)	β	t
Constant	17.83	.99	–	18.07
1. Involvement-related support	.01	.02	.02	.44
2. Love- and esteem-related support	.14	.04	.27	4.11**
3. Disclosure- and acceptance-related support	.00	.03	.01	.13
4. Informational support	.13	.04	.20	3.13**
5. Active emotional support	−.07	.06	−.08	−1.25
6. Instrumental support	−.11	.05	−.11	−2.07*
7. Gender[a]	.24	.26	.03	.93
8. Geographical area of residence[b]	−.60	.26	−.08	−2.27*

Full model statistics: $R = .33$, $R^2 = .11$, $F(8, 726) = 11.14$

[a] 1 = Female; 2 = Male

[b] 1 = Rural; 2 = Urban

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

When this variable entered into the full model with all of the other variables, its β weight was −.08 (see Table 2).

In the full model, another possible suppressor variable appeared as instrumental support dimension of social support from family. This variable had a positive zero-order correlation with other predictor and the outcome variables. However, when it entered in the regression model, it had a negative beta (β) weight. This change was also interpreted as the presence of a negative suppression. Considering these possible suppressor variables, in this study, we conducted two separate regression models for rural and urban area.

3.2.2 Analysis by Geographical Area of Residence

When separate regression analysis were conducted for rural and urban area, the results indicated significant multiple linear regression coefficients (for rural area: $R = .32$, $R^2 = .11$, $F(7, 372) = 6.24$, $p < .001$; for urban area: $R = .37$, $R^2 = .14$, $F(7, 347) = 8.01$, $p < .001$). For rural area, the predictors accounted for 11% of the variance in hope. The only significant predictor, informational support, was positively related to students' hope. As one unit increased in informational support, hope scores increased by .24 units. For urban area, the predictors explained 14% of the variance in hope. Love- and esteem-related support, instrumental support, and gender were significant predictors of hope. As one unit increase in love- and esteem-related support and being male, hope scores increased by .37 and .10 units, respectively. In contrary, as one unit increase in instrumental support, hope scores decreased by .20 units.

3.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A CFA was conducted using maximum-likelihood estimation to test the original factor structure of the Turkish HS. Results of the CFA, the fit indices of the two-factor model, were found to be satisfying [$\chi^2(19) = 41.20$, $\chi^2/df = 2.17$, $RMSEA = .04$, $SRMR = .04$, $GFI = .97$, $AGFI = .95$, $IFI = .98$, $NFI = .97$, $CFI = .98$]. In other words, the original factor structure and Kemer's (2006) findings of two-factor solution for the Turkish version were confirmed in the present study.

4 Discussion

The aim of the present study was to explore the role of sub-dimensions of perceived social support from family, gender, and geographical area of residence in predicting hope levels of high school students. Moreover, the factor structure of the Turkish Hope Scale was examined with a confirmatory study.

The statistically significant relationship between perceived social support from family and hope level (Barnum et al. 1998; Hagen et al. 2005; Irving et al. 1997) was also supported in the present study. However, the hypotheses that sub-dimensions of social support were significant predictors of students' hope levels were partially supported. Three separate regression analyses were conducted in the current study. In the first regression model, love- and esteem-related support, informational support, instrumental support, and geographical area of residence appeared to be significant predictors of students' hope levels. Love- and esteem-related support and informational support had positive contributions on students' hopeful manner whereas instrumental support and residing in the urban area were negative predictors of hope levels. However, the inconsistencies between the bivariate correlations and regression results lead researchers to carry out further analyses to explore more about the relationships among the variables of the study.

Entering in the equation as a significant predictor, geographical area of residence was uncorrelated with the dependent variable but significantly related to the dimensions of social support from family except for involvement-related emotional support. Geographical area was not a significant predictor of students' hope levels by itself in a further regression analysis. Similarly, instrumental support had positive bivariate correlations with the other predictors and the outcome variable, but it was a negative predictor in the regression model. In a recent study, Crothers et al. (2005) found a similar result that social support satisfaction was a significant predictor of hope in cancer patients, until the other variables of affect and relationship closeness entered into the equation. Therefore, these inconsistencies encouraged researchers to carry out two separate regression analyses for geographical areas, urban and rural, to obtain safer results.

In the regression analysis for rural area students, informational support perceptions were the only predictor of hope levels. The informational support (guidance, advice, and encouragement) was positively related to the hope levels of the students. Child rearing practices in rural areas was considered to be an explanation to this finding. In rural areas, children and adolescents are expected to display great respect and obedience toward their elders at all times (Kagitcibasi 1992). Objecting to or arguing against the parents' or elders' thoughts is hardly acceptable. Therefore, the senior-junior relationship becomes essential and adolescents who grow up in such environments are expected to value approval, guidance, and encouragement by their significant others. A sense of support with the shared knowledge by significant others seems to contribute on rural area adolescents' hopeful thinking.

Urban area students' hope levels were predicted by love- and esteem-related support, instrumental support, and gender variables. Love- and esteem-related support perception and being a male student had a positive contribution on hope levels of the students whereas instrumental support perceptions were a negative predictor. Love- and esteem-related support was the most significant predictor of hope levels of urban area students. In other words, the more loved and confident adolescents felt, the more hopeful they were. This finding is considered to draw attention to the importance of familial relationships in urban areas. In urban settings, parents have to participate in the labor force that might lead to inattentiveness and a decrease in adults' support for their children. Although children or adolescents are frequently instrumentally supported by their parents, they may experience a

deep feeling of loneliness and desperateness. Therefore, receiving family's love and pride appeared to have a bigger contribution on hope beliefs of the students.

Being a male student in the urban area also contributed on higher hope levels. Inconsistent with the previous study results of the US samples (Snyder et al. 1991, 1996), male students' hope levels were higher than their female counterparts. Gender-related parental approaches may be considered as one of the reasons for this finding. In Turkey, traditional family structure may reveal different child rearing practices depending on children's gender. More frequently, boys obtain autonomous life views and styles whereas girls tend to be more controlled by their significant others when compared to the boys. Similarly, stronger relational tendencies of Turkish women were presented as congruent with traditionally valued aspect of Turkish culture and female gender roles (Imamoğlu 2003; Imamoğlu and Imamoğlu 1992). Thus, male students may feel more in control and hopeful about their life decisions whereas female students may feel less hopeful due to more externally bounded pathways, agency, and goals.

In the last part of the present study, the factor structure of Turkish Version of the Hope Scale was examined with a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). CFA was preferred due to the inconsistent findings between the factor structure of the original scale (Snyder et al. 1991) and Akman and Korkut (1993) and Denizli's (2004) findings. Moreover, CFA was considered to be a robust analysis due to the theoretical background of Hope Scale, the Hope Theory. In the present study, two-factor solution was confirmed by CFA results. Obtaining a two-factors solution was crucial because this was also consistent with the hope theory.

In conclusion, this study provides evidence for the role of specific types of family support and gender in prediction of hope levels of students from rural and urban area of Ankara, and for the factor structure of Turkish Version of Hope Scale. Results of the present study may reveal important implications. Types of perceived social support from family differ according to the geographical area of residence. However, adolescents' social support preferences seemed to be influenced by the environments they were in. In both urban and rural settings, while working on improvement of students' hope levels, school counselors might consider contextual influences within family as well as personal factors. Therefore, collaboration with parents and other significant family members in any kind of work with adolescents becomes an essential part of student development while taking familial culture into account. In addition, gender was still an important factor in students' hope beliefs. In order for school counselors to increase hope levels of Turkish female students, personal emphasis in combination with gender role attributions must be considered.

Several limitations of the present study should also be presented. The scope of the study is limited to the data collected from the high school students attending those two schools. In addition, dispositional (trait) hope and perceived social support from family levels of students were assessed by all self-report scales and they only reflect the perceived levels of related constructs. Lastly, generalization of the results is limited due to the cross-sectional nature of the study.

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