Hope among Polish Youth: The Polish Panel Study of Adolescents

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Introduction

According to E. Erikson (1997), hope is the belief in a meaningful and supportive world. The set of relatively enduring convictions based on this belief indirectly affect the functioning of the individual in the world. The AHS measures Snyder’s cognitive model of hope which defines hope as “a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy), and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)” (Snyder, Irving, & Anderson, 1991, p. 287). The group study was performed in March and April 2010 in Poland. It was the second wave of the Polish Panel Study of Adolescents.

Method

The representative sample of students who began to attend secondary schools in Poland in 2009 (N = 3337, mean age 17.5, sd=0.34). The sample was selected in two stages. In the first stage 200 schools were randomly selected from among all secondary schools in Poland. Then, within each school, one class was randomly selected for the study.

Participants

The level of hope was measured with the Polish version of the Adult Hope Scale (AHS) (Snyder et al., 2000, quoted by Laguna, Trezbinski & Zieba, 2005). The tool comprised the 4-item Agency subscale (AHS_A) (e.g., ‘I energetically pursue my goals’ (item 2)) and the 4-item Pathways subscale (AHS_P) (e.g., ‘There are lots of ways around any problem’ (item 4)). Participants determine the degree to which they consider a statement to be true using a scale from 1 (definitely false) to 8 (definitely true).

Related measures:

State-Trait Anxiety: The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) by Spielberger, Gorsuch, and Lushene (1970), Polish adaptation by Wrześniewski, Soczynski, Jaworskowa and Ferenc (2006). The test is split into a State-Anxiety (STA-I) scale and a Trait-Anxiety scale (STA-II).


Social Competences: the Social Competences Questionnaire (SCQ) by Matczak (2007), was implemented to measure social competences understood as social, emotional, and intellectual skills and behaviours needed for success as a member of society. In addition to the general index of social competence the social skills index also provides three scales: assertiveness (SCQ_A), coping with social exposition (SCQ_CE) and management of close peer interactions (SCQ_B).

ESCS: The PISA Index of economic, social and cultural status. The index is composed of: 1) highest occupational status of parents (HISEL), 2) highest educational level of parents in years of education according to ISCED, 3) family wealth, cultural possessions and home educational resources index (OECF, 2009b).

Academic Skills: Polish adaptations of the PISA instrument were used to measure academic skills.

A two-hour rotated test design included an extensive test on the major domain (in the current study: reading) and smaller subsets for two minor domains (mathematics, science). The dataset includes plausible value (PV) estimates for each of the above three subjects, standardized into a score with a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100.

Main results

Cronbach’s Alpha for: AHS_P, 0.820, for subscale AHS_A 0.753, for subscale AHS_P 0.721

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of school</th>
<th>AHS_P</th>
<th>AHS_A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3A General upper secondary</td>
<td>26.2 (0.2)</td>
<td>22.9 (0.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3B General-voc up. sec. (3-years)</td>
<td>25.6 (0.4)</td>
<td>23.0 (0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3B General-voc up. sec. (4-years)</td>
<td>24.8 (0.2)</td>
<td>22.8 (0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3C Vocational</td>
<td>23.6 (0.2)</td>
<td>22.6 (0.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The AHS_P subscale: Significant differences were found between individuals from vocational schools compared to individuals from any other type of school (Valk tests at the .001 level), the AHS_A subscale: No significant differences were found.

Conclusions

- Reliability measured by alfa Cronbach is good for 2 subscales as well as the general index of hope.
- The Adult Hope Scale demonstrated adequate construct validity in terms of correlations with related measures. There is a positive but weak relationship between Hope and ESCS.
- Scores on the Pathways subscale differentiate significantly between students of ISCED 3C vocational schools and students of other types of upper secondary schools, but differences between various types of schools in scores on Agency subscale were not statistically significant.
- Significant differences in PISA test results between groups of students with low and high levels of hope were obtained.

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