Mediation Role of Hope between Self-efficacy and Subjective Well-being

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Dear Editor-in-Chief

Hope is an important construct, which predicts several aspects of subjective well-being (SWB) (1). With hope, one believes that his or her own future will be successful and desirable. There is evidence that hope worked as a mediator between self-efficacy and SWB (2). Hope is described as "a cognitive set that is composed of a reciprocally derived sense of successful agency and pathways"(3). Agency thinking refers to a person's perceived capability to actively and constantly engage in goal attainment, while pathways thinking refer to a person's perceived capability to generate the necessary routes that aids in goal attainment. Self-efficacy is another important positive psychology construct. An individual with high self-efficacy would create high hope to deal with stressful situations. Consequently, as more agency and pathways thinking are employed, chance that an individual is affected by negative impacts is decreased, which finally enhance the level of SWB. On the contrary, low self-efficacy individual declines to create agency and pathways thinking, and consequently result in less psychological well-being (2).

This study aimed to investigates the hypothesis that hope functions as a mediator between self-efficacy and SWB using General Self-efficacy Scale, General Well-Being Scale, and Hope Scale (3-5). The data was gathered from 2,716 college students (1,151 males). Participants were all voluntary.

Inform consent forms and instruments were distributed to participants after being reviewed by the institutional review board. Overall, 134 incomplete questionnaires were excluded, yielding a return sample of 95.1%. Data analyses were carried out by M*plus* 6.0 and SPSS 17.0. To test the mediating role of hope, a multiple mediation bootstrapping approach was used (6, 7). First, self-efficacy significantly predicted SWB in the absence of agency and pathways. Second, both agency and pathways regressed on self-efficacy significantly. Third, even though the two mediators were added, the direct effect of self-efficacy on SWB remained significant. Bias-correct bootstrapping method was used to assess significance of indirect effects through agency and pathways (Table 1).

The results showed that the essential mediating role of hope between self-efficacy and SWB. Agency and pathways, two dissociating sub-dimensions of hope, explained more variance in SWB, compared with situation self-efficacy regressed on SWB alone. Individuals with high self-efficacy incline to create more agency and pathways thinking in stress situations. More agency and pathways thinking are employed; a higher level of SWB is developed. It is confirmed that

hope is an important protective factor for SWB. Furthermore, the two effect size measures served as a sign that the effect size through both mediator paths was same. It means that both two mediators make equal contribution to enhance SWB. This study provides us information to design effective intervention models. To improve SWB, it would be better to focus more on hope, which seems to have a profound influence on the relationship between self-efficacy and SWB. The current study not only enriches and extends our understanding of SWB, but also deepens our knowledge of hope.

Table 1: Regression Analyses

Dependent variable	Path/Effect	β	$SE\beta$	Bias-correct	
				Lower	Upper
Subjective Well- being (Y) = .116	$(X \rightarrow Y)$	.53**	.02	.50	.56
	$a_1 (X \rightarrow M1)$	.52**	.02	.48	.55
	$a_2 (X \rightarrow M2)$	.66**	.01	.63	.68
	$b_1 (M1 \rightarrow Y)$	.27**	.02	.23	.31
	$b_2 (M2 \rightarrow Y)$	.19**	.02	.15	.24
	$(X \rightarrow Y)$	.26**	.02	.22	.31
	a_1b_1	.14**	.01	.12	.16
	a_2b_2	.13**	.02	.10	.16
	$a_1b_1 + a_2b_2$	.27**	.02	.23	.30

Note. **$P < .001$, Self-efficacy (X), Agency ($M1$), Pathways ($M2$), Subjective Well-being (Y)

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