The Relationship between Hopelessness, Extraversion Trait and Academic Achievement among Undergraduate University Students

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Abstract

The focus of the study is to find relationship between extraversion, hopelessness and academic achievement among University students. The study was conducted using cross-sectional survey design among the undergraduate students (n=137) of Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI). Among participants, 105 (76.6%) were female, while the male participants were 32 (23.4%). The five factor of personality traits was used to measure through 8-items out of 44-items Big Five Inventory (BFI), the hopelessness level was measured through 20-items true and false questionnaire of Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS). The Pearson r values' result showed that there is negative correlation between hopelessness and the extraversion (r = -.162), and there is a significant negative correlation between hopelessness and academic achievement (r = -.177*). These findings proved that there is negative relationship between hopelessness, extraversion and academic achievement. The increased score of hopelessness will reduce the extraversion and academics achievement. In conclusion, this study emphasized of the vital roles of each traits of personality that might influenced the level of hopelessness among individuals and their academic achievement. The study indicates that a precise and strategic precautions by the educators and students should be applied through interventions' programs in campus, counselling sessions and guidance to enhance their hope and academic achievement.

Keywords: Hopelessness; extraversion; academic achievement

1. Introduction

Hopelessness can be explained as the feelings with lack of positive emotions in life, and categorized as a symptom in major depressive mood episode (Pettorruso et al., 2020). Hopelessness usually (Pettorruso et al., 2020). It can be understood as loss of interest and lack of energy which lead to the major symptoms of depression (Haroz et al., 2017). Hopelessness can lead an individual to feel pessimistic about the future, resulting in depression which may lead to suicide (Karakus, 2018). General studies in literature about hopelessness is accompanied by the research about learned helplessness. In addition, Rabon, & Hirsch, (2017) stated that hopelessness is related to cognitive-emotional constructs; which are positively related to negative affect and perceived stress, and inversely related to optimism and hope. The university students usually face a lot of trials in their education phase (Siddiqui et al., 2018) and it will give some impact in their academic achievement, emotions or mind (Pekrun et al., 2017). The academic achievement might be cause by inferences (Abraham, 1989) such

as their extraversion traits and lead to hopelessness deficit.

The students were synonym with the evaluation on the abilities, accomplishments or assessments during the education phase. The evaluation might come from the tests, while the level accomplishments indicated by the exam results. Students' academic achievement is measured by the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), the overall students' academic performance where it considers the average of all examinations' grade for all semesters during the tenure in university (Yogendra, 2017). The results are used to make decisions regarding further education and future employment (Rimfeld, 2016). Students often face significant academic challenges and social distress during their academic years, besides the students' expectations for assistance during university's life adaptation prompt to disappointment and distress (Ben-Naim et al., 2017).

Optimism was conceptualized as stable personality traits based on goal oriented cognitive processes related to expectancies about one's own future (Kraft, 2021). Mutlu, (2010) however found

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that the uncontrolled events that been faced gave the negative assumptions on future, and therefore build the negative assumption of the inner self, and the personality formed. The pessimistic thought that included emotions about future, expectations, and level of self-construction create hopelessness in individuals (Ginevra et al., 2017) which then become a major symptom of depression depending on the severity's stage. Symptoms of depression and anxiety accompanied hopelessness and unhappiness, high academic success was related to less anxiety and less symptoms of depression (Oyekcin, 2017). Lew (2019) revealed that several identifiable factors that lead to an undesired consequence such as tendency of suicidal behavior in university students correlated with personality traits and negative life events (such as academic difficulties).

1.1 The Learned Hopelessness Theory of Depression (Abraham et al., 1989)

The cognitive styles vulnerability construct is related to the theory of hopelessness. The presence of hopelessness are equal with the cognitive styles and depression (Haeffel et al., 2017). Thus, a theoretical framework on hopelessness and the cognitive relations explored by Abraham et al. (1989) precisely and initiated that the negative life events, inferences that people make about causes, consequences and self-characteristics became some factors that triggering the hopelessness deficits in an individual. The theory was shown in a Model 1 below:
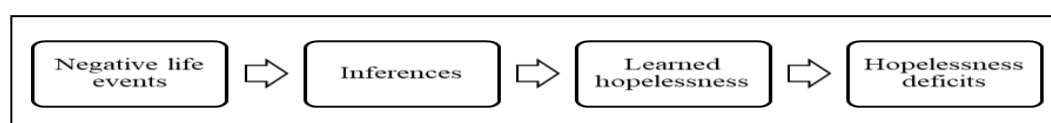
Model 1: Causal chain implied in Theory of learned hopelessness as in Abraham et al. (1989)

In present study, the internal characteristic to the hopelessness experiences become the main point to be investigated. Abramson's theory stated that negative attributions to life events were produce by stable and global causes, when a person have a thought that it is possible to change the situations. Although the different perception of the event whether future or current, stable or global, its support that the negative thoughts will increase the depressive's symptoms. Simply, individuals with negative thinking are easier to get depressive disorder. Baptista et al., (2014) explored that the individual with pessimistic thoughts become more stressed and depressed when they perceive any triggered event's consequences. Beyond that, Beck's theory explained that the term of hopelessness can be interpreted through a negative view of the individual, personal world and future.

2. Research Question
The research questions of this study are:
1. What is the status and level of hopelessness among undergraduate university students?
2. Is there any significant relationship between hopelessness and extraversion personality traits among undergraduate university students?
3. Is there any significant relationship between hopelessness and academic achievement among undergraduate university students?

3. Literature Review
3.1 Studies on hopelessness
Beck's studies on depression and related factors suggest that the concept of hopelessness should always be taken into consideration in the evaluation of depression; namely, feelings led by hopelessness are closely related to depression (Beck et al., 1974, & Karakus, 2018). A lot of studies explained about individuals with depression, and less likely to explored specifically in hopelessness. Based on study by Karakus (2018), the individuals with depressions also feel deeply hopeless. Any novel changes that take place in the life style they used to, had been afraid of and everything with worse outcome. People with the depressed state believed that nothing can be beneficial or helpful in solving their problems (Karakus, 2018).

The fundamental nature of hope and optimism for example as cognition or emotion, self-efficacy or trust, virtue or mere disposition, and the role of other factors such as basic beliefs, values and religious faith (Kraft et al., 2021). Regarding the duality of hope and despair, people were being reminded from the Quran in order to prevent suffering of hopelessness as mention in one part of it: "And never give up hope of Allah's soothing mercy: truly no one despairs of Allah's soothing mercy, except those who have no faith" (Holy Quran, Surah Yusuf: 87). Thus, in achieving to real goals in future, the individuals always find an opportunity which probably reflects to hopefulness and hopelessness. Hopefulness can be explained as more achievable and positive feeling of reaching the goal, in contrast with hopelessness, where the assumptions of failure is present (Karakus, 2018).

Beyond that, John & Srivastava (1999) stated that on traits specification of Big Five personality traits, the extraversion versus introversion where the individuals tend to have traits such as, sociable, assertiveness, energetic, adventurous, enthusiastic and outgoing. The traits found to be contradicted with hopelessness, where the signs accompanied in individuals are the feelings of worthlessness,

desperation, unhappiness, indecisiveness, guilt and inability to maintain his/her business.

3.2 Relationship between hopelessness and extraversion personality traits

Chioqueta, (2005) found that the hopelessness was negatively predicted by extraversion, while, Fabella, (2016) revealed a significant correlation between the hope scales scores with the extraversion scores. Kate et al., (2016), explored that higher levels of extraversion are related to less stressor-related negative affect. It was also supported by Lew et al. (2019) that stated perceiving meaning in life was shown to be a protective factor for suicidal behavior. Hopelessness, depression, stress and negative coping styles were the major risk factors for suicidal behavior. Individuals experiencing hopelessness tend to have a pessimistic attitude about the future and react poorly to stressors, and hopelessness acts as a mediator between psychological distress and suicidal behaviors (Miranda et al, 2013).

Chee et. al (2018) found that extraversion able to boost happiness indirectly through social support. Analysis of responses of 360 undergraduate students showed that extraversion, social support, and hope were significantly linked with happiness. Moreover, the linkage of extraversion and happiness and of social support and happiness can be intermediate by hope. The serial mediating effect results supported that extraversion increases happiness through social support and followed by hope. Meanwhile, Shri (2017) had found that models of depression show the specific psychological factors such as hopelessness, neuroticism, extraversion and insecure attachment interact with life stress to increase risk of depression in rural area.

3.3 Studies on hopelessness and academic achievement

A causal model of academic achievement and learning-related personal variables were tested by Raymond et. al., (2010), exploring on the nature of relationships between learned hopelessness, its risk factors and hopelessness deficits. Findings from the study suggest that prior achievement was the best predictor of subsequent achievement. The next best predictors were perceived learning difficulties and learned hopelessness. The model examines affective–motivational characteristics of students such as prior academic failures, academic attributional style, self-efficacy, thoughts about intelligence, school values, learned hopelessness, self-esteem, learning strategy effectiveness and academic achievement, and the relationships among them. Peixoto et. al., (2017) proved that there were significant associations between student competence and value appraisals, their emotional experiences in test and classroom situations, and their math achievement. Hopelessness occurred to have a certain role in the interplay between cognitive appraisals, emotions, and academic achievement as it was the only emotion that relates to achievement both in test and classroom situations.

A relationship between depression and students' academic performance among undergraduate students were widely explored in various aspects such as the effects of the depression and hopelessness levels among university students with difficulties in finding jobs after graduating (Muhammad, 2018; Karakus, 2018). Akçöltekin (2016) also suggest there are statistical significant relationship of hopelessness level among university students in Turkey with their socio-demographic variables such as non-employment, and pursuit of a postgraduate degree. Meanwhile, there was no significant difference was observed between hopelessness levels with gender, age, class, parental bereavement, growth environment, family residential setting, work status, and prospective employment sector after graduation.

In view of the literature the aim of the present study is to reveal the effects of undergraduate students' extraversion personality trait, hopelessness, and the academic achievement during education phase in university.

4. Methodology

The method used for this study was cross-sectional survey study, which included a correlational research design that measure the relationship between three variables. The online survey method through Google Form and 'paper and pencil' method was used to collect the participants' data. The survey including the instruments purposed to find the level of hopelessness through Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS), the personality traits through Big Five Inventory (BFI) and the academic achievement based on current semester of the undergraduate students of UPSI.

The population selected to determine the relationship between hopelessness, personality traits and academic achievement of the undergraduate UPSI students by using sample size determination through effect size calculated through G*Power 3.1.9.4 software, an estimated medium effect size of 0.3, a power of 0.95 and alpha value of 0.05, the minimum sample size needed to recruited to analyze the correlations between variables were 113 participants. The participants were recruited by the convenience sampling from UPSI undergraduate students. However in final data collection, 137 participants were recruited from nine different faculties, currently studying in their first, second, third and fourth year. An informed consent was distributed along with the inventories in order to acknowledge their willingness and voluntary participation to ensure the agreement and confidentiality between researcher and participants. The details of sample were anonymous. The participants involved voluntarily and had right to withdraw from participating the study without any conditions.

4.1 Instrument

    i) Beck-Hopelessness Scale (BHS)

Beck et. al (1947) had developed the instruments to measure the level of hopelessness on individual through Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS). The part of hopelessness that been measured involved three aspects which were the extent of pessimism, thoughts and beliefs about the future. Eleven (11) of the items were coded as true and the remaining 9 as false. If the answer to items 2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, and 20 was "true", one point was assigned for each; if the answers to items 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, and 19 were "false", then the marking would be one point each. A (0) point was assigned to adverse answers. After the scale was administered, the resultant scores were termed as "hopelessness scores". The scores ranged from (0) to (20). Higher scores got by participants refer to a higher level of hopelessness. The scores were categorized in four groups; namely, 0-3 refers to no hopelessness, 4-8 to mild, 9-14 to moderate, and 15-20 to severe hopelessness.

    ii) Big-Five Inventory (BFI)

Personality traits were measured based on the responses by participants in the self-report questionnaire on Big-Five Inventory (BFI). The Big Five Factors (dimensions) of personality for Extraversion consisted of 8-item out of 44-item inventory that measures individual personality traits (Goldberg, 1993). The Big Five personality traits contained five personality dimensions. The extraversion dimensions are chosen. Each of the items was rated on a 5-point scale, with the responses ranging from 1. Disagree strongly, 2. Disagree a little, 3. Neither agree nor disagree, 4. Agree a little and 5. Agree strongly.

5. Data Analysis

The data analysis is computed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 2.3. Mean (standard deviation) and frequency were used to depict the socio-demographic characteristics and scores on the study measures completed by the respondents. The overall internal consistency of the items of the BHS was evaluated with Cronbach's alpha. The correlation is analyze by Pearson correlation and also t-test. Linear regressions with 95% Confidence Interval used to identify those variables that significantly influence the hopelessness scores among the undergraduate students. Level of statistical significance was set at p value less than 0.05.

5.1 Profile of participants

There were total of 137 undergraduate students from UPSI, were involved in this study, majority of the participants were female with 105 (76.6%) out of 137 participants. Meanwhile, the male participants involved were 32 (23.4%). The demographic information like gender, race, religion, faculty and semester of participants involved in the study was shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of demographic information of participants

Demographic	*f*	%
Gender		
Male	32	23.4
Female	105	76.6
Race		
Malay	120	87.6
Chinese	8	5.8
Indian	4	2.9
Others	5	3.6
Religion		
Islam	124	90.5
Christianity	1	0.7
Buddhism	9	6.6
Hinduism	3	2.2
Faculty		
FPM	56	43.1
FBK	8	5.8
FPE	14	10.2
FSK	13	9.5
FSM	24	17.5
FTV	9	6.6
FSSKJ	5	3.6
FSKIK	4	2.9
FMSP	1	0.7
Semester		
Second year	37	27.0
Third year	25	18.2
Fourth year	67	48.9
Others	8	5.8

From Table 1, majority of participants were Malay with a total of 120 participants (87.6%), followed with Chinese participants with a total of 8 participants (5.8%), 4 participants (2.9%) were Indian, and 5 participants (3.6%) stated as others. Despite that, the religion of participants that involved in this study according to the majority were Islam (n=124, 90.5%), followed by Buddhism (n=9, 6.6%), Hinduism (n=3, 2.2%) and finally Christianity (n=1, 0.7%).

The table also showed nine different faculties in UPSI that participated by the samples. According to the rank, with the highest participation from Faculty of Human Development (FPM) with 56 participants (43.1%). The participants from Faculty of Science and Mathematics (FSM) represented by 24 students (17.5%), and Faculty of Management and Economics (FPE) represented by 14 students (10.2%).

Followed by Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (FSK) with 13 students (9.5%), Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education (FTV) by 9 students (6.6%), and Faculty of Languages and Communication (FBK) by 8 students (5.8%). 5 participants and below came from Faculty of Sports Science and Coaching (FSSKJ), Faculty of Arts, Computing and Creative Industries (FSKIK) and the lowest participation recorded was only one student (0.7%) from Faculty of Music and Performing Arts (FMSP).

Meanwhile, according to the participants' semester of education, the highest number of participants by years' study were 67 participants (48.9%) in the fourth year, followed by 37 participants (27.0%) from second year and 25 participants (18.2%) from the third year. The minority of participants were in the first year or stated as 'others' which only 8 participants (5.8%).

5.2 Hopelessness level of participants
Hopelessness scales was classified into four groups: no hopelessness (scores between 0 and 3), mild hopelessness (scores between 4 and 8), the moderate hopelessness or contained the risk of suicide (scores between 9 and 14), and severe hopelessness or had greater risk of suicide (scores between 15 and 20).

Table 2. Level of hopelessness among participants

Level of hopelessness	*f*	%
Mild	46	33.6
Moderate	80	58.4
Severe	11	8.0
Total	137	100.0

For the level of hopelessness by the study of participants, 11 (8.0%) participants were screened with severe hopelessness, 80 (58.4%) of participants has moderate level of hopelessness and 46 (33.6%) participants has mild level of hopelessness. Majority of participants experienced moderate level of hopelessness.

5.3 Correlation analysis of hopelessness and extraversion
Pearson correlation was conducted to investigate whether there is significant relationship between hopelessness and big five personality traits among the undergraduate students in UPSI. We presented specifically on the result correlation of the hopelessness and the extraversion scale of the Big-Five personality traits.

The Pearson correlation in Table 3, the result showed that there was negative correlation between hopelessness and extraversion scale $r= -.162$. The null hypothesis was accepted.

5.4 Correlation analysis of hopelessness and academic achievement
This part exposed the result regarding the correlation analysis of hopelessness and academic achievement of the participants.

The result in Table 4 shows the correlation analysis of hopelessness and the academic achievement was significant negative correlation, $r = -.177$.

Table 3. Correlation between hopelessness and extraversion

		Hopelessness	Extraversion
Hopelessness	Pearson Correlation	1	-.162
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.059
	N	137	137
Extraversion	Pearson Correlation	-.162	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.059	
	N	137	137

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4. Correlation between hopelessness and academic achievement

		Hopelessness	Extraversion
Hopelessness	Pearson Correlation	1	-.177[*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.038
	N	137	137
Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	-.177[*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.038	
	N	137	137

[*]. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

6. Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

As the analysis revealed, it can be summarized that majority of undergraduate students of UPSI that involve in this study had a moderate level of hopelessness. The hopelessness level had negative correlation to extraversion. The result exposed that hopelessness was significant negative correlation with academic achievement. It was concluded that the hopelessness of participants had negative correlation with personality traits but not statistically significance. Hopelessness level however, has statistically significant negative correlation with the academic achievement. The increased score of hopelessness will reduce the extraversion and academics achievement. Individuals that not hopelessness are optimistic about the future and able to adapt with stressors (Lew et al, 2019).

The results proved the same way as in the learned hopelessness theory (Abraham et al., 1989). Most importantly, the awareness of the dualism factor related with hopelessness such as personality traits and the academic achievement must be emphasized among educators and students. Helping the students in the aspect of self-motivation through programs and interventions would be improve the performance (Park, 2017). The screening process for the academic problems also will be beneficial for the cognitive improvement of students (Muhammed, 2018). Likewise, academic achievement has important effect on the life of the students because it controlled the students' psychological feeling (Zach et al., 2016). This study will also enhance student capacity and the feel the hope in order to increase their academic achievement. Understanding the attribution of personality traits will encounter the daily life as a university student for building the hopes and optimistic for future. The study has similar outcome related to the student's understanding and awareness of hopelessness that relate with their perception and expectation of future thus, contribute them to get the good academic achievements in university. In conclusion, as suggested by previous research, hopelessness is important as a key variable, which impact engagement and achievement levels (Alverson, 2014) as it is strongly depend on the motivation level (Komarraju, 2011).

Study has implications towards academic achievements by enhancing the student's level of hopefulness. The universities counselors, psychologist and academician should take note on the focusing on students' level of positive feelings toward self and future outcome to improve their academic achievement. In future research, the limitations can be improved by having a Malay version of instrument to increase the efficiency of conducting research. It is also important to consider the chosen instruments for examining the variables. For example, the Beck Hopelessness Scale that being used in this study have low but acceptable reliability after being analyzed through SPSS software. The preparation of instruments would contribute a better analysis in research.

Recommendation for future research might be more precise and systematic if it being conducted to a larger and specific targeted population among undergraduate students in UPSI. For example, this research can be conducted among all the completed undergraduate students that successfully graduated, because the academic achievements' measure would be more precise and synchronize. Hence, the more reliable and valid result of analysis able to be gained.

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