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A Cultural Context Lens of Hope

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A Cultural Context Lens of Hope

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter explores hope theory, measurement (i.e., Children's Hope Scale and Adult Dispositional Hope Scale), and research with regard to diverse racial and ethnic groups. Utilizing a cultural context lens, a case study of a Latina adolescent without documentation is used to illustrate how culture influences goals, obstacles, agency, and pathways. Research about the equivalence of hope across groups, including racial and ethnic groups within the United States as well as in other countries, is reviewed. The chapter concludes with a summary of findings regarding hope measurement and hope theory as they apply to various cultural groups and suggestions for future research in the field.

Keywords: hope, goals, agency, pathways, cultural context, equivalence, Children's Hope Scale, Adult Dispositional Hope Scale

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Hope is the perceived ability to produce energy and avenues around obstacles to work toward goals. As such, hope is relevant to everyone and can be utilized by all. Hope has existed across time and cultures and has been demonstrated in the individual and collective feats of all humans (Lopez et al., 2000). While hope may be a universal construct that all can access and develop, it is clear that people use and conceptualize hope in very different ways (Lopez, Snyder, & Teramoto Pedrotti, 2003). From the goals that people develop to the obstacles they face, as well as the factors they use to maintain motivation toward achieving their goals, all exist within a cultural context. Therefore, in order to best understand hope, or any human strength, it is critical to consider cultural context (Sandage, Hill, & Vang, 2003; Sue & Constantine, 2003). In this chapter we attempt to summarize the state of hope measurement and research with regard to diverse groups, utilizing a cultural context lens of hope. We describe how hope might differ across cultures from both theoretical and measurement perspectives. Specifically, we focus on racial and ethnic differences (e.g., multicultural differences) as well as differences based on country of origin (e.g., cross-cultural differences). For the most part, we also focus on research that has been conducted with the purpose of exploring culture and hope, rather than just studies that have included small groups of participants of different demographic backgrounds. We describe findings about hope measurement and hope theory as they apply to various cultural groups and conclude with suggestions for future research in the field.

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Goals are the building blocks of hope theory, such that hope necessitates having the ability to develop meaningful goals and work toward them. Goals naturally vary in size, temporal frame (e.g., short-term or long-term), specificity, value, and importance (Rand & Touza, 2016). They should be aspirational and must be valued by the individual (Snyder, 2002). Given the diversity of human experience, it is not hard to imagine, then, the vast array of goals that individuals, families, and communities might develop. These goals will be influenced by any number of cultural background characteristics, (p. 96) including age, gender, disability status, immigration history, sexual orientation, spirituality, and many others. One person's idea of a "positive" or "appropriate" goal might be seen by someone else as inappropriate, pointless, or even harmful. As such, understanding the role of cultural context in goal development and achievement is critical.

In addition to goals, hope theory suggests that all people will encounter obstacles during their goal pursuit (Snyder, 2002). These roadblocks are inevitable and may vary in size. Part of having hope is contending with these obstacles and deciding how to continue to proceed toward goals. Similar to goals, obstacles also should be understood from a cultural context. Individuals across groups may share certain obstacles, such as lack of social support or a lack of self-confidence, yet some obstacles are unique to certain groups. Within the United States, for example, members of marginalized groups such as

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racial and ethnic minorities often experience systemic obstacles to goal attainment (Lopez et al., 2000). Poverty, lack of access to culturally relevant services, and racism/discrimination are all obstacles that are more commonly experienced by individuals and communities of color, which might make hope particularly relevant (Snyder, 1994). These obstacles have been shown to relate to poorer health and mental health outcomes, as well as academic attainment, financial stability, and many other outcomes (Office of the Surgeon General, 2001). Expecting that an individual's goals would be completely thwarted by these obstacles would clearly be problematic, yet not recognizing that these larger, sociopolitical obstacles exist is equally concerning. Indeed the balance between maintaining hope in spite of challenges, while also acknowledging that some obstacles are insurmountable, is a difficult one.

Finally, the cultural context of *agency* (willpower) and *pathways* (waypower) is critical to understanding hope. Hope theory defines agency as the belief that one has the motivation to reach one's goals and waypower as the belief that one knows how to reach one's goals (Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2002). Without each of these, hope is not present (Edwards, Rand, Lopez, & Snyder, 2007). All individuals can utilize their strengths and supports to maintain motivation and make progress toward goals, but this will likely look different for each person. Some will utilize internal resources, while others may seek help from others in the family or community. We believe it is important to consider culturally relevant strengths, many which have only recently been investigated by the field, as potential resources for maintaining agency and pathways. In particular, we describe cultural values (e.g., familism) and ethnic identity as two strengths that can be utilized by individuals of color.

Cultural values serve as lenses for interacting with the social world and refer to the role of the family, interpersonal interactions, and gender roles, as well as religious and spiritual values (Edwards & Cardemil, 2015). Among Latinos, for example, the cultural value of *familismo* refers to strong feelings of attachment, commitment, loyalty, and obligation to family members (Arredondo & Perez, 2003; Gloria, Ruiz, & Castillo, 2004; Lugo Steidel & Contreras, 2003). Highly familistic individuals tend to conceptualize the family as a source of support that is readily available and provided when needed and may be less inclined to seek external sources of support (Campos et al., 2008). The value of family has been noted in many other cultures, particularly those that are collectivistic in nature, and as such can serve as both a motivational source (e.g., agency; "I'm going to keep working toward this goal because this is something that is important to me and my family") and a resource for support (e.g., pathways; "I'm going to talk to a family member to get advice about how to tackle this obstacle").

Another culturally related strength, ethnic identity, can be a useful agency and pathways resource for ethnically diverse individuals. Ethnic identity is a part of one's self-concept that manifests from a sense of belonging, knowledge, pride, and esteem related to membership with an ethnic group (Piña-Watson, Ojeda, Castellon, & Dornhecker, 2013; Tajfel, 1981). Rather than feeling shameful, alienated, or disconnected, individuals with ethnic identity are proud and feel a sense of affirmation toward their ethnic group.

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Adolescents with a strong sense of ethnic identity tend to have higher self-esteem, better coping with discrimination, higher academic achievement, and less engagement in risky behaviors, among other positive outcomes (Guilamo-Ramos, 2009; Piña-Watson et al., 2013; Roberts et al., 1999; Umaña-Taylor, Diversi, & Fine, 2002). As such, capitalizing on ethnic identity can serve as agency (e.g., “I’m not giving up because I want to be the first African American in my cohort to accomplish this”) and pathways (e.g., “There are skills I have learned from my background that I can use to navigate this obstacle”).

There are many other strengths that emerge from cultural traditions and practices that can serve as the pathways and agency components of hope. Pamela Hays (2008) provides a list of (p. 97) culturally related strengths and supports that may be relevant to individuals of diverse backgrounds, which she delineates as personal/individual, interpersonal, and environmental. Some of the individual strengths include religious faith, bilingual or multilingual skills, ethnic pride, and wisdom. Interpersonal supports may be extended families, traditional celebrations and rituals, and cultural or group-specific networks. Finally, examples of environmental conditions include cultural foods, animals, a space for prayer or meditation, and an altar to honor deceased ancestors.

A Case Example: Rocio

To illustrate a cultural context lens for hope theory, consider the case of Rocio, a Latina high school student who is undocumented. Rocio has dreams of going to college and becoming a professional in health sciences. Her goals are long term, but she continuously works toward shorter term goals in her coursework and activities. In many ways she is a typical high schooler, with a very busy schedule, good friends and family, and many dreams for the future. She has been successful in school thus far, obtaining a high grade point average (GPA) in difficult science and math classes, thereby distinguishing herself to the teachers and staff at her high school as someone with great potential for college.

Despite her hard work and success within the academic arena, however, Rocio is keenly aware of the systemic obstacles that she faces because she is undocumented. Each day she fears that her citizenship status might be revealed and that her parents may be deported. She has many unanswered questions about her future and the United States climate toward immigrants. Due to being undocumented, she is unable to obtain a driver’s license or an after-school job that could be aligned with her career interests in health sciences and help her save money for college. Rocio is also aware she may not receive admission to a university because of her documentation status, and it is unclear if she will qualify for in-state tuition or scholarships.

Using a cultural context lens of hope theory, Rocio’s goals and obstacles show similarities and differences to those of other adolescents her age. She is working toward getting admitted to college, which many youth do, and she is naturally faced with obstacles (e.g., time management, hard courses) to her goal attainment. Additionally, Rocio is faced with

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challenges not encountered by many of her peers as a result of her lack of US citizenship. These obstacles come from the sociopolitical system in which she lives, and they are unable to be directly changed by Rocio or her family.

Like many culturally diverse individuals, Rocio's agency and pathways may reflect her cultural background. When Rocio finds herself particularly overwhelmed by her financial future, she reminds herself that there are some universities and colleges where she might obtain financial aid and that she will continue to work hard in the next year and summer to save as much money as possible. With these agency thoughts, she is propelled to continue to show up on time for work each day, even though her job is not related to her future goals and to talk with her parents about the family finances. Rocio also decides to phone a financial aid counselor at a nearby college to ask basic questions about budgeting and tuition fees. Though she is not comfortable disclosing her name, she asks general questions about opportunities for aid for someone who is undocumented. Learning practical information about the finances helps her manage concerns about her goal.

At other times Rocio gets discouraged about how much work she is doing in her courses, and she must call upon her agency thoughts to keep going. Rocio reminds herself that her parents came to the United States to help ensure that she could have opportunities and that she is going to be the first to go to college in her family. She knows she wants this goal for herself and for her family, and this is her primary motivation. These agency thoughts work in conjunction with the pathways that she must identify to get around her obstacles. When Rocio is unsure of how to get everything done in her classes or does not understand a concept, she must reach out to her teachers for guidance, and she sometimes talks to her older brother. She also combats her doubts and stress by praying and marshaling her personal faith.

As can be seen by the case of Rocio, all aspects of hope exist in a cultural context. Each person faces unique obstacles, and each individual has unique cultural strengths and resources that might be used to maintain hope. It is also important to note that the added obstacles that individuals from marginalized groups face are sometimes insurmountable, even when the individual is hopeful. Assuming that any motivational or cognitive construct is enough to make any goal possible would be akin to believing that simply having hope could cure a terminal illness. That said, the significant evidence that suggests that being hopeful is important and related to well-being, health, mental health, and athletic and academic outcomes implies that being hopeful may (p. 98) be more useful than not in the face of personal and systemic obstacles (Lopez et al., 2000). Hope can give individuals an edge to achieving their goals, it can help them navigate obstacles better, and it may also help them modify goals when appropriate.

Hope Measurement across Cultures

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If hope is relevant to all people, then it would seem as though measuring and understanding hope across cultures would be a simple task. However, as has been discussed, just because hope might be relevant to many does not mean that it means the same thing to everyone or that the measures used to assess hope in one population are valid for another population (Lopez et al., 2003).

Measurement issues across groups are important to consider for any construct before making test selection and interpretation decisions (Ægisdóttir, Gerstein, & Çinarbaş, 2008). Specifically, using measures that have been normed primarily on the mainstream population may create problems with cross-cultural equivalence. In this context, equivalence refers to the comparability of test scores across cultures (Ægisdóttir et al., 2008). Several types of equivalence have been noted in the field, including: functional, conceptual, metric, and linguistic (Ægisdóttir et al., 2008; Lonner, 1985). Functional equivalence addresses the meaning the behavior under investigation (e.g., hope) has in different cultures. Thus, if similar behaviors have different meaning across cultures, they cannot be compared. Conceptual equivalence addresses the connection in meaning ascribed to a behavior or notion. In other words, behaviors and notions may differ in meaning in various cultures. Metric equivalence refers to the psychometric properties of a scale or tool developed to measure the same concept across cultures. In other words, if the psychometric data from multiple cultural groups are identical or very close, the measure is cross-culturally equivalent. Last, linguistic equivalence addresses the phrasing of items in different language versions of an instrument, including the reading difficulty and the natural ease of the items in translated form (Ægisdóttir et al., 2008; Lonner, 1985).

In addition to equivalence issues, bias can also affect generalizability of measures or constructs across cultures. Common sources of bias are construct, method, and item bias (Ægisdóttir et al., 2008). Construct bias occurs when the construct (e.g., hope) being measured is not identical across cultures. Sources for this form of bias are when there is not a complete overlap of how the construct is described across cultural groups and when there are language differences in relation to item content between two versions of an instrument. Nonequivalence is the product of construct bias. Method bias occurs when characteristics or administration methods create differences in scores across cultural groups. Potential sources of this type of bias are differences in response styles, communication problems between researchers and participants, and variations in physical conditions during the administration of the instrument across cultures. Finally, item bias may produce a threat to cross-cultural comparison. Item bias is a form of bias related to measurement at the item level. This form of bias can result from inadequate translation or unsatisfactory item construction. In addition, item bias can occur because item content may not have the same relevance for the cultural groups being compared (Ægisdóttir et al., 2008).

Because providing support for linguistic equivalence is fundamental for translated measures for cross-cultural research, Brislin (1986) has suggested translation methods that increase linguistic equivalence. The first procedure is to translate the instrument

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using bilingual individuals who speak both the original and the target language. The next procedure is back translation, whereby the translated version of a measure is independently translated back to the original language by different individuals than those who developed the original translation. The two versions are compared to refine and ensure equivalence (Brislin et al., 1973). Once the translation and back translation of the instrument have occurred, various pretest measures are utilized to evaluate the equivalence of the instrument.

Providing support for equivalence is an ongoing process and one that can be complicated. Authors have proposed different terms and guidelines for various types of equivalence, and researchers have utilized different methods depending on the guidelines they are following. Hope measurement across culturally diverse groups has progressed a great deal in the last years, with some studies directly addressing issues of equivalence. In the next section, we review the most commonly used and researched hope measures—the Children’s Hope Scale (CHS; Snyder et al., 1997) and the Adult Dispositional Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1991)—and describe efforts made to provide evidence of equivalence across different racial and ethnic groups.

(p. 99) Hope Scales

Children’s Hope Scale

The CHS (Snyder et al., 1997) is a six-item self-report measure of children’s hope validated for use with children ages 7 to 17, second grade and beyond (Lopez et al., 2000). The scale is easily hand-scored in about 3 minutes. In accordance with Snyder’s model of hope, three of the six items tap into agency (“I believe I’m doing fairly well”), and three are designed to assess pathways (“I have the ability to come up with many ways to solve any problems I may experience”). Participants taking the CHS are instructed to rate statements using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*none of the time*) to 6 (*all of the time*). The agency and pathways subscale scores can range from 3 to 18, while total scores (sum of both agency and pathways scores) can range from 6 to 36.

The CHS was standardized using multiple samples of 1,115 schoolchildren in four states, some of who were diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or who had a history physical health issues such as arthritis, sickle cell anemia, or cancer. The norming samples were predominately European American, and, according to Snyder and colleagues (1997) only two samples had sufficient numbers of children from diverse racial/ethnic groups to conduct statistical comparisons. The first sample included 12 African American, 70 Caucasian, and 59 Hispanic children. The racial demographics of the second group included in the scale development were African American ($n = 26$), Caucasian ($n = 130$), and other ($n = 5$).

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Internal consistency was demonstrated by the Cronbach alphas computed for the normative samples that ranged from .72 to .86, with a median alpha of .77 (Snyder et al., 1997). The test-retest correlations over a one-month period were found to be both positive and significant, ranging from .70 to .80 (Snyder et al., 1997). Concurrent construct validity was supported in a number of ways. For example, parents' judgments of their child's hope level was found to be correlated positively with their children's scores on the CHS. Youth's CHS scores were also found to be positively correlated with scores on various measures of children's self-perceptions and control-related attributions. Self-perceptions were assessed in the areas of scholastics, social acceptance, athletics, physical appearance, and behavioral conduct (Lopez et al., 2000; Snyder et al., 1997). Children's Hope Scale scores were negatively correlated with scores on the Children's Depression Inventory (Kovacs, 1984). The fact that higher scores on the CHS were not associated with intelligence provided evidence for discriminant validity. However, scores on the CHS were positively correlated with cumulative percentile scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (Snyder et al., 1997).

Studies of Equivalence of the Children's Hope Scale

In an early study that sought to further evaluate the psychometric properties of the CHS with an ethnically diverse (50% African American) group of high school students, Valle, Huebner, and Suldo (2004) found support for the two-factor structure of the scale. Similarly, Edwards, Ong, and Lopez (2007) assessed the psychometric properties of the CHS in a sample of 135 Mexican American adolescents and found support for the two-factor model. More recently, Shadlow, Boles, Roberts, and Winston (2015) completed a construct validation study of the CHS with a sample of 96 Native American children. Participants were administered the CHS as well as questions from a hope interview ("Tell me about your hopes" and "Is hope important to you? Why?") to ascertain how youth described hope. The results indicated a similar conceptualization and factor structure of hope for the children in this sample, thereby providing support for its equivalence.

The CHS has also been translated to Portuguese (Marques, Pais-Ribeiro, & Lopez, 2009) through the process of translation, back translation, and validation with 367 Portuguese students. The results suggest that the psychometric properties of the translated version are similar to the English version of the scale, providing support for metric and linguistic equivalence of the measure.

Adult Dispositional Hope Scale

The Adult Dispositional Hope Scale or Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1991) is a 12-item self-report measure of hope developed for use with ages 15 and older. During administration the Hope Scale is referred to as the "Goals Scale" as way to disguise the purpose of the assessment. Participants taking the Adult Hope Scale are instructed to rate statements using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*definitely false*) to 4 (*definitely true*).

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Recently an 8-point Likert scale has been used to encourage score diversity. Four items measure agency (“I’ve been pretty successful in life”), four measure pathways (“I think of many ways to get out of a jam”), and four items are distracters (“I feel tired most of the time”; Snyder et al., 1991).

(p. 100) The Hope Scale was normed on six separate samples of University of Kansas introductory psychology students and two samples (one outpatient and one inpatient) of individuals in psychological treatment. No information was given about the racial background of the norming sample, though it is assumed to be predominately Caucasian. During the process of norming the Hope Scale, Snyder et al. (1991) found that the average score for college and non-college student samples was 24 using the 4-point scale and 48 using the 8-point scale. Those seeking psychological treatment had lower hope scores; however, these treatment sample participants scored on the hopeful end of the Hope Scale (i.e., approximately a 3 on the 4-point response scale for each hope item).

Reliability coefficients were determined by assessing six samples of undergraduate college students and two samples of individuals in psychological treatment. Cronbach alphas ranged from .74 to .84, and test-retest correlations of .80 or above were found for a period of over 10 weeks (Snyder et al., 1991). Concurrent construct validity was assessed by comparing Hope Scale responses to responses on similar scales of psychological processes (Snyder et al., 1991). For example, Hope Scale scores were found to be correlated in the range of .50 to .60 with measures of optimism (Lopez et al., 2000; Scheier & Carver, 1985). Construct validity was evaluated by testing hope’s application to daily life. For example, it was found that high-hope people view their goals in a more positive manner (Snyder et al., 1991). Finally, discriminant validity was supported by comparing Hope Scale scores to unrelated measures, such as the Self-Conscious Scale (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975), and no significant correlations were found (Lopez et al., 2000).

Studies of Equivalence of the Adult Dispositional Hope Scale

Snyder (1995) originally suggested that ethnic minority individuals, in comparison to European Americans, would have less hope due to larger obstacles and differential goal availability. Research suggests, however, that there are not strong differences in levels of hope among ethnically diverse college students (Chang & Banks, 2007; Hirsch, Visser, Chang & Jeglic, 2012). Congruent with hope theory, Chang and Banks also found that hope is significantly related to other variables (e.g., problem orientation) among Latino, African American, and Asian American college students. Finally, in a study of 1,031 multiethnic adults, Roesch and Vaughn (2006) sought to test the factorial validity and structure of the Hope Scale and found invariance across ethnic groups as well as support for the two-factor model of hope.

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The Adult Dispositional Hope Scale has been translated into several languages, including Arabic (Abdel-Khalek & Snyder, 2007), Chinese (Sun, Ng, & Wang, 2012), Dutch (Brouwer, Meijer, Weekers, & Baneke, 2008), French (Gana, Daigre, & Ledrich, 2013), Japanese (Kato & Snyder, 2005), Portuguese (Marques, Lopez, Fontaine, Coimbra, & Mitchell, 2014; Pacico, Bastianello, Zanon, & Hutz, 2013), Slovak (Halama, 1999, 2001), and Spanish (Galiana, Oliver, Sancho, & Tomás, 2015). Of the studies noted previously, several (Galiana et al., 2015; Gana et al., 2013; Marques et al., 2014; Pacico et al., 2013; Sun et al., 2012) used the process of translation and back translation as first steps toward establishing linguistic equivalence.

Support for construct equivalence (e.g., the two-factor structure of hope) was found in samples in China (Sun et al., 2012), France (Gana et al., 2013), Japan (Kato & Snyder, 2005), and Portugal (Marques et al., 2014). In contrast, studies in Brazil (Pacico et al., 2013), Spain (Galiana et al., 2015), and the Netherlands (Brouwer et al., 2008) found that hope was better conceptualized as one factor (Rand & Touza, 2016). In a study comparing Portuguese and American college students, Hutz, Midgett, Pacico, Bastianello, and Zanon (2014) found that relationships between hope and variables such as optimism, life satisfaction, and self-esteem were different, as were levels of hope.

Researchers in Taiwan (Luo, Huang, Lin, & Hwang, 2010) and Japan (Kato, 2006) have sought to expand hope theory by incorporating aspects of each respective culture (Rand & Touza, 2016). Kato's expansion of hope theory included hopeful thinking related to others, while Luo et al. found support for two constructs from Chinese culture in addition to pathways and agency: transcendental adaptation and persisting effort. Together these new constructs formed "peaceful hope," which was shown to predict lower levels of hopelessness than agency and pathways.

How Hope Operates in Diverse Cultural Groups

In addition to studies providing support for equivalence of the construct of hope and hope (p. 101) measurement within racial and ethnic groups both within and outside of the United States, a growing number of studies have attempted to understand hope and its relation to other constructs. Chang and Banks' (2007) study of college students suggested that while levels of hope were similar across ethnic groups and hope was associated with other positive constructs, there were variations in the predictors of agency and pathways for specific groups. For example, the strongest predictor of agency differed for African Americans (negative problem orientation), Asian Americans (positive affect), Latinos (rational problem-solving), and European Americans (life satisfaction).

Using a daily diary methodology, Roesch, Duangado, Vaughn, Aldridge, and Villodas (2010) investigated hope in a diverse sample of 126 low-socioeconomic status (SES), minority adolescents. The study assessed CHS hope components (i.e., agency, pathways) on the use of daily coping strategies over a five-day period. The analysis revealed that

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pathways thinking predicted direct problem-solving (Roesch et al., 2010) among all participants. In addition, the agency component of hope predicted greater seeking of instrumental support. While differences in hope among specific ethnic/racial groups were not explored, this study helped to provide support for the relationship between hope and related variables in a low-SES diverse sample.

Authors have investigated the role of hope, depression, and suicidal risk in ethnically diverse samples. In one study of college students, Hirsch, Visser, Chang, and Jeglic (2012) found that higher levels of hope buffered the relationship between depressive symptoms and suicidality among White and Hispanic participants but not among African American participants. Among Latino college students, Chang et al. (2013) found that hope significantly predicted hopelessness and suicide risk. Importantly, findings also revealed that a positive problem orientation uniquely predicted suicide risk, such that “doubling up” on positive future cognitions (through both hope and problem orientation) might be most useful against hopelessness and suicidal behavior.

A series of studies by Adams and colleagues (Adams, 2002; Adams & Jackson, 2000; Adams & Nelson, 2001) examined hope in African Americans of various ages. Adams and Jackson analyzed a national survey of African Americans and found a correlation between high hope and increased satisfaction. Similarly, Adams and Nelson examined life satisfaction among African American fathers and indicated that hope predicted perceptions of their ability to support their families above and beyond parental strain and self-esteem. Analogous findings were found in a study examining African American mothers (Adams et al., 2003).

A few researchers have investigated hope and its relationship to discrimination. In one study, Danoff-Burg, Prelow, and Swenson (2004) examined hope and coping with race-related stress on life satisfaction in a sample of 100 African American undergraduate college students. Results indicated that high-hope students reported more use of problem-focused and greater coping efficacy with race-related stressors than students with low hope. Of note, high-hope participants' life satisfaction was associated with fewer active coping strategies and vice versa for low-hope students. Coping and hope had no effect on life satisfaction, a finding that contrasts previous research about hope among White populations.

In a larger study of African American college students, Banks, Singleton, and Kohn-Wood (2008) similarly found that individuals with high hope reported experiencing more depressive symptoms when reporting discrimination compared to low-hope individuals. In contrast to the idea that hope may serve as a buffer to discrimination, these findings instead suggest that at high levels of discrimination hope is no longer protective because the obstacle may be too large. The authors remind us that though hope may not buffer the negative effects of discrimination for African American students, it is still a useful construct because of its relation to positive adjustment variables. Nonetheless,

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professionals working with African American college students should be aware of the complex relationship between these variables in order to best work with this population.

In one of the few qualitative studies of hope, McClintock (2015) utilized grounded theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to explore how resilient African American youth use hope in their lives. The participants included in the study met criteria for possessing a “hopeful profile,” which included high hope scores (29 or above), resilience factors (presence of risk and protective factors such as low SES, family and friend support), a high GPA (3.0 or above), and teacher/counselor ratings’ of positive adaptation. Seventeen adolescents (5 male, 12 female) participated in individual interviews in which they were queried about their goals as well as how they created pathways and maintained movement toward their goals when faced with obstacles. (p. 102) The storyline or theory that emerged from the analysis revealed that resilient African American youth use hope to facilitate academic and long-term life goals by calling upon multiple support systems and persevering to combat obstacles such as racial discrimination and procrastination. Participants revealed that they were primarily pursuing academic goals that were influenced by family role models and aspirations for an improved quality of life. Goals were generally academic in nature possibly due to the study being conducted in the school setting. In order to accomplish their goals in the face of a variety of obstacles (e.g., racial discrimination, procrastination), participants utilized various social support systems (e.g., family, friends, teachers) and personal coping strategies (e.g., perseverance). Furthermore, participants offered ideas for other youth to reach their goals.

Future Directions

Research in the area of hope across cultures has seen a large increase recent years. From investigations about hope in specific groups to translation of hope measures that can now be used with individuals in many different countries, the field has clearly begun to attend to cultural context with this construct. As can be seen from this review, one of the most important findings from this growing body of research is that hope looks similar and can be measured in the same way in some groups but not in others. In some cases, it appears that the structure and definition of hope may differ for groups, and in other cases predictors and correlates of hope may differ. Indeed, the early cautions (e.g., Lopez et al., 2003) against assuming that hope can be used in the same way by all were wise.

While the findings about hope and hope measurement among diverse cultural groups have given us a flavor for some of the complexities of this construct, there is still much more work to be done. Generally speaking, there is still a dearth of research about individuals of color and hope as compared to European Americans (Chang & Banks, 2007) and a need for more attention to translations of the CHS. Additionally, studies are needed that describe *how* individuals utilize pathways and agency thinking toward goal pursuits (Edwards, Rand, Lopez, & Snyder, 2007). Qualitative studies are particularly useful for exploring phenomena such as these, and McClintock's (2015) project about how African Americans use hope is an example of this work. Finally, more research is needed that explores how hope might change over the life course or as diverse individuals cope with general and culture-specific obstacles. The complex processes and interactions between experiences of discrimination and poverty and the resilience exhibited by ethnic minority youth and adults, for example, provides an area ripe for investigation with longitudinal methods.

It is inspiring to see that theorists and researchers alike now commonly acknowledge the importance of context in understanding human emotions and behavior. Indeed, using a cultural context lens to consider the role of hope helps to reveal the unique aspects and functioning of this construct. Existing research with culturally diverse individuals suggests there are compelling nuances that still must be further understood, however, and it is hoped that researchers will take this charge and continue to move the field forward.

Future Directions

- In what ways does the structure and meaning of hope differ across culturally diverse groups?
- How do individuals utilize pathways and agency thinking toward goal pursuits?

- How can hope help culturally diverse individuals cope with stressors such as discrimination and poverty?

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