



Exploring the relationship between Optimism and Hope among Individuals using Vision Boards

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Abstract

This study explores the psychological impact of vision boards on goal setting and achievement, with a particular focus on hope and optimism. Many individuals struggle with maintaining motivation and clarity when working toward their goals, which can hinder progress and achievement. Optimism refers to a general expectation that positive outcomes will occur, while hope is comprised of two components: agency thinking (motivation to pursue goals) and pathway thinking (strategies to reach those goals). Understanding how these psychological factors interact may provide insight into the role of vision boards in goal-directed behaviour. The study included 59 participants aged 18-35 years. Standardized psychological measures were used to assess Hope (Adult Hope Scale, AHS) and optimism (Revised Life Orientation Test, LOT-R). The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between optimism and hope, with optimism being more strongly related to agency thinking than pathway thinking. These findings imply that optimism—rather than strategic planning, or "pathway thinking," may be a major factor in increasing motivation. Future studies can investigate whether using vision boards in structured interventions can improve long-term achievement outcomes and goal-setting success even more.

Keywords: *Vision boards, Goal setting, Goal achievement, Optimism, Hope*

Introduction

“What the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve.”

– Napoleon Hill, 1937

Setting goals is crucial for success, productivity, and personal development and is a basic component of human motivation. According to research, establishing precise and well-defined goals increases motivation and perseverance, which in turn raises the probability of success (Locke & Latham, 2002). Nonetheless, people frequently struggle to stay motivated, stay focused, and plan their strategy for reaching their objectives. As a result, visualization methods, like vision boards, have drawn interest as possible means of improving goal clarity and commitment.

Usually made up of words, pictures, and symbols that represent personal aspirations, a vision board is a visual representation of an individual's goals (Waalkes et al., 2019). Cognitive-behavioural theories, which highlight the influence of mental imagery on motivation and goal-directed behaviour, form the theoretical foundation of vision boards (Dixon et al., 2023). According to studies, visualization can strengthen the idea that success is achievable by activating brain pathways linked to motivation and self-efficacy (Subramanian, 2006).

Optimism and hope are two important psychological concepts that are essential to goal-directed behaviour. The general expectation of success is known as optimism, and it affects how people respond to obstacles and failures (Scheier & Carver, 1985). According to Snyder et al. (1991), hope is made up of pathway thinking (the capacity to come up with plans to reach goals) and agency thinking (the drive to pursue goals). Individuals who are more hopeful and optimistic are more likely to stick with their goals and overcome setbacks.

Although vision boards, hope, and optimism are theoretically related, empirical research has not yet demonstrated how effective they are at enhancing goal achievement. While

some studies warn against relying too much on visualization without tangible action (Dixon et al., 2023), others support the notion that vision boards can be used as motivational aids (Waalkes et al., 2019). The current study aims to ascertain whether vision boards have a significant impact on hope, optimism, and goal-setting behaviour in light of this gap in the literature.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the relationship between hope and optimism in individuals who engage in vision board exercises.
2. To examine whether optimism is significantly correlated with agency and pathway thinking, the two subcomponents of hope.
3. To provide empirical insights into the psychological mechanisms underlying vision boards' role in goal-setting success.

Operational Definitions

1. **Vision Board:** A vision board is an arrangement of words, symbols, and images on a board, either digital or physical, that serves as a visual representation of a person's objectives. (Tchiki Davis, 2021).
2. **Goal setting:** Setting goals is the process of determining particular objectives that a person hopes to accomplish, over a predetermined specified period of time. A self-report questionnaire is administered on the sample that will be used to gauge the goals' attainability (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019).
3. **Goal Achievement:** The degree to which a person achieves their objectives over a calculated specific time frame. (*Achievement Goals - an Overview* | ScienceDirect Topics (n.d.)

4. **Hope:** A person's ability to develop goal-directed strategies (pathway thinking) and sustain motivation (agency thinking). Measured using the Adult Hope Scale (AHS; Snyder et al., 1991).
5. **Optimism:** A general expectation that positive outcomes will occur. Measured using the Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R; Scheier et al., 1994).

Review of Literature

Goal-setting and attainment are crucial for motivation and personal development. Among the various tactics employed to enhance these procedures, vision boards have gained popularity. A vision board is a visual depiction of an individual's objectives that typically includes words, images, and symbols that illustrate the intended outcomes. The psychological processes, empirical findings, theoretical foundations, and critical analyses pertaining to the use of vision boards for goal-setting and achievement are examined in this section.

Theoretical Foundations of Vision Boards in Goal Setting

Vision boards are based on the concepts of mental imagery and visualization, which are central to theories of cognitive behaviour. By forming clear mental images of desired outcomes, visualization stimulates the brain similarly to real-world experiences (Dixon and others, 2023). This process increases the likelihood of achieving goals by activating brain pathways linked to motivation and action (Waalkes et al., 2019). By strengthening these neural connections, visual rehearsal can improve performance and skill acquisition, according to neuro-scientific research (Subramanian, 2006). The idea of "value-tagging," which refers to the brain's predilection for visual cues over textual information, is also promoted by vision boards. Setting priorities increases people's awareness of opportunities that fit with their goals by making it simpler for them to concentrate on and remember them. It is crucial to stress that regular exposure to

images related to goals can prepare the brain to identify and seize pertinent opportunities, bridging the gap between intention and action (Swart, 2019).

Psychological Mechanisms: Self-Efficacy and Optimism

The effectiveness of vision boards is strongly associated with psychological concepts like optimism and self-efficacy. A key component of goal-directed behaviour is self-efficacy, or the conviction that one can carry out the actions necessary to accomplish particular objectives (Bandura, 1997). By giving them a concrete and understandable representation, vision boards can boost people's confidence in their capacity to achieve their objectives. This visual affirmation promotes a proactive approach to goal pursuit by acting as a continual reminder of one's objectives (Waalkes et al., 2019). Another psychological element impacted by the use of vision boards is optimism, or the widespread expectation of favourable results (Melnick & Nevis, 2017). Creating and engaging with a vision board can help generate the optimism and positivity needed to sustain motivation. According to positive psychology, these affirmative actions can improve resilience and wellbeing, empowering people to overcome obstacles in their pursuit of goals (Waalkes et al., 2019).

Empirical Findings on Vision Boards and Goal Achievement

The effect of vision boards on goal achievement has been the subject of numerous empirical studies, with differing findings. It has been demonstrated that using visualization techniques, such as vision boards, improves performance and raises the possibility of reaching objectives (Dixon and others, 2023). According to Subramanian (2006), visualization can be used as a rehearsal technique to get the body and mind ready for on-stage performance. For example, athletes who use mental imagery have shown improved performance. Vision boards must, however, include specific actions in order to be effective. Vision boards can help you stay focused and clear, but they need to be used in conjunction with actual planning and work. Psychologists warn that complacency can result from relying only on visualization without

taking the required actions. Vision boards should therefore be a part of a more comprehensive goal-setting framework that incorporates SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) objectives (Dixon et al., 2023).

Critical Evaluation and Practical Implications

Though vision boards have psychological advantages, it's important to approach them objectively. Sometimes, the appeal of using visualization to accomplish goals can surpass the need for consistent, intentional practice (Dixon et al., 2023). Experts stress that while vision boards can increase motivation and focus, they cannot take the place of ongoing work and strategic planning. To turn dreams into real accomplishments, vision boards must be incorporated into a methodical goal-setting process that blends visualization with concrete actions (Waalkes et al., 2019). Furthermore, different people may experience different psychological effects from vision boards. The effectiveness of vision boards can be impacted by factors like individual differences in cognitive processing, past experiences, and personal beliefs. To ensure that vision boards function as individualized motivators in line with their objectives and values, it is advised that people customize their vision board creation and implementation to their particular circumstances.

When used in goal-setting exercises, vision boards provide a multifaceted method that blends psychological reinforcement with visualization. Vision boards can be useful tools in the pursuit of both personal and professional goals because they boost self-efficacy, encourage optimism, and activate brain pathways linked to motivation (Waalkes et al., 2019). However, a realistic assessment of one's goals and the implementation of practical strategies are crucial to their success (Dixon et al., 2023).

Purpose

The study aims to investigate how vision boards affect goal-setting and achievement psychologically. It specifically looks into how individuals use vision boards, which are visual representations of their goals, to improve motivation, reaffirm their commitment to their goals, and influence success-related cognitive processes. This study intends to ascertain whether vision boards are useful instruments for improving goal clarity and achievement. The results could offer important new information about how visualization strategies affect self-efficacy and motivation in goal-directed behaviour.

Hypothesis

1. There will be a significant positive relationship between optimism and hope among people using vision boards.
2. Among vision board users, optimism will be more strongly correlated with agency (goal-directed motivation) than with pathway thinking (strategic planning).

Method

Sample

A total sample of (N=59) in the age range of 18-35 years, inclusive of all genders, was collected from various cities across India.

Measures

Adult Hope Scale (AHS): Developed by Snyder et al. (1991), the Adult Hope Scale is a 12-item self-report measure designed to assess an individual's level of hope. The scale consists of two sub-scales: agency thinking (goal-directed motivation) and pathway thinking (strategic planning to achieve goals). Each item is rated on an 8-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (definitely false) to 8 (definitely true), with higher scores indicating greater levels of hope. The

AHS has been widely used in psychological research to assess goal-pursuit tendencies and motivational persistence.

Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R): Developed by Scheier et al. (1994), the LOT-R is a 10-item self-report scale designed to measure dispositional optimism, assessing an individual's generalized expectations of positive versus negative life outcomes. Of the 10 items, six are directly related to optimism and pessimism (three each), while four serve as filler items. Participants respond using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicate greater optimism, while lower scores reflect a more pessimistic outlook. The LOT-R has been widely validated and is commonly used in studies examining psychological well-being, resilience, and goal persistence.

Procedure

Data was collected via an online Google Forms survey, distributed across various cities in India. Participants first provided informed consent and then completed the AHS and LOT-R scales.

Analysis of Results

Results

Table 1: *N, Mean & SD of variables*

	OPTIMISM	AGENCY SUB- SCALE	PATHWAY SUB- SCALE	HOPE
N	59	59	59	59
Mean	13.2	22.1	22.9	45.0

Standard deviation	3.88	6.74	6.31	12.5
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Table 2: *Correlation between Optimism & Hope*

	OPTIMISM	AGENCY	PATHWAY	HOPE
OPTIMISM	—			
AGENCY	0.387**	—		
PATHWAY	0.331*	0.831***	—	
HOPE	0.376**	0.960***	0.954***	—
Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001				

Discussion of Results

The results found out that there is positive significant relationship between hope and optimism ($r=0.376$, $p<0.01$), suggesting that individuals with higher optimism tend to have greater hope which is linked to stronger goal motivation; along with a positive significant relation between hope and agency ($r=0.960$, $p<0.001$), indicating that individuals with higher hope are significantly more motivated to take action toward achieving their goals. There is also a significant positive relationship between hope and pathway ($r=0.954$, $p<.001$), pathway and optimism ($r=0.331$, $p<.05$) and between pathway and agency ($r=0.831$, $p<.001$), while agency and optimism also share the same relation ($r=0.387$, $p<.01$).

Conclusion

The study looked at how individuals who use vision boards relate to optimism and hope. The results showed that hope and optimism were significantly positively correlated, with optimism being more strongly linked to agency (goal-directed motivation) than to pathway

thinking (strategic planning). Furthermore, there was a strong correlation found between hope and both agency and pathway thinking, indicating that people who have more hope are more driven and have better plans for achieving their objectives. These findings support the potential psychological advantages of vision boards as instruments for bolstering goal-directed thought processes by highlighting the role that optimism plays in boosting motivation and perseverance.

This study examined the relationship between optimism and hope among vision board users. The findings demonstrated a significant positive correlation between hope and optimism, with optimism being more closely associated with agency (goal-directed motivation) than with pathway thinking (strategic planning). Additionally, hope was found to be strongly correlated with both agency and pathway thinking, suggesting that individuals with higher levels of hope are more motivated and have better plans for accomplishing their goals. These findings, which emphasize the role that optimism plays in increasing motivation and perseverance, lend credence to the potential psychological benefits of vision boards as tools for strengthening goal-directed thought processes.

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