

The Relationship between Social Identity and Hope: The Moderating Role of Belief in Social Justice and Collective Action Potential

Dilek Baran*

St. Clements University

Corresponding Author: **Dilek Baran** (St. Clements University)

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between individuals' social identities and levels of hope. It further analyzes how this relationship is shaped by belief in social justice and the potential for collective action.

Findings from this quantitative research conducted with 176 participants reveal that belief in social justice positively affects individuals' levels of hope, while collective action potential strengthens group-based solidarity and promotes social change. In conclusion, belief in social justice and collective action potential play significant roles in enhancing individuals' hope. This study offers important contributions for strategies of social change and for efforts aimed at increasing individuals' hopes.

Keywords: *Social identity, Hope, Belief in Social Justice, Collective Action Potential, Social Psychology.*

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Introduction

This study investigates the role of social structures and social identity in shaping individuals' identity formation and future expectations. It explains how the feeling of hope shapes both individual lives and belief in social change, while also discussing complex findings regarding this relationship.

In addition, the study highlights how belief in social justice and the potential for collective action moderate the relationship between social identity and hope. By filling a gap in the existing literature, this research aims to examine these dynamic interactions through a holistic approach. Ultimately, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive theoretical basis for understanding the psychosocial dynamics of motivation toward social change.

Problem Statement

This study investigates the impact of social identity-defined as the way individuals define themselves-on levels of hope. Particularly in contemporary societies, where uncertainties, social inequalities, and injustices are increasing, this relationship has become even more critical.

The existing literature indicates a lack of depth regarding the conditions under which the relationship between hope and social identity is strengthened or weakened. Therefore, this research addresses the moderating roles of belief in social justice and collective action potential in understanding this relationship.

By comprehensively examining these multidimensional interactions within the social sciences, this study aims to fill an important knowledge gap that will contribute to developing strategies for enhancing individuals' psychosocial well-being.

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Research Objective

The main objective of this research is to investigate the relationship between individuals' levels of social identity and hope. It also aims to analyze the moderating roles of belief in social justice and collective action potential in this relationship.

Within this framework, the study seeks answers to three central questions:

- Is there a relationship between social identity and levels of hope?
- Does belief in social justice play a moderating role in this relationship?
- Does collective action potential play a moderating role in this relationship?

The results of this research are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the social psychology literature as well as practical guidance for fostering social cohesion, solidarity, and psychosocial well-being.

Theoretical Framework and Related Literature Review

This section examines the key concepts forming the foundation of the research: social identity, hope, belief in social justice, and collective action potential.

Social Identity: This concept explains how self-perception is shaped through group memberships (e.g., ethnicity, gender). It involves three core processes: social categorization, social

identification, and social comparison. A strong social identity enhances individuals' psychological well-being and shapes motivation for collective action.

Hope: According to C.R. Snyder's Cognitive Hope Theory, hope is more than passive optimism. It involves the capacity to develop alternative pathways to achieve goals (Pathways Thinking) and the determination to pursue these goals (Agency Thinking). Hope positively influences coping with stress, psychological resilience, and life satisfaction, while also strengthening social solidarity.

Hope and Other Concepts: The literature emphasizes hope's relationship with life satisfaction, resilience, self-efficacy, optimism, and social identity. Individuals with high levels of hope tend to form healthier relationships, cope more effectively with challenges, and show greater self-confidence.

Belief in Social Justice: Defined as the conviction that the social order is fair and equal, this belief enhances sensitivity to inequalities and motivates individuals toward rights-claiming behaviors and collective actions.

The Role of Social Justice and Hope: Hope influences how demands for social justice are expressed. In difficult times, hope encourages individuals to engage in collective action and generates potential for social change. The "Black Lives Matter" movement serves as an example of this relationship.

Related Literature

Politicized Collective Identity and Action Potential: Social identity is not merely a sense of belonging; it is also a political factor that directs individuals toward social change, justice-seeking, and collective action. A strong social identity creates solidarity within groups and forms the foundation of social movements.

Theoretical Foundations of Hope: According to C.R. Snyder's theory, hope is not a passive expectation but a cognitive and motivational process of identifying alternative pathways (pathways thinking) and showing determination to follow them (agency thinking).

The Relationship Between Social Justice and Hope: There is a strong connection between belief in social justice and hope. The hope that social justice can be achieved strengthens individuals' sensitivity to injustices and their motivation to act for change. This belief triggers justice-seeking at both individual and collective levels and accelerates social transformation.

Collective Action Potential: Defined as the ability to come together for a common goal, collective action is shaped by psychological factors such as group membership, perceptions of external threats, and awareness of inequality. Hope is a key motivational source for collective action. Hopeful individuals believe conditions can be changed and are more willing to participate in collective movements.

Gap in the Literature: Few studies have examined the relationship between social identity and hope alongside moderating factors such as belief in social justice and collective action potential. This study aims to fill this gap.

Method

This study employed quantitative research methods using a correlational survey model.

Population and Sample: The research was conducted in 2025 with a sample of 176 volunteers aged 18 and above living in various cities in Turkey. Participants were selected using convenience sampling.

Data Collection Tools:

- **Demographic Information Form:** Used to determine participants' demographic characteristics.
- **Social Identity Scale:** A 6-item, 7-point Likert-type scale developed by Cameron (2004).
- **Snyder Hope Scale:** A 12-item, 8-point Likert-type scale developed by Snyder et al. (1991).
- **Belief in Social Justice Scale:** A 5-point Likert-type scale measuring individuals' perceptions of social justice.
- **Collective Action Potential Scale:** A 6–8 item scale inspired by frameworks such as Van Zomeren et al. (2008).
- **Reliability:** All scales had reliability coefficients within acceptable ranges.
- **Data Collection Process:** Data were collected via online platforms, ensuring participant anonymity.

Data Analysis:

- IBM SPSS Statistics 25.0 was used for data analysis.
- Descriptive statistics and normality tests were conducted.
- Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the direction and strength of relationships between variables.
- Hypotheses were tested using hierarchical regression analysis and moderation (interaction) analyses.
- Reliability was tested through Cronbach's Alpha coefficients.
- Independent samples t-test and ANOVA were applied to examine the effects of demographic variables.
- All hypotheses were tested at a 95% confidence level ($\alpha = .05$).
- These methodological steps aimed to ensure the validity and reliability of the research.

Findings

This section summarizes the findings obtained from the data of 176 participants.

Participant Profile:

- Majority were women (59.7%).
- Largest age group was 18–24 (28%).
- More than half were university graduates (54.6%).
- Marital status was balanced between married (45.5%) and single (41.5%).
- Students represented the largest occupational group (25.6%).
- Household income levels varied, reflecting economic diversity.

General Evaluation:

- The sample was demographically diverse, allowing for multidimensional analysis.
- Some groups (men, low-education, high-income individuals) were underrepresented, limiting generalizability.
- Demographic variables such as gender, age, marital status, and income provided an important context for

interpreting findings related to hope, belief in justice, and collective action potential.

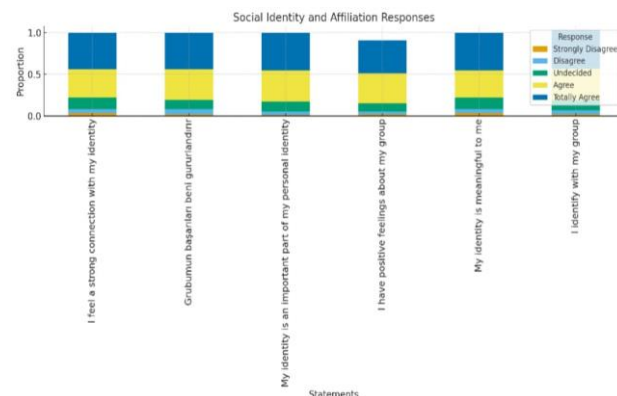
- The prevalence of students in the sample was particularly significant for analyzing hope toward the future.

Descriptive Findings and Participant Profile

- A total of 176 individuals participated voluntarily.
- Majority were women (59.7%) and aged 18–24 (28%).
- Over half (54.6%) were university graduates.
- Participants reported feeling the strongest sense of belonging to ethnic identity (49.1%), followed by professional identity (22.9%) and political views (17.1%).

Scale Reliability and Overall Scores

- Reliability: Cronbach's Alpha (α) values for all scales (Social Identity, Hope, Belief in Social Justice, Collective Action Potential) ranged between .81 and .88, indicating high reliability.



These results indicate that all scales used in the study are highly reliable. The highest value, 0.88, belongs to the social identity commitment scale. The lowest α value, 0.81, was observed for the social justice belief scale, although this value is quite sufficient in terms of reliability.

These findings clearly demonstrate that participants are not merely passive observers but rather actively participate in matters such as defending group interests and opposing injustices. Specifically, it was observed that a large majority of participants believe it is important to participate in collective efforts and are willing to support such actions.

Social Identity and Affiliation Data

	I Strongly Disagree	I disagree	I'm undecided	I agree	I totally agree
I feel a strong connection with my identity	0.03	0.05	0.14	0.34	0.44
Grubumun başarıları beni gururlandırır	0.02	0.06	0.11	0.37	0.44
My identity is an important part of my personal identity	0.01	0.04	0.12	0.38	0.45
I have positive feelings about my group	0.02	0.03	0.10	0.36	0.40
My identity is meaningful to me	0.03	0.05	0.14	0.33	0.45
I identify with my group	0.02	0.05	0.12	0.38	0.46

Picture 2: Heat Map of Social Identity Engagement Scale Responses

Findings (Continuation)

This table visualizes the percentage distribution of participants' responses to the Social Identity Commitment Scale in the form of a heatmap. As the color intensity increases, it indicates a higher proportion of participants endorsing that response category.

The most prominent finding is that across all items, the categories "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" hold the highest proportions. In particular, proportions exceeding 40% clearly demonstrate that participants express strong attachment, pride, and positive emotions toward their social identities. These results support the conclusion that individuals in the sample strongly identify with their respective groups and regard this identity as an important component of their personal self.

Belief in Social Justice: The majority of participants reported low levels of belief in societal justice. Statements such as "The system favors the powerful" received high levels of agreement, indicating skepticism toward the fairness of the social system.

Collective Action Potential: Participants displayed a high inclination toward defending group rights and engaging in collective actions.

Relationships between Variables

Correlation: Correlation analyses conducted among the main variables (social identity, hope, belief in social justice, and collective action potential) did not reveal statistically significant relationships. This indicates that the direct associations hypothesized were not supported within this dataset.

Regression and Moderation:

In contrast to the simple correlations, regression analyses revealed that social identity commitment significantly predicted collective action potential.

The moderating role of belief in social justice demonstrated a marginally significant effect. This effect was particularly evident among individuals with low levels of belief in justice, where strong identity commitment significantly increased collective action

potential. In other words, when individuals believe the system is unjust, their sense of group belonging triggers a stronger willingness to engage in collective action.

Group Differences

Demographic Characteristics: Analyses showed no statistically significant differences in levels of hope, identity commitment, or collective action potential with respect to participants' gender, age group, or education level.

I Strongly Disagree	I disagree	I'm undecided	I agree	I totally agree
I achieve my goal despite the difficulties	0.01	0.03	0.09	0.53
I can find ways to achieve my goals	0.01	0.02	0.07	0.53
I have many goals to achieve	0.02	0.03	0.010	0.49
I am successful in producing solutions	0.01	0.03	0.08	0.52
When I encounter obstacles, I look for new ways.	0.01	0.02	0.07	0.53
I am strong enough to achieve my goals	0.01	0.03	0.07	0.52
I can produce alternative solutions	0.01	0.02	0.08	0.52
I am hopeful about the future	0.01	0.02	0.07	0.53

Picture 3: Snyder Hope Scale Response Distribution – Heat Map

This heat map visualizes the percentage distribution of participants' responses to the Snyder Hope Scale. The intensity of the colors indicates which response category (from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree") participants concentrated on.

The most striking finding is that the "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" categories have the most intense colors across nearly all items in the table. This suggests that participants' hope levels are quite high. This strongly reflects the perception that individuals possess both the ability to find ways to achieve their goals ("wayfinding") and the sufficient motivation ("desire strength") to achieve them.

The findings reveal that participants' beliefs in the fairness of the social system are generally low. Specifically, the majority of participants responded negatively to items such as "Everyone in society has equal opportunities" and "Social resources are distributed fairly." Conversely, positive responses (60% and above) were more prevalent for items such as "The system favors the powerful" and "Justice is more accessible to some groups." This suggests that individuals have a strong awareness of the existence of social injustice.

	I Strongly Disagree	I disagree	I'm undecided	I agree	Strongly Agree
Everyone in society has equal opportunities	0.23	0.26	0.17	0.20	0.15
Social resources are distributed fairly	0.20	0.28	0.16	0.23	0.13
Everyone gets what they deserve	0.22	0.27	0.14	0.22	0.15
There is social justice in society	0.24	0.25	0.15	0.18	0.18
The system favors the difficult	0.09	0.11	0.14	0.34	0.32
Justice is more accessible to some groups	0.10 0.31	0.12	0.13	0.33	0.31

Picture 4: Social Justice Belief Scale Response Distribution – Heat Map

This table presents the percentage distribution of participants' responses to the Social Justice Belief Scale as a heat map. The data in the table indicate that participants' perception of social justice is quite low.

The most significant finding observed is that responses to the first four statements (e.g., "Everyone in society has equal

opportunities") are mostly concentrated in the "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" categories. This suggests that participants have a weak belief that the current system operates fairly.

Conversely, "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" responses dominate statements such as "The system favors the powerful" and "Justice is more accessible to some groups." These findings clearly demonstrate that participants have a strong awareness of the

existence of social injustice and believe that justice is not applied equally to everyone.

The findings clearly demonstrate that participants are not merely passive observers but rather actively participate in activities

such as defending group interests and opposing injustices. The vast majority of individuals believe it is important to participate in collective efforts and express a willingness to support such actions.

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6
Emoticons	I Strongly Disagree	I disagree	I'm undecided	I agree	Strongly Agree
I'm willing to protest for my group's rights.	0.14	0.16	0.19	0.30	0.22
I support collective action to defend my group's interests.	0.12	0.16	0.17	0.32	0.23
I Will Not Remain Silent Against the Injustice My Group Experiences	0.11	0.15	0.16	0.34	0.25
It is important to participate in collective efforts for the future of my group.	0.07	0.08	0.11	0.41	0.33

Picture 5: Heat Map of Collective Action Potential Scale Responses

This table visualizes the percentage distribution of participants' responses to the Collective Action Potential Scale as a heat map. The table's color intensity indicates a high proportion of participants who selected that response category. The most striking finding is the predominance of "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" responses across all items. In some items, the combined percentage of these two categories exceeds 70%. This demonstrates that individuals have a strong tendency to defend their group's interests and oppose injustice. The data demonstrates that participants are not merely passive observers but also eager to demonstrate collective solidarity and active participation. The Pearson correlation analysis ($r = 0.0615$, $p > 0.05$) also supports this visual finding. Because the correlation coefficient (r) is very close to zero, it is concluded that social identity commitment does not have a direct and statistically significant effect on collective action potential. This suggests that individuals' sense of belonging to a group may not always directly increase their willingness to take action. Finding suggests that as individuals' beliefs in social justice increase, their potential to participate in collective action also increases somewhat. However, the weakness of the relationship suggests that the direct link between these two variables is not very strong and is not a single determining factor.

Discussion and Conclusion

This section evaluates the findings of the study in light of the hypotheses and existing literature, presents its theoretical and practical contributions, and outlines limitations along with suggestions for future research.

Evaluation of Findings

Correlation: Contrary to expectations, no direct and statistically significant relationships were found among the main variables

(social identity, hope, belief in social justice, and collective action potential). This indicates that most of the proposed hypotheses were not supported.

Regression and Moderation: Unlike the simple correlations, regression analysis revealed that Social Identity Commitment was a significant predictor of Collective Action Potential. Moreover, Belief in Social Justice was shown to play a moderating role in the relationship between identity commitment and collective action. Specifically, among individuals with low perceptions of justice, strong identity commitment significantly increased their tendency toward action.

Demographic Differences: No significant differences were observed in the psychological variables under study (hope, identity commitment, collective action potential) with respect to demographic variables such as gender, age, and education. This may be attributed to the relative homogeneity of the sample.

Contributions of the Study

The study provides unique insights into the complex interactions among psychosocial variables, offering a multidimensional perspective.

By demonstrating the moderating role of belief in social justice, the study contributes to the literature and confirms that this relationship is context-sensitive.

The research enriches the field of social psychology in Turkey with local data.

Limitations and Suggestions

Limitations:

- Sample: The sample was drawn primarily from Mersin Mezitli and similar demographic settings, which restricts the generalizability of the findings.
- Design: As a cross-sectional study conducted at a single point in time, the dynamics among the variables could not be fully captured.
- Methodology: Quantitative data may not always reflect the complexity of psychosocial structures.
- Suggestions: Future studies are encouraged to employ more diverse samples, longitudinal research designs, and qualitative methods in order to achieve more comprehensive insights.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the relationships among social identity, hope, belief in social justice, and collective action potential are not simple or linear but are instead shaped by more complex interactions. Regression analyses confirmed the effect of group identity on action potential and indicated that perceptions of social justice may moderate this effect. These findings provide important implications for scholars and practitioners working on social movements and civic participation.

In Conclusion

This research reveals that the relationships among crucial psychosocial variables-social identity, hope, belief in social justice, and collective action potential-are not always straightforward or linear, but rather vary depending on context and mediating variables. The regression findings confirm the influence of group identity on collective action potential while also highlighting the moderating role of perceptions of social justice. The study's results offer valuable insights for academics and practitioners engaged in social movements, civic awareness, activism, and community participation.

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