

The Extent Of Optimism Among Jadara University Students About Their Expected Results Through The Distance Learning Experience

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Abstract

The current study aimed to assess the extent of optimism among Jadara University students about their expected results through the distance learning experience. The descriptive-analytical method was applied to collect data. The researchers administered a questionnaire of (18) statements to a sample of (n = 363) students from the study population (n = 4993). The data were processed through the Statistical Analysis Program for Social Sciences (SPSS), and the validity and reliability of the measure were verified. Arithmetic means, standard deviations, and two-way analysis of variance were computed. The results showed that Jadara University students are moderately optimistic about their expected results through the distance learning experience. The study concluded that there are statistically significant differences between the averages of the respondents due to the variable of the school year, where the third- and fourth-year students showed higher responses. And there are no statistically significant differences for the gender variable. The study suggested holding motivational courses for all university students, improving the teaching plan, and diversifying teaching strategies.

Keywords: optimism, distance learning

Introduction

Optimism has a considerable impact on the students' behaviour, hence researchers have placed high importance on this topic. Optimistic people are usually full of enthusiasm, and vigour and look positively toward the future (Al-Ghazw & Jaradat, 2020). They also have methods for having a positive life experience, as optimism leads to the avoidance of negative ideas and the expression of contentment with life. Cousins et al.(2016) believe that optimistic people have good attitudes and can accept problems, adjust to them, view them positively, and utilize appropriate techniques to deal with them, allowing them to accomplish greater results (Jaradat, 2016).

Corona's (Covid-19) emergence and spread over the world led to the fundamental transformation of numerous institutions, including educational institutions at all levels, to be able to carry out their job remotely. Jordanian universities swiftly provide platforms and websites to assist students in carrying out their studies and overcoming the crisis. As previously stated, optimism is a positive trait that causes an individual to expect positive outcomes, and distance learning has contributed to increasing student optimism as a result of the variety of study methods used, their distance learning experience, their positive involvement in the educational process, and the use of flexible methods and techniques that meet the needs of students that considers their

peculiarities as individuals (Al-Zahi, 2012).

Types of optimism in light of distance learning:

Al-Aboudi and Saleh (2018) described three types of optimism which are:

Unrealistic optimism: It refers to the individual internal tendency, those people deem that they are less likely to experience negative events and more likely to experience positive events than are other people.

Biased optimism: an individual expects positive things to happen to himself more than they happen to others, and similarly negative things to others will happen more than they happen to himself.

Preparatory optimism: The main idea here is to direct our behaviour toward goals that we can achieve and control, and thus the individual can adopt positive expectations towards a bright future.

Distance learning depends on several different methods, such as the correspondence learning method, the multimedia method, the video conference method, the printed materials method, and the virtual learning method, in addition to the zoom platform (www.edutrapedia).

The role of distance learning

Distance learning has a significant advantage in that it allows students to receive education whenever and wherever they are, which is especially beneficial for people who are unable to learn due to time constraints, distance, financial constraints, or working situations. This increased students' hope about distant learning as a solution to their issues, especially because it is closely linked to the ideology of continuing education and human capital

development to meet the demands of this era. Furthermore, it is consistent with the world's rapid scientific and technical growth, which contributed to the success of the distance learning experience and boosted student optimism (Ruqayya, Khawla, Jamila and Saeeda, 2021).

Factors affecting optimism.

Numerous studies have emphasized the significance of optimism as it suggests positive expectations and the individual's ability to overcome the obstacles, he faces during distance learning (Karadmas et al., 2007). The most important of which are:

- **Biological factors:** are related to genetic predispositions that have a role in determining optimism (Plomint et al., 2006).
- **Cultural and environmental factors:** These refer to the context in which the individual lives, as they assist him to learn and get the learning material and be informed of all that is new in the educational process. Distance learning provided individuals who are constrained by their remote geographical areas with this advantage by receiving learning, regardless of the distance, near or far (Plomin et al., 2006).
- **Social factors:** They refer to the process of social upbringing that shapes the individual personality and aids him to acquire the values and attitudes prevailing in the community and obtain a prominent position among the members of the community. Furthermore, distance learning provides individuals with choices regarding programs and

courses they deemed appropriate and that are related to their social issues (Al-Ansari, 2000)

- Family-related factors: There is no doubt that the parental upbringing method and their treatment of their children have a positive or negative role in shaping their children's growth and characteristic. Psychological stability leads to affection, intimacy, love, cooperation and optimism, especially if there is a child with special needs in the family. Family support and encouragement are manifested here. Furthermore, distance learning offers numerous benefits to this group, including considering their learning needs by allowing them to attend lectures at any time that is convenient for them and looking forward to a bright future full of hope and optimism (Muhaisen, 2012). Jaradat (2016) emphasized the importance of emphasizing the role that parents play in triggering their children's optimism by understanding their needs and how to meet them appropriately, as well as strengthening their children's personalities and aiding them in overcoming life's obstacles.

Characteristics of optimists

Nasrallah (2008) identified several common characteristics among optimistic people, the most important of which are:

1. Physical traits:

These traits refer to an individual's outer appearance, such as posture, and

the way he sits walks and converses with others. The optimistic personality is characterized by relative calm and lack of stress, and it looks like he is an optimistic person, with a keen gaze. The optimist does not ponder aloud, and his sleep is free of upsetting dreams.

2. Verbal traits:

They are positive expressions, and the ability to convey good news related to others, talk about happy memories, encourage others, and focus on the positive personality traits.

3. Mental traits:

The tendency towards acquiring and accepting positions logically, rational thinking, the ability to generate new ideas, and belief in a better future.

4. Emotional traits:

These people are characterized by emotional balance and do not follow the principle of all or nothing in their lives, consider the feelings of others and do not close themselves off, he instilled in them a sense of calm and satisfaction, and he expected good things to happen to them.

Optimism Theories

1. Psychosocial Theory (Eric Erikson):

Erikson, the founder of psychosocial development emphasized that the positive solution to the crisis that the individual is exposed to in the first eight stages leads to increased confidence and the formation of a comprehensive view of life in an optimistic way. He indicates that if a

person received consistent care at the first stage “Trust vs. Mistrust”, that is predictable and reliable, they will develop a sense of trust and will carry it with them to other relationships, and they will be able to feel secure even when **threatened** (Al-Aboudi and Saleh, 2018).

2. Bandura's self-efficacy theory:

Bandura emphasized the significance of the concept of self-efficacy, which means the individual's expectation that he has the capabilities to perform a behaviour that achieves desired results. He elucidated the difference between effectiveness and expectations of the result. He believes that expecting the results of optimism is the belief that the behaviour results in desirable results because anticipating the results is considered one of the most important determinants of behaviour through the individual's evaluation of the results of successful performance and the possibility of reaching the desired goal through this behaviour (Gold & Roth, 1993).

3. Seligman's Explanatory Style Model:

Seligman pointed out that optimism is not limited to positive statements or witnessing excellence and success in life, but rather to the individual's way of thinking. This theory is based on two concepts: the optimistic explanatory style, and the pessimistic explanatory style. Of course, there is a difference between the optimist and the pessimist (Seligman, 2006). He identified three dimensions which are internal/external; stable/unstable and global/specific. For instance, according to the attributional style model, if a person's explanatory style tends to deem bad events as internal, stable, and global, they have a pessimistic explanatory style because they consider the bad

experience or event as their fault, one that will not change in the future, and is generally problematic rather than specific to that particular event. Whereas a person with an optimistic explaining style, on the other hand, is said to interpret unfavourable events as external, unstable, and specific. The optimistic individual assigns no blame to oneself and believes that change is possible and that the negative experience was unique to that situation and should not be applied to all others (Al-Aboudi and Saleh, 2018).

4. Carver's behavioural self-regulation theory:

This theory emphasized that individuals with positive expectations can successfully cope with stressful events. This suggests that an optimistic person will continue to put in more effort to reach the desired result. The pessimist, on the other hand, believes that his objectives are difficult, if not impossible, to achieve, and hence withdraws or surrenders (Scheier & Carver, 1985).

Several studies have been conducted to address the role of optimism on students. In Algeria, Hamida et al. (2018) conducted a study aimed at identifying the quality of life and optimism among a sample of (57) doctoral students, who were chosen purposefully. The findings revealed a statistically significant correlation between the quality of life and optimism and the presence of statistically significant differences in the level of quality of life among doctoral students due to the variables of gender and specialization. It also showed statistically significant differences in the level of optimism among doctoral students due to the variables of gender and specialization. In Pakistan, Zafar and Murtaza (2018) sought to investigate the relationship between optimism and depression among (296)

students at Jujuat University, aged 20-24 years. A negative relationship between optimism and depression was found. The results showed statistically significant differences between males and females concerning the level of optimism and depression, and a negative relationship between optimism and depression, as it appeared that females have high levels of depression compared to males, while males showed higher levels of optimism compared to females.

Al-Dabbabi et al (2019) aimed to identify the level of optimism in the light of the life-orientation model and its relationship to self-efficacy and happiness among students at the University of Science and Technology. The study sample consisted of (358) male and female students. The results indicate a statistically significant correlation between optimism, self-efficacy and happiness. No statistically significant gender differences in optimism. The study showed differences in happiness degrees attributed to gender and specialization, where the degrees of females and students at scientific colleges were higher.

In a recent study, **Ruqayya et al. (2021)** studied optimism and pessimism among students in light of distance learning during the Corona pandemic. The subjects were (100) students from the psychology major at the University of M'sila. The results did not show a statistically significant difference for gender concerning optimism and pessimism, and there was a negative correlation between optimism between the sexes. The students had high optimism regarding distance learning in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, in contrast to the pessimism that was very low among students.

And in another recent study, **Al-Qahtani (2021)** aimed to identify the effectiveness

of employing the flipped learning strategy in teaching cognitive achievement, the survival of the learning, and the trend toward distance learning among (63) female students of the Early Childhood Department at the Faculty of Education in Al-Muzahimiyah. The results revealed significant effects of the flipped learning strategy in teaching and promoting the achievement and attitude of female students towards distance learning and the survival of the learning.

Study Importance.

The importance of the study comes from the topic it addresses which is optimism and the distance learning experience of an important segment of society, which is the university student. It also contributes to researchers' understanding of these variables and is reflected in a positive way in their understanding of the factors affecting the educational process. The current study will contribute to enriching the theoretical literature and research in this field. Furthermore, the age group studied here, is an important indicator and a strong indication of the extent of society's progress and its interest in planning for a successful future.

Study Objectives.

- Highlighting the efforts made by the state, especially the education and scientific research sector, in the extent of the success of the distance learning process.
- Identifying the extent of optimism among the students of Jadara University in light of distance learning.
- Shedding light on the university student segment.

- Determining the psychological state of students during the distance learning stage.

This study is limited to Jadara University during the academic year 2021/2022, the second semester.

Terminology

Optimism: the positive expectations and perceptions of the individual towards the future and the individual ability to face challenges, as well as his orientation towards his life, his behaviours and his relations with others. In addition to his short and long-term plans (Al-Ghazw and Jaradat, 2020). **Operationally,** It is the degree to which the respondent obtains the optimism measure used in the current study.

Distance learning: transferring learning to the learner in his place of residence or work instead of moving it to the educational institution, and accordingly the learner can combine learning and work at the same time and adapt the curriculum and the speed of progress in the educational material in line with his circumstances and conditions (Al-Dulaimi, 2018).

Methods and Procedures

This section includes a description of the study's method, sample, population, the tool used, tool's validity and reliability, correction of the tool, its variables, and procedures. The following is an exposition of that:

Study Approach:

The descriptive-analytical method was adopted, through which the phenomenon under study can be described, its data analysed, and the relationships between its components are justified.

Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all undergraduate students at Jadara University, (n=4993) male and female students during the second semester of the academic year (2021/2022), according to the university's admission and registration unit. A cluster random method was used to select the study subjects (n=363) students.

Table (1) shows the distribution of the subjects by variable

Variables	Categories	N	Ratio
Gender	Male	174	47.9
	Female	189	52.1
School Year	First	83	22.9
	Second	95	26.2
	Third	80	22.0
	Fourth	105	28.9
Total		363	100 %

Study Measure

The study measure was developed after reviewing the theoretical literature and previous studies on the subject of the study a study (Abu Ashour and Al-Nimri, 2013), to identify the extent of optimism among Jadara University students about their expected results through the distance learning experience. The questionnaire consisted of (18) items. A five-point Likert scale was employed following these rates (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree). The questionnaire in its initial form was presented to a committee of (8) specialized and experienced faculty members from the

departments of the Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Jadara. They were asked to rate the quality of the items' content, as well as their linguistic structure and integrity, as well as the statements' suitability for the field in which they were placed. They may also suggest any additional viewpoints they think are relevant, such as the deletion or inclusion of some statements. The scale obtained 80% acceptance. To check the construct validity, the Pearson correlation coefficient was computed between the items and the domain on the one hand, and between the items and the overall scale on the other hand, as shown in Table (2).

Table No. (2): Correlation coefficient of the Measure.

N	Correlation	N	Correlation
1	0.43**	13	0.71**
2	0.51**	14	0.68**
3	0.66**	15	0.54**
4	0.72**	16	0.38**
5	0.39**	17	0.48**
6	0.79**	18	0.74**
7	0.71**	19	0.53**
8	0.66**	20	0.57**
9	0.55**	21	0.69**

* Significant at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

** Significant at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.01$).

Table (2) shows that the correlation coefficients between the extent of optimism among Jadara University students about their expected results through the distance learning experience and the overall tool were more than (0.50), all of which are statistically significant ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). This indicates a strong correlation coefficient.

To, Cronbach Alpha was used to verify the reliability of the tool. The reliability

coefficient was (0.84), which is a high and acceptable value.

Correction of the measure:

A five-point Likert scale was used with these responses and rates strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). To estimate the extent of optimism among Jadara University students about their expected results through the distance learning experience, the following statistical

grading was used to distribute the arithmetic averages, according to the following equation: To determine the minimum and the maximum length of the 5-point Likert type scale, the range is calculated by $(5 - 1 = 4)$ then divided by 3 as it is the greatest value of the scale $(4 \div 3 = 1.33)$. Afterwards, number one which is the least value on the scale was added to identify the maximum of this cell. The length of the cells is determined as follows: From 1 to 2.33 represents (low degree), 2.34 to 3.67 represents (medium degree), and 3.68 to 5.00 represents (high) degree.

Study Variables:

The independent variables include:

1 -Gender: It has two levels (male and female).

2 -The school year: It has three levels: (first, second, third and fourth).

Dependent variable: How optimistic are Jadara University students about their expected results through the distance learning experience.

Study Procedures

The study was carried out according to the following procedures:

1. The study tool is designed containing (18) items.
2. It was presented to a committee from the faculty members of the departments of the colleges of education in Jordanian universities.
3. It was produced in its final form.
4. The study subjects were identified.

5. The questionnaire was distributed to all study members electronically, and (363) questionnaires were responded to by the students, and when they were reviewed, the data were completed, so they were all subjected to statistical analyzes.

6. After completing the study, the data was coded.

7. Appropriate statistical processing of the data was carried out using the computer (SPSS) program to obtain the results.

8. The study questions were answered by presenting, analyzing, and discussing the results in the light of the theoretical literature and previous studies.

Statistical analyzes:

The researchers used the following statistical analyzes:

1. Arithmetic averages and standard deviations.
2. Two-way analysis of variance test.

Results and Discussion

This section includes a presentation of the results.

Results of the first question:

“How optimistic are the students of Jadara University about their expected results through the distance learning experience?”

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations of the responses were calculated as shown in Table (3).

Table (3) Means and standard deviations of the participants' responses

Rank	N	Items	Mean*	Std.	Degree
1	17	I stay away from things that hinder my academic career	3.79	1.24	High
2	2	I expect the teaching style to be different and conducive to learning.	3.59	1.04	Medium
3	6	I see the teaching process positively taking place.	3.45	1.30	Medium
4	1	My future teaching life seems like an active environment.	3.43	1.16	Medium
5	11	I feel that teaching is going more organized.	3.43	1.15	Medium
6	12	The new semester has many pleasant surprises in store for me.	3.42	1.24	Medium
7	15	I don't lose hope no matter how difficult the circumstances are	3.42	1.20	Medium
8	5	I think the future will be better.	3.41	1.14	Medium
9	13	I expect to achieve all my ambitions during this semester.	3.34	1.26	Medium
10	14	I have a positive feeling that I will meet new friends.	3.28	1.08	Medium
11	9	I am always looking forward to a better future.	3.26	1.20	Medium
12	4	The semester holds new positive results for me.	3.22	1.31	Medium
13	18	I stay away from things that cause me stress and lack of achievement.	3.18	1.18	Medium
14	10	Learning shapes aspects of my personality.	3.06	1.22	Medium
15	16	I believe in the saying "there is no despair with life".	3.04	1.26	Medium
16	3	I think the teaching will be better than it was after my personal experience.	2.93	1.26	Medium
17	8	I believe that every course has positive and negative points.	2.91	1.26	Medium
18	7	I can overcome the problems facing me in this chapter through my previous experiences.	2.79	1.28	Medium
Total			3.27	0.71	Medium

*Highest score (5)

Table (3) shows that statement (17), which reads "I stay away from things that hinder my academic career," topped the scale with a mean (3.79), a standard deviation (1.24) and a high degree. Statement (2), which states, "I expect the teaching style to be different and conducive to learning" ranked second with a mean (3.59), a standard deviation (1.04) and medium degree. While statement (7), which reads "I can overcome the problems facing me in this chapter through my previous experiences" ranked last with a mean (2.79), a standard deviation (1.28) and a medium degree. The overall mean score of the measure was (3.27), a standard

deviation of (0.71), and with a medium degree.

Results of the second question:

"Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level (α 0.05) about the extent of optimism among Jadara University students about their expected results through the distance learning experience due to the variables (gender, school year)?"

To answer this question, the means and standard deviations of the participants' responses were calculated to show the difference by the variable, gender (males,

females), and the school year (first, second, third, fourth), as shown in Table (4).

Table (4). Results of descriptive analysis by (gender & school year)

Variables	Category		Optimism
Gender	Male (N=174)	Mean	3.26
		Std.	0.70
	Female (N=189)	Mean	3.28
		Std.	0.71
School year	First (N=83)	Mean	2.76
		Std.	0.64
	Second (N=95)	Mean	2.80
		Std.	0.61
	Third (N=80)	Mean	3.73
		Std.	0.36
	Fourth (N=105)	Mean	3.76
		Std.	0.42

There are significant differences between the means of the participant's responses on the scale credited to gender and school year variables, as shown in Table (5).

Table (5): The results of Two-way ANOVA for the differences between the responses of the participants by gender & school year

Variables	SS	DF	MS	F-value	P-Value
Gender	0.015	1	0.015	0.057	0.812*
School year	84.588	3	28.196	104.247	0.000
Error	96.829		358	0.270	
Total	4072.731			363	

* Statistically significant at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$).

Data in Table (5) shows that:

1. There are no statistically significant differences at the level of statistical significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

between the means score of the responses on the scale attributed to the gender variable.

2. There are statistically significant differences at the level of statistical significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the means score of the responses on the

scale due to the variable academic year. To determine the sources of these differences, the Scheffe test was used, as shown in Table (6).

Table (6). Scheffe test results

School year		First	Second	Third	Fourth
	Mean	2.76	2.80	3.73	3.76
First	2.76		0.04	0.97*	0.99*
Second	2.80			0.94*	0.96*
Third	3.76				0.02

* Statistically significant at ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Table (6) demonstrates that there are statistically significant differences between the means of the respondents due to the variable of the school year, where the third- and fourth-year students outperformed students of the first and second school year.

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