

# Wishful Thinking Among University Students

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## Abstract

The current research aims at identifying:

1. The wishful thinking among university students
2. The differences in the statistically significant relationship in the wishful thinking among university students according to the gender variables (male - female) and academic specialization (scientific - humanitarian).

To achieve the objectives of the current research, the researchers collect the research community represented by the students of the University of Baghdad, who are (61481) students selected from (6) colleges with humanitarian and scientific specialization, distributed as follows (political science, media, agricultural science, college of Education for Women, science, algorithm engineering). The total number of the sample is (500) male and female students, the number of males is (228), and the number of females is (272). For the purpose of measuring the research variables, the researchers build a scale of wishful thinking based on a survey of the views of a sample of university students for the four stages of these colleges who are selected randomly with the revision of literature of previous studies. The scale may consist of (34) items distributed in two directions (negative - positive) in the final form. The apparent validity of the scale is confirmed by presenting it to a group of experts, and after treating the scale by statistical means, the research reached the following results;

1. The research sample has moderately wishful thinking.
2. There are no differences in the wishful thinking among the university students according to gender (males - females).

**Keywords:** wishful thinking, university students.

## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### First: The problem of the research

A person often wishes and desires, but wishing alone is not enough to achieve a distinguished achievement in life, so wishing must be accompanied by serious and diligent

pursuit. And loss, and sometimes these decisions are ambitious and do not take into account the context and factors surrounding the individual, and the individual does not appreciate the size of the obstacles that may occur properly, so he makes decisions that are difficult to achieve or reach (Zaghloul, 2003: 313-323), and when he feels enough to face future events in an unjustified and

logical manner that leads to unexpected results in the future (Taylor, Brown, 1988:103-210).

The current research sample represented by university students may encounter some of these events in their academic life that requires them The ability to solve academic or achievement problems, as well as social problems during their learning, in which he hopes to make the right decisions that will help him raise his academic level and vice versa in his low level when his solutions are not correct, via his academic level and other negative consequences.

Therefore, students try to think of more advanced ways to confront this to push them to excel, as wishful thinking, if present among students, and in a positive direction pushes them to excel, diligence and perseverance in their academic work, and their behavior is always towards success, and vice versa, thinking is in the direction of negativity. It reduces the academic behavior of students, which shows that they drop out of the university and lower their educational attainment. Therefore, the problem of the current research is summarized in the following question: Is there a statistically significant correlation between desire thinking and academic behavior among university students?

### **Second: The Significance of the Research**

Individuals naturally compete for things that are in harmony with their emotional experiences, and in the light of them, thinking mechanisms are adopted that stimulate internal desires, not logical or rational, which is called wishful thinking or wishful thinking, according to some scholars, and this is one of the important psychological concepts that

occupied the center stage in a number of Recent psychological studies, showed a number of controversial things.

Despite the importance of this concept in human life in general and psychological life in particular, the history of interest in it is relatively recent (Al-Ansari, 1998: 75), as Carver & Schaeir, 1994 indicated that wishful thinking, preparation lies within the student to predict The occurrence of things and the anticipation of the positive events in the future, instead of the occurrence of the bad side of them, which enables the individual to easily overcome the difficulties and problems he faces, in one way or another, and preserve the existence and survival of the human being (Muhammad, 2013: 54).

### **Third: Limitations of the Research**

The current research is limited to Baghdad University students for morning study for the fourth stage and for the academic year 2021-2022.

### **Fourth: Definition of the Terms**

#### **Wishful Thinking**

Scheier & Carver, 1987: A willingness that lies within an individual for the general expectation of the occurrence of good things and the anticipation of positive outcomes for future events that are affected by his own desires more than by objective information, which refers to the individual's tendency to believe that the probability of being exposed to negative events is less than positive. (Shier, Carver, 1987).

### **Chapter Two**

#### **Theoretical framework and previous studies**

##### **First: Wishful Thinking**

The term wishful thinking consists of two terms, one related to the other and complementing each other, namely, thinking, and the second, wishful, which means wishful thinking and optimism. The first relates to thinking. We can say that we can distinguish between fantasy thinking and objective thinking. objective)) as the first is the thinking that the individual takes because it satisfies and satisfies the personal and subjective desires and expectations of the individual, while the second is the objective thinking, which is impersonal, free of bias, logical and systematic thinking (Linde & et al, 1968: 125)) and the concept of optimism is an attribute that falls under the tent of wishful thinking , since individuals have positive expectations for the future, as the viewer of current events is optimistic if the events are happy, and pessimistic if the events are unhappy.

However, Weinstein's study (Weinstein 1980: 30) has proven the validity of this, which means that optimism and pessimism have no effect. It can be denied and underestimated its importance on human behavior, as wishful thinking is a relatively modern concept, and the delay in its emergence is due to the delay in positive psychology, and optimism is one of its most important topics (Landa & martos&zafra:2011: 463-474), and the concept of wishful thinking refers to a general expectation of good rather than bad.

### **Cognitive perspective models according to wishful thinking:**

#### **A- Scheier & Corver Model (Scheier & Corver, 1994);**

Shayer & Korver gave this model great attention, as a result of its association with expectations and a positive outlook on life,

belief in the possibility of achieving desires in the future, and belief in the occurrence of good or the good side of events. The general expectation of good things to happen or the anticipation of positive events, and they stress the existence of a relationship between wishful thinking and optimism.

The model of Snyder and colleagues expectation of hope and initiative (Hope theory- Schnyder al: 2002-:

Snyder and his colleagues refer to a new model, "hope and initiative," which they associate with positive expectations for the concept of wishful thinking. This theory considers that "hope" specifically represents the belief and expectation of individuals. They can find ways to achieve their desired desires and aspirations, as hope becomes according to this theory the extent to which people are convinced of the ability to identify or achieve goals of importance and value, work to sharpen energies and capabilities, escalate motivation and be able to find ways to reach the desired desires on the ground.

### **Previous studies;**

1-Study (Sigall al.et, 2000) (the difference between high-level desire thinkers and low-level desire thinkers among university students).

The researcher assumed that high-level desire thinkers are more likely to postpone performing their duties than low-level desire thinkers, as the scale was applied to a sample of (199) male and female students from one of the American universities in the state of (Florida), with (790) male and (120) male students. Then, the discriminatory validity coefficient was extracted by calculating the correlations with other scales that measure the same concept, as the correlation coefficient was (0.74), and the reliability

coefficient was extracted by retesting after six weeks, and the reliability coefficient was (0.92).

2-Al-Shammari study (2016): Control deception and its relationship to academic behavior among university students.

Measuring desire thinking is utilized among university students, and to identify the differences in control deception, according to the variables of type and specialization for students, and to identify the correlation between control deception and desire thinking among university students, and then extracting the validity and reliability of the two scales, as the validity was extracted by three methods: apparent validity, the relationship of the paragraph with the total sum, factorial honesty, and stability by the two methods of re-testing, and Facronbach. Random stratification from (four) colleges of the University of Baghdad distributed according to the variables of type - specialization. After collecting the information and processing it statistically, the study reached the following results:

1.The university students showed control deception to a moderate degree through the significance level (0.05).

2.There are no statistically significant differences in deception of control according to the gender variable (male - female) at the level of significance (0.05), according to the specialization variable (scientific – human).

3.University students enjoy wishful thinking through the level of significance (0.05).

4.There are no statistically significant differences in the desire thinking of university students according to the gender variable (male - female) and specialization (scientific – human).

5.The correlation coefficient between control deception and wishful thinking is statistically significant, meaning that the relationship is a positive function between the two variables, and the greater the control deception, the greater the wishful thinking and vice versa.

3-The study of Al-Quraishi (2014) (Wishful thinking and its relationship to self-efficacy among university students).

This study seeks to identify desire thinking and its relationship to self-efficacy among university students, and humanity and for the first four stages, and the researcher adopted the Eichelberger scale, (2007), as well as the (Al-Alusi, 2001) scale to measure self-efficacy. After applying the research tools to the sample, the study found:

1.University students in general do not have a high level of wishful thinking.

2.There are differences in wishful thinking according to gender and in favor of males.

3.There are differences in wishful thinking according to specialization and in favor of scientific specialization.

4.There is a high level of self-efficacy among university students.

5.There are differences in self-efficacy according to gender and in favor of males.

6.There are no differences in self-efficacy according to specialization.

### **Chapter Three**

#### **Research Methodology and Procedures**

##### **First, the research community**

The current research community has been determined by students of the fourth stage

from the University of Baghdad for both sexes (males and females) and for the two branches (scientific and human) for the academic year (2021-2022) and their number is (11306) students distributed among (24) colleges, (16) colleges with The scientific specialization and (8) colleges with humanitarian specialization. The number of students with scientific specialization reached (6878) male and female students, with a percentage of (2984) males and a percentage of (43.38) and the number of females with a percentage of (3894) and a percentage of (56.62). As for the number of students in the faculties of humanitarian specialization, it reached (4428) male and female students (1569)

males (35.44) and females (2859) and (64.56) : 2/28/2022.

### Second: the research sample

If (500) male and female students of (6) colleges at the University of Baghdad are selected from the fourth stage distributed according to the following figure (Al-Khwarizmi Engineering, Media, Education for Girls, Science for Girls, Agriculture, Political Science) according to the academic specialization (scientific, humanities), and gender (males, females), noting that the total number of students with a humanitarian major is (203) and a scientific major is (297), as for gender, the number of females is (272), and the number of males is (228) and table (2) shows this.

Table (2) Research sample according to gender and specialization

Total	Gender		Name of the college	Seq.	Specialization
	Female	Male			
66	46	20	political science	1	the human ity
64	64	-	Education for Women	2	
73	46	27	media	3	
<b>203</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>human total</b>		
104	50	54	algorithm engineering	1	Scienti fic
94	44	50	Farming	2	
99	40	59	Sciences	3	
<b>297</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>Scientific total</b>		
500	290	210	<b>grand total</b>		

### The first tool / construction of the wishful thinking scale- :

The researcher built a scale of wishful thinking, and in order for this scale to be identical or appropriate to the characteristics of the current research community in terms of validity and reliability, the researcher followed the following procedures:

- .1Planning the scale.
- .2Building the scale items in its initial form.
- .3Statistical analysis of the scale items.

.4Psychometric Characteristics Extraction. (Yen & Allen, 1996:10)

Scale layout:

.1The researcher took the theory (Shayer and Carver) as a theoretical framework to build the scale of wishful thinking. After reviewing the literature and previous studies and reviewing the theoretical frameworks, a set of paragraphs was formulated (Awda, Al-Khalili, 1988: 120.)

.2Determining the method or method of formulating paragraphs and the alternatives to answering these paragraphs for the scale of wishful thinking by taking the Likert method.

Derivation of the scale items from a number of sources as follows-:

- 1.Previous studies and literature.
- 2.The theory adopted.

Table (3) Distribution of the open questionnaire sample according to the variable of type and specialization

Total	Female		Male		College Name	Seq.
	human	scientific	human	scientific		
15	-	-	-	15	College of Science	1
15	-	-	15	-	Faculty of Political Science	2
15	-	15	-	-	faculty of Agriculture	3
15	15	-	-	-	College of Media	4
60	15	15	15	15	<b>Total</b>	

A - Finding a distinction between the paragraphs of the Desirable Thinking Scale: For the purpose of extracting the discriminatory power, the following steps were taken:

Determine the upper and lower degrees of the research sample forms.

2.Arrange the scores in descending order from the highest score to the lowest score.

(%27) .3of the upper and lower grades who answered correctly, representing (135) male and female students for each group, were selected.

Table (5) The discriminatory power of the wishful thinking scale

Significance	Discriminatory power	Number of answers in the lower group	Number of answers in the higher group	Paragraph number
Non,sig.*	0.15	82	98	1
Sig.	0.33	63	99	2
Non,sig.*	0.12	94	107	3
Sig.	0.38	60	102	4
Sig.	0.32	65	100	5
Sig.	0.33	38	74	6
Sig.	0.31	66	100	7

Sig.	0.34	43	80	8
Sig.	0.33	63	99	9
Sig.	0.32	63	98	10
Sig.	0.30	30	63	11
Non,sig*	0.19	72	93	12
Sig.	0.30	74	107	13
Sig.	0.35	62	100	14
Sig.	0.42	51	97	15
Sig.	0.32	74	109	16
Sig.	0.32	45	80	17
Non,sig*	0.16	89	106	18
Sig.	0.30	69	102	19
Sig.	0.31	68	102	20
Sig.	0.30	35	68	21
Sig.	0.40	17	61	22
Sig.	0.35	45	83	23
Sig.	0.33	26	62	24
Sig.	0.31	72	106	25
Sig.	0.34	72	109	26
Non,sig*	0.19	87	108	27
Sig.	0.51	46	102	28
Sig.	0.37	66	106	29
Sig.	0.31	74	108	30
Sig.	0.34	69	106	31
Sig.	0.40	61	105	32
Sig.	0.43	57	104	33
Sig.	0.32	70	107	34

Sig.	0.35	69	107	35
Sig.	0.30	76	109	36
Non,sig*	0.19	84	105	37
Sig.	0.30	75	108	38
Sig.	0.30	75	108	39
Sig.	0.34	69	106	40

The scale became in its current form consisting of (40) items, in front of each item two alternatives (yes, no), and the weights of the alternatives were determined between (1, zero) respectively, a score for each item if given (zero) for the alternative (no) and (1) for the alternative (yes).

Psychometric properties of the wishful thinking scale:

#### **A- Face validity**

The researcher presented the scale in the initial form, as shown in Appendix (2) to a number of (8) experts (arbitrators) specialized in educational, psychological and psychometric sciences as shown in Appendix (3) to judge the scale's paragraphs as valid or not. Valid or need to be modified, and the validity of the alternatives used to answer each paragraph of the scale.

B-Constructive Validity: Structural validity has been verified through the following.

The relationship of the paragraph with the total score of the scale (internal consistency);

When comparing the calculated correlation coefficients with the critical value of the correlation coefficients with a degree of freedom (498) at the level of significance (0.05) of (0.088), all of which were statistically significant.

#### **Reliability:**

Coder-Richardson 20:

This method is preferred for measuring stability, as it measures the internal consistency and homogeneity between the items of the scale (Anstasi & Urbina, 1997: 95), meaning that all items actually measure the same characteristic, and this is achieved when the items are interconnected with each other within the scale. The researcher pulled out (100) forms in a random manner from the statistical analysis sample, which amounted to (500), and the reliability coefficient was (0.80).

Descriptive characteristics of the Wishful Thinking Scale:

**Table (7)** Descriptive statistical characteristics of the wishful thinking scale

The value of wishful thinking	statistical characteristics	Specifications Descriptive
500	No.	No.



24.62	Mean	Mean
25.00	Median	Median
25	Mode	Mode
4.208	Std. Deviation	Std. Deviation
17.707	Variance	Variance
0.565	Skewness	Skewness
0.109	Std. Error of Skewness	Std. Error of Skewness
0.228	Kurtosis	Kurtosis
0.218	Std. Error of Kurtosis	Std. Error of Kurtosis
22	Range	Range
11	Minimum	Minimum
33	Maximum	Maximum

The final formula for the wishful thinking scale:-

After conducting the statistical analysis process and applying the psychometric properties of stability and validity, the wishful thinking scale has become consisting of (34), paragraphs in a row, and two alternatives were given to each paragraph (yes, no), appendix (9), and through correction (1, zero), and the total score of the respondent was calculated by summing the scores obtained from the scale items.

Chapter Four

### **Presentation, interpretation and discussion of the results**

The first goal: to identify the desire thinking of university students.

To achieve this goal, the (desirable thinking) scale was applied to the members of the research sample of (500) male and female students, if they obtained an arithmetic average (24.62) degrees, with a standard deviation of (4.208) degrees, and when calculating the difference between the average scores of the sample on the thinking scale The rugby and the hypothetical average of the scale amounted to (17) degrees, using the t-test on a sample, as it was found that the difference between the two averages is statistically significant, if the calculated t-value is (40.503) degrees, and it is greater than the tabular value of (1.96). ), through the level of significance (0.05), and the degree of freedom (499), and Table (13) illustrates this.

**Table (13)** Sample size, arithmetic mean, hypothetical mean, standard deviation and t-value of the wishful thinking variable

Result		T-value					Variable
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	Degree of freedom	Tabulated	Calculated	Standard deviation	Hypothesis mean	Arithmetic mean	Sample size	
Statistical Sig.	499	1.96	40.503	4.208	17	24.62	500	Wishful thinking

This result indicates that there are statistically significant differences, that is, that the students have high (desirable) thinking, and the researcher believes that this result is due to social conditions, methods of upbringing, wrong beliefs and pressures.

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