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Young People Hopes for The Future after Digital Disruptions and the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The uncertainty caused by disruptions, exacerbated by the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, has influenced how young people perceive their future. This research aimed to explore young people's hopes for the future through a qualitative, phenomenological approach, involving 390 participants aged 18-25 years. Data were collected via a survey with open-ended questions and interviews, and analyzed using thematic content analysis. The findings revealed that young people's hopes center around three key factors: personal factors such as career success, education, self-development, emotional and material well-being, and leisure; interpersonal relationship factors, mainly focused on family; and broader environmental factors, including social concerns and global development. To support young people in navigating future uncertainties, it is recommended to enhance educational and career guidance programs to build resilience, strengthen mental health support, foster community engagement, and promote global awareness initiatives that empower young adults to address social and environmental challenges.

Keywords: *emerging adulthood; future; hope, phenomenology.*

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Introduction

The uncertainty brought about by technological disruption, intensified by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020, has significantly impacted various aspects of human life, including education (Onyema et al., [2020](#)), finance (Wulan et al., [2023](#)), and mental health (Dewa et al., [2024](#)). Sudden changes created widespread concern about the future (Hacimusalar et al., [2020](#); Nen et al., [2022](#); Uysal & Dönmez, [2024](#)). People were also introduced to the "new normal" phase, which involved adopting new behavioral patterns aimed at minimizing the virus's spread (Baharuddin et al., [2021](#); Sundawa et al., [2021](#); Yong et al., [2022](#)). This new normal required continuous adaptation and the establishment of new behaviors for an indefinite period, prompting individuals to develop specific thoughts and feelings about the future (Newson et al., [2022](#); Alexander et al., [2022](#); Yong et al., [2022](#)). These thoughts and feelings brought about significant changes in various aspects of life, particularly in how people maintain and manage their hopes for the future, even after the pandemic was officially declared over (Farris et al., [2021](#)).

The Future Hope

Psychologically, the future encompasses three dimensions: time, hope, and worry. Hope is both an emotion and a thought that motivates behavior and helps direct a person toward future goals (Callina et al., [2014](#); Churu et al., [2022](#); Lo-oh, [2021](#)). It is one of the most accessible and essential resources in life. Without hope, individuals experience a narrower and emptier existence (Fowler et al., [2017](#); Marsay, [2020](#); Lo-oh, [2021](#)). Hope enables people to view challenges as opportunities for growth and life improvement (Buheji, [2020](#)). On the other hand, worry represents the negative side of hope, where negative feelings and thoughts overshadow positive ones (C. Zhang et al., [2022](#); Hernandez & Overholser, [2021](#); Marchetti et al., [2023](#)). Worry involves fear of future events and a sense of threat about what lies ahead (Zaleski et al., [2019](#)).

Hope for the future begins with one's perspective on it, including thoughts, plans, motivations, and feelings about what is to come (Bazzani, [2023](#); Johnson et al., [2024](#); Takle, [2021](#)). This view of the future starts to form during adolescence, around ages 11-12, as independence, self-regulation, and personal identity develop (Bühler-Niederberger et al., [2022](#); Turner et al., [2023](#); Wapano & Paguta, [2022](#)). During this time, individuals gain a more detailed vision of their future, enabling them to focus more on educational and career goals (Arnett, [2000](#)).

Hope is a human strength characterized by the ability to: (1) clearly define goals (goals thinking); (2) create strategies to achieve those goals (pathways thinking); and (3) maintain motivation to implement these strategies (agency thinking) (Corrigan & Schutte, [2023](#); Husnawati et al., [2019](#); Turner et al., [2023](#)). These three components—goals, pathways, and agency—form the foundation of hope (Corrigan & Schutte, [2023](#); Snyder, [2002](#); Turner et al., [2023](#)).

The life stage most closely associated with future thinking is early adulthood, often referred to as emerging adulthood, which spans the ages of 18-25. This is a period marked by identity exploration and frequent life instability (Arnett, [2007](#); Contini et al., [2019](#); Palmer & Connolly, [2023](#)). Early adulthood is when individuals begin to seriously contemplate their future, including decisions about life partners, family, and careers. It is also during this stage that hopes and worries about the future are most intense, making future planning and goal-oriented activities crucial (Aktu & İlhan, [2017](#)).

Hope and optimism about the future play a crucial role in the development of life during early adulthood (Grobler & Joubert, [2020](#); Sun & Shek, [2012](#); Wider et al., [2022](#)). The balance of hopes and worries about the future shapes a person's overall outlook, influencing their current attitudes and behaviors (Kocayoruk & Simsek, [2020](#)). Hope serves as a foundation for setting future goals and making plans, guiding individuals toward purposeful actions and decisions in their lives (Creed et al., [2021](#); Gavilano et al., [2018](#); Stoddard et al., [2011](#)).

Previous Studies on Future Hope

Previous studies have demonstrated that future expectations are linked to various behavioral domains. In early adulthood, key areas of focus for future expectations typically include education, career, and relationships (Sun & Shek, [2012](#)). Positive expectations for the future are associated with fewer behavioral problems (Chen & Vazsonyi, [2013](#)). Hope for the future has also been shown to enhance life satisfaction (Park et al., [2004](#); Piko et al., [2009](#)), increase self-esteem (Halama & Dědová, [2007](#)), improve psychological well-being (Valle et al., [2006](#)), boost academic achievement (Ciarrochi et al., [2007](#); Snyder et al., [2002](#)), and is negatively correlated with depression (Piko et al., [2009](#)). Hope has numerous positive impacts, such as promoting academic success (Ciarrochi et al., [2007](#); Lopez et al., [2009](#)), improving psychosocial well-being (Lopez et al., [2009](#)), and fostering traits like competence, confidence, cooperation, and caring (Callina et al., [2014](#)). Additionally, hope strengthens self-efficacy, self-regulation, and well-being (Callina et al., [2014](#)).

A future-oriented mindset also promotes behavioral flexibility and more effective planning to achieve goals (Schacter et al., [2008](#)), making future orientation crucial for decision-making and an integral part of self-construction (Conway, [2005](#)). The absence of a future orientation can result in a lack of hope, which disrupts goal-directed behavior (Stoddard et al., [2011](#)). Developing hopes during early adulthood can increase life satisfaction and self-esteem (Marques et al., [2011](#)).

Research suggests that personality and education are key factors influencing future expectations (Kaya et al., [2013](#)). One of the primary goals of education is to cultivate a positive outlook toward the future and improve life satisfaction by helping individuals become competent and professional. Thus, young adults' perceptions of the future are shaped by the educational programs they are part of (Kaya et al., [2013](#)).

Given that most individuals in early adulthood are college-aged, programs designed to support students should be tailored to meet their developmental needs (Aslam et al., [2022](#); Yin, [2023](#)). One of the goals of these programs is to nurture a hopeful outlook for the future (Jurišová et al., [2023](#); Ojala, [2017](#)). As future orientation develops rapidly during early adulthood, young adults begin to form more realistic evaluations of their abilities to achieve future goals, particularly regarding education and employment (Creed et al., [2021](#); Wong & Hoskins, [2022](#)). Feelings of hope can facilitate positive development and successful transitions into the next life stage (Stoddard et al., [2011](#)). It is essential for colleges to support this development, as students are preparing to transition into their future careers and lives after graduation. The effectiveness of these programs depends on their alignment with students' developmental stages and goals (Alshumaimeri, [2022](#); Bond et al., [2022](#)).

Given this context, exploring young people's hopes for the future is critical, as their hopes shape how they live in the present and set future goals (Kaya et al., [2013](#)). The many positive impacts of hope for the future highlight the need to foster this mindset among young adults (Creed et al., [2021](#); Garst et al., [2009](#)). Educational programs, especially at universities, can play a key role in supporting the development of hope during early adulthood (Ehlers & Eigbrecht, [2024](#); Pereira & Felicetti, [2023](#)). To ensure the relevance of these programs, it is necessary to explore what young adults hope for and where their focus lies. Furthermore, the need to explore young people's hopes is underscored by the scarcity of research in this area, especially in the context of Indonesian culture. Previous studies have primarily focused on testing the impact of future hopes (Callina et al., [2014](#); Chen & Vazsonyi, [2013](#); Ciarrochi et al., [2007](#); Conway, [2005](#); Halama & Dědová, [2007](#); Marques et al., [2011](#); Park et al., [2004](#); Piko et al., [2009](#); Schacter et al., [2008](#); Snyder et al., [2002](#); Valle et al., [2006](#)) and on factors that influence future expectations (Kaya et al., [2013](#)). Research on future expectations in Indonesia has generally employed quantitative approaches, focusing on correlations with anxiety (Syuhadak et al., [2023](#)), describing levels of expectation (Pratiwi et al., [2020](#)), and training for future preparedness (Azizah et al., [2023](#); Jembarwati, [2015](#)). To date, no studies have explored young adults' hopes for the future in-depth by examining individual experiences. Thus, this study aims to fill that gap by exploring young people's hopes for the future and the aspects of life that they focus on with these hopes.

Method

Respondents

Respondents in this study were determined through purposive sampling techniques, namely looking for people who meet the criteria according to the research objectives. Based on the objectives that have been explained previously, the appropriate respondents are those who were in an important decision-making period during the Covid-19 pandemic, for example choosing the next level of education. Thus, when this study was conducted, they were in early adulthood who were preparing for the future through higher education, namely active students aged 18-25 years. A request for approval as a research respondent was submitted to all prospective respondents through a statement at the beginning of the distributed Google form, namely by starting with providing information regarding the general objectives of the study, the procedure for providing responses, an affirmation that the response will not have a personal impact on the respondent's life and is solely used for research purposes, and the confidentiality of the response.

This Google form does not require the respondent's identity to be written specifically, only data in the form of gender, study program, semester, and age. At the end of the information, a statement of willingness to become a research respondent is given voluntarily. Prospective respondents are given time to decide whether or not they are willing to become respondents for up to two weeks. At the end there is also a question regarding willingness/unwillingness to be interviewed further if necessary, and if you are willing, you are asked to write down a contact number where you can be contacted. All respondents responded willingly to be interviewed further, but for practical purposes only nine respondents were randomly selected from each study program.

Based on these criteria, there were 390 students who were willing to be involved in this research, with an age range of 19-21, where the majority of respondents were 20 years old. Of the 390 respondents, 260 were female, twice the number of male respondents, which was 130. Data on the age and gender of respondents can be seen in table 1.

[Table 1](#)

Age and gender of research respondents

Age (years)	Total		Total
	Male	Female	
19	40	103	143
20	69	140	209
21	21	17	38
	130	260	390

Respondents in this study came from five scientific fields, as can be seen in [Table 2](#).

[Table 2.](#)

Data on the scientific fields of research respondents

Field of Science	f	%
Social humanities	86	22,05
Teaching-Language	82	21,03
Teaching-Social	81	20,77
Teaching-Science	49	12,56
Science and Technology	92	23,59
Total	390	100%

Design

This study employs a Heideggerian phenomenological qualitative approach, which seeks to explore individuals' lived experiences (Lisboa et al., [2016](#)). This method is used to understand the meaning that respondents ascribe to their life experiences, particularly in relation to their hopes for the future after enduring the Covid-19 pandemic. The analysis method used is qualitative content analysis (AIK), which involves the subjective interpretation of textual data through a systematic process of coding and theme identification (Hsieh & Shannon, [2005](#)). In this research, respondents are encouraged to answer questions in accordance with their personal circumstances, and the researchers analyze emerging

themes from each respondent's responses.

Procedures

The data collection process for this research began with submitting a research permit application to the university's academic head, where students meeting the study's respondent criteria were enrolled. The researcher received approval in February 2024. Following this, from March 1-5, 2024, the researcher distributed a survey via Google Forms to all university students, with assistance from each study program head. The heads of study programs shared the Google Form through WhatsApp groups for first- to fourth-year students.

The Google Form included an introduction with general information about the research's purpose, the estimated time to complete the survey, instructions for responding, and a statement ensuring the confidentiality of respondents' identities and answers. After reviewing this information, respondents had the option to agree or decline participation in the study. Respondents were given two weeks to decide whether to participate and complete the survey. Data was collected and summarized on March 25, 2024. Following the survey responses, nine respondents were randomly selected to participate in follow-up semi-structured interviews, which were conducted between March 27-29, 2024, to further elaborate on their survey answers.

Instrument

The research instruments used in this study included open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The open-ended questionnaire was adapted from the Future Orientation Questionnaire (FOQ), a scale designed to measure future orientation (Hejazi et al., [2013](#)), particularly focusing on questions intended to explore participants' hopes for the future. To gain deeper insights into the written responses, interviews were conducted with nine respondents. These interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexible conversations while maintaining focus on key topics.

The study used two primary questions to guide data collection:

1. What are your hopes for the future?
2. What other things make you think about it most hopefully?

These questions were designed to elicit detailed responses regarding participants' future aspirations and the factors that influence their hopeful outlook.

Data Analysis

The initial stage of data processing in this study follows the procedures for handling open questionnaire data as outlined by Rea and Parker ([2014](#)). These steps include: (1) verifying the accuracy, completeness, and readability of the responses; (2) coding the answers to the open-ended questions; and (3) recording the responses. The data analysis technique employed is thematic content analysis, in which themes are derived from the content of the respondents' answers. The data analysis process consists of three steps: (1) coding, where codes are identified based on patterns in the respondents' answers; (2) determining themes, which are created by grouping similar codes; and (3) categorizing, where the identified themes are further grouped into categories based on commonalities. In this process, each keyword mentioned by a respondent is analyzed, meaning that a single respondent may contribute multiple keywords to the analysis. The frequency of each theme and category's appearance is calculated.

In the second stage of data analysis, the interview data is also processed using thematic content analysis. The steps for this include: (1) identifying the unit of analysis, (2) defining the meaning unit, (3) coding, (4) organizing the codes, (5) determining the relationships between codes with similar meanings, and (6) interpreting the meaning or formulating an understanding of the data (Supratiknya, [2015](#)).

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the research data in this study is ensured through three criteria: credibility, dependability, and confirmability, which are commonly applied in thematic analysis (Nowell et al., [2017](#)).

****Credibility**** was established by discussing the interpreted themes with the respondents to obtain feedback and ensure that no misinterpretations occurred. This process helped confirm that the respondents' perspectives were accurately represented. ****Dependability**** was achieved by conducting the research in a logical, traceable, and well-documented manner, ensuring that the stages of the research process could be followed and reviewed by others. ****Confirmability**** involved ensuring that the researcher's interpretations and findings were clearly grounded in the data, requiring transparency in how conclusions were drawn. To meet this criterion, input was sought from experts in Educational Psychology and Measurement Psychology, who are lecturers at the Faculty of Psychology at a private

college in Yogyakarta. These experts reviewed the mapping of themes and categories derived from the study's findings. Additionally, credibility was further tested by verifying the accuracy of coding, theme identification, and category determination through professional judgment from an expert in measurement and educational psychology.

Result

From 390 participants, 904 keywords were obtained for answers to questions about young people's hopes for the future. Of the 904 existing keywords, researchers categorized them into nine major themes.

Young People Future Hope

The categories of themes regarding hopes for the future can be seen in [table 3](#). The categories are sorted based on the percentage of the most responses appearing.

[Table 3](#)

Categories of young people hopes for the future

Categories	f	%
Career success	345	38,2
Family	174	19,2
Education	92	10,2
Social concern	83	9,2
Self-development	68	7,5
Emotional well-being	55	6,1
World progress and life together	42	4,6
Material well-being	36	4,0
Entertainment	9	1,0
Total	904	100%

[Table 3](#) show the category with the largest percentage of expectations for the future is career success (f=345; 38.2%). The responses included in the career success category can be grouped into ten

keywords, ranging from general responses such as getting a job to more specific responses referring to a particular job. The frequency and percentage of each keyword in the career success category can be seen in [table 4](#).

Table 4

Keywords of young people expectations for the future in the category of career success

Keywords		
get a job	112	32,5
good and successful career	102	29,6
have a good and prestigious future	61	17,7
work in a particular field	25	7,2
have a profession with certain qualities	23	6,7
businessman	22	6,4
Total	345	100%

Examples of interview results that show the category of career success are as follows:

"My hope is that after graduating, I hope to get a good job according to the degree I get"

"My hope is to have a good career, strengthen my skills and be able to work where I want"

"be able to become a successful person in my career"

The second largest category is family, which includes seven keywords with the highest frequency of welfare of parents and family which include making happy, proud, and other things related to improving welfare. The frequency and percentage of each keyword in the family category can be seen in [table 5](#).

Table 5

Keywords of young people hopes for the future in the family category

Keywords	f	%
improve the welfare of parents and family	123	70,7
build a family (get married)	16	9,2
have a place to live	14	8,0
lighten the family's economic burden	11	6,3
have a good partner	8	4,6
have children	2	1,1
Total	174	100%

Examples of interview results from respondents that show the family category are as follows:

"I hope I can go through my future well, become a mature person and make my family happy"

"Happiness for family, loved ones and closest people, and have time to go on vacation and relax with family"

"have your own income and at least help ease the family's economy".

The third largest category is education. The responses included in the education category include three main categories, namely graduating with good results and on time, further studies, and undergoing lectures well. The frequency of each keyword can be seen in [table 6](#).

Table 6

Keywords for youth hopes for the future in the education category

Keywords	f	%
graduated with good results and on time	63	68,5
further studies	18	19,6
do well in college	11	12,0
Total	92	100%

Examples of interview quotes that show the education category are as follows:

"Hope to graduate on time"

"Graduate from college as soon as possible and be able to continue to Masters"

"I have many hopes for the future. One of them is that I want to finish my studies on time..."

The fourth largest category is social concern. The responses included in the social concern category are responses with the keywords useful to others, improving the welfare of others, being involved in society, initiating goodness for the environment, and inspiring others. The frequency of each keyword can be seen in [table 7](#).

Table 7

Keywords of young people hopes for the future in the category of social concern

Keywords	f	%
useful for others	61	73,5
prosper others	10	12,0
involved in society	7	8,4
initiating goodness for the environment	3	3,6
inspire others	2	2,4
Total	83	100%

Examples of interview quotes that show the category of social concern are as follows:

"be a role model for others and can help many people, especially children with disabilities"

"be a useful person for the surrounding environment and can make people around me happy. When I grow up and am known, I want to establish a free school for underprivileged children"

"work and help others, be a good listener, help them solve their problems"

The next largest category is self-development. Keywords included in the self-development category consist of various domains of self-development, which include mental-personality, cognitive, spiritual, language, social, and also physical domains. More detailed data on these domains can be seen in [table 8](#).

Table 8

Keywords for young people hopes for the future in the self-development category

Keywords	f	%
have a strong mental personality	13	22,4%
have good cognitive competence	9	15,5%
getting better in general	8	13,8%
active and productive	7	12,1%
have specific competencies	5	8,6%
self-confident	5	8,6%
persistent to life values	5	8,6%
spiritual life increases	2	3,4%
have language skills	2	3,4%
have social competence	1	1,7%
attractive physical appearance	1	1,7%
Total		

Examples of interview results that show the category of self-development are as follows:

"I also hope that I will continue to be able to develop myself even though I am faced with various challenges or obstacles. In the end, I hope that I will be able to become a good person with a good character"

"Have creativity and ability in the field being worked on"

"Have more than two language skills"

The next category is emotional well-being, which consists of two keywords, namely established, comfortable, happy, and physically healthy, as seen in [table 9](#).

Table 9

Keywords of youth hopes for the future in the emotional well-being category

Keywords	f	%
Established, comfortable, happy	39	70,9
physically healthy	16	29,1

Total	55	100%
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Examples of interview quotes that show the category of emotional well-being are as follows:

"A comfortable normal life, being able to control all situations, living healthily and happily"

"happiness and comfort, being physically, mentally and spiritually healthy"

"Good and well-maintained physical and mental health"

The next category is world progress and life together. This category contains various keywords as seen in [table 10](#).

Table 10.

Keywords for young people's hopes for the future in the category of world progress and life together

Keywords	f	%
education, knowledge, more advanced technology	12	30,8
the world becomes a better place	6	15,4
tolerance between humans is increasing	5	12,8
Indonesia's socio-economic conditions are increasingly advanced	5	12,8
dare to help the weak and marginalized	4	10,3
the government is functioning properly	4	10,3
guaranteed public welfare	3	7,7
Total	39	100%

Examples of quotes interviews that show categories of world progress and communal life are as follows:

"Technology is getting more advanced, human resources are getting more developed, and human welfare is guaranteed"

"Conditions are getting better and everything is made easier with technological advances. Of course I hope that it is also balanced with more and more people in Indonesia who are literate with the latest technology so that it is easier to interact with one another"

"technology is developing as an alternative to all life problems, and society is more literate with technology (the digital world) especially the lower middle class"

Keywords for category of material welfare are sufficient income, sufficient personal assets, and sufficient living. More detailed data can be seen in [table 11](#).

Table 11

Keywords for young people future hopes in the category of material well-being

keywords	f	%
sufficient income	27	75
sufficient personal property	5	13,9
Sufficient life	4	11,1
Total	36	100%

Examples of interview quotes that show the category of material well-being are as follows:

"having a steady income that is sufficient or even more than sufficient"

"having enough wealth that I can share with others. I want to have my own house so as not to bother my parents"

The last category regarding young people's hopes for the future is entertainment. The keywords that emerge cover four different domains, namely traveling, me time, watching concerts, and shopping, as seen in [table 12](#).

Table 12

Keywords for young people hopes for the future in the entertainment category

keywords	f	%
travelling	4	44,4
me time	3	33,3
watch a concert	1	11,1
shopping	1	11,1
Total	9	100%

Examples of interview quotes that show the entertainment category are as follows:

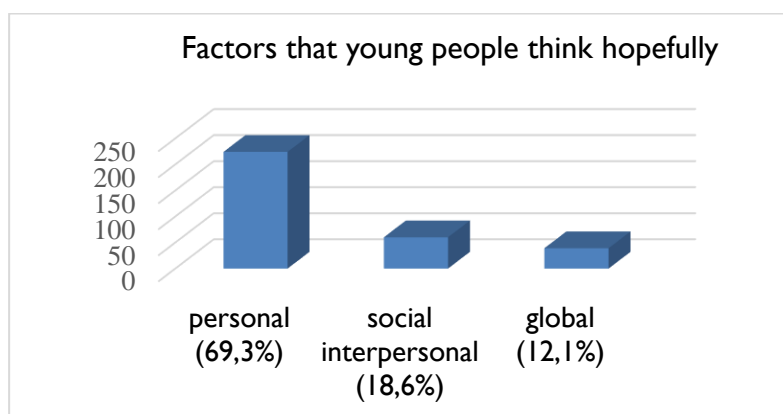
“Traveling around the world”

“Can go to London, can watch NCT concerts, when buying anything you don't have to think about rupiah”

“Can still have me time”.

Factors that young people think hopefully

Responses regarding the things that young people think hopefully can be grouped into three factors, namely personal, social interpersonal, and global factors. Personal factors are intended for things related to fulfilling personal needs, social interpersonal factors include things that are related to other people, while global factors are intended for groups that contain things that are broader than the individual and interpersonal relationships with other people. The magnitude of the response for each factor is depicted in Figure 1.



[Figure 1.](#) Factors that young people think hopefully

Personal factors are the factors most frequently mentioned by respondents as the things they think about most with great hope. Personal factors in this study include personal development, work and career, study, finance, love-partner-family, self-pleasure, future conditions, physical health, self-success, self-happiness, residence, independence, mental health, spirituality, self-esteem, safety, physical appearance, luck, old age, life problems, and age. Examples of interview quotes with respondents that show personal factors are as follows:

"What I think about most is myself. Will I be able to face everything in the future and will my current skills be able to support that career. Because I myself feel that it is not enough. And that boomerangs on me, sometimes I keep blaming myself for not wanting to try.."

"The success that is in me and the efforts that I make"

"Health, life problems, heartache and other things that have a short-term effect on me".

The second largest factor is the global factor, which includes social concern, role in society, government policy, justice, and the environment. An example of an interview quote that shows the global factor category is as follows:

"...the thing I think about most with full hope is whether the world of education system is in accordance with the definition of humanizing humans and thinking when life does not match expectations, making the right solution to be able to rise. Still standing on the principle of independence in order to serve the wider community"
"The government works for the people and sides with the welfare of the people"

"about goodness, justice, and wisdom in life. I fully hope that it can be realized in all people's lives"
"Unfortunate children, education in Indonesia, and poor justice in Indonesia"

The next factor is the interpersonal social factor consisting of parents and family and social relations. Examples of interview results with respondents that show the category of social factors are as follows:

"Having a prosperous, healthy, and harmonious family"

"The desire to repay parents, the desire to help my siblings, the desire to satisfy myself and my family in the future in worldly matters, and the desire to open up employment opportunities for others, and my desire to help many people in trouble"

"Reconnecting extended family relationships, thinking about the father being happy to see his children succeed from heaven, relationships with the community, and having facilities that are useful for many people".

Discussion

The results of this study show that young people's hopes for the future can be grouped into nine categories: career success, family, education, social concern, self-development, emotional well-being, world progress and life together, material well-being, and entertainment. Previous studies have suggested that young people typically focus on two main domains regarding their future: the instrumental domain (education, work, career) and the relational domain (social relationships, marriage,

family) (Seginer, [2009](#), [2019](#)). However, this study also identified new areas of focus beyond those domains, such as material and emotional well-being, self-development, world progress, life together, and entertainment.

In the post-Covid-19 pandemic era and with the rapid development of communication and information technology, well-being, self-development, and thoughts on world progress have gained importance. Research indicates that the pandemic impacted young people's learning, social relationships, mental health, finances, and parental involvement (Sarker, [2023](#)). Despite these challenges, young people have become more adept at using technology and more creative with its applications, a factor that could explain the additional focus on material and emotional well-being, self-development, world progress, and entertainment in this study.

The study focuses on emerging adulthood, a developmental phase characterized by identity exploration, instability, self-focus, a feeling of being "in between," and possibilities (Arnett, [2007](#); Jensen & Arnett, [2012](#)). During this period, young people face critical decisions, particularly in areas like career and relationships. This is supported by the study's finding that career success is the most significant hope for young people, as they often experience job changes or pursue further education during this stage. Additionally, mental health concerns, such as increased levels of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation among students, have been noted (Liu et al., [2024](#)).

Emerging adulthood is also an age of hope, as young people generally believe their lives will improve (Jensen & Arnett, [2012](#)). However, some studies have shown a decline in hope at this stage (Rédei et al., [2011](#)). Social expectations regarding achievement and socialization are considerable and influence how young people view their future. Family plays a crucial role in this process, as it is the first and safest social environment for young people. The family is where norms, values, and morals are learned, making family a central part of young people's future aspirations, as highlighted in this study, where family ranked second among the categories.

Hopes related to family in this study include the desire to provide for and support parents and family members, reflecting the significant role of parental involvement. Strong parent-child bonds positively influence young people's academic performance, emotional development, and behavior (Salgado et al., [2021](#)). Parental involvement not only provides material and educational support but also instills values,

goals, and aspirations that shape young people's positive orientation toward the future (Hong et al., [2020](#)).

The approach to understanding future orientation has evolved from a focus on how individuals envision their future life domains to a multidimensional view. For young people, future expectations typically revolve around education, work, career, marriage, and family, which are seen in both universal and culture-specific contexts (Seginer, [2008](#)). This study's findings are consistent with prior research in several categories: career success, family, self-development, emotional well-being, material well-being, and entertainment. However, it also identified education, social concern, and world progress and life together as new areas not previously emphasized.

The concepts of hope, aspirations, and fears regarding the future are critical for young people, as they influence identity formation, goal setting, decision-making, and behavior (Lo-oh, [2021](#)). Positive future expectations offer numerous benefits, including better academic performance (Eren & Abant, [2009](#)), reduced problem behaviors (Chen & Vazsonyi, [2013](#)), increased self-efficacy (Kerpelman et al., [2008](#)), and improved mental health (J. Zhang et al., [2009](#)). Therefore, fostering positive future orientation is essential for the well-being and development of young people.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is the lack of variation in the scientific field groups represented by the research respondents. This limited variation may have influenced the range of responses provided by the participants. Future researchers who wish to explore the same topic should consider increasing the diversity of respondents by including participants from a broader range of educational institutions or study programs. This approach would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of young people's hopes for the future across different academic and professional contexts.

Conclusion

The results of the study identified three key factors influencing young people's hopes for the future: personal factors, interpersonal relationship factors, and broader environmental factors. Personal factors encompass career success, education, self-development, emotional well-being, material well-being, and entertainment. Interpersonal relationship factors focus on family relationships, while broader environmental factors include social concerns and the progress of the world and life together.

Consistent with these findings, the most frequently mentioned factors filled with hope include personal factors (such as personal development, work, career, study, finance, family, love, self-pleasure, future conditions, physical and mental health, spirituality, and self-esteem), global factors (such as social concerns, societal roles, government policies, justice, and the environment), and social factors (focusing on family, parents, and social relations).

The implications for educational institutions, particularly higher education, suggest a need to create programs and spaces that foster students' personal development, social relationships, and contributions to global issues. These spaces should address the developmental needs of students and nurture their hopes for the future. Notably, this study revealed new themes, including material and emotional well-being, self-development, world progress, life together, and entertainment, which highlight emerging areas of focus for young adults.

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