



# European Journal of Psychology and Educational Research

Volume 3, Issue 1, 13 - 38.

ISSN: 2589-949X

<https://www.ejper.com/>

## Interpersonal relationships: Cognitive appraisals, Emotions and Hope

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*Received: March 4, 2020 • Revised: May 10, 2020 • Accepted: June 15, 2020*

**Abstract:** This study examined teachers' attributions and emotions for their subjectively perceived interpersonal relationships with their students as positive or negative, and whether hope (pathways thinking, agency thinking) influences the perceived positive or negative interpersonal relationships, the subsequent attributions and emotions, and the impact of attributions on emotions. Fifty teachers, of both genders, completed the questionnaire for each of their five students who were randomly selected from their teaching classes. The results revealed that the positive interpersonal relationships were predominately attributed to stable, personally controllable and self-student controllable factors, whereas the negative interpersonal relationships were primarily attributed to external, external controllable, unstable, and self-student controllable factors. Also, teachers reported positive emotions of high intensity (sympathy, cheerfulness, exciting, love, not anger, calmness) for the positive relationships, and negative emotions of moderate intensity (no enthusiasm, shame, anxiety, no excitement) for the negative relationships. Yet, the high hope teachers made adaptive attributional and emotional appraisals for the positive and, mainly, negative interpersonal relationships. Agency thinking, as compared to pathway thinking, was a better and worse formulator of the appraisals in negative and positive interpersonal relationships, respectively. Hope, additionally, had direct effect on the emotions, beyond that afforded by attributions, particularly in negative interpersonal relationships.

**Keywords:** *Interpersonal relationship, attributions, emotions, hope, cognitive appraisals.*

**To cite this article:** Stephanou, G., & Athanasiadou, K. (2020). Interpersonal relationships: Cognitive appraisals, emotions and hope. *European Journal of Psychology and Educational Research*, 3(1), 13-38. <https://doi.org/10.12973/ejper.3.1.13>

### Introduction

Interpersonal relationships have been widely considered as a central source of happiness and well-being, and as a buffer against stress (Argyle, 2001; Carr, 2005; Holder & Coleman, 2009; Saphire-Bernstein & Taylor, 2013; Schoebi & Randall, 2015; Stephanou, 2012). This prediction is stronger for the quality of relationships than for objective features of relationships, such as number of friends or length of time being partners (Lucas & Dyrenforth, 2006; Lucas et al., 2008; Saphire-Bernstein & Taylor, 2013).

In education, the quality of the interpersonal relationships, such as peer relations in classroom, teachers and parents, school leaders and teachers and teacher and students, are crucial for the developments of teachers and students (Pennings et al., 2018; Stephanou, 2014; Stephanou & Doulkeridou, 2020; Wubbels et al., 2006). However, although the importance of the interpersonal relationships in education has been recognized a long time ago, from a wide variety of perspectives, little attention has devoted to the parameters and mechanisms that formulate relationships and make them important for happiness and adaptive education development (Maulana et al., 2014; Wubbels et al., 2012; Martin & Collie, 2019; Taylor, 2010). Also, there is far more literature devoted to studying the association of the teacher-student relationship with student outcomes than to association of these relationships with teacher outcomes (Friedman, 2000; Kyriacou, 2001; Pennings et al., 2018; Veldman et al., 2013). The past main research interest is how the teacher-student interpersonal relationships could contribute in understanding student outcomes and achievement motivation (Martin, 2014; Roorda et al., 2011). Clearly, the available literature evident that adaptive interpersonal relationships with the teacher function against stress and risk, and it is a beneficial factor for students' motivation, engagement for school achievement, learning and a rich variety of relevant factors to academic outcomes, such as healthy social, cognitive and emotional functioning, self-esteem and self-worth (Davis, 2003; den Brok et al., 2004; Martin & Dowson, 2009; Maulana et al., 2014; Opdenakker et al., 2012; Pianta, 2006; Pianta et al., 2012; Stephanou, 2007, 2014; Zandvliet et al., 2014).

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The teacher-student interpersonal relationships from the teachers' point of view is the central theme of the present study, since the knowledge about how teacher-student relationships impact the teachers' professional and personal lives is extremely limited, although it is widely believed that personal relationships with children afford teachers internal rewards and give meaning to their work (Aldrup et al., 2018; Claessens et al., 2017; Spilt et al., 2011). As Aldrup et al. (2018) point out, this research gap is surprising because establishing a caring relationship with one's students is inherent to the teaching profession and at the core of teachers' professional identity (O'Connor, 2008; van der Want et al., 2014). The existence literature supports the positive role of these relationships in teachers' lives. For example, Veldman et al. (2013) reported positive association of teachers' job satisfaction with the self-reported quality of the teacher-student relationships. Hargreaves (2000) found that teachers' enjoyment of, and motivation for, teaching was in the most formulated by the quality of their interpersonal relationships with their students. Also, other studies reasoned that there cannot be real professional development without personal development (Day & Leitch, 2001; O'Connor 2008). Yet, problematic teacher-student relationships, which are characterized by conflict and low levels of affiliation, are mentioned by teachers to be sources of stress and negative emotions (Yoon, 2002). Similarly, teacher work stress stem from relationships with students (Friedman, 2006).

Focusing on teachers' interpersonal relationships with their students may contribute understanding their professional life, and enhancing their happiness and subjective well-being, as relevant to the topic educational research indicates and positive psychology conceptualizes (Aldrup et al., 2018; Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003; Diener et al., 2005; Pennings et al., 2018; Seligman, 2002, 2005). Understanding, specially, their perceptions of the interpersonal relationships may help understand their professional and emotional lives and development, since happy workers and people are those who report fulfilling relationships (Aldrup et al., 2017 et al., 2018; Buss, 2005; Claessens et al., 2017; Diener, 2000; Diener & Seligman, 2002; Fletcher & Thomas, 1996). Furthermore, building and sustaining positive teacher-student relationships is a main goal for teachers, not meeting this goal is likely to harm teacher well-being (Aldrup et al., 2018; Butler, 2012; Klassen et al., 2012).

Cognition and cognitive process are significant contributors in the development and quality of a close relationship, and so need to be considered in any comprehensive investigation of teacher-student interpersonal relationships (Harvey et al., 2005; Karney et al., 2003; Stephanou & Balkamou, 2011; Stephanou & Doukeridou, 2020; Wang & Hall, 2018). This study deals with intuitive and attributional appraisals which are two such constructs, and which have been central concepts in the research in the close interpersonal relationships (Collins et al., 2006; Fincham, 2003; Greitemeyer & Weiner, 2003; Harvey, 1987; Harvey & Omarzu, 1999; Prager, 1995; Stephanou, 2005, 2012; Wee, 2017; Weiner, 2000, 2014). Whether partners perceive their relationship as positive or negative, and which explanations or interpretations they make about a given relationship influence their emotions, motivation and behaviour (Blascovich & Mandess, 2000; Flecher et al., 1990; Fletcher & Thomas, 2000; Fincham, 2003; Fitness et al., 2005; Stephanou, 2011; van Doorn et al., 2015). Accordantly, examining teachers' attributions for their interpersonal relationships with their students potentially help explain how these relations can develop and sustain as well as it might help understand teaching and learning. In addition, the attribution perspective of the interpersonal relationships is a phenomenological concept, and, hence, teachers themselves give meaning to their interpersonal relationships. Wubbel et al. (2014) define the teacher-student relationship "as the generalized interpersonal meaning students and teachers attach to their interactions with each other" (p. 364). In line with this speculation, Spilt et al. (2011), for example, revealed that the perceived quality of the teacher-student relationship can mediate the effect of disruptive student behavior on teacher well-being. Similarly, in Aldrup et al.'s (2018) study, the teacher-student relationship was positively related to teacher well-being and mediated the association of teacher-perceived misbehavior with enthusiasm.

This study also, attempting a comprehensive discussion of the teacher-student interpersonal relationships, examines emotions. Emotions are inherently and intensely experienced in the context of interpersonal relationships, are related to cognitive appraisals, influence expectations of the quality of the relationship in the future, and impact on the future behaviour of the partners (Baucom et al., 2006; Berscheid & Ammazalorso, 2003; Forgas, 2002; Forgas & Smith, 2005; Karney et al., 2003; Parrott, 2003; Rose, 2007; Siemer et al., 2007; Smith & Kirby, 2000; Trope & Gaunt, 2005; Stephanou, 2011). Recent literature has begun to focus on the interdependence in partners' emotional changes, by examining the patterns in emotional dynamics (e.g., Butler, 2011, 2015; Helm et al., 2012; Randall & Butler, 2013; Schoebi, 2008; Schoebi & Randall, 2015). In education, as Lyons and Higgings (2014) mention, the interaction between teacher and learner creates a learning space in which knowledge is constructed and co-constructed, and this space is not just cognitive but it is 'coloured and nuanced by emotions and interpersonal relationships' (p.111). For example, cross-sectional studies have shown that teachers who have a close, conflict-free relationship with their students, experience more positive emotions and work engagement as well as less anger and burnout (Gastaldi et al., 2014; Jo, 2014; Klassen et al., 2012; Milatz et al., 2015). Similarly, a diary investigation found that teachers' more work enthusiasm was impacted by the more connected to their students (Aldrup et al., 2017). However, generally, there is a notable limited empirical research on teachers' emotions and their antecedents (Chen, 2016; Frenzel, 2014; Fried et al., 2015; Hargreaves, 2004; Keller et al., 2016; Pekrun & Schutz, 2007; Stephanou & Mastora, 2013; Stephanou & Oikonomou, 2018; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003).

Despite the wide variety of the antecedents of emotions, they are elicited by appraisals (Ellsworth & Scherer, 2003; Efklides, & Volet, 2005; Frenzel, 2014; Zembylas, 2004). The attributional appraisal perspective to emotions focuses on how specific emotions, such as sadness and anger are elicited, and on the motivational functions they serve in particular relationship (Clore & Ortony, 2010; Frijda, 1993, 2007; Smith & Kirby, 2000; Weiner, 2002, 2005, 2014). For example, if a teacher believes that the student's good behaviour was the significant factor for their good interpersonal relationship then she / he may experience gratitude. Anger combines distress over an undesired event with perceiving the other as responsible for it (Carver & Harmon-Jones, 2009; Ortony et al., 1988). Once emotions are experienced, they influence partners' on-going appraisals, perceptions, information processing with important consequences in relationship judgments and behaviours (Bless, 2003; Parrott, 2003; Weiner, 2006; Van Doorn et al., 2014). For example, happy partners make more optimistic attributions than unhappy (Forgas, 1994; Planalp & Fitness, 1999). Anger pushes individuals to attribute blame and malicious intentions to others (Fitness & Fletcher, 1993; Keltner et al., 1993).

On the other hand, individual differences, as component of the cognitive schemas individuals develop of themselves and others, influence in affective, cognitive and behavioral responding to relational situations, particularly to negative or ambiguous situations (Demir, 2008; Schoebi & Randall, 2015; Stephanou, 2012; Timmermans et al., 2010). The estimated coping potential is crucial in further emotion differentiation, and in determining the appropriate response to the event by evaluating the resources at one's disposal (Lazarus 1991; Schmidt et al., 2010; Tong & Jia, 2017). Hope, as it is conceptualized in Snyder's (1994, 2005) hope theory, is a significant construct in understanding how individuals deal in close relationships (Smith & Kirby, 2000; Snyder et al., 1997). The Snyder's (2000) cognitive goal- directed conceptualization of hope predicts goal directed behaviour, such as developing- and having- a good interpersonal relationship (see Dixson, 2017; Feldman & Kubota, 2015; Rand et al., 2011; Snyder, 2004). In addition, 'the goal of 'connecting' with other people is fundamental because the seeking of one's goals almost always occurs within the context of social commerce' (Snyder et al., 2005, p. 266). People with high hope enjoy high social desirability, perceive social support, are not characterized by loneliness, enjoy their interactions with others, and are socially competent (Snyder & Lopez, 2007). Also, individuals with high dispositional hope enjoy life, are able to handle stress better and use positive reappraisal for a variety of stressor situations, they not use avoidance and denial behaviour, are effective problem-solvers and believe in success (Dixson, 2017; Gilham, 2000; Snyder, 2000; Snyder et al., 1999; Snyder et al., 2006; Stephanou & Tsoni, 2019).

Hope, influences how individuals interpret and feel in close relationships (Roberts et al., 2005; Stephanou, 2011). Specifically, although in hope theory the focus is on reaching desired future goal-related outcomes, hope is related to attributions for past behaviour, since both theories elaborate pursuit goals and important outcomes (Seligman, 1991; Snyder et al., 2005; Weiner, 2002). Hope is related to emotions in a given close relationship, since goal-pursuit cognitions, such as avoiding or alleviating harm or maximizing benefits in the relationship, cause emotions (Smith & Ellsworth, 1987; Snyder et al., 2005).

In education, a very limited number of researches have focused on the role of hope in teaching and teacher, although the high importance of dispositional hope has long been recognized (see Eren, 2014). Accurately, most of the past studies (e.g., Birmingham, 2009; Bullough, 2011; Hammerness 2003) dealt with teaching, did not involve Snyder's (2005) theory and used qualitative research method. Eren (2014), using Snyder's hope theory, showed that the associations between prospective teachers' emotions for teaching, responsibility for student achievement, and teaching were moderately and negatively mediated by hope.

Conclusively, despite the increased knowledge evidencing the positive role of teacher-student interpersonal relationships in student outcomes, how teachers cognitively appraise these relationships, and the subsequent emotions they experience have been limitedly examined. Moreover, to our knowledge, no study has investigated all three, attributions, emotions and hope, in teacher-student interpersonal relationships. Accordingly, the present investigation expands past research evidence. In doing so, this study is based on Weiner's (2001, 2010, 2014) attributions theory which, incorporating cognitive appraisals and emotions, is helpful in understanding interpersonal relationships (Argyle, 2001; Fincham, 2003; Fitness et al., 2005; Fletcher & Clark, 2003; Hewstone & Antaki, 2001; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2006; Stephanou, 2011; Wand & Hall, 2018). Snyder's (2000) hope theory was also involved because, incorporating waypower and willing power, offers an important construct in understanding how teachers deal and interact with students.

#### *Attributions and Emotions for Interpersonal Relationships*

Individuals appraise a relationship by evaluating and by attributing causes (Leary, 2000; Smith & Lazarus, 1990; Trope & Gaunt, 2005; Schoebi & Randall, 2015). The appraisals reflect what the stimulus-relationship- means to the individual and whether it is good or bad (Fincham, 2003; Fitness et al., 2005). Teachers are motivated to understand the causes of their interpersonal relationships with their students or the student's behavior because such an understanding is crucial to their professional role and identity (Aldrup et al., 2018; Van Doom et al., 2014; Wage & Hall, 2018).

Weiner's (1992, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2010, 2014) attribution theory, on which this study is based, represents a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding motivation for achievement outcomes from the intrapersonal perspective, which refers to the attributions individuals make for their performance, and from the interpersonal

perspective, which concerns the attributions made for outcomes experienced by others, and how perceptions of another's responsibility for an outcome contributes to other-directed emotions (gratitude, sympathy, anger) and behaviors (punishment, support) (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2006; Wand & Hall, 2018).

Although, an interpersonal relationship could be attributed to infinite number of attributions, self, other person, situation, environment, self-other person interaction, and relationship itself are the most prominent causes in describing positive and negative relationships (Argyle, 2001; Erber & Gilmour, 1995; Planalp & Rivers, 1996; Stephanou, 2012). However, the causes per se are not crucial, as the location of the causes on attributional dimensions which have psychological and behavioral consequences which have psychological and behavioral consequences (Argyle, 2001; Berscheid & Ammazalorso, 2003; Fletcher & Thomas, 2000; McAuley et al., 1992; Stephanou, 2005, 2007; Weiner, 2002, 2005). In Weiner's (2002, 2014) theory, attributions are categorized into causal dimensions of locus of causality (internal / external to the person), stability (stable / unstable over time) and controllability (personal and external controllable / uncontrollable).

The perceived quality of the relationship differentiates the attributional pattern (Fiedler et al., 1995; Fincham, 2003). Partners exhibit self-enhancing and self-saving biases (Dix & Grusec, 1985; Stephanou, 2007, 2012; Stephanou & Doukeridou, 2020), when making attributions for positive and negative interpersonal relationships or the other's behavior. Specifically, individuals tend to attribute the positive interpersonal relationships to themselves (internal, stable, personal controllable, and external uncontrollable), and the negative relationships to the other person and situational factors (Fitness et al., 2005; Gagné & Lydon, 2004; Stephanou, 2005, 2007, 2011; Weiner, 2001, 2002; Ybarra & Stephan, 1999). However, according to some theorists, although the attributional biases of partner have been repeatedly found in different relationship situations (Fincham 1985; Macnow, 2019), this bias may affect satisfaction in relationships, or it could serve as a secondary indicator that the relationship is already distressed. Specifically, the more negative the interpersonal relationship the more the attributions to the other person's constant negative properties (Argyle, 2001; Gilbert & Malone, 1995; Hewstone & Antaki, 2001; Williams & Gilmore, 2008). The respective research in education is extremely limited. Studies in teachers' interpersonal attributions focus on student achievement- and social-related behavior. The empirical studies illustrate that teachers tend to attribute a student failure to factors internal to the student (e.g., student ability, effort) or family influences than teacher- and school-related issues as well as they make internal to the students and stable attributions when explaining performance that matches their own original expectations toward the students (ability, consistent effort, student personality). In the case of success, although teachers take responsibility for student success (e.g., instructional quality), they, at the same time, give credit to students' positive proprieties (e.g., student ability, effort) (Wang & Hall, 2018 for a review).

Theories on intimate relationships conceptualize how interdependent actions and their appraisal shape affective experience and related relationship behaviors (Schoebi & Randall, 2015). Previous researches document that the intuitive appraisal and the attributional appraisal are major source of experienced emotions in interpersonal relationships (Clark et al., 2003; Fletcher, 2002; Smith & Lazarus, 1990; Trope & Guant, 2005; Weiner, 2002). According to Weiner's (2002, 2014) attribution theory, there are 'outcome-dependent' emotions, such as happiness, pleasure and sadness, that are the initial and strongest response to the valence of the relationship. For example, if it is positive, a person feels happy, whereas if it is negative, he / she feels sad. Sanford and Grace (2011), for instance, found that perceptions of threat and neglect in the relationship went along with increases in negative affects. There are also 'attribution-dependent' emotions, such as anger and encouragement, that are influenced by the attributional explanation for the relationship (Oatley & Jenkins, 1998; Weiner, 2002, 2014). For example, a teacher may experience anger to a student if he/she believes that the student could and should have behaved differently. In contrast, a teacher may feel encouragement if she / he considers the student's positive dispositional factors as causes for the positive interpersonal relationship. Attributions of responsibility to an intimate partner may play a key role for the elicitation of negative affect, particularly anger, in intimate relationships (Bradbury & Fincham, 1987).

Partners (teacher-student) might experience various and different emotions for the same estimated behavior or interpersonal relationship, depending on the cause selected for explaining the given behavior or relationship. Attributing, for instance, a failure to lack of effort, an individual may experience the emotions of less pride (internal), higher hope (unstable), and guilt (controllable), that, in turn, directly influence behaviors (Wang & Hall, 2018). However, although all attributional dimensions are related to emotions for the partner's (student) behavior and the relationship itself, their prevalence differs across the various emotions (Berndsen & Manstead, 2007; Weiner, 2005, 2006, 2014). Stability most impacts on performance expectations and the emotions of hopefulness/hopelessness, controllability affects perceptions of personal responsibility and the social-related emotions, such as shame, anger and gratitude, while locus of causality mainly influences perceptions of personal competence and the self-related emotions, such as pride in success.

For example, internal attributions for a good interpersonal relationship are associated with the emotions of confidence and pride, whereas external attributions lead to positive behaviors, such as help seeking, or negative responses, such as helplessness, avoidance and lack of persistence. In contrast, attributing a bad interpersonal relationship to inadequate self-factors predicts incompetence, shame, guilt and resignation, whereas attributing unsuccessful events to others causes aggression and vindictiveness (Fincham, 2003; Fitness et al., 2005).

Attributing a good interpersonal relationship to stable factors enhances the relationship expectations, and facilitates relationship engagement, while attributing a negative interpersonal relationship to unstable factors is likely to improve the relationship and minimizes the feeling of hopelessness. In contrast, attributing a negative relationship to stable factors reduces positive expectations, produces the feeling of hopelessness and can lead to learned helplessness, a sense that none effort can lead to good relationship (Fitness et al., 2005; Peterson & Steen, 2005; Seligman, 2002; Weiner, 2001).

Guilt and anger are elicited by controllable causes for negative outcomes, but guilt emerges from internal responsibility, whereas anger is typically elicited by external factors (Stephanou & Balkamou, 2011; 2010; Van Dijk & Zeelenberg, 2002; Weiner, 1992). Further, anger involves the perception that the external agent, often a person, is responsible or blameworthy (Averill, 1982; Berkowitz & Harmon-Jones, 2004; Carver & Harmon-Jones, 2009; Kuppens & Van Mechelen, 2007). Hate resulted from appraisals of relative powerlessness and a perceived lack of control (Fitness et al., 2005). Also, stable causes maximize feelings of pity, given uncontrollable causes, and feelings of anger, given controllable causes (Graham & Hoehn, 1995).

Overall, the belief that a person -teacher- has about the causes of his / her interpersonal relationship influences his / her emotions for the partner -student-, and his / her expectations for the quality of the relationship in the future (Fletcher, 2002; Siemer et al., 2007; Stephanou, 2011; Weiner, 2001, 2014). Then, emotions and expectations influence the individual's actual behavior toward the partner, and the relationship itself (Fincham, 2003; Fletcher & Clark, 2002; Fletcher & Thomas, 2000; Weiner, 2001, 2014).

#### *Association of Hope with Attributions and Emotions for Interpersonal Relationship*

According to Snyder (2000, p. 8), hope is the “sum of perceived capabilities to produce routes to desired goals, along with the perceived motivation to use those routes”. The three key components of the Snyder's theory are the conceptualization of a goal, the developed routes to obtain the conceptualized goal (pathway thinking), and the motivation to obtain the conceptualized goal (agency thinking) (Snyder, 2000; Snyder & Lopez, 2007). Although agency and pathway are highly and reciprocally related, they are separate constructs (Chang & Banks, 2007; Dixton, 2017; Magaletta & Oliver, 1999; Rand & Cheavens, 2009; Snyder, Harris et al., 1991). Agency thinking is the motivational component in hope theory, and it is particularly crucial in the case of impediments (Snyder, 1994).

The majority of the studies support that hopeful people, like optimistic people, expect positive outcomes even when they face difficulties, in which they insist in pursuit their goals and regulate themselves, using effective coping strategies, so they enhance the chances to achieve their goals (Carver & Scheier, 2005; Scheier et al., 2000; Peterson, 2000; Seligman, 1991). Higher-hope individuals also tend to pursue goals more energetically and with greater confidence than their lower-hope counterparts, which leads to the greater likelihood of achieving goals (Snyder et al., 1991). Hopeful people, additionally, focus not only on future goals but also on goals they believe they can achieve (Nolen-Hoeksema & Davis, 2005; Snyder, 2000). Similarly, previous researchers also document the positive association of hope with positive affect, personal adjustment, self-beliefs and perceived quality of life (see Marques et al., 2017), better handling of stress (Chang, 1998) and stressful life events (Hellman & Gwinn, 2017; Valle et al., 2006), and lower depression and anxiety (Ong et al., 2006). Also, hopeful individuals are more optimistic about the future, develop more and longer-term life goals and have higher success expectations (Snyder et al., 2006).

The abovementioned literature suggest that hope could be a critical construct to understand how teachers deal with others and work towards goals, such as developing a good interpersonal relationship with their students, in an adaptive way. Accordantly, a high hope person/teacher might use adaptive attribution pattern in explaining positive or negative interpersonal relationship. Probably, a high- hope teacher, as an optimistic teacher does, attribute failure to external, unstable and specific factors instead of internal, stable and global factors (Scheier & Carven, 1985; Snyder et al., 2005; Seligman, 2002). Similarly, in Snyder's hope theory, emphasizing the thinking processes, ‘goal-pursuit cognitions cause emotions’ (Snyder et al. 2005, p. 258). Specifically, positive emotions result from perception of successful goal pursuit which reflects unimpeded movement toward the goal or effective overcoming the obstacles. In contrast, negative emotions are formulated by the perception of unsuccessful goal pursuit which may result from insufficient agency thinking and / or pathway thinking or the ineffective ability to overcome the problem.

#### **Research Aim and Hypotheses**

This study aimed at examining teachers' attributions and emotions for their subjectively perceived positive and negative interpersonal relationships with their students, and whether dispositional hope (pathways thinking, agency thinking) influences the perceived positive or negative interpersonal relationships, the subsequent attributions and emotions, and the impact of attributions on emotions.

*The hypotheses of the study were the following:*

The perceived positive interpersonal relationships will be in the main attributed to self- related factors (internal, personally controllable, stable), whereas the perceived negative interpersonal relationship will be most ascribed to

student- or external- related factors (Hypothesis 1a). The group with the positive interpersonal relationships will predominately discriminated from the group with the negative interpersonal relationships by the attributional dimension of locus of causality (Hypothesis 1b).

The participants will report various positive emotions for their positive interpersonal relationships with their students, while they will experience various negative emotions for their negative interpersonal relationships (Hypothesis 2a). The group with the good interpersonal relationships will be separated from the group with the bad interpersonal relationships mainly due to outcome-dependent emotions (Hypothesis 2b).

Hope (both agency thinking and pathway thinking) will contribute to adaptive attributional pattern for the perceived positive and, in particularly, bad interpersonal relationships (Hypothesis 3a). Hope will be a beneficial factor most to stability than to any other attributional dimension (Hypothesis 3b). The valence of the prediction of pathway thinking and agency thinking will vary between and within attributional dimensions and perceived bad or good interpersonal relationships.

Hope (both agency thinking and pathway thinking) will have positive effects on the experienced emotions for the estimated as good and, manly, negative interpersonal relationships (Hypothesis 4a). Hope will be a more powerful predictor of the expectancy- related emotions than of the rest of the emotions (Hypothesis 4b). The valence of the prediction of pathway thinking and agency thinking will vary between and within the emotions for perceived bad and good interpersonal relationships (Hypothesis 4c).

Attributional dimensions (each of them on specific kind of emotions) and hope will have positive effects of the emotions for the interpersonal relationships (Hypothesis 5a). Hope will enhance the impact of attributions on emotions, predominately in the negative interpersonal relationships (Hypothesis 5b). This influential role of hope will differ across the attributional dimensions and within each attributional dimension, exhibiting the most effect on stability (Hypothesis 5c). Pathway thoughts and agency thought will differ in the beneficial power to impact of attributions on emotions (Hypothesis 5d).

## Method

### *Participants*

The participants were 50 teachers, of both genders (23 male, 27 female), who randomly came from 10 state junior high schools from various regions of southern Greece. Most of the teachers taught the subjects of math/physics/technology, literature and a foreign language, while fewer of them taught other school subjects, such as physical education and artist. They reported teaching experience from 5 to 31 years with balance among years of teaching experience, and their age ranged from 34 to 58 years. The teachers reported good interpersonal relationships with 197 of their total 250 students, while they reported bad relationships with 53 of their students.

### *Measurements*

#### *Perceptions of the quality of interpersonal relationships*

Teachers' perceptions of the quality of their interpersonal relationships with their students were examined by filling a five- point four items ("How satisfied are you with the interpersonal relationship with the student?") scale. Responses ranged from 1=Not at all to 5= Totally. The construction of the scale was based on Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS) (Pianta, 1999), on the Inventory of Teacher-Student Relationships (ITSR) (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987), and on past similar researches. This scale is a reliable and valid research instrument in examining the sense of the quality of an interpersonal relationship (Stephanou, 2012; Stephanou & Balkamou, 2011). In this study Cronbach's Alpha value was .69.

The participants themselves defined their relationships as positive or negative by responding to the relationship scale twice. Accurately, the teachers filled it for the current quality of their relationship with their students, and, then, mentioned the lowest value in each item over which their relationship would be the desired positive one. Teachers who indicated that the current relationship was lower than the indicated as positive labelled the group of negative interpersonal relationships, while those whose relationship was equal or higher than the indicated one formed the group of positive relationships.

#### *Attributions for interpersonal relationship*

Teacher's attributions for the subjectively estimated interpersonal relationship with their students as positive or negative were assessed through the modified Causal Dimension Scale II (CDSII) (McAuley et al., 1992). The modified version of the CDSII was based on past researches on interpersonal relationships (Fincham, 2003; Fletcher, 2002; Fletcher & Thomas, 1996); and has proved a reliable and valid research instrument in examining attributions for intimate interpersonal relationships in Greek population (Stephanou, 2012). The participants, first, wrote down the most important factor which, according to their opinion, influenced the perceived level of the quality of their interpersonal

relationship with each of their students, then indicated on a 5- point item (ranging from 1=not at all to 5= very much) how much this factor contributed to the given relationship, and, finally, classified that cause along the attributional dimensions of locus of causality (internal / external causes to him/ herself), stability (stable / unstable cause over time), personal controllability (controllable / uncontrollable causes by their own), external controllability (controllable / uncontrollable causes by others), student's locus of causality (internal / external causes to his/her student), student's controllability (controllable / uncontrollable causes by the student), self-student interactive locus of causality (internal / external causes to interaction self-student) and self-student interactive controllability (controllable / uncontrollable causes by the interaction self-student). Each subscale consists of three items, ranging from the negative pole 1= not at all stable to the positive pole 5 = totally stable. Cronbach's Alpha were .85 for locus of causality, .81 for stability, .86 for personal controllability, .90 for external controllability, .78 for student's locus of causality, .76 for student's controllability, .90 for self-student locus of causality, and .86 for self-student controllability.

#### *Emotions for interpersonal relationships*

Teachers' emotions for their interpersonal relationships with their students were examined by mentioning the extent to which they experienced the emotions of happiness, sympathy, pleasure, pride, encouragement, love, not anger-anger, cheerfulness, calmness-nervousness, not anxiety- anxiety, enthusiasm, optimism and excitement. The emotions had the form of adjectives with two opposite poles, with the positive pole having the high score of 5 and the negative one having the low score of 1 (e.g., happy 5 4 3 2 1 unhappy, calm 5 4 3 2 1 nervous). The scale is a reliable and valid measure in assessing emotions for interpersonal relationships, and its consistency was relied on past researches (Fischer & Manstead, 2008; Forgas, 2002; Stephanou, 2007, 2012; van Kleef, 2009; Schutz & DeCuir-Gunby, 2002; Weiner, 2000, 2005). Cronbach's Alpha was found .82.

#### *Hope*

Dispositional hope was estimated by the Adult Hope Scale (AHS) (Snyder et al., 1991) which consists of four distractive items, four agency thinking items (e.g., "My past experiences have prepared me well for my future") and four pathways thinking items (e.g., "I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are important to me"). Responses ranged from 1 = "Definitely false" to 8 = "Definitely true", with higher scores indicating greater levels of hope. The scale was independently translated from English into Greek by two familiar to the topic researches, and, then, there was a backward translation by a native English speaker. The feedback was positive for the Greek version of the scale. In the present study, Cronbach's Alpha was found .68 and .65 for agency thinking and pathways thinking, respectively.

#### *Personal factors*

The participant responded to a personal information scale regarding personal and demographical factors, such as age, gender and teaching experience.

#### *Procedure*

Teachers indicated the class in which they taught most of his/her teaching hours, as it was estimated that the high frequency of interaction between the students and the teachers increases the possibilities for developing and shaping the between them interpersonal relationships. In cases where the teaching schedule did not vary the hours, random sampling was applied for the selection of the class. Then, five students were randomly selected from each participating class. All the participants completed the questionnaire for each of their five students.

Data collection was performed in the middle of a school year, to ensure that the teachers had enough time to form an impression about their interpersonal relationships with their students. Also, the participants completed, first, the hope scale, and, one week later, the scales of the perceived quality of their relationships with their students, and the subsequent emotions and attributions.

Oral and written information about the aim of this study were provided to the teachers, and they were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. To match the questionnaires that were responded by the same teacher, the participants were asked to choose a code name and use it on across all of the scales. They were also asked to use an additive code name across all of the scales for each of their students.

#### *Data Analyses*

Univariate and multivariate statistical analyses between and within groups of the positive and negative interpersonal relationships were performed to examine possible effects of the perceived quality of the interpersonal relationships on attributional and emotional appraisals. A series of regression analysis was conducted to examine the impact of hope on attributions and emotions within each group of interpersonal relationships as well as hierarchical regression analyses were performed to assess the role of hope in the impact of attributions on each of the experienced emotions for the positive and negative interpersonal relationships.

## Results

### *Attributions for the Positive and Negative Interpersonal Relationships*

One-way MANOVA analysis with the eight attributional dimensions as dependent variables and the perceived interpersonal relationship (positive / negative) as between-subjects factor revealed a significant effect,  $F_{(8, 241)} = 42.48$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .58$ .

The results from the subsequent ANOVAs and Discriminant Function analysis (Table 1), with the perceived interpersonal relationship (positive /negative) as grouping variable and attributional dimensions as predictor variables, revealed that stability, discriminating power = .61,  $n^2 = .43$ , followed by student's personal controllability, discriminating power = .52,  $n^2 = .27$ , locus of causality, discriminating power = .21,  $n^2 = .08$ , self-student interactive locus of causality, discriminating power = .18,  $n^2 = .06$ , and personal controllability, discriminating power = .14,  $n^2 = .04$ , was the most powerful attributional dimension in discriminating the group with the positive interpersonal relationships from the group with the negative interpersonal relationships. It was also found that the attributional dimensions of self-student interactive controllability, external controllability and student's locus of causality had no significant contribution in discriminating the two groups of interpersonal relationships.

Furthermore, the above results and observation of the descriptive statistics on Table 1 indicate that the teachers made internal, personal controllable, external uncontrollable, controllable and internal to the students, self-student interactive internal and, predominately, student's controllable, self-student interactive controllable and stable attributions for the perceived positive interpersonal relationships. Contrarily, they attributed their perceived negative interpersonal relationships with their students to external controllable, unstable, student's internal and controllable, and, mainly, external and self-student interactive controllable factors.

The above findings in the most and partly confirmed Hypothesis 1a and Hypothesis 1b respectively.

*Table 1. Descriptive statistics and results from Discriminant analysis for teachers' attributional dimensions for their perceived positive and negative interpersonal relationships with their students*

Attributional dimensions	Positive relationships		Negative relationships		Wilks' Lambda	Discriminating power		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		power	$n^2$	F
Locus of causality	8,25	2,88	6,3	1,73	0,92	0,21	0,08	22
Personal controllability	9,32	3,27	7,48	1,08	0,97	0,14	0,03	7,15
Stability	11,61	2,5	7,35	2,3	0,66	0,61	0,34	128,7
External controllability	7,92	3,74	8,3	2,96	0,99	-0,04	0	0,48
Student's locus of causality	8,23	1,78	7,62	1,25	0,98	0,1	0,01	3,85
Student's personal controllability	11,96	2,69	8,17	1,84	0,73	0,52	0,27	93,8
Self-student interactive locus of causality	9,65	2,97	7,92	1,26	0,94	0,18	0,06	15,83
Self-student interactive controllability	10,2	3,29	9,79	2,27	0,99	0,03	0	0,035

Note:  $F(1, 248) \geq 7.15$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $F(1, 248) < 7.15$ ,  $p > .05$ .

### *Emotions for the Positive and Negative Interpersonal Relationships*

MANOVA analysis revealed significant effect of the perceived interpersonal relationship (positive /negative) on teachers' emotions,  $F_{(12, 237)} = 79.38$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $n^2 = .80$ ,  $p < .01$ . To clarify the findings, univariate analyses within and between groups were conducted.

The results from two repeated measures ANOVAs, one for each group of interpersonal relationship (positive / negative), in which emotions was the within-subjects factor, showed a variability of the intensity of the emotions that the teachers experienced for the perceived positive,  $F_{(12, 237)} = 48.75$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .76$ , and negative  $F_{(12, 237)} = 78.37$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .93$ , interpersonal relationships with their students. Specifically, the post hoc pairwise comparisons and inspection on the scores on Table 2 illustrate that the teachers experienced positive emotions of high intensity, particularly sympathy, cheerfulness, exciting, love, encouragement and calmness, and negative emotions of low intensity of anger and anxiety for the positive relationships, whereas, in the negative relationships group, they experienced negative emotions, predominately no enthusiasm, shame, anxiety, no excitement, displeasure and sadness.

The findings from ANOVAs and Discriminant analysis (Table, 2), which was performed to examine the set of emotions that best discriminated the two groups of teachers' relationships, illustrated that the teachers felt better for their positive than negative interpersonal relationships with their students, and that the emotion of not anxiety-anxiety, discriminating



power= .75,  $\eta^2$ = .68, followed by the emotions of cheerfulness, discriminating power= .64,  $\eta^2$ = .57, calmness, discriminating power= .55,  $\eta^2$ = .53, exciting, discriminating power= .53,  $\eta^2$ = .51, and enthusiasm, discriminating power= .50,  $\eta^2$ = .48, was the most powerful emotion in discriminating the one from the other group of teachers.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and findings from Discriminant analysis for teachers' emotions for their perceived positive and negative interpersonal relationships with their students

Emotions	Positive relationships		Negative relationships		Wilks' Lambda	Discriminating power	n <sup>2</sup>	F
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Happiness	3.96	0.62	2.81	0.52	.62	.41	.38	152.04
Sympathy	4.58	0.57	3.72	0.88	.77	.28	.23	74.38
Pleasure	4.20	0.66	2.81	1.11	.65	.37	.35	133.75
Pride	4.03	0.87	2.57	0.95	.69	.34	.31	113.76
Love	4.34	0.67	3.96	0.71	.95	.12	.05	12.64
Encouragement	4.31	0.70	3.06	0.87	.68	.43	.32	118.75
Not anger-anger	4.75	0.45	3.49	1.05	.59	.44	.40	169.12
Cheerfulness	4.48	0.57	2.83	0.64	.43	.64	.57	333.90
Excitement	4.38	0.67	2.58	0.91	.49	.53	.51	254.37
Optimism	4.32	0.73	2.98	0.84	.65	.31	.34	130.86
Calmness/ nervousness	4.74	0.47	2.98	1.18	.47	.55	.53	274.73
Not anxiety-anxiety	4.70	0.54	2.79	0.53	.32	.75	.68	517.76
Enthusiasm	3.94	0.75	2.30	0.50	.52	.50	.48	226.74

Note: All  $F(1, 248)$ - values are significant at the .01 level of significance; The nature of the emotions is positive and negative in the positive and negative interpersonal relationship group, respectively.

The above findings in the most confirmed Hypotheses 2a and 2b.

#### Effects of Hope on Attributions for the Positive and Negative Interpersonal Relationships

To examine the role of hope in attributions within each group of interpersonal relationships (positive / negative), correlation coefficients and a series of regression analysis (Table 3), with agency thinking and pathway thinking as predictive variables and each of the attributional dimensions as predicted variable, were conducted. The results from these analyses showed the following.

Higher-hope teachers, as compared to lower-hope teachers, made more personal controllable, stable, student's internal and controllable, and self-student interactive controllable attributions for their perceived positive interpersonal relationships with their students. In contrast, the former, in comparison to the later, attributed the negative interpersonal relationships to more external, personal uncontrollable, unstable, external controllable, and self-student interactive uncontrollable factors.

Hope proved a more powerful predictor of the attributional dimensions for the perceived negative interpersonal relationships than for the perceived positive relationships. Specifically, agency thoughts and pathways thoughts, together, had a positive effect on the attributional dimensions, explaining an amount of the variance from 11% (personal controllability) to 57% (external controllability) in the negative interpersonal relationships group, and from 5% (student's personal controllability) to 9% (stability) in the positive interpersonal relationships.

Pathways thoughts in the most explained a significant variability of attributions for the positive interpersonal relationships, while agency thoughts evidenced unique contribution in the generation of most of the attributional dimensions in the negative interpersonal relationships group.

The findings confirmed Hypotheses 3a, whereas Hypotheses 3b and 3c were partly confirmed.

Table 3. Findings from regression analyses for the effects of teachers' hope (agency thinking, path thinking) on the attributional dimensions for their positive and negative interpersonal relationships with the students

	Predictors Hope	Positive interpersonal relationships				Negative interpersonal relationships			
		R <sup>2</sup>	F	b	t	R <sup>2</sup>	F	b	t
Locus of causality	Agency thinking			---	---			.43	4.20
	Path thinking	--	--	---	---	.25	8.75	.17	2.00
Personal controllability	Agency thinking			.28	3.50			.38	2.80
	Path thinking	.07	7.30	---	---	.11	3.20	---	---
Stability	Agency thinking			.30	4.00			.21	2.35
	Path thinking	.12	12.45	---	---	.25	9.00	---	---
External controllability	Agency thinking			---	---			.41	4.00
	Path thinking	--	--	---	---	.57	33.10	.20	2.15
Student's locus of causality	Agency thinking								
	Path thinking	.06	6.10	.24	2.30	--	--	---	---
Student's personal controllability	Agency thinking							.22	2.10
	path thinking	.05	5.55	.22	2.20	.30	10.65	.48	3.60
Self-student locus of causality	Agency thinking			---	---			.28	2.60
	Path thinking	--	--	---	---	.25	8.25	---	---
Self-student controllability	Agency thinking			---	---			.28	2.60
	Path thinking	.09	9.60	.29	3.70	.23	8.00	---	---

Note:  $F \geq 5.55, p < .01$ ;  $F < 5.55, p < .05$ ;  $F--, p > .05$ ;  $t--, p > .05$ ,  $t \geq 2.35, p < .01$ ,  $t > 2.35, p < .05$ .

#### Effects of Hope on Emotions for the Positive and Negative Interpersonal Relationships

The results from correlations coefficients and a series of regression analyses, with agency thinking and pathway thinking as predictive variables and each of the emotions as predicted variable, within each group of interpersonal relationship (perceived positive / negative) (Table 4) showed that (a) agency thinking and pathways thoughts, in combination, was a significant predictor of teachers' emotions for their positive interpersonal relationships,  $R^2$  ranged from .06 (optimism) to .26 (happiness), and, mainly, of their emotions for their negative interpersonal relationships,  $R^2$  ranged from .14 (anger) to .29 (shame), (b) the higher the hope was, the more intense the positive emotions (predominately, love and happiness) were for the positive interpersonal relationships, and the less intense the negative emotions (mainly, discouragement, hate, and shame) were for the negative interpersonal relationships, (c) the relative power of pathway thinking and agency thinking in formulating emotionç varied across emotions and between the two groups of the interpersonal relationships, and (d) pathway thinking, compared to agency thinking, was a better predictor of most of the emotions in the positive interpersonal relationships, while in the negative interpersonal relationships the reverse was the case.

The above findings partly confirmed the Hypotheses 4a and 4b, while they confirmed Hypothesis 4c.

Table 4. Findings from regression analyses for the effects of teachers' hope (agency thinking, path thinking) on their emotions for the positive and negative interpersonal relationships with their students

	Predictors	Positive interpersonal relationships				Negative interpersonal relationships			
		R <sup>2</sup>	F	b	t	R <sup>2</sup>	F	b	t
Happiness	Agency thinking			.23	2.90			.38	2.90
	Path thinking	.26	34.00	.27	3.45	.16	4.80	---	---
Sympathy	Agency thinking			.29	3.95			.43	3.35
	Path thinking	.18	21.00	.31	4.20	.17	5.01	---	---
Pleasure	Agency thinking			---	---			---	---
	Path thinking	--	--	---	---	.20	6.45	.32	2.50
Pride	Agency thinking			.32	4.35			.42	3.05
	Path thinking	.13	14.23	---	---	.29	10.00	.19	2.25
Love	Agency thinking			--	---			.43	3.45
	Path thinking	.24	31.44	.31	4.25	.26	8.80	.18	2.20
Encouragement	Agency thinking			.29	3.85			.45	4.84
	Path thinking	.25	32.00	.20	2.40	.24	7.82	---	---
Not angry-angry	Agency thinking			---	---			---	---
	Path thinking	--	--	---	---	.14	4.25	.40	2.95
Cheerfulness	Agency thinking			.28	3.80			.38	2.60
	Path thinking	.15	16.00	.18	2.20	.14	4.35	---	---
Excitement	Agency thinking			---	---			---	---
	Path thinking	--	--	---	---	.18	5.30	---	---
Optimism	Agency thinking	.06		---	---			.40	2.95
	Path thinking		5.90	.24	3.00	.22	6.88	---	---
Calmness	Agency thinking			---	---			---	---
	Path thinking	--	--	---	---	.19	5.30	---	---
No anxiety-anxiety	Agency thinking			---	---			.33	2.45
	Path thinking	--	--	---	---	.20	6.45	---	---
Enthusiasm	Agency thinking			---	---			.21	2.35
	Path thinking	.16	18.96	.28	3.70	.23	7.70	.25	2.80

Note:  $F > 4.25, p < .01$ ;  $F \leq 4.25, p < .05$ ;  $F--, p > .05$ ;  $t > 2.35, p < .01$ ;  $t \leq 2.35, p < .05$ ;  $t---$ ,  $p > .05$ ; The nature of the emotions is positive and negative in the positive and negative interpersonal relationship group, respectively.

#### Effects of Hope on the Impact of Attributions on Emotions for the Perceived Positive and Negative Interpersonal Relationships

Twenty-six separate hierarchical regression analyses (Table 5) were performed to examine the role of hope and attributions in the generation of teachers' emotions for their perceived positive and negative interpersonal relationships with their students, and the role of hope in the effect of attributions on emotions. All of the attributional dimensions were entered simultaneously into first step of the analysis, while agency thoughts and pathway thoughts were entered into the second step of the analysis.

The results from these analyses indicated that the two sets of predictors had complementary and positive effects on emotions but their relative power in influencing them varied between positive and negative interpersonal relationships and within each emotion. Also, hope had direct effect on the emotions (not on all), beyond the influence of the attributions, suggesting that the teachers with higher hope (mainly, agency thinking) were more likely to use the specific attributional pattern and enjoy their relationships with their students more than the teachers with lower hope. Accurately, the results showed that (a) hope and attributions, together, explained a significant amount of the variance of

the emotions for the perceived positive interpersonal relationships,  $R^2$  ranged from .22 (exciting) to .60 (pride), and, particularly, for the perceived negative interpersonal relationships,  $R^2$  ranged from .35 (anxiety) to .89 (pessimism), (b) hope -agency thinking and pathways thinking, together- improved the effect of the attributions on the emotions of pleasure, pride, optimism, enthusiasm and, mostly, happiness and love for the positive interpersonal relationships, and it enhanced that impact of attributions on most of the emotions for the negative interpersonal relationships,  $R^2$ ch ranged from .05 to .15 (sadness), (c) agency thinking had unique effect on most of the emotions in the negative interpersonal relationships, whereas pathway thinking had unique effect on the emotions of pleasure, optimism and enthusiasm in the positive interpersonal relationships, (d) stability, followed by self-student interactive controllability and locus of causality, compared to the rest of the attributional dimensions, were better predictors of most of the emotions for the positive interpersonal relationships, while personal controllability, followed by external controllability, student's locus of causality and self-student interactive controllability played the most significant role in the emotions for the negative interpersonal relationships.

*Table 5 Results from hierarchical regression analyses for the effects of hope (agency thinking, path thinking) on the impact of attributions on emotions for the positive and negative interpersonal relationships*

Emotions	Predictors	Steps	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> ch	Fch	F	beta	t
Positive interpersonal relationships								
Happiness	Attributions	1st	.21			6.15	S: .39	4.45
	Hope	2nd	.35	.15	21.30	10.25	AH: .27	3.95
Sympathy	Attributions	1st	.39			14.90	ILC: .63	3.98
	Hope	2nd	.39	--	--	12.00	--	--
Pleasure	Attributions	1st	.38			14.50	S: .48	6.10
	Hope	2nd	.41	.03	4.50	12.92	PH: .21	2.70
Pride	Attributions	1st	.48			16.90	S: .47	3.00
	Hope	2nd	.60	.13	18.55	10.30	AH: .23	3.21
Love	Attributions	1st	.39			15.00	IC: .59	4.10
	Hope	2nd	.59	.21	21.50	19.00	AH: .24	4.00
Encouragement	Attributions	1st	.28			9.10	S: .47	4.15
	Hope	2nd	.28	--	--	7.50	---	---
Not angry- angry	Attributions	1st	.26			8.50	SC: .44	3.85
	Hope	2nd	.27	--	--	6.80	---	---
Cheerfulness	Attributions	1st	.33			11.50	ILC: .55	4.90
	Hope	2nd	.33	--	--	9.25	---	---
Excitement	Attributions	1st	.21			6.36	ILC: .45	3.75
	Hope	2nd	.22	--	--	5.30	---	---
Optimism	Attributions	1st	.40			16.00	PC: .46	6.12
	Hope	2nd	.44	.04	5.30	14.45	PH: .16	2.10
Calmness	Attributions	1st	.24			7.60	SC: .51	4.35
	Hope	2nd	.24	--	--	6.35	---	---
No anxiety-anxiety	Attributions	1st	.50			7.90	IC: .53	5.00
	Hope	2nd	.50	--	--	6.35	---	---
Enthusiasm	Attributions	1st	.27			8.85	IC: .45	4.30
	Hope	2nd	.38	.10	15.40	11.25	PH: .29	3.55
Negative interpersonal relationships								
Unhappiness	Attributions	1st	.79			9.40	SLC: .68	3.40
	Hope	2nd	.85	.06	6.70	10.80	AH: .35 HA: .33	2.60 2.20

Table 5. Continued

Emotions	Predictors	Steps	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> ch	Fch	F	beta	t
Not sympathy	Attributions	1st	.55			6.65	LC: .56	3.70
	Hope	2nd	.68	.13	8.50	8.80	HA: .50	3.62
Displeasure	Attributions	1st	.72			14.40	PC: .60	3.30
	Hope	2nd	.74	--	--	12.10	---	---
Shame	Attributions	1st	.75			16.90	PC: .60	4.00
	Hope	2nd	.83	.08	9.65	20.70	AH: .52	6.35
Hate	Attributions	1st	.76			17.50	PC: .77	5.10
	Hope	2nd	.82	.06	6.90	19.00	HP: .38	2.70
Discouragement	Attributions	1st	.84			28.56	IC: .40	3.80
	Hope	2nd	.89	.05	6.10	32.63	AH: .53	3.60
Anger	Attributions	1st	.60			8.35	SLC: .53	2.65
	Hope	2nd	.60	--	--	6.40	HA: .35	2.10
Sadness	Attributions	1st	.51			5.75	SLC: .23	3.00
	Hope	2nd	.66	.15	9.60	8.30	AH: .53	2.70
No excitement	Attributions	1st	.39			3.50	ILC: .80	3.35
	Hope	2nd	.45	.07	7.00	3.50	AH: .28	3.20
Pessimism	Attributions	1st	.73			14.55	PC: .25	2.40
	Hope	2nd	.73	--	--	12.00	AH: .44	3.95
Nervousness	Attributions	1st	.34			3.00	LS: .75	4.90
	Hope	2nd	.43	.09	9.30	3.22	---	---
Anxiety	Attributions	1st	.30			2.35	---	---
	Hope	2nd	.35	--	--	2.30	---	---
No enthusiasm	Attributions	1st	.62			8.90	IC: .40	3.85
	Hope	2nd	.68	.06	4.50	8.85	PH: .52	2.50

Notes: LC = Locus of causality; PC= Personal controllability; S= Stability; EC= External controllability; ILC= Self-student interactive locus of causality; IC= Self-student interactive controllability; SLC= Student locus of causality, SC= Student controllability; AH= Agency hope; PH= Pathway hope; Fch- and F- > 4.50,  $p < .01$ ; Fch- and F-  $\leq 4.50$ ,  $p < .05$ ;  $t > 2.65$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $t \leq 2.60$ ,  $p < .05$ ; ---, and --:  $p > .05$ .

The above findings partly confirmed Hypotheses 5b and 5d, while they in the main confirmed Hypotheses 5a and 5c.

## Discussion

This study provides insight into teachers' attributions and emotions for the interpersonal relationships with their students that have been limitedly examined, and it stresses the role of dispositional hope in the attributional appraisal and emotional experience for the interpersonal relationships.

### Attributions for the Interpersonal Relationships

The findings from the present study regarding the attributional pattern of the teacher-student interpersonal relationships in the main complimented our hypotheses and past researches. The high variability of the attributions for the interpersonal relationships underlines the high importance of such relationships in teachers' professional identity, since the individuals try to explain the high ego involvement tasks (Argyle, 2001; Holder & Coleman, 2009; Wang & Hall, 2018; Weiner, 2014). Similarly, the attributional pattern within- and between- the perceived positive and negative interpersonal relationships reinforced previous empirical studies, which have documented a strong positive association between attributional processes and relationship satisfaction (Fincham, 2003), and it indicated the high importance of the desirable good relationships for the participants (Harvey et al., 2005; Høglund et al., 2008; Weiner, 2002, 2005, 2010). Specifically, by attributing the positive interpersonal relationships to stable and personal positive properties, along with the student- related factors, and self-student interactive internal and controllable causes, the participants enhanced themselves, ensured high expectations of satisfactory relationship in the future, rose the chances to support

the students, multiplied the possibilities of positive future relationships, and, simultaneously, indicated the crucial role of the student in forming a good relationship (Fiedler et al., 1995; Fincham, 2003; Fletcher & Clark, 2002; Lauermaann & Karabenick, 2013; Rusbult et al., 2003; Weiner, 2001). By ascribing the negative interpersonal relationships to external-related factors, along with the student- and self-student- negative controllable factors, the teachers protected their ego and their role as a caring person, enhanced the expectations of future good relationship, and underlined the crucial role of the student in forming positive interpersonal relationships (Noddings 1996; Wang & Hall, 2018; Weiner, 2001). Although this specific attributional pattern seems to be adaptive, it should be mentioned that considering the other person-partner as responsible for the negative interpersonal relationship minimizes the chances for better relationship (Fletcher, 2002; Planalp & Rivers, 1996; Weiner, 1995). Teachers' sense of personal responsibility, in addition, is positively related to student outcomes and their own teaching, job satisfaction and engagement (Eren, 2014; Guskey 1984; Halvorsen et al., 2009; Lauermaann & Karabenick, 2013; Matteucci & Gosling 2004; Polat & Mahalingappa, 2013; Silverman 2010).

As compared to other attributional dimensions, stability was the most powerful in discriminating the two groups of the interpersonal relationships. This specific finding, might be associated with teachers' initial good relationship expectations, since a good care teacher intend to develop good relationships with his/her students. Accordingly, teachers implicated unstable factors for the relationships that were not consistent with their initial expectations, confirming similar past researches (Berscheid & Ammazalorso, 2003; Bless, 2003; Trope & Gaunt, 2005; Wang & Hall, 2018).

### *Emotions for the Interpersonal Relationships*

The findings regarding the emotions in the most confirmed our predictions and previous researches. Accurately, the teachers experienced various emotions and a variety of intensity of emotions for their interpersonal relationships with their students. They also felt positive emotions of moderate to high intensity for the positive relationships, and negative emotions of moderate to low intensity for the negative relationships. These results show the high importance of the good relationships in teachers' professional- and self- identity (Becker et al., 2014; Erb, 2002; Frenzel, 2014; Forgas & Smith, 2005; Frijda, 1993, 2009; Hargreaves, 2000; Lasky, 2000; Pekrun, 2006; Stephanou et al., 2013; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Weiner, 2005; Zembylas, 2003). Further, as Split et al. (2011) propose 'relationships with students can only be harmful or beneficial to the wellbeing of teachers when teachers have a need or desire for personal relationships with students'.

Relationships intentions and expectations could partly explain the participants' emotions. Teachers might have intended and expected positive interpersonal relationships with their students and confirmation of them influenced intense positive emotions (see Bless, 2003; Trope & Gaunt, 2005), while the unexpected bad relationships led to negative emotions. This argument is related to the Berscheid's (1983) emotion-in-relationships model which supports that the greater the interruption when one partner does something unexpected, or fails to do something expected, the higher the intensity of the experienced emotions. Yet, it seems that the negative relationships were against the teachers' goals and desires, since under such conditions individuals experience negative emotions (Berscheid & Ammazalorso, 2003; Carver & Scheier, 2000; Forgas, 2002; Frijda, 2007, 2009; Parrott, 2003). A possible explanation for the lack of negative emotions of high intensity may emanate from the participants' great range of teaching experience (Chen, 2016; Stephanou & Oikonomou, 2018). Research has shown that teachers with long professional experience have been exposed to difficulties and have overcome challenging situations that allow them to develop robust skills and be confident (see Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Ross et al., 1996; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007; Wolters & Daugherty, 2007). However, research needs to examine this speculation.

Also, as supported by previous studies (e.g., Acee et al., 2010; Becker et al., 2014; Demetriou et al., 2009; Pekrun et al., 2010; Stephanou et al., 2013), by the contention that emotions cannot be understood without understanding the social context in which they emerge (Boiger & Mesquita 2012; Efklides & Volet, 2005; Frijda, 2009), by the interpersonal interaction view of the emotions for the interpersonal relationships (Fischer & Manstead, 2008; van Kleef, 2009), and by the Weiner's (2001, 2010) interpersonal attributions, teachers predominately experienced social-, goal and task (relationship itself)-, other- and interaction (self-student)- related emotions, such as not anger, calmness, sympathy, love, exciting and enthusiasm, for the positive interpersonal relationships, and emotions, such as not enthusiasm, not exciting, displeasure and anxiety, for the negative interpersonal relationships. In addition, in line with these speculations and Weiner's (2002, 2005) theory, the participants felt self- and outcome- related emotions, such as pride/shame, cheerfulness / sadness and happiness /unhappiness.

In addition, rewarding other studies and Weiner's (2002, 2005) interpersonal attribution theory, the group of the positive interpersonal relationships was discriminated from the group of the negative interpersonal relationships predominately by the outcome- and interaction (self-student)- related emotions, such as not anxiety-anxiety, cheerfulness, calmness, excitement and enthusiasm.

Interestingly, and in consistency with other researches (e.g., Stephanou & Oikonomou, 2018), the teachers seem to consider the development of their interpersonal relationships because, based on Seligman's (2002) view of classification of emotions, they experienced emotions which are related to the past (e.g., pride/ shame), the present (e.g., pleasure / displeasure) and the future (e.g., encouragement/ discouragement).

It should be mentioned, however, that the experience of some certain negative emotions does not facilitate future good interpersonal relationships. For example, previous empirical investigation illustrate that anger is positively related to attribute malicious intentions to other, anxiety enhances the belief that threatening events are about to occur, and sadness shapes malicious attributions for conflicts in close relationships (Fitness et al., 2005; Forgas, 1994, 1995; Planalp & Fitness, 1999). Further, teachers' excessive anxiety has negative impact on their well-being and professional performance, and on their students' progress (Becker et al., 2015; Kyriacou, 2001; Lazarus, 2006), while a moderate level of anxiety activates the teachers to redouble their efforts to achieve their professional goals (Pekrun et al., 2007).

The results from the current study also reinforced previous findings (e.g., Bradbury & Fincham, 1987; Fitness & Fletcher, 1993; Planalp & Fitness, 1999; Stephanou & Balkamou, 2011) in intimate relationships, showing that teachers experienced discrete emotions by cognitively appraised their interpersonal relationships with their students along the attributional dimensions. As expected, attributions were more powerful contributor in the generation of the emotions in the negative than positive interpersonal relationships, confirming the notion that individuals search for explanations of their negative than positive experiences (Weiner, 2002, 2005).

However, the pattern of the impact of the attributions on the emotions is partly in line with the Weiner's (2005, 2010) theory which proposes specific emotional consequences of each attributional dimension. On the other hand, it is in consistency with the Weiner's notion regarding the occurrence of mixed emotions, for example, attributing negative outcome (interpersonal relationship) to lack of effort leads to less pride (locus of causality) and to higher motivating emotions, such as encouragement and confidence (stability). Specifically, stability, followed by self-student interactive controllability and locus of causality were found to be the most significant predictors of most of the emotions for the positive interpersonal relationships, while personal controllability, followed by external controllability, student's locus of causality and self-student interactive controllability, played a significant role in the emotions for the negative interpersonal relationships, underling the interactive nature of the emotions in the interpersonal relationships (Schoebi & Randall, 2015). The positive effect of the self-student interactive attributions on the emotions is an indication of the significant role of the sense of 'being together' in teacher-student relationship development and enhancement (Butler, 2015; Becker et al., 2015; Wang & Hall, 2018). The impact of the external controllable attributions on teachers' emotions (mainly in negative relationships) might hint the effects of the unpredictable school- and classroom- related factors on the development of the teacher-student relationship, and the subsequent emotions (Becker et al., 2015; Frenzel, 2014; Frenzel & Stephens, 2013; Stephanou & Oikonomou, 2018). The positive role of personal controllability in the emotional experience is in accordance to Weiner's (2000) notation that controllability accounts for responsibility which is related to emotions, and with other studies evidencing the association of teachers' emotions with their attributes of responsibility to students and themselves (Matteucci, 2007; Matteucci & Gosling, 2004). This specific finding indicates the necessity of examining responsibility and blame attributions, along with causal attributions (Fincham, 2003; Murray, 2003).

#### *The Role of Hope in Attributions and Emotions for the Interpersonal Relationships*

The findings regarding hope, confirming in the main our predictions, previous studies (Dixson et al., 2017; Elbaz 1992; Eren, 2014; Snyder et al., 2005) and Snyder's (2000) hope theory, revealed that the teachers with high hope enjoyed their interpersonal relationships with their students, and used adaptive appraisal for their good relationships. Similarly, in contrast to low-hope teachers, high-hope teachers suffered less for their bad interpersonal relationships, and they used effective appraisal of the bad interpersonal relationships. Yet, hope served as a better indicator variable for the emotions and the appraisals in the negative than positive interpersonal relationships, supporting previous research evidence documenting the high hope people's use of optimistic and adaptive reappraisal for a variety of stressor situations (Gilham, 2000; Snyder et al., 1999). Overall, these findings sustain that the high hope teachers, not the low hope teachers, searched for something positive, a consistent finding with previous empirical evidence (Carver & Scheier, 2005; Snyder et al. 1991; Wong & Lim 2009).

The valence of the prediction of pathway thinking and agency thinking varied between and within both attributions and emotions for the interpersonal relationships as well as it varied between and within bad and good interpersonal relationships. This specific finding is an indication that hope is interactively constructed by these two elements, as Snyder's theory supports (Snyder et al., 1991; Snyder et al, 2005). Also, the high agency teachers, generally, reported more adaptive attributional and emotional pattern for their bad interpersonal relationships with their students than the high pathway hope teachers, whereas the reverse was the case in the good interpersonal relationships. This may support the notion that agency thinking shares similarity with self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), and, it, being the motivational component of hope, is crucial in the case of difficulties or confronts, like negative interpersonal relationships (Snyder, 1994). However, despite these differences, when interventions are being developed, attention should be given to both constructs of hope, since, according to Snyder's (2002) contention, neither is more adaptive.

The results for the attributions, additionally, showed that, as predicted, hope most impacted on stability than any other attributional dimensions for the positive interpersonal relationships, while, unexpectedly, it mainly influenced external controllability and student's personal controllability for the negative interpersonal relationships, hinting, probably, the desire and assurance only for the former relationships. These findings may also support other findings which reported

that high-hope as compared with low-hope individuals tend to present themselves more positively and social desirable (Snyder, Hoza, et al., 1997; Taylor, 1989). However, research is needed to examine this speculation. Also, hope influenced controllable attributions, supporting other studies which have documented the association of hope with controllability and responsibility for interpersonal relationships and achievement outcomes (Eren, 2014; Hammerness, 2003). Moreover, in the bad interpersonal relationships, the teacher self-related attributional dimensions were most affected by the agency thinking, while the student- and self-student-related attributions were most influenced by pathway thinking. This specific finding is another indication that hope consists of both of them, and that both contribute into coping with the various stressor situations. Research needs to verify their relative role in teachers' interpersonal relationships-related procedures.

The pattern of the effects of hope on emotions is also consistent with empirical evidence showing the important role of hope in expectancy (encouragement / discouragement, optimism/ not optimism, enthusiasm / non enthusiasm)-, goal pursuit (pleasure/ displeasure, cheerfulness / sadness, anxiety) other-related (love / hate, sympathy)-, self (pride / shame)- related affects. Furthermore, hope had direct impact on the emotions for the interpersonal relationships, beyond that afforded by attributions.

### **Limitations, and Implications of the Findings into Interpersonal Relationships and Future Research**

There are some limitations in this study which could be considered fruitful investigation lines in the future. This study examined dispositional hope but an individual may have hope for a specific goal which initially is based on her/his trait hope level (Edwards et al., 2007; Snyder, 1994). Also, data were gathered from 50 junior high school teachers; hence, future research should be evolved into different educational levels, and expands the number of the participants. This study focused on teacher-student interpersonal relationships at one point of time. To better understand these relationships, as suggested by other researches (e.g., Butler, 2015; Martin & Collie, 2019; Schoebi & Randall, 2015), it is interesting to examine the interdependence between individual processes at the interaction level, to link these measures with both momentary and stable individual and relational outcomes.

Despite these limitations, this study contributes to- and expands the extant research in hope and in interpersonal relationships. Precisely, the investigation contributes into knowledge about teachers' attributions and emotions for their own interpersonal relationships, contrarily to the majority of the past researches on teacher attributions having focused predominately on the implications of attributions for students. It also provides additional knowledge about hope in the interpersonal relationships, examining the role of hope in cognitive and emotional appraisals of the bad and good interpersonal relationships.

Teachers' interpersonal relationships with their students constitute a significant aspect of their professional life, as the attribution and emotion patterns suggest. Consequently, strengthening teacher-student relationships could support teacher well-being, by interventions based on the relationship-focused reflection program (Spilt et al., 2012), which help teachers reflect on critical interactions, their own emotional experiences with the student, and the student's perspective. Also, given research indicates that attributional retraining (Seligman, 2002) helps to change maladaptive attributional pattern of interpersonal relationships. Still, accordantly to Van der Want et al. (2015), teachers can enhance their relationships with students by becoming more aware of the meanings they attach to this relationship in specific situations. Similarly, understanding the nature and function of the emotions within good/bad interpersonal relationships is essential. In addition, teachers are needed to be aware that emotional expression influences their students' -partners- emotions and behavior (Clark et al., 1996; Van Kleef et al., 2010; Van Klee et al., 2011).

Hope proved a meaningful factor in interpersonal relationships. Accurately, teachers had certain hope level which impacted on the estimation of their interpersonal relationships with their students as good or bad, and on the subsequent attributions and emotions, mainly in bad relationships. Higher hope teachers, in contrast to low-hope counterparts, reported adaptive attributional and emotional pattern for their interpersonal relationships. Accordantly, hope thinking could be enhanced through interventions, based on Snyder's theory and respective researches (e.g., Feldman & Dreher, 2011). In doing so, attention should be given to both agency thinking and pathway though.

More research is needed to fully understand the role of hope in interpersonal relationships. Research also needs to examine the effects of teachers' beliefs and expectancies about the interpersonal relationships with their students on the observed associations as well as to investigate the consequences of the present emotional and cognitive pattern on relationship development.

Conclusively, the findings from this study contributes into research and practice that may help teachers develop and sustain good interpersonal relationships, with possible predictability of mindful professional life and personal well-being.

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