

A mixed-methods examination of hope and adolescent STEM career expectancies.

THE GIST: STEM fields are expanding rapidly, making it important to understand what drives adolescents' interest in STEM careers. This study explored how hope—a combination of future expectations, self-regulation, and social connections—relates to STEM career aspirations. While hope has been linked to academic success, its connection to STEM interest had not been thoroughly studied before.

This study surveyed middle and high school students in the southwestern U.S. Results showed that those with a hopeful expectation of the future were also likely to have an interest in STEM, especially in middle school boys and high school girls.

THE TAKEAWAY: The findings from this study suggest that fostering hope in students - especially by encouraging goal-setting and self-regulation - could increase interest in STEM careers. Promoting hopeful thinking in education may help more young people see STEM as a path to both personal success and positive societal impact.