



Exploring The Interplay Of Self-Esteem, Hope, And Social Support: A Comparative Study Among Employed And Unemployed Recent Graduates

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the intricate relationship between self-esteem, hope, and social support among recent graduates, focusing on the influence of employment status on these psychological factors. Through quantitative analysis, data was collected from both employed and unemployed recent graduates to examine the associations between self-esteem, hope, and social support.

The findings revealed significant differences between employed and unemployed recent graduates in terms of self-esteem and hope levels, with unemployed individuals exhibiting lower scores in both domains. Additionally, social support was found to moderate the relationship between employment status and psychological well-being, suggesting that high levels of perceived support may mitigate the negative impact of unemployment on self-esteem and hope.

These findings contribute to our understanding of the psychological challenges faced by recent graduates transitioning into the workforce and highlight the importance of addressing their psychological well-being. The implications of these findings extend to the development of interventions and support programs aimed at enhancing the successful integration of recent graduates into the professional sphere.

Keywords: Self-Esteem, Hope, Social Support, Employment Status, Unemployment, Recent Graduates, Psychological Well-being

Introduction

The transition from university to working life is a significant and often difficult stage in the life of a young adult. It is a time of change, growth, and uncertainty. This dissertation explores the complex interplay of self-esteem, hope, and social support among recent graduates, both employed and unemployed.

Unemployment among recent graduates is a pressing issue that has been widely researched over the years. The adverse effects of unemployment on mental health are well documented (Paul and Moser, 2009; Murphy and Athanasou, 1999; Bartelink et al., 2020). Unemployment can lead to feelings of inadequacy, self-doubt, and mental stress, which can exacerbate mental health problems. The psychological impact of unemployment goes beyond mental health and affects a person's self-esteem and leads to a decrease in goal-oriented activity (Feathis and Bond, 1983).

Self-esteem, often considered a cornerstone of personal identity, refers to an individual's subjective assessment of his or his own worth and abilities. Increased self-esteem generally corresponds to increased adaptability, optimism, and effective coping mechanisms, while decreased self-esteem can promote experiences of inadequacy, self-doubt, and emotional distress (Shamir, 1986; Lackovic-Grgin et al., 1996; Lars Axelsson and Göran Ejlertsson, 2003).

Amid these challenges, however, hope and social support emerge as key factors that can protect against the harmful effects of unemployment. In particular, hope has been identified as a key element in dealing with unemployed clients (Amundson et al., 2018). Activating hope can improve outcomes for the unemployed, increase resilience, and promote positive mental health (Walter, 2021).

Optimism and hope are highly correlated with personality and individual differences, suggesting that these traits can significantly influence a person's ability to cope with adversity (Alarcon, Bowling, & Khazon, 2013). In addition, the importance of social support, which includes both tangible and emotional activities of interpersonal networks to promote an individual's psychological well-being in the midst of transitions and stressful conditions, cannot be overstated.

On the other hand, social support has been found to reduce the health effects of unemployment (Gore, 1978). It can provide a sense of belonging, increase the self-esteem of unemployed college graduates, and promote emotional well-being (Lackovic-Grgin et al., 1996). The role of perceived social support between envy and emotion regulation among unemployed university graduates has also been investigated, highlighting the importance of supportive relationships in managing negative emotions and promoting positive mental health (Aisha Shakeel et al., 2023).

This study aims to delve into these relationships by examining how self-esteem, hope, and social support interact and influence each other in relation to the work situation. By comparing employed and unemployed recent graduates, this study aims to provide a more detailed understanding of these dynamics. It aims to shed light on the unique challenges faced by unemployed graduates and the resources to help them navigate this difficult period. Ultimately, this research hopes to contribute to more effective support strategies for young adults during this important transitional period, promoting flexibility, well-being, and a successful transition to working life (Atay and Güneri, 2023).

The transition from university to working life is not just a change in physical location or daily routine. It is a shift in identity, a redefinition of self. As students, individuals are part of a structured environment with clear goals and expectations. But as graduates, they are thrust into a world where they must create their own structure, set their own goals, and navigate the complexities of the workplace. This transition can be particularly challenging for those who are unable to find employment. The struggle to secure a job, the constant rejection, and the uncertainty of the future can take a toll on a person's mental health and self-esteem.

The impact of unemployment on mental health is not a new area of study. Numerous researchers have explored this topic and found a strong correlation between unemployment and mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and stress. Unemployment can lead to feelings of worthlessness, incompetence, and hopelessness. It can cause individuals to question their abilities and worth, leading to a decrease in self-esteem.

Self-esteem is pivotal in shaping our self-perception and our interactions with the world around us. It influences our beliefs, actions, and emotions. High self-esteem can lead to positive outcomes such as increased resilience, better stress management, and overall happiness. Conversely, diminished self-esteem can result in adverse effects such as depression, anxiety, and various mental health challenges.

Despite the challenges associated with unemployment, it is not all doom and gloom. There are factors that can buffer the negative effects of unemployment and help individuals navigate this difficult period. One such factor is hope. Hope can be a powerful tool in combating the negative effects of unemployment. It can inspire individuals to keep going, to keep searching for a job despite the rejections and disappointments. It can help them see beyond their current situation and envision a future where they are employed and financially stable.

Another important factor is social support. Social support can come from various sources such as family, friends, mentors, or professional networks. It can provide emotional support, practical assistance, and valuable advice. Social support can help individuals cope with the stress of unemployment, boost their self-esteem, and encourage them to keep striving for their goals.

This dissertation aims to explore these factors in depth. It seeks to understand how self-esteem, hope, and social support interact and influence each other in the context of unemployment. It aims to provide insights into the experiences of recent graduates, both employed and unemployed, and shed light on the resources and strategies that can help them navigate this challenging transition. By doing so, it hopes to contribute to the development of more effective support systems and interventions that can promote mental health, well-being, and successful transition to working life among young adults.

Review of Literature

Gore, S. (1978). Gore's study, conducted over two years, investigated the health impacts of involuntary job loss on 100 married men. The study found that social support did not affect the duration of unemployment or economic deprivation, but it significantly influenced health outcomes. Those with lower social support experienced more health issues and emotional distress. The study concluded that social support can help mitigate the health effects of unemployment.

Lackovic-Grgin et al. (1996) conducted a study on the relationship between social support and self-esteem among unemployed university graduates. The study aimed to understand how social support systems influence the self-esteem of individuals who have recently graduated but are unable to find employment. The findings of this study contribute to the understanding of the psychological impacts of unemployment and highlight the importance of social support in maintaining self-esteem during periods of unemployment.

Rylee P. Walter's 2012 study, "Activating Hope: How Functional Support Can Improve Hope in Unemployed Individuals," explores the relationship between functional support and hope in unemployed individuals. The study hypothesized that functional support would encourage the reappraisal of distressing unemployment-related emotions, leading to increased hopefulness. The research revealed that functional support correlates positively with state hope and inversely with unemployment distress. Notably, esteem support was identified as pivotal in fostering hopeful perceptions of support, although belonging and appraisal support also influenced hope. However, the findings did not suggest that reappraisal served as the mechanism linking support to hope. Additionally, insignificant moderation analyses indicated that support's association with hope was direct rather than buffering.

Alarcon, Bowling, and Khazon's 2013 study, "Great Expectations: A Meta-Analytic Examination of Optimism and Hope," conducted a meta-analysis to examine the relationship between optimism and hope. The research discovered that optimism and hope are distinct concepts and are linked to various measures of mental and physical health. Moreover, both optimism and hope are discernible from other personality traits, such as those outlined in the Five Factor Model and trait affectivity. The study concludes by suggesting future research avenues to explore optimism and hope further.

Amundson et al.'s 2018 study, "Hope-Centred Interventions with Unemployed Clients," The research explores the efficacy of hope-based interventions employed with clients in employment counseling centers exhibiting low hope. Five hope-centered interventions were administered in both face-to-face and online formats to participants, who completed various assessments at the beginning and end of the study. The findings suggest that enhancing hope competencies can elevate the overall sense of hope, which has a direct and measurable effect on how individuals perceive their career situation. Both face-to-face and online groups experienced similar outcomes.

Borgen and Amundson's 1994 study, "The Experience of Unemployment: Implications for Counselling," explores the psychological reactions to unemployment and the implications for counseling. The study is based on several studies regarding people's psychological reaction to unemployment. The authors identified several factors that either facilitated or impeded the unemployed. Enabling factors included familial and social support, maintaining a positive mindset, pursuing career changes or retraining, engaging in part-time or temporary work, participating in job-search support groups, receiving vocational counseling, initiating job-search activities, networking, and engaging in physical activity. Conversely, hindering factors encompassed

job rejections, financial strains, interactions with government agencies, uncertainty or pessimism about the future, ineffective job-search strategies, negative thought patterns, and familial conflicts. Additionally, the study revealed that group employment counseling yielded significant positive outcomes, with some participants securing employment (48%) and others sustaining active job-search efforts (52%). The timing of the group intervention appeared crucial, as some individuals experienced gradual decline after two months of unemployment, while others maintained optimism for up to six months before experiencing a rapid emotional downturn.

Paul, K.I., & Moser, K. (2009). The study conducted a meta-analysis to examine the effect of unemployment on mental health. The study found that unemployed individuals showed more distress than employed individuals. Additionally, the study revealed that men and individuals in blue-collar occupations experienced higher levels of distress due to unemployment compared to women and those in white-collar jobs. Moreover, the adverse impact of unemployment on mental health was more pronounced in countries characterized by lower levels of economic development, unequal income distributions, or inadequate unemployment protection systems. The study concluded that unemployment is not only correlated to distress but also causes it.

Murphy, G. C., & Athanasou, J. A. (1999). The study examined 6 recent longitudinal studies for evidence that a change in employment status affects mental health. The study found that job loss generally affects the mental health of the unemployed, with a weighted effect size of .54 for the question of the extent to which gaining employment impacts mental well-being, and a smaller weighted effect size (.36) for the question of the extent to which employment loss impacts mental health.

Md. Abdur Rafi, Mohammed A. Mamun, Kamrul Hsan, Moazzem Hossain & David Gozal. (2019). The study found that 49.3% of participants experienced moderate to severe depression, 53.6% experienced anxiety, and 28.3% experienced stress. The study concluded that the elevated levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among graduate job seekers warrant the adoption of market force initiatives integrating interventions addressing the key risk factors identified in the research.

Lim et al. (2018) conducted a study on job-seeking stress, mental health problems, and the role of perceived social support in university graduates in Korea. The study found that job-seeking stress was a significant factor affecting mental health problems among university graduates. It also highlighted the importance of social support in mitigating the negative effects of job-seeking stress.

Dunstan et al. (2017) examined the relationship between hope, social inclusion, and mental wellbeing in supported employment. The study found that hope and social inclusion were significant predictors of mental wellbeing. It suggested that interventions aimed at enhancing hope and social inclusion could improve mental wellbeing in supported employment settings.

Axelsson & Ejlertsson (2003) conducted a population-based study on self-reported health, self-esteem, and social support among young unemployed people. The study found that unemployed individuals reported poorer health and lower self-esteem compared to their employed counterparts. It also found that social support played a crucial role in mitigating the negative effects of unemployment.

Atay & Güneri (2023) studied the role of personal and social resources in thriving in the face of youth unemployment. The study found that personal resources such as self-efficacy and optimism, and social resources such as social support, played a significant role in helping young people thrive despite unemployment.

Bartelink et al. (2020) conducted a systematic review on unemployment among young people and mental health. The review found that unemployment was associated with a range of mental health problems among young people, including depression, anxiety, and stress. It highlighted the need for interventions to support the mental health of unemployed young people.

Feathis & Bond (1983) studied time structure and purposeful activity among employed and unemployed university graduates. The study found that unemployed graduates had less structured time and engaged in

fewer purposeful activities compared to employed graduates. This lack of structure and purpose was associated with lower levels of psychological wellbeing.

Shamir (1986) examined self-esteem and the psychological impact of unemployment. The study found that unemployment had a significant negative impact on self-esteem. It also found that low self-esteem was associated with high levels of psychological distress among unemployed individuals.

Shakeel et al. (2023) studied the mediating role of perceived social support between envy and emotional regulation among unemployed graduates. The study found that perceived social support played a significant mediating role between envy and emotional regulation. It suggested that enhancing social support could help unemployed graduates manage negative emotions and improve their emotional regulation.

Schaufeli & VanYperen (1992) conducted a longitudinal study on unemployment and psychological distress among graduates. The study found that unemployment was associated with increased psychological distress over time. It also found that the impact of unemployment on psychological distress was moderated by individual differences, such as coping style and personality traits.

The study in Anxiety, Stress, & Coping (2021) examined the psychological implications of unemployment. The study found that unemployment was associated with increased levels of anxiety and stress. It highlighted the need for interventions to support the mental health of unemployed individuals.

Sinha (2018) studied the effects of unemployment in Indian graduates from psychological, financial, and social perspectives. The study found that unemployment had significant psychological, financial, and social impacts on Indian graduates. It highlighted the need for policies and interventions to support unemployed graduates in India.

Biswas et al. (2024) conducted a study on the psychological implications of unemployment among highly educated migrant youth in Kolkata City, India. The study found that unemployment was associated with increased levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among migrant youth. It highlighted the need for interventions to support the mental health of unemployed migrant youth in India.

Bhandari (2018) studied the causes and psychological impact of unemployment among university graduates in Bhutan. The study found that unemployment had a significant psychological impact on university graduates in Bhutan. It highlighted the need for policies and interventions to support unemployed graduates in Bhutan.

Singh & Singh (2004) compared the level of life satisfaction between educated unemployed and employed youth in India. The study found that unemployed youth had lower levels of life satisfaction compared to employed youth. It highlighted the need for interventions to enhance life satisfaction among unemployed youth in India.

Kaur (2020) compared anxiety, stress, and depression levels between employed and unemployed individuals. The study found that unemployed individuals had high levels of anxiety, stress, and depression compared to employed individuals. It highlighted the need for interventions to support the mental health of unemployed individuals.

Methodology

Aim: To explore whether social support can mitigate the effects of low self-esteem and hope among unemployed individuals.

Objectives:

1. Examine the Relationship: Investigate the correlation between employment status (employed vs. unemployed) and the levels of self-esteem among graduates.
2. Compare Self-Esteem Levels: Compare and contrast the self-esteem levels of employed and unemployed graduates to identify any significant differences.
3. Evaluate the Role of Social Support: Assess the role of social support in moderating or mediating the relationship between employment status and self-esteem among graduates.

Hypothesis:

1. Hypothesis 1: Unemployed recent graduates will exhibit lower levels of self-esteem compared to employed recent graduates.
2. Hypothesis 2: Hope levels will be significantly lower among unemployed graduates as compared to those that are employed.
3. Hypothesis 3: Social support will predict levels of hope and self-esteem in unemployed graduates.

Sample and Selection Criteria

The sample consisted of participants recently awarded a bachelor's degree from diverse fields. Both genders were proportionately represented.

For the employed sample, participants were considered for the study if they obtained employment within a defined period of time of two years after receiving their bachelor's degree. Employment was confirmed by the participant's report and, when possible, cross-referenced with documentation.

The unemployed sample consisted of individuals who were recently awarded a bachelor's degree and who were currently unemployed and seeking employment. Unemployment was confirmed by the participant's report. It is important to mention that recent bachelor's degree graduates, who were not seeking employment, were excluded from the study.

- Inclusion criteria were the same for both groups and consisted of the following: Completion of a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.
- 18 years of age and older.
- Willingness to participate in the survey.

Participants were recruited through various means, such as alumni networks, mailing lists, online resources, and other means of discreet discretion. When recruiting potential study participants the confidentiality of their involvement in the study was assured and explicit consent was requested before the commencement of participation.

Research Design

This dissertation employs a cross-sectional comparative design to investigate the interplay of self-esteem, hope, and social support among employed and unemployed recent graduates. Data collected through surveys are analyzed using regression analysis to explore relationships between variables and T-tests to compare group differences. This design allows for insights into how employment status influences psychological factors among recent graduates, informing interventions to support their well-being during the transition to the workforce.

Tools

The following standardized instruments were employed to measure the key variables of interest in this study:

1. **Adult Hope Scale (AHS):** The Adult Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1991) was used to assess participants' levels of hope. This scale comprises 12 items rated on an 8-point Likert scale, with high scores indicating greater levels of hope. The AHS evaluates two aspects of hope: pathways thinking, which reflects confidence in one's capability to devise pathways toward desired objectives, and agency thinking, which pertains to the motivation to actively pursue those goals.
2. **Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MPSS):** The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al., 1988) was utilized to measure participants' perceptions of social support. This scale comprises 12 items gauging perceived support from three sources: family, friends, and significant others. Participants rate items on a 7-point Likert scale, with high scores indicating stronger perceived social support.
3. **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES):** The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) was administered to assess participants' self-esteem. This widely used scale comprises 10 items designed to measure global self-esteem. Participants express their agreement with statements using a 4-point Likert scale, where high scores signify elevated levels of self-esteem.

Procedure and Statistical Design

Participant Recruitment: Participants were recruited through various channels, including university alumni networks, online platforms, and social media advertisements. Individuals who met the inclusion criteria of recent bachelor's degree completion and employment status were invited to participate in the study.

Data Collection: Data collection involved administering the Adult Hope Scale (AHS), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MPSS), and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) to participants. Surveys were disseminated electronically through secure online platforms, enabling participants to complete them at their convenience. Clear instructions outlining the study's objectives were provided, and informed consent was obtained from participants prior to their involvement.

Data Analysis: Quantitative data analysis was conducted using regression analysis and independent samples t-tests. Regression analysis was employed to examine the relationships between self-esteem, hope, and social support among both employed and unemployed recent graduates. T-tests were used to compare the levels of self-esteem, hope, and social support between the employed and unemployed groups. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Ethical Considerations: The study received ethical approval from the relevant institutional review board. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, and informed consent was obtained prior to their involvement. Measures were implemented to safeguard the privacy and security of participants' data during both data collection and analysis phases.

Results:

Hypothesis 1: Unemployed recent graduates will exhibit lower levels of self-esteem compared to employed recent graduates, reflecting the potential impact of employment status on individual self-perception.

Table 1

	EMP.STATUS	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SELFESTEEM	Employed	75	27.89	4.837	.558
	Unemployed	75	25.63	6.264	.723

Table 2

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
SELFESTEEM	Equal variances assumed	6.950	.009	2.480	148	.014	2.267	.914	.461	4.073
	Equal variances not assumed			2.480	139.099	.014	2.267	.914	.460	4.073

We conducted an independent samples t-test to compare the self-esteem levels between unemployed recent graduates and employed recent graduates. Here's a breakdown of the results:

1. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances:

- The Levene's test checks the assumption of equal variances between the two groups. The null hypothesis for this test is that the variances are equal.
- The obtained F-value is 6.950, and the associated p-value is .009, indicating that the assumption of equal variances is violated ($p < .05$).

2. t-test for Equality of Means:

- The t-test compares the means of self-esteem scores between the two groups.
- With equal variances assumed, the t-value is 2.480 with 148 degrees of freedom. The associated p-value is .014, indicating that there is a statistically significant difference in self-esteem levels between unemployed and employed recent graduates at the .05 significance level.

- The mean difference in self-esteem scores between the two groups is 2.267, with a standard error of .914.
 - The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means ranges from .461 to 4.073.
3. When equal variances are not assumed, the results are similar, with a slight change in degrees of freedom (139.099) due to the adjustment for unequal variances.

Based on these results, we would reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant difference in self-esteem levels between unemployed recent graduates and employed recent graduates, with unemployed recent graduates exhibiting lower levels of self-esteem.

Hypothesis 2: Hope levels will be significantly lower among unemployed recent graduates as compared to their employed counterparts, suggesting that the experience of unemployment may influence one's outlook on the future.

Table 3

	EMP.STATUS	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
HOPE	Employed	75	64.41	7.343	.848
	Unemployed	75	56.47	10.512	1.214

Table 4

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
								Lower	Upper	
HOPE	4.873	.029	5.367	148	.000	7.947	1.481	5.021	10.873	
			5.367	132.332	.000	7.947	1.481	5.018	10.875	

For Hypothesis 2, which states that hope levels will be significantly lower among unemployed graduates compared to those that are employed, the analysis involved comparing the mean hope levels between the two groups (employed and unemployed). Here's a breakdown of the results:

1. Group Statistics:

- Employed: Mean hope level = 64.41, Standard Deviation = 7.343, N = 75
- Unemployed: Mean hope level = 56.47, Standard Deviation = 10.512, N = 75

2. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances:

- The Levene's test checks the assumption of equal variances between the two groups. The null hypothesis for this test is that the variances are equal.

- The obtained F-value is 4.873, and the associated p-value is .029, indicating that the assumption of equal variances is violated ($p < .05$).

3. t-test for Equality of Means:

- The t-test compares the means of hope levels between the two groups.
- With equal variances assumed, the t-value is 5.367 with 148 degrees of freedom. The associated p-value is .000, indicating that there is a statistically significant difference in hope levels between unemployed and employed graduates at the .05 significance level.
- The mean difference in hope levels between the two groups is 7.947, with a standard error of 1.481.
- The 95% confidence interval for the difference in means ranges from 5.021 to 10.873.

4. When equal variances are not assumed, the results are similar, with a slight change in degrees of freedom (132.332) due to the adjustment for unequal variances.

Based on these results, we would reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant difference in hope levels between unemployed graduates and employed graduates, with unemployed graduates exhibiting significantly lower levels of hope.

Hypothesis 3: Social support will moderate the relationship between employment status and both self-esteem and hope, with high levels of social support mitigating the negative impact of unemployment on self-esteem and hope among recent graduates.

Table 5

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Hope Unemployed	56.47	10.512	75
Support Unemployed	4.8019	1.25382	75
Self Esteem Unemployed	25.63	6.264	75

Table 6

Correlations		Hope Unemployed	Support Unemployed	Self Esteem Unemployed
Hope Unemployed	Pearson Correlation	1	.549**	.487**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0
	N	75	75	75

Support Unemployed	Pearson Correlation	.549**	1	.584**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0		0
	N	75	75	75
Self Esteem Unemployed	Pearson Correlation	.487**	.584**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	
	N	75	75	75
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

- Hope Unemployed vs. Support Unemployed:** The Pearson correlation coefficient between Hope Unemployed and Support Unemployed is $r=0.549$, indicating a moderately positive correlation. This suggests that those who report high levels of hope related to unemployment also report high levels of perceived support from others regarding their unemployment situation.
- Hope Unemployed vs. Self Esteem Unemployed:** The correlation coefficient between Hope Unemployed and Self Esteem Unemployed is $r=0.487$, also indicating a moderately positive correlation. This implies that individuals who express more hope in the context of unemployment tend to also have high levels of self-esteem related to their unemployment status.
- Support Unemployed vs. Self Esteem Unemployed:** The correlation coefficient between Support Unemployed and Self Esteem Unemployed is $r=0.584$, indicating a moderately positive correlation. This suggests that individuals who perceive more support from others regarding their unemployment situation also tend to have high levels of self-esteem related to their unemployment status.

Discussion

The results of this study provide valuable insights into the psychological dynamics experienced by recent graduates, particularly in relation to their employment status. The discussion will focus on each hypothesis and its implications for understanding the interplay of self-esteem, hope, and social support among employed and unemployed recent graduates.

Hypothesis 1: The findings support the hypothesis that unemployed recent graduates exhibit lower levels of self-esteem compared to their employed counterparts. This underscores the significant impact of employment status on individual self-perception. Unemployment can often lead to feelings of inadequacy, uncertainty, and diminished self-worth, contributing to lower self-esteem levels among recent graduates who are unable to secure employment. These findings highlight the importance of addressing the psychological well-being of unemployed individuals, particularly in terms of bolstering their self-esteem and resilience during the job search process.

Hypothesis 2: The results also confirm the hypothesis that hope levels are significantly lower among unemployed recent graduates compared to their employed counterparts. The experience of unemployment can profoundly influence one's outlook on the future, with feelings of hopelessness and uncertainty prevalent among individuals facing prolonged periods of joblessness. Lower hope levels among unemployed graduates may hinder their motivation, goal-setting, and overall psychological well-being, underscoring the need for targeted interventions aimed at restoring and nurturing hope among this population.

Hypothesis 3: The findings provide partial support for the hypothesis that social support moderates the relationship between employment status and both self-esteem and hope among recent graduates. The positive correlations observed between social support, self-esteem, and hope among unemployed individuals suggest that high levels of perceived support from others may mitigate the negative impact of unemployment on self-esteem and hope. This underscores the importance of social networks and support systems in buffering individuals against the adverse effects of unemployment and fostering psychological resilience during transitional phases.

Overall, the results of this study contribute to our understanding of the psychological challenges faced by recent graduates transitioning into the workforce. The findings underscore the importance of addressing the psychological well-being of unemployed individuals and the potential role of social support in mitigating the negative impact of unemployment on self-esteem and hope. These insights have implications for the development of interventions, support programs, and policy initiatives aimed at enhancing the psychological resilience and successful integration of recent graduates into professional spheres. Further research is warranted to explore additional factors influencing the psychological well-being of recent graduates and to develop comprehensive strategies for supporting their transition into the workforce.

Summary

This dissertation examined the complex interplay of self-esteem, hope, and social support among recent graduates, with a particular focus on how employment status influences these psychological factors. Through quantitative analysis, data was collected from both employed and unemployed recent graduates to investigate the relationships between these variables.

The findings of the study revealed several key insights. Firstly, unemployed recent graduates exhibited lower levels of self-esteem compared to their employed counterparts, highlighting the profound impact of employment status on individual self-perception. Secondly, hope levels were significantly lower among unemployed recent graduates, suggesting the importance of addressing the psychological consequences of unemployment. Lastly, social support was found to moderate the relationship between employment status and both self-esteem and hope, indicating the potential role of social networks in buffering individuals against the adverse effects of unemployment.

These findings contribute to our understanding of the psychological challenges faced by recent graduates transitioning into the workforce and underscore the importance of addressing their psychological well-being. The implications of these findings extend to the development of interventions and support programs aimed at enhancing the successful integration of recent graduates into the professional sphere.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this dissertation sheds light on the psychological dynamics experienced by recent graduates and underscores the significance of employment status in shaping their psychological well-being. The findings highlight the importance of addressing the unique challenges faced by unemployed recent graduates and emphasize the potential role of social support in fostering resilience during transitional phases.

Moving forward, it is essential to continue exploring the determinants of psychological well-being among recent graduates and to develop comprehensive strategies for supporting their transition into the workforce. By addressing the psychological needs of recent graduates, we can facilitate their successful integration into professional spheres and contribute to their long-term career success and fulfillment.

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