



Hope, Perceived Social support and Psychological Well-being among Unemployed Young Adults

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Abstract: The present study aimed to find Hope, Perceived Social support and Psychological Well-being among Unemployed Young Adults. The sample taken was 220 Unemployed Young Adults (66 males and 154 females). The instruments including the Adult Hope Scale, Psychological Well-Being Scale and Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support were used. For data analysis correlation, regression, and t-test were done. The findings of the study are: (1) All the selected variables have a significant relationship with each other. (2) Hope and its sub-variables (Agency thinking and Pathway thinking), Support from Family and Support from Friends are significant predictors of Psychological Well-being. (3) Significant sex difference exists in case of Hope, sub-variables of Hope, Perceived Social Support, sub-variables of Perceived Social Support, and Psychological Well-being. Hope and Social Support play a key role in determining the Psychological-Wellbeing of Unemployed Young Adults.

Key wordss - Psychological Well-being, Hope, Perceived Social Support, Unemployed Young Adults

I. INTRODUCTION

Unemployment refers to the condition of being Jobless. Kerala has faced a significant and persistent problem of chronic unemployment among a substantial portion of its working population over the past few decades. When such challenges persist over an extended period, they can result in financial difficulties, behavioral problems, and a deterioration in mental well-being. The Positive mental health of human beings is a factor that fortifies their existence. Having good mental health is not only the lack of illness but rather a state of overall well-being.

Psychological well-being

Psychological well-being is conceptualized as inter and intra-individual levels of positive functioning that can include one's relatedness with others and self-referent attitudes that include one's sense of mastery and personal growth (Burns, 2016). By definition, therefore, people with a high level of psychological well-being describe themselves as happy, capable, content with their lives, and so on. Psychological well-being is compromised when negative emotions are extreme or enduring and impair one's ability to function in his or her daily life. Unemployed individuals have lower levels of Psychological Well-being in comparison to the employed group (Bhat & Joshi, 2020).

Hope

Well-being is the product of a multitude of psychological factors, among which hope plays a significant role. Hope can be described as the belief in one's ability to create and inspire oneself to follow paths that lead to desired outcomes. Snyder, Irving, and Anderson proposed the following definition in 1991: "Hope is a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy), and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)". Agency thinking is the perceived capacity to use one's pathways to reach desired goals-is the motivational component in hope theory. These self-referential thoughts involve the energy to begin and continue using a pathway through all stages of the goal pursuit. Pathway thinking is used to identify possible ways to achieve a goal. Pathway thinking can be aided by focusing on specific important goals. Starting with a clear goal will increase one's ability to identify targeted pathways.

An investigation on gender differences in feelings of hopelessness among unemployed college graduates found that, the duration of unemployment had an effect on hopelessness scores among males, while advancing age was identified as a notable contributing factor to the development of hopelessness among female graduates (Olawa et al., 2016).

Social support

Social support is considered to be another factor linked with an individual's overall well-being. Using the subjective-objective dimension as a starting point, Lin (1986) defined social support as "perceived or actual instrumental and/or expressive provisions supplied by the community, social networks, and confiding partners". Research shows that, Family support is important to the Psychological Well-being of unemployed individuals (Huffman et.al, 2015).

1.1 Need and Significance of the study

Unemployment is a prevalent issue both in India and on a global scale. In the context of the state-wise unemployment rates for individuals aged 15 years and above in 2018-19, it is evident that Kerala exhibited a noteworthy 9.0% unemployment rate, with rural and urban areas reporting rates of 8.4% and 9.7%, respectively (Periodic Labour Force Survey, 2019), signifying a high prevalence of unemployment in the region. Research has established a connection between unemployment and adverse mental health outcomes, including increased levels of depression (Waters & Moore, 2001) and decreased self-esteem (Muller, Hicks, & Winocur, 1993) among the unemployed population. Also, these consequences can have detrimental effects on social stability and overall workforce productivity, both of which are pivotal for the progress and development of the state.

Despite the World Health Organization (WHO) recognizing unemployed young adults as a newly emerging vulnerable group for mental health issues in 2013 (WHO, 2013), there is a current dearth of research focused on assessing the extent of mental health challenges within this vulnerable demographic in Kerala. It is well-established that long-term unemployment, especially in the wake of events like the COVID-19 pandemic, can have severe physical and mental health implications (Witte et al., 2012). Consequently, the persistent and substantial unemployment resulting from the pandemic poses a grave public health concern. The escalating suicide rates are particularly alarming, with 14% of suicides by unemployed individuals occurring in Kerala (1,963 out of 14,019 suicides), 10.8% in Maharashtra (1,511), 9.8% in Tamil Nadu (1,368), and 9.2% in Karnataka (1,293) (Anil, 2020). Hence, it is imperative for mental health professionals to raise awareness within society regarding the link between rising unemployment and an upsurge in suicide rates, underscoring the relevance of this study.

1.2 Objectives

1. To know whether there exist any relationship between Hope, Perceived Social Support and Psychological Well-being among Unemployed Young Adults.
2. To know whether Hope and Perceived Social Support predict Psychological Well-being of Unemployed Young Adults.
3. To know how Hope and Perceived Social Support influence the Psychological Well-being of Unemployed Young Adults based on certain demographic variables.

II. METHOD

2.1 Sample

The sample of the study consist of 220 unemployed young adults, 66 males and 154 females belonging to the age group of 20-30 years residing different districts of Kerala. Among this 186 are unmarried and 34 are married individuals.

2.2 Sources of Data

The data was collected from participants who belonged to different districts of Kerala by the researcher itself. For that, the scales and personal data sheet were given to the participants after taking the consent. They were provided with an explanation of the study's objectives, and assurances regarding the confidentiality and safety of their data.

2.3 Tools

Adult Hope Scale (AHS): Adult Hope scale was developed by Snyder et al (1991). It is a 12-item measure of a respondent's level of Hope, which is divided into two subscales: Agency (i.e., goaldirected energy) and Pathways (i.e., planning to accomplish goals). Of the 12 items, 4 items make up the Agency subscale, 4 items make up the Pathways subscale and the remaining 4 items are fillers. Each item is answered in an 8-point Likert scale ranging from 'Definitely False' to 'Definitely True'. Fillers were excluded from scoring. The total Hope score ranges between 8 and 64, with a higher score indicating higher Hope.

Psychological Well-being Scale (PWS): The 13-item Psychological Well-being Scale was developed by Manikandan and Mary (2015) in regional language (Malayalam) based on the concept of positive functioning of the individual. All items are worded positively to indicate Psychological Well-being. Each item is answered in a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'. The score can range from 13 to 65, with a higher score indicating higher Psychological Well-being.

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS): The instrument was developed by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, and Farley in 1988 to measure the Perceived Social Support. The scale consists of 3 subscales- Significant others, Family and Friends. These scales are measured by 12 statements (4 each) which were assessed on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'Very Strongly Disagree' to 'Very Strongly Agree'. All the scores of 12 items were added to find the total score of Perceived Social Support. The total score ranged from 12 to 84, with a higher score indicating higher Perceived Social Support.

Personal data sheet: Personal Data Sheet taps relevant information like Gender, Marital status, Educational Qualification, and Previous job experience.

2.4 Statistical techniques

The statistical techniques were selected based on the objectives of the study. Here the investigator employed statistical techniques such as Person product moment correlation, Regression, and t-test.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result of Correlation between Study Variables

To know whether there is any relationship between Hope, Perceived Social Support and Psychological Well-being among unemployed young adults Person product moment correlation was calculated and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Correlations of variables under study

Variables	Agency	Pathway	Hope	Psychological Well -being	Significant Others	Family	Friends	Social support
Agency	-							
Pathway	.552**	-						
Hope	.900**	.860**	-					
Psychological Well-being	.639**	.487**	.645**	-				
Significant Others	.240**	.154*	.227**	.341**	-			
Family	.350**	.207**	.322**	.476**	.369**	-		
Friends	.235**	.225**	.261**	.445**	.414**	.401**	-	
Social support	.357**	.249**	.349**	.539**	.796**	.768**	.750**	-

*p< .05 **p< .01

Table 1 shows, all the variables are significantly correlated to each other. The relationship between Significant other's support and Pathway thinking is statistically significant at 5% level of significance. All the other variables are correlated to each other at 1% level of significance.

3.2 Result of Regression between Study Variables

To know whether Hope, Optimism, and Social Support predict Psychological Well-being of unemployed young adults regression analysis was performed with enter method and results are presented in table 2

Table 2
Simultaneous Regression between Psychological Well-being, Hope and Social Support

Index	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value
Agency	.570	.083	.413	6.862**
Pathway	.246	.091	.152	2.702**
Significant Others	.067	.060	.058	1.112
Family	.228	.067	.184	3.397**
Friends	.307	.078	.210	3.946**

**p< .01

The table 2 shows, the variables Agency thinking (t=6.862, p<0.01), Pathway thinking (t=2.702, p<0.01), Family's support (t=3.397, p<0.01) and Friend's support (t=3.946, p<0.01) constitute the 55% of variance in the Psychological Well-being. That is, the variables Agency thinking and Pathway thinking of Hope, Family's support and Friend's support are the significant predictors of Psychological Well-being among Unemployed Young Adults.

3.3 Result of t-test based on sex

To know whether the variables have any significant mean differences between the groups based on the sex t-test was employed. The mean scores of males and females on the study variables and t-value are presented in table 3.

Table 3

Mean, SD and t-value of, Hope (Agency, Pathway), Psychological Well-being and Social support (Significant Others, Family, Friends) by Sex

Variables	Sex	Mean	SD	t-value
Agency	Male	22.15	5.818	2.767**
	Female	24.44	5.091	
Pathway	Male	23.59	5.123	1.990*
	Female	25.03	4.342	
Hope	Male	45.74	9.713	2.719**
	Female	49.46	8.234	
Psychological Well-being	Male	45.47	7.119	2.542*
	Female	48.18	7.496	
Significant Others	Male	19.12	7.501	2.508*
	Female	21.73	5.915	
Family	Male	18.94	6.312	3.189**
	Female	21.82	5.705	
Friends	Male	19.61	5.854	3.493**
	Female	22.43	4.536	
Social support	Male	57.67	15.571	3.872**
	Female	65.97	11.969	

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

The table 3 shows, Psychological Well-being, Hope and its sub-variables, Social Support and its sub variables vary significantly among males and females. While comparing the mean scores of all the variables between male and female, it can be seen that unemployed females have high means scores than males. The worries or feelings of insecurities which may be present among the males due to the increase in population of females can be the cause for this significant sex difference among these variables. Also, in Kerala the caring attitude provided by parents towards female children and the difference in child rearing may contribute to this difference.

3.4 Result of t-test based on marital status

To know whether the variables have any significant mean differences between the groups based on the marital status t-test was employed. The mean scores of unmarried and married individuals on the study variables and t-value are presented in table 4.

Table 4

Mean, SD and t-value of Hope (Agency, Pathway), Psychological Well-being and Social support (Significant Others, Family, Friends) by Marital status

Variables	Marital status	Mean	SD	t-value
Agency	Unmarried	23.62	5.568	0.987
	Married	24.47	4.440	
Pathway	Unmarried	24.51	4.556	0.630
	Married	25.09	5.029	
Hope	Unmarried	48.12	9.070	0.989
	Married	49.56	7.520	
Psychological Well-being	Unmarried	47.41	7.515	0.212
	Married	47.12	7.343	
Significant Others	Unmarried	20.56	6.746	2.606**
	Married	23.03	4.700	
Family	Unmarried	20.74	6.023	1.230
	Married	22.12	5.994	
Friends	Unmarried	21.83	4.925	1.463
	Married	20.24	5.990	
Social support	Unmarried	63.13	13.712	0.895
	Married	65.38	13.416	

** $p < .01$

The table 4 shows, support from Significant Others has significant difference by marital status. The mean score for Significant Others among married individuals is 23.03 which is slightly high than that of unmarried individuals and it is statistically significant. This may be because married individuals often identified the significant other as their spouse. Only significant difference in Support from Significant Others was found between unemployed married and unmarried individuals. No other variables show significant difference between unemployed married and unmarried individuals.

IV. CONCLUSION

The present study was able to conclude that, though the variable Support from Significant Others stood chance to predict Psychological Well-being, only the Support from family and Support from Friends (sub-variables of Perceived Social Support), Hope and its sub variables (agency and pathway thinking) stood as a significant predictor to Psychological Well-being among Unemployed Young Adults. That is, Psychological Well-being of unemployed young individual's may get enhanced through getting support from Family and Friends. Also, being Hopeful might actually reduce anxiety and distress related to unemployment.

The study seems particularly beneficial to employ Hope and social support oriented models in strategies or interventions aimed at developing the Psychological Well-being of the Unemployed Young Adults and preventing Hopelessness and distress among them. Furthermore, the study acknowledged the significance of social support in the Psychological Well-being of unemployed young individuals, emphasizing the necessity for community-level awareness initiatives aimed at families.

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