



RESEARCH ARTICLE

LONELINESS AS PREDICTOR OF DEPRESSION AMONG UNEMPLOYEDMehfooz Ahmad¹, Aqeel Khan²¹RCI licensed Clinical Psychologist, Bijnor, UP 246701.²School of Education, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Skudai, 81310, Johor, Malaysia.*Corresponding Author Email: mehfooz.aliq@gmail.com

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ARTICLE DETAILS

ABSTRACT

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Researches have shown that the unemployed have significantly higher 'psychological distress. Loneliness has been associated with many negative mental health outcomes such as depression, suicidality, reduced positive emotions, poor sleep quality and general health, as well as physiological changes. Lonely people have indicated that they are less happy, less satisfied, more pessimistic, and suffer from more depressive symptoms. The aim of present study was to examine loneliness as predictor of depression among unemployed. The scale of loneliness and Beck Depression Inventory II were administered on 68 unemployed participants age ranging from 20-35 years in Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh. Multiple Regression analysis was done for the analysis of data. Results revealed that loneliness significantly predict depression among unemployed.

KEYWORDS

loneliness, depression, unemployed

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent researches have shown that the unemployed have significantly higher 'psychological distress' [1]. A researcher suggested that confronting uncontrollable events leads to a sense of helplessness and loss of control [2]. If unemployment is perceived as an uncontrollable event, is it capable of altering a person's control locus either temporary or permanently? In other hand, some researchers stated that unemployment does not only have an impact on the manifest function (gaining an income) of employment, but also on five latent functions: 1) establishment of structure in life, 2) providing social contact outside the family, 3) status and prestige, 4) opportunities for self-realization and activity and 5) the ability to deploy one's capacities to fully contribute to society [3]. A group researcher maintains that unemployment can also affect social support through its negative impact on significant others, especially partners who are directly and indirectly affected by the stressor [4].

Previous research uses the concepts of 'unemployment' and 'joblessness' interchangeably, when it has been established that a more precise definition of labour market status is crucial [5]. When jobs are rare, as is typically the case among disadvantaged minority groups, the low probability of getting new employment should result in more distress than when reemployment is easy to obtain [6]. The negative effects of an early-career job loss may work through channels of increased subsequent unemployment risks, employment instability and lower job quality [7-11]. The persons of middle age have little access to alternative identity constructions beyond the work role, young persons may be able to find alternative identities in subcultures and older unemployed persons can categorize themselves not as "unemployed", but as "early retired", a process that is likely to buffer the negative mental health effects of unemployment [12,13]. found elevated depression, anxiety, and somaticism occurring only as brief initial responses for some workers; for others the emotional strain did not abate even when unemployment ended.

Research comparing unemployed with employed people has consistently found higher levels of psychological distress and depression, and lower

levels of self-esteem among the unemployed [14,15]. Unemployed persons have a lower confidence; feel rejected by society and in turn to developing feelings of resentment for the society. They experience years of bitterness and frustration and have symptoms of depression. Grows in them the feeling that they cannot get the life in their hands, so clipping their expectations of themselves and others [16].

2. LONELINESS AND DEPRESSION

Apart from the indirect adverse effects of loneliness, there are direct consequences for the unemployed, such as depressive symptoms and physical symptoms, which show that the feeling of loneliness and the perceived degraded social position, can lead to a generalized poor health [17]. Gaev maintained that loneliness is a feeling of sadness that an individual experience when the desire or the attempt to relate with some aspect of the world is frustrated [18]. He asserted that the most significant problem contributing to loneliness in our modern world is the pervasive sense of meaninglessness many people feel.

Loneliness appears in different forms. For example, some group researchers classified loneliness as deep loneliness which comes with depression, social statue loneliness which is formed by sensing self-estranged in society, sensual loneliness which is formed when the person cannot get a respond to his mental expectations even if he is in fine physical and environmental circumstances, and hidden loneliness in which the behaviors are apparently normal [19,20]. Loneliness has been associated with many negative mental health outcomes such as depression, suicidality, reduced positive emotions, poor sleep quality and general health, as well as physiological changes (e.g., increased cortisol awakening response and pro-inflammatory gene expression) [21,22].

A study conducted revealed that the loneliness was related to poor psychological adjustment, dissatisfaction with family and social relationship [23]. In a study, stated that more internet use was associated with an increase in perceived social support but also decrease in loneliness [24]. As majority of prior research have focused on either social isolation or loneliness only, or merging these two together as one concept, there is uncertainty in regard to which of the two plays a more important role in

depression [25]. Lonely people have indicated that they are less happy, less satisfied, more pessimistic, and suffer from more depressive symptoms than people who are not lonely [26]. Some researcher found that perceived material deprivation increases with the length of unemployment among young people [27].

2.1 Current Study

Researches have shown that the unemployed have significantly higher 'psychological distress. Loneliness has been associated with many negative mental health outcomes such as depression, suicidality, reduced positive emotions, poor sleep quality and general health, as well as physiological changes. As the historical and societal settings in which unemployment occurs are very important in interpreting findings there is a need for unemployment research in many different countries [28]. Therefore, researcher planned to measure loneliness as predictor of depression among unemployed.

3. METHODS

3.1 Participants

68 unemployed participants age ranging 20-35 years, who have been taken for the study.

3.2 Tools

3.2.1 Socio-Demographic and Clinical Data Sheet (SDCS)

This data sheet was be used to obtain information about age, gender, education and occupation.

3.2.2 The UCLA Loneliness Scale

It was developed by Russell, Peplau and Ferguson and was re-ordered in 1980 [29]. It is a scale made of 20 items of which 10 are direct and the other 10 are reverse coded. In each item of the scale, a circumstance that states a sense or a thought about the social relation is presented and the individuals are asked to state how often they meet this circumstance, on a four-point Likert scale. Higher score is accepted as a sign of loneliness that is met very occasionally. The lowest scores to be received from the scale is 20 and the highest is 80. In Turkey, the validity and reliability study of the UCLA Loneliness Scale was completed the internal consistency coefficient as 0.96; and the correlation coefficient as 0.94 by the test-retest method.

3.2.3 Beck Depression Inventory

Depression was measured by Beck Depression Inventory developed [30]. BDI-II contains 21 questions, each answer being scored on a scale value of 0 to 3. The test was also shown to have a high one-week test-retest reliability (Pearson $r = 0.93$), suggesting that it was not overly sensitive to daily variations in mood. The test also has high internal consistency ($\alpha = .91$).

3.2.4 Procedure

Informed consent was taken prior to the administration of tools. The demographic data sheet, loneliness scale and Beck Depression Inventory II were administered on 68 unemployed participants age ranging from 20-35 years in Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh. The participants were briefed about the purpose of the study. Then participants were given the questionnaires and proper instructions for completing the questionnaires. Confidentiality of data was ensured. Data analysis was performed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 21.0 version. Obtained data was analyzed with Multiple Regression Analysis.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of unemployed participants

Education	Professional Courses (29)	Post graduate (17)	Graduate (16)	Ph. D. (6)
Year of Unemployment	0-6 Months (38)	6-12 Months (19)	More than one year (9)	
Gender	Male (46)	Female (22)		
Marital Status	Married (20)	Unmarried (48)		
Religion	Hindu (25)	Muslim (33)	Sikh (7)	Christian (3)
Rural/Urban	Urban (45)	Rural (23)		

Table 1 revealed that twenty-nine participants have done professional courses, seventeen post-graduation, sixteen graduation and six Ph. D. In the sample thirty-eight participants were unemployed for six months, nineteen participants six months to twelve months and nine participants were unemployed more than one year. There were fourty six male and twenty-two female. There were twenty married participants and forty

eight single. In terms of religion twenty-five were hindues, thirty-three muslims, seven sikh and three Christians. Fourty five participants were from urban area and twenty-three were from rural areas.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 2: Descriptive statistics

	N	Mean	Std Deviation
Loneliness	68	38.26	13.62
Depression	68	15.14	5.14

Table 3: Summary of multiple regression analysis of lonliness and depression among unemployed.

Variables	R	Adjusted R square	F	Level of significance	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
					Beta		
Loneliness	.827	.678	142.293	.001	.827	11.929	.001

It can be seen from table 3, that the adjusted R square value was .827 which shows that our model accounts for 82.7% of the variance in depression, it could be attributed to loneliness. This model was significant at .001 levels. The beta value and significance value for loneliness was .827 and significant at .001 levels, it indicates that the loneliness was contributing in depression among unemployed. The aim of present study was to examine loneliness as predictor of depression among unemployed. The scale of loneliness and Beck Depression Inventory II were administered on 68 unemployed participants age ranging from 20-35 years in Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh. Multiple Regression analysis was done for the analysis of data.

Table-2 reveal the mean score loneliness was 38.26 which indicate that the unemployed had loneliness. A study conducted out by Hansson et al 1987 revealed that the loneliness was related to poor psychological adjustment, dissatisfaction with family and social relationship. A researcher maintained that loneliness is a feeling of sadness that an individual experience when the desire or the attempt to relate with some aspect of the world is frustrated [18]. Table-2 further reveal the mean score was 15.14 which indicate that the students had some level of depression. Unemployed persons have a lower confidence; feel rejected by society and in turn to developing feelings of resentment for the society. They experience years of bitterness and frustration and have symptoms of depression [16]. Research comparing unemployed with employed people has consistently found higher levels of psychological distress and depression, and lower levels of self-esteem among the unemployed [14,15].

Table 3 loneliness was contributing in depression among unemployed. Similarly, Lonely people have indicated that they are less happy, less satisfied, more pessimistic, and suffer from more depressive symptoms than people who are not lonely [26]. Loneliness has been associated with many negative mental health outcomes such as depression, suicidality, reduced positive emotions, poor sleep quality and general health, as well as physiological changes (e.g., increased cortisol awakening response and pro-inflammatory gene expression) [21]. Apart from the indirect adverse effects of loneliness, there are direct consequences for the unemployed, such as depressive symptoms and physical symptoms, which show that the feeling of loneliness and the perceived degraded social position, can lead to a generalized poor health [17].

5. CONCLUSION

In short, depression was one of the most common mental health issues among unemployment. In the present study loneliness has been found to be significantly predicting depression among unemployed. The findings of the study can be useful in improving the mental health of the unemployed.

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