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कला, मानविकी और सामाजिक विज्ञान विषयों की अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सहकर्मी समीक्षित, मूल्यांकित, त्रैमासिक शोध-पत्रिका

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Author's :

Dr. Chandani Kumari
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, S. M. College, Tilkamanjhi Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur, Bihar, India.

Corresponding Author :

Dr. Chandani Kumari
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, S. M. College, Tilkamanjhi Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur, Bihar, India.

A Study of the effect of Long-Term Unemployment on satisfaction in life

Abstract : The present study examined the impact of long-term unemployment on life satisfaction among graduates of S. M. College, Bhagalpur. The sample comprised of two groups: an experimental group of 30 graduates who had remained unemployed for at least three years after graduation, and a control group of 30 graduates who were gainfully employed for a minimum of three years. The Life Satisfaction Scale was administered to both groups to assess subjective well-being. The groups were matched on relevant demographic and socio-economic variables, including age, sex, marital status, family type, family size, area of residence, and socio-economic status. It was hypothesized that long-term unemployment is associated with lower levels of life satisfaction. Statistical analysis using the t-test revealed a significant difference between the two groups, with employed graduates reporting higher life satisfaction than their long-term unemployed counter-parts. The findings highlight the detrimental effects of prolonged unemployment on the subjective well-being of educated youth and underscore the need for socio-economic and psychological interventions.

Keywords : Unemployment and life satisfaction, Life satisfaction and unemployment, Prolonged unemployment and life satisfaction, Long-term unemployment and life satisfaction, Consequences of unemployment on life satisfaction.

Introduction : Several studies, particularly in Bihar, India, have indicated that prolonged unemployment has a negative or detrimental impact on life satisfaction. A few years ago, an ambitious study was undertaken by faculty members of the Postgraduate Department of Psychology, sponsored and funded by the University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi. The primary objective of that project was to examine whether varying durations of

unemployment produce differential effects on the life satisfaction of students of this university. The findings of the study were largely in line with expectations, revealing that as the duration of unemployment increased, satisfaction with life decreased proportionately. However, an unexpected result also emerged: after many years of unemployment, some individuals reported relatively lower levels of dissatisfaction with their lives. To explore this finding in greater depth, a subset of respondents was interviewed in detail to identify factors that might account for this outcome. A structured interview schedule containing items relevant to the research problem was developed. The responses were content-analyzed and compared with scores obtained earlier on the Life Satisfaction Scale. The analysis suggested that although there has been a gradual shift from the joint family system to the nuclear family system, many individuals still retain the values and mentality of the joint family structure. This provides a strong support system through extended family members, thereby reducing the adverse effects of prolonged unemployment. Additionally, it was subtly discerned that a religious orientation among the respondents acted as a psychological safeguard, wherein individuals shifted their locus of control toward religious or otherworldly explanations rather than purely social or material factors.

Method of Study

Sample : The present study employed a comparative research design involving two groups of participants, designated as the experimental and control groups. Both groups were comparable on several demographic and personal variables. The age range of participants was 32–35 years, all participants were female, belonged to nuclear families, and had a family size of three to five members. All participants resided in Bhagalpur town and belonged to the middle socio-economic status category. The monthly parental income ranged from ₹30,000 to ₹46,000, and the educational level of parents was within the literate category.

To ensure comparability between the groups, a carefully constructed Personal Data Sheet was used. This tool included items related to demographic variables as well as the duration of unemployment, which was treated as the independent variable in the study.

Tools Used

1. Personal Data Sheet: A self-prepared Personal Data Sheet was administered to collect information regarding age, sex, family type, family size, area of residence, socio-economic status, parental income, parental education, and duration of unemployment.
2. Life Satisfaction Scale: A Hindi-adapted version of the Life Satisfaction Scale developed by Neugarten (1961) was used to measure satisfaction with life. Life satisfaction was treated as the dependent variable. The scale consists of a specified number of items, scored in the conventional manner, where higher scores indicate greater satisfaction with life and lower scores indicate lower satisfaction. The scale has been reported to possess satisfactory reliability and acceptable validity, rendering it suitable for use in the present study.

Strategy of Study : The subjects for the present study were selected on the basis of college records obtained from S. M. College, Bhagalpur. These records contained details of students who had passed out from the college, along with their addresses and contact numbers, and information regarding their employment status. On this basis, an initial pool of 67 participants for the experimental group (unemployed graduates) and 54 participants for the control group (employed graduates) was identified. Subsequently, the two groups were screened for comparability on relevant demographic and socio-economic variables. After this process, the final sample consisted of 30 participants in the experimental group and 31 participants in the control group. The selected participants were initially contacted by telephone and were requested to provide their responses either telephonically or through a personal meeting, depending on their

convenience.

As expected, the majority of participants preferred to respond over the telephone. Their verbal responses were audio-recorded with consent and later transcribed for the purpose of data analysis. The process of data collection was found to be time-consuming and demanding, highlighting certain practical constraints inherent in studies of this nature. However, through sustained rapport building and empathic engagement with the participants, the data collection process was successfully completed over a period of approximately three months.

Results and Discussion : After the completion of the fieldwork, the data obtained from both groups were systematically organized and tabulated for statistical analysis. The relevant results are presented in the table below, which depicts the effect of long-term unemployment on satisfaction with life.

Table

Table Showing the effect of Standard Deviation (SD), t-value, and Level of Significance for Life Satisfaction Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Condition	N	Mean	D	t' ratio
Experimental Group (Unemployed)	31	18.25	3.00	4.77
Control Group (Employed)	30	21.04	1.20	

<.0.01

A perusal of the above table clearly indicates that, as hypothesized earlier, the experimental group was more adversely affected by their unemployment status as compared to the control group. The mean score of the experimental group was found to be lower than that of the control group, indicating comparatively lower satisfaction with life among the long-term unemployed graduates. The standard deviation scores of both groups further reflect variability in life satisfaction within each group. The obtained t-ratio was found to be statistically significant at the specified level of significance, thereby indicating a meaningful difference between the two groups. This statistically significant difference suggests that employment status plays a crucial role in determining the level of life satisfaction among educated individuals. Long-term unemployment, therefore, appears to have a detrimental impact on subjective well-being.

Conclusion : The findings of the present study lead to the conclusion that, when compared with individuals who are gainfully employed for a similar duration, those who remain unemployed for a long period experience significantly lower satisfaction with their lives. These results are consistent with the stated hypothesis and are also in conformity with general observations, common sense expectations, and earlier research findings in this area.

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