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# Resilience as a Psychological Resource for Subjective Well-Being among Unemployed Youth

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## Abstract

Youth unemployment can be challenging because it often occurs at a stage of life marked by career development, increasing independence, and future planning. Difficulty finding suitable employment can bring uncertainty, financial concerns, social expectations, and disappointment about career goals. However, Young people differ considerably in how they respond to these challenges. Individual psychological resources, particularly resilience, may help young people adapt to difficult circumstances while maintaining a relatively positive sense of well-being. The present study examined resilience as a psychological resource for subjective well-being among unemployed youth. We used a correlational research design with a sample of 100 unemployed youth selected through purposive sampling. The study assessed resilience using the Resilience Scale developed by Vijaya Lakshmi and Shruti Narain, and subjective well-being using the Subjective Well-Being Inventory (SUBI) developed by Sell and Nagpal. We used descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and simple linear regression to examine the relationship between the variables. Participants obtained a mean resilience score of 95.59 (SD = 13.40) and a mean subjective well-being score of 80.13 (SD = 9.77). Resilience was positively and significantly related to subjective well-being, $r(98) = .585$, $p < .001$. Regression analysis further indicated that resilience significantly predicted subjective well-being and explained approximately 34.2% of its variance. The findings highlight the potential importance of resilience as a psychological resource for young people experiencing unemployment. The results also suggest the value of integrating resilience-building approaches into psychological and career-support programmes for unemployed youth.

**Keywords:** resilience, subjective well-being, unemployed youth, psychological adjustment, positive psychology

## 1. Introduction

Youth is a period of important personal, social, and occupational transition. During this stage, individuals begin to make decisions about education, employment, relationships, financial independence, and their future direction in life. Employment is often considered an important part of this transition because it provides not only financial resources but also structure, social interaction, purpose, identity, and a sense of personal contribution. When young people cannot find employment despite their qualifications and efforts, the experience can go beyond economic hardship and affect their psychological well-being.

Unemployment can involve uncertainty about the future, financial pressure, repeated rejection, reduced confidence, and concerns about social expectations. These experiences may be particularly significant during youth because career development is closely connected with expectations of adulthood and independence. A young person who repeatedly applies for jobs without success may begin to question their abilities, prospects, or place within society. At the same time, unemployment affects individuals differently. Some young people experience substantial psychological difficulties, whereas others continue to pursue their goals, adapt to setbacks, seek alternative opportunities, and maintain a positive outlook. Resilience is generally understood as the capacity to adapt positively in the face of adversity, stress, or significant life challenges. Contemporary perspectives do not necessarily view resilience as a fixed characteristic that a person either possesses or lacks. Instead, resilience is a dynamic process involving interactions among individual strengths, coping abilities, relationships, and environmental resources. In the context of unemployment, resilience may help young people cope with uncertainty and setbacks. Job searching can be a lengthy process involving unsuccessful applications, interviews, competition, changing requirements, and periods of waiting. A resilient individual may be better able to maintain motivation after rejection, regulate negative emotions, reconsider strategies, and keep working toward meaningful goals. Resilience does not remove the difficulties associated with unemployment, but it may influence how those difficulties are experienced and managed.

Subjective well-being is especially relevant when studying unemployed youth because employment status can influence several aspects of everyday life. Unemployment may affect financial security, daily structure, social participation, future expectations, and perceptions of personal achievement. However, employment status alone cannot explain subjective well-being. Individuals differ in their coping resources, relationships, personality, social support,

and how they interpret difficult experiences. Resilience may therefore be particularly relevant to subjective well-being. A resilient person may better maintain emotional balance during periods of uncertainty, recover from disappointing experiences, and retain a sense of purpose. Such processes may contribute to more positive evaluations of life even when external circumstances are not ideal. The present study therefore focuses specifically on unemployed youth. Rather than viewing unemployed young people only through the lens of psychological problems, the study adopts a strengths-oriented perspective by examining resilience as a psychological resource. This perspective aligns with positive psychology, which emphasises understanding the capacities that allow individuals to function and adapt under difficult circumstances. The central purpose of the present study was therefore to examine the relationship between resilience and subjective well-being among unemployed youth and to explore whether resilience statistically predicts subjective well-being.

## 2. Review of Literature

### 2.1 Resilience among Youth

Resilience has become an important construct within developmental and positive psychology. Masten (2014) emphasised that resilience represents adaptive functioning in the presence of adversity and is supported by ordinary developmental systems rather than being an exceptional quality found only in a small number of individuals.

Luo et al. (2025) synthesised evidence concerning resilience and mental health among adolescents and young adults. Their findings indicated that resilience was associated with better positive psychological outcomes and fewer negative mental-health indicators. These findings support the view that resilience matters for both psychological protection and positive functioning.

Indian studies have also highlighted the relevance of resilience among young people. Ramya et al. (2021), for example, examined rural and urban adolescents and reported a significant positive relationship between resilience and subjective well-being among rural adolescents. These findings suggest that resilience may support young people's adjustment across different social environments.

### 2.2 Subjective Well-Being among Youth

Youth is an important period for studying subjective well-being because experiences during this stage can influence later adjustment. Career aspirations, relationships, educational

experiences, financial circumstances, and perceptions of future opportunities may all contribute to young people's evaluations of their lives.

In the Indian context, research has also highlighted the psychological experiences of unemployed young people. Such research suggests that unemployment should not be viewed solely as a labour-market issue but also as a psychosocial experience.

### 2.3 Resilience and Subjective Well-Being

Bharti et al. (2023), studying Indian university students, found that resilience played an important role in the relationship between mindfulness and subjective well-being. Although their population and research design differed from the present study, the findings illustrate resilience's potential importance in maintaining positive psychological functioning.

Vats and Waraich (2024) examined resilience and subjective well-being among young adults in Delhi NCR and similarly reported an association between the two constructs. Such findings are relevant to the present study because they concern a young-adult population within an Indian context.

## 3. Research Gap

Previous research has established that resilience is associated with positive psychological functioning and subjective well-being among adolescents and young adults. However, much of the existing research has focused on students, university populations, or general youth samples.

Less attention has been given to unemployed youth as a distinct population. Young people experiencing unemployment may face repeated job-search setbacks and uncertainty concerning their career development. The psychological resources that help them maintain well-being in this situation therefore deserve greater attention.

This study addresses this gap by examining the relationship between resilience and subjective well-being among unemployed youth.

## 4. Objectives

1. To study the level of resilience among unemployed youth.
2. To study the level of subjective well-being among unemployed youth.
3. To examine the relationship between resilience and subjective well-being among unemployed youth.

4. To examine whether resilience significantly predicts subjective well-being among unemployed youth.

## 5. Hypotheses

**H1:** There will be a significant positive relationship between resilience and subjective well-being among unemployed youth.

**H2:** Resilience will significantly predict subjective well-being among unemployed youth.

## 6. Methodology

### 6.1 Research Design

A quantitative correlational research design was used for the study. The design was appropriate because the study focused on examining the relationship between resilience and subjective well-being rather than experimentally manipulating either variable.

### 6.2 Participants

The study consisted of **100 unemployed youth** selected through purposive sampling method. Participants were selected based on the study's inclusion criteria. Relevant demographic information was also collected.

### 6.3 Sampling

Purposive sampling and the snowball sampling method were employed because the study required participants with the specific characteristic of being unemployed youth. Participants who met the predefined criteria were invited to participate.

### 6.4 Measures

- **Resilience Scale**

The Resilience Scale assesses resilience using items developed by **Vijaya Lakshmi and Shruti Narain (2017)**. The scale consists of 30 items and assesses four dimensions: **Perseverance, Composure, Self-Reliance, and Faith**.

The total score ranges from 30 to 150, with higher scores indicating greater resilience. For this analysis, the total resilience score was the primary measure.

- **Subjective Well-Being Inventory**

The Subjective Well-Being Inventory (SUBI), developed by Sell and Nagpal (1992), assessed subjective well-being. The inventory consists of 40 items and assesses different dimensions of positive and negative well-being.

The total score ranges from 40 to 120. Higher scores indicate greater subjective well-being. The present analysis used the total SUBI score.

### 6.5 Procedure

Participants were informed of the study's purpose and assured that participation was voluntary and that their responses would remain confidential. The instruments were administered according to the instructions provided for each measure.

Participants completed the measures individually. After data collection, the researchers scored responses and entered them into a statistical database. The researcher then examined the data using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

### 6.6 Statistical Analysis

We calculated the mean and standard deviation to describe resilience and subjective well-being. We used Pearson's product-moment correlation to examine the relationship between the two variables. We conducted simple linear regression to examine whether resilience statistically predicted subjective well-being.

## 7. Results

### 7.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for resilience and subjective well-being.

**Table 1**

**Descriptive Statistics of Resilience and Subjective Well-Being**

| Variable | N | Mean | SD | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Resilience** | 100 | 95.59 | 13.40 | 72 | 136 |
| **Subjective Well-Being** | 100 | 80.13 | 9.77 | 55 | 104 |

The participants obtained a mean resilience score of **95.59 (SD = 13.40)**. The mean subjective well-being score was **80.13 (SD = 9.77)**. The observed scores indicate variability between participants in both resilience and subjective well-being.

### 7.2 Relationship between Resilience and Subjective Well-Being

A Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between resilience and subjective well-being.

**Table 2**

**Correlation between Resilience and Subjective Well-Being**

| Variables | r | P |
|---|---|---|
| **Resilience – Subjective Well-Being** | .585 | < .001 |

The analysis indicated a **moderate positive and statistically significant relationship** between resilience and subjective well-being, $r(98) = .585$, $p < .001$. Thus, higher resilience scores were associated with higher subjective well-being scores.

Analysis therefore supported the first hypothesis.

### 7.3 Regression Analysis

A simple linear regression examined whether resilience statistically predicted subjective well-being.

**Table 3**

**Simple Linear Regression Predicting Subjective Well-Being from Resilience**

| Statistic | Value |
|---|---|
| **R** | .585 |
| **$R^2$** | .342 |
| **B** | .426 |
| **P** | < .001 |

The regression model was statistically significant. $R^2 = .342$ indicates that resilience accounted for about **34.2% of the variance in subjective well-being** in the dataset.

The regression coefficient was positive (**B = .426**) and statistically significant ($p < .001$). Thus, higher resilience scores were associated with higher predicted subjective well-being scores.

It is important to emphasise that the regression results represent a statistical prediction and do not establish a causal relationship. Because the study uses a cross-sectional correlational design, the results cannot demonstrate that increasing resilience would necessarily cause an increase in subjective well-being.

## 8. Discussion

The present study examined resilience as a psychological resource for subjective well-being among unemployed youth. The analysis assumed that unemployment is not experienced uniformly and that individual psychological resources may influence how young people respond to career-related uncertainty and setbacks.

The results showed a mean resilience score of 95.59 and a subjective well-being score of 80.13. Variations indicate differences in psychological resources and perceptions, showing unemployment doesn't fully explain psychological experiences. Two young people with similar jobs may respond differently based on coping resources, support, expectations, and traits. The key finding was a positive relationship between resilience and subjective well-being, with a .585 correlation coefficient indicating a moderate positive association, meaning higher resilience individuals reported greater well-being.

One possible explanation is that resilience helps individuals manage emotional consequences of setbacks. Unemployed youth face rejection, career uncertainty, family pressure, and financial concerns, affecting their self-perception and outlook. Resilience aids emotional balance and prevents viewing temporary issues as personal failures. Another explanation involves persistence, as finding a job demands sustained effort with repeated applications, skill development, and career adjustments. Resilience supports ongoing effort despite setbacks.

The present study therefore supports a balanced understanding of unemployment. Young people's psychological resources matter, but they operate within wider social and economic contexts.

## 9. Implications

The findings have several possible implications for psychologists, counsellors, educational institutions, career practitioners, and organisations supporting unemployed youth.

- First, career counselling may benefit from incorporating psychological components alongside employment-related guidance. Young people may need help coping with rejection, managing uncertainty, maintaining motivation, and setting realistic but meaningful goals.
- Second, resilience-building programmes could focus on emotional regulation, adaptive coping, problem-solving, self-efficacy, persistence, and flexible goal adjustment.

- Finally, employment-support programmes may benefit from collaboration between career counsellors and mental-health professionals so they can address practical and psychological needs together.

## 10. Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings.

- First, the sample consisted of 100 participants selected through purposive sampling. Consequently, the findings cannot automatically be generalised to all unemployed youth.
- Second, the study relied on self-report measures. Participants' responses may have been influenced by their current mood, how they interpreted questionnaire items, or their desire to present themselves positively.
- Third, the study focused primarily on resilience and subjective well-being. The study did not examine other relevant variables, including unemployment duration, financial stress, social support, family environment, coping strategies, career adaptability, and perceived employability.

## 11. Suggestions for Future Research

- Future studies should use larger, more diverse samples of unemployed youth from different geographical and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Longitudinal research would be particularly valuable because it could examine whether resilience and subjective well-being change as young people move from unemployment into employment or experience prolonged unemployment.
- Qualitative research could also deepen understanding of how unemployed youth experience rejection, uncertainty, family expectations, career setbacks, and personal growth. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods may provide a more complete picture of youth unemployment and psychological adjustment.

## 12. Conclusion

- These findings support the relevance of a strengths-based psychological perspective when examining unemployed youth. Resilience does not eliminate the structural difficulties associated with unemployment. Still, it may represent an important psychological resource that helps young people cope with setbacks, maintain motivation, and preserve positive evaluations of their lives.

- For this reason, psychological support for unemployed youth may benefit from addressing both external employment needs and internal psychological resources. Career opportunities and economic support remain essential, while resilience-building and psychological counselling may help young people navigate periods of uncertainty with greater adaptive capacity.

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