

UNEMPLOYMENT ANXIETY SCALE - CONSTRUCTION AND VALIDATION

By

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Abstract

This study explores the prevalence and impact of unemployment anxiety among final-year undergraduate students in arts and science colleges. Many of these students have increased anxieties about their employment prospects in an increasingly competitive job market as they approach the end of their academic journey. The authors developed the unemployment anxiety scale (2024), which was operationalized on four significant dimensions of unemployment anxiety. A panel of four experts in the field of employment officer, educational educator, and assistant professor established the scale's content validity, and the pilot study was conducted among the undergraduates of arts and sciences colleges in the Tenkasi district. The validity and reliability of the tool were established in addition to the internal consistency. The split half of the tool is 0.822. The tool thus developed to evaluate unemployment anxiety is named HeWi's Unemployment Anxiety Scale.

Keywords: *unemployment anxiety, skills and qualifications, self-confidence level, psychological well-being.*

Introduction

Education significantly impacts a student's future because it increases their employment opportunities. Students known to prosper have the skills, knowledge, qualifications, and responsibilities required for their present careers. Students with a solid academic background are more likely to attain secure, satisfying employment when they have an academic background, critical thinking skills, and knowledge employers consider highly important. Many students become anxious as their educational programs end if they do not have an employment position after graduation, especially if they observe peers or recently graduated individuals having

difficulties finding a job. The primary issue of needing help to determine if their educational experience is eventually practical can make the transition from academic institutions to jobs challenging. Higher educational attainment is often associated with reduced unemployment anxiety, as individuals with advanced degrees or specialized skills typically have better job prospects. Studies indicate that education enhances employability, leading to greater job security and confidence in one's career path (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). Students have been encouraged to prepare excellent profiles and develop additional skills for their academic program based on their anxiety about unemployment. In an increasingly highly competitive job market,

they often experience pressure to help themselves ahead by getting involved in extracurricular activities, volunteer work, and internships. In the future, this pressure to enhance employability may become helpful, and it can also render it more challenging to maintain the correct balance between academic responsibilities and practical work experience.

Unemployment Anxiety

Unemployment is a condition where individuals capable of working, actively seeking work, and willing to work cannot find any employment. Chappelow (2020) argues that unemployment occurs when someone searching for employment cannot find work. Unemployment is often used as a measure of the economy's health. *Anxiety* is a psychological and physiological state characterized by feelings of worry, nervousness, or fear, often about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome. Unemployment anxiety refers to the worry, fear, and uncertainty individuals experience regarding their job security and the potential for unemployment (Khan et al., 2022). This type of anxiety is particularly prevalent among students and recent graduates who are entering the job market, as they may feel pressure to secure employment and fear the consequences of being unable to find a job.

Objective of the study

To develop and validate a scale for evaluating unemployment anxiety among final-year art and science college students.

Methodology

The sample chosen studied the third year of Art and Science College in Tenkasi district.

Construction of Unemployment Anxiety Scale

The unemployment anxiety scale was developed by the individual conducting the study. The students' essential characteristics included their gender, the type and nature of the institution, the preparation of competitive exams, the referral of employment news, parental qualification and occupational status, and the family's monthly income. The preliminary draft of positive and negative items includes 50 items and subscales, including skill and qualifications (16 items), self-confidence level (15 items), experience (10 items), and psychological well-being (9 items), are all measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5.

Dimensions of unemployment anxiety

Skill and Qualification

A student's employability depends mainly on their skills and qualifications. Anxiety frequently arises from the ability to think that the skills those jobs require are different from those students acquire by college. Research suggests that students with inadequate technical or soft skills are more prone to experiencing unemployment anxiety as they feel underprepared to meet market expectations (Gore et al., 2016).

Self-confidence level

Self-confidence significantly affects how students think about their abilities to get job opportunities. Students who lack self-confidence frequently doubt their ability to perform effectively in job interviews or satisfy the requirements of their desired jobs, exacerbating their anxiety (Fiori et al., 2015). Conversely, higher self-confidence is a buffer against unemployment anxiety since confident students believe in their ability to overcome job market difficulties.

Experience

A lack of actual work experience can also increase unemployment anxiety. Students without internships, part-time jobs, or appropriate volunteer work may be concerned that they lack the practical experience employers search for, which may increase their anxiety (Jackson, 2017). On the other hand, students with multiple jobs are more competent and confident in their ability to seek jobs after graduation.

Psychological well-being

Psychological well-being is crucial in how students cope with the uncertainties of post-graduation life. High levels of anxiety, stress, and fear of unemployment can lead to decreased psychological well-being, which can create a negative feedback loop, further diminishing a student's job-search motivation and confidence (Creed et al., 2016). Students who maintain a higher level of psychological well-being through resilience or coping strategies tend to handle unemployment anxiety more effectively.

Content validity

"Content validity involves, essentially, the systematic examination of the text content to determine whether it covers a representative sample of the behavior domain to be measured." (Anastasi, 1968). The basis of content validation is a couple of reasons: an expert investigation of the content to be selected and the use of currently available statistical tools to enhance the original item selection. The points of view provided by various experts in the field form the basis of content validity. To establish content validity, the investigator made the tool and gave it to four experts: an assistant professor of Art and Science College, the assistant director of district employment and career counselling in Tirunelveli, an assistant professor and a principal of Education, checking through the tool, they decided that the device was acceptable. Twenty items were modified based on their suggestions. Looking into the scales' preliminary draft will show that the quantity of weight is allocated to the objectives and content. The tool has become content-valid.

Pilot study

A pilot study is a research investigation conducted to analyze a more extensive investigation's feasibility, method, and expected findings. It helps recognize and solve potential issues before the primary investigation. This includes analyzing the value of the study concept, estimating sample sizes, developing guidelines, and testing research tools. Sixty students from government and private colleges in the

Tenkasi district participated in the investigator's pilot study. A random population sample was given access to the draft, created specifically for this study. The science and arts undergraduates were instructed to tick the suitable box after the statement's options.

Reliability

Reliability refers to a measurement that supplies consistent results with equal values. It measures the research's consistency, precision, repeatability, and trustworthiness (Chakrabarty, 2013).

The split-half reliability test was administered to a group of students. Here, the test items were divided into two halves, ensuring that each half matched the item's difficulty and content. Each half was marked

separately. If the test is to demonstrate split-half reliability, then the marks obtained on each half should be highly correlated with the other. Any student's marks on the one half should match his or her marks on the other half. The reliability coefficient was calculated using the Spearman-Brown formula and found to be 0.822, showing the tool's reliability.

HeWi's Unemployment Anxiety Scale (HUAS) - Final Version

Direction:

Read the given statement carefully. Each item has five responses. They are: 1. Strongly Agree (SA), 2. Agree (A), 3. Undecided (UD), 4. Disagree (DA), 5. Strongly Disagree (SDA)

S.No.	ITEM	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA
1. Skill and qualifications						
1	I anticipate myself getting a job in my field even after graduation.					
2	I often worry that my Communication skills won't match the demands of the job requirements.					
3	I am confident that I can find a job with my passions.					
4	I am confident about my English proficiency for getting a job.					
5	I feel a master degree is necessary for employment.					
6	I feel that time management skill important for getting a job.					
7	I will study post-graduation to get a job.					
8	I think good education and skills are necessary for a job.					
9	I believe that all jobs depend on Technological skills.					

2. Self-confidence level						
10	I am confident about my leadership skills for getting a job.					
11	I constantly compare myself to classmates who seem more confident about their post-graduation plans.					
12	I feel confused when I think about future job opportunities.					
13	I think I will definitely go to work after completing my studies.					
14	I believe in my potential to achieve my career goal.					
15	I am confident in my ability to make a positive impact in the workplace.					
16	I trust that my sincerity and dedication in college life have prepared me well for getting a job.					
17	I am sure that in the future I will get a good position.					
18	I am confident about my future prospects and maintain a positive attitude towards finding employment.					
3. Experience						
19	I have some concerns about my lack of work experience, but I believe I can overcome them.					
20	I worry that my experience will make it difficult for me to compete with more experienced candidates.					
21	My inexperience does not affect my thoughts about the job.					
22	I often feel anxious and stressed about my future prospects because of my inexperience.					
4. Psychological Well-Being						
23	I worry that my degree won't be enough to secure a stable job.					
24	I am worried about the economic challenges I may face after graduation.					
25	Sometimes I feel anxious about my future because of unemployment.					
26	I think I need proper advice regarding employment.					

Conclusion

The HeWi's Unemployment Anxiety Scale for Undergraduates measures anxiety concerning skills, self-confidence, experience, and psychological well-being. Many people are concerned that their qualifications will not meet career path requirements, and they are also concerned about their lack of self-confidence and

experience. The change from education to employment brings about stress. Addressing these issues through skill development, confidence building, and mental health support can help undergraduates overcome unemployment anxiety and improve their preparation for the workforce. Thus, HeWi's unemployment anxiety scale is a valid and reliable measure to assess unemployment anxiety among college students.

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To cite this article

Hemalatha, K. & William Dharma Raja, B. (2024). Unemployment Anxiety Scale - Construction and Validation. *Sparkling International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research Studies*, 7(3), 7-13.

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