



Literature Review: The Relationship between Optimism and Psychological Well-being in Fresh Graduate Students Who Are Looking for Work

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to investigate the connection between psychological health and optimism in recent graduate students seeking employment. Especially in light of the current state of the economy and the fierce competition for jobs, optimism is seen as a critical component that can impact someone's mental health. This study makes use of literature analysis or library research. The study's findings demonstrate a strong positive correlation between optimism and psychological well-being, with people feeling more psychologically well-off when they had higher levels of optimism. These results highlight how crucial it is to cultivate optimism in order to enhance psychological wellbeing when making the shift to the working world. The ramifications of this study's findings can be utilised to create interventions and support systems for recently graduated students seeking employment that are more successful.

Keyword: Optimism, Psychological Wellbeing, Fresh Graduate, Job

INTRODUCTION

The transition from college life to the working world can sometimes be fraught with difficulties and uncertainty. In addition to the difficulty of quickly finding a job that matches their expectations and abilities, new graduates may also experience additional stress due to the competitiveness of the job market. Optimism—the belief that positive things will happen in the future—can be crucial in maintaining psychological health in such situations (Risthathi 2019).

The current era of globalization has brought intense competition in the world of work, creating new obstacles for prospective workers in Indonesia. Therefore, new graduates must be able to overcome obstacles in the workplace by getting a position that suits their qualifications and abilities and competing in professions that require innovation and high levels of competition (Ardiansyah 2016).

New graduate students are experiencing significant life changes as they transition from academia to the workforce (Ramadani and Muhid 2022). Significant obstacles and changes are

often encountered during this phase, including finding a job, adjusting to a new workplace, and building a career. These difficulties may have an impact on students' mental health (M. Afrizal Miradji, 2024).

Table 1. Open Unemployment Figures According to the Central Statistics Agency

Last Education	Amount	Year
Diploma and Bachelor Degree	2.057.794	2019
Diploma and Bachelor Degree	2.540.464	2020
Diploma and Bachelor Degree	2.184.809	2021
Diploma and Bachelor Degree	1.778.388	2022
Diploma and Bachelor Degree	2.005.576	2023

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS-Statistics Indonesia)

Based on table 1, it is known that in 2019 there were 2,057,794 unemployed individuals with diploma and bachelor's degrees. In 2020, the number increased significantly due to economic instability caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2021 to 2022, the number of unemployed decreased due to the national economic conditions that began to recover after the Covid-19 pandemic. Until 2023, the number of unemployed people increased again.

In order for humans to fulfill their basic needs, working is very important. People who work get a salary or money that is used to cover daily expenses. (Nasution et al. 2024) argues that fulfilling the demands and work environment is a developmental task for every person in early adulthood in order to earn a living and achieve a good social status in society. Many new graduates or students who aspire to be successful at an early age want to work in the company of their choice after finishing school. However, in reality, plans and expectations are often different because many people are competing to get a job (Nurjanah 2018).

(Mustikasari 2018) due to the current strict and complicated employment process, the aspirations of new graduates to get a job and start a career are not in line with reality. According to preliminary research on recent graduate students, unemployed people experience worry, anxiety, and social pressure. They also often feel dissatisfied with their lives because they are unable to support their families and meet their basic needs (Gunawan and Hustinawati 2022).

Due to the imbalance caused by the number of job seekers compared to available positions, getting a job may be difficult (Yunita 2013). (Yundari and Nurcahyo 2023) that worrying about one's financial status when unemployed or underemployed can have a negative impact on mental health, overall well-being, and life satisfaction levels. Therefore, a mindset is needed that can inspire people's enthusiasm, especially from within themselves.

To face life's challenges with optimism and the belief that living life optimally will make their lives better and more successful, people must have self-confidence. In this situation, optimism can be very helpful in helping first-year students overcome obstacles and improve their psychological health (Nastiti et al. 2021).

The role of optimism as a buffer to maintain the mental health of graduate students who are looking for work. Individuals and educational institutions can take proactive steps to help new graduates overcome obstacles after graduation by recognizing the importance of a positive attitude (Saad and Elshaer 2020). Therefore, it is expected that students will be able to pass through this phase of change with increased resilience and self-confidence, and be ready to face a competitive work environment.

Based on the background of the problem that has been written by the researcher, the formulation of the problem is determined as follows: 1) Is there a relationship between optimism and psychological well-being in fresh graduate students who are looking for work?

METHOD

This study employs a literature review methodology and focuses on the association between psychological well-being and optimism in recent graduate students seeking employment. The researcher reviewed earlier research on psychological well-being and optimism in recent graduate students seeking employment. Online publications including Google, SINTA Journal, DOAJ, Wos, Google Scholar, and EBSCO were used as data sources. In order to prevent readers from raising concerns, the problem formulation requires prior investigation (Ali, H., & Limakrisna 2013).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Optimism

Optimism is a cheerful outlook and belief that good things will happen in the future and that favorable outcomes are more likely than unfavorable outcomes are characteristics of an optimistic mindset (Imtiaz & Kamal, 2016). An optimist has a tendency to look on the bright side and think that they can control the outcomes they desire and optimism improves a person's physical and social health in addition to their psychological well-being (Khoirunnisa & Ratnaningsih, 2016). According to (Muskerina et al., 2018) optimists tend to live longer, experience less stress, and have stronger immune systems. In addition, optimism has been linked to successful goal setting and increased productivity in the workplace, and a positive outlook can be developed in a variety of ways, including emphasizing the good things that come from life experiences, setting reasonable goals, and creating useful coping mechanisms. Optimism is therefore a skill that can be acquired and maintained through practice and positive thinking. In addition to intrinsic tendencies, optimists tend to bounce back from setbacks more easily because they see them as opportunities to grow and learn rather than as the culmination of one's efforts. They are more likely to be resilient and persistent in the face of adversity because they believe that with hard work and perseverance, they can achieve their goals (Ekawati & Sweinstani, 2020).

Aspects that support optimism include: 1) Positive Expectancy: This is the belief that good things will eventually happen. Optimists tend to see obstacles as opportunities and believe in their ability to overcome them. Because they believe that something good will happen, they concentrate on positive prospects and are more willing to take calculated risks; 2) Self-Empowerment: Self-confidence and belief in one's ability to achieve goals are also associated with optimism. Optimists tend to believe that they have power over their lives and can influence the outcomes of their efforts and actions. Rather than viewing failure as an insurmountable obstacle, they see it as a lesson and an opportunity to move forward; 3) Emotional Well-Being: A positive outlook has beneficial effects on mental and emotional well-being. Optimists tend to experience less stress, depression, and emotional well-being. They are better at controlling negative feelings and maintaining an optimistic attitude in the face of adversity; 4) Social Interaction: A person's social interactions are also influenced by their level of optimism. Optimists tend to be friendlier, more encouraging, and better at forming lasting relationships. Their cheerful and optimistic nature often draws others to them, strengthening their social networks and offering more emotional support.

The Optimism variable has been studied by previous researchers, including: (Nasution et al., 2024), (Saad & Elshaer, 2020), (Harpan, 2015).

Psychological Well-being

The state of mind that represents a person's emotional and cognitive balance in overcoming obstacles in life is known as psychological well-being (Twenge et al., 2018). This phrase describes a person's sense of satisfaction and meaning in life, as well as their ability to manage stress and unpleasant feelings. A number of factors contribute to psychological well-being, including self-acceptance, healthy interpersonal relationships, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal development (Awaliyah & Arruum Listiyandini, 2018). People who have high psychological well-being tend to view life more optimistically, can overcome setbacks with resilience, and are able to reach their maximum potential. This ability to accept one's own talents and shortcomings without being overly judgmental or self-deprecating is known as self-acceptance (Aulia & Panjaitan, 2019).

Aspects that support psychological well-being include: 1) Self-acceptance, where a person feels satisfied with themselves and their life circumstances; 2) Positive relationships with others, the ability to build and maintain supportive and meaningful relationships; 3) Autonomy, the ability to manage one's own life and make decisions independently; 4) Purpose in life refers to having goals and objectives to work towards in addition to having a direction and purpose in life.

Psychological well-being variables have been studied by previous researchers, including: (Risthathi, 2019), (Aulia & Panjaitan, 2019), (Khoirunnisa & Ratnaningsih, 2016)

Fresh Graduate

Those who have recently completed formal undergraduate, graduate, or postgraduate education at the college level are referred to as recent graduates (Nurjanah, 2018). They are just starting their professional life and are usually looking for a first job that suits their interests and educational background and when new graduates enter the workforce, they often face a number of difficulties, including fierce competition, lack of work experience, and adjusting to workplace dynamics and cultures that are different from those in the classroom (Saputra et al., 2024). However, new graduates also have a number of benefits, including new information, lots of energy and excitement, and openness to change and learning (Gunawan & Hustinawati, 2022). They usually have technological knowledge related to their subject of study and are proficient in using the latest data and technology. New graduates should prepare themselves well to increase their chances of getting a job (Umam & Syafi'i, 2021). They should also understand the importance of facing workplace obstacles by taking initiative and being adaptable. In addition to having the flexibility to pursue a career that they can advance over time, new graduates also need to have a long-term vision in order to compete in an ever-changing job market (Fauziyah et al., 2016).

Aspects that support fresh graduates include: 1) Proficiency in academic-related knowledge and skills. This includes theoretical knowledge and practical skills learned in school or through training; 2) Work experience is also an important indicator, whether in the form of internships, college projects, or part-time jobs. This experience shows an individual's ability to work in a team and use their knowledge in real-world situations; 3) Communication skills are essential because most jobs require productive engagement with coworkers, clients, or other parties. Fresh graduates with strong communication skills can communicate concepts effectively and build positive relationships; 4) Adaptability and problem-solving skills are also highly valued. Having the capacity to recognize problems, provide solutions, and adapt to change is essential in a dynamic work environment.

The fresh graduate variable has been studied by previous researchers, including: (M. Afrizal Miradji 1, Wahyu Abdi Santoso 2, Oktavirna Dwi Wasisca 3, 2024), (Nurjanah, 2018), (Mustikasari, 2018), (Nastiti et al., 2021).

Relevant Previous Research

Table 2. Previous Research

No	Author	Title	Research result	Difference/ Novelty
1	(Harpan, 2015)	The Role of Religiosity and Optimism on Psychological Well-being in Adolescents	There is a direct role of optimism on psychological well-being. Optimism plays a role on psychological well-being.	Differences in the variables of religiosity and psychological well-being in adolescents
2	(Khoirun nisa & Ratnaningsih, 2016)	Optimism and Psychological Well-being in Medical Education Students of the Faculty of Medicine, Diponegoro University	There is a Positive Relationship between Optimism and Psychological Well-being in Medical Faculty Students	Differences in the variables of Fresh Graduate Students and Medical Faculty Students
3	(Risthathi, 2019)	The Relationship between Optimism and Psychological Well-being in Adolescents in Orphanages	Optimism effectively contributes to psychological well-being by 31.3%.	Differences in the variables of adolescents in orphanages

Source: Previous Research

Discussion

Based on the above findings and previous research, the research discussion is formulated as follows:

In line with this research, the research results (Risthathi, 2019) optimism has been shown to be effective in reducing psychological symptoms by around 31.3%, while the remaining 68.7% is caused by other factors. (Harpan, 2015) showed that although 63.31% of a person's psychological well-being is due to other factors, optimism and religion contribute 36.69% to the increase. Optimism is claimed to have the power to reduce stress caused by pressure and encourage more optimistic thinking about the future. (Imtiaz & Kamal, 2016). (Harpan, 2015) states that having optimism can motivate someone to work harder, be more persistent and steadfast in building a better life, so that it can lead to the formation of psychological well-being and a more prosperous soul.

Therefore, it can be concluded from a number of previous related studies that there is a relationship between a person's psychological well-being and optimism, and that having optimism contributes to improving a person's quality of life. A person's well-being is positively correlated with their optimistic outlook and positive mental attitude. Likewise, a person's psychological well-being will decrease if they are less optimistic and always think negatively.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the current study and previous studies, it can be concluded that: Optimism and Psychological Well-being, the level of optimism and psychological well-being are positively correlated. Fresh graduate students with higher levels of optimism usually show higher psychological well-being. To help the psychological health of fresh graduates who are looking for work, optimism is very important. Strategies that emphasize increasing optimism and social support may be useful in helping students overcome obstacles related to job search more effectively.

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