

## COVID19: to study self-compassion, fear of failure and psychological wellbeing among job seeking individuals among males & females

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### ABSTRACT

India's unemployment rate has risen to 27.11% during the COVID 19 crisis. After the coronavirus lockdown, about 6.6 million white-collar workers lost their jobs, washing away all employment gains achieved since 2016. According to data from the private think tank Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy (CMIE), industrial workers lost 5 million jobs among the salaried class. This has put a great effect upon the mental health of the students, questioning their own self upon their potential and ability to start or make a career. The research is a gender study among male and female adults, to study self-compassion, fear of failure and psychological wellbeing among job seeking individuals during Covid-19. The sample consist of 83 individuals (37 Males and 46 Females) among 20 to 30 years of age considering different fields of study such as management, science, humanities and others. Standardized measures of self-compassion, fear of failure and psychological wellbeing were administered. The results showed that there is a positive relation between self-compassion and psychological wellbeing and there is a negative relationship between fear of failure and self-compassion. Also, Females are found higher on psychological wellbeing and self-compassion. The females showed good mental health than males. This also shows that females are good in dealing with stress and other problems that arises while finding a job and males need to find different ways to deal with the situations relating to unemployment.

**Keywords:** *Self Compassion, Fear of Failure, Psychological Wellbeing, Freshers, Male, Female, Job Seeking individuals*

*"The only person who can pull me down is myself, and I'm not going to let myself pull me down anymore."*

- C. Joybell C.

*"COVID-19 pandemic turns into economic crisis rather a health crisis as the world's best economies experiencing negative GDP growth."* (The Hindu)

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As the above statement claims, the economic crisis due to lockdown or COVID 19 has resulted in taking away various white collar and salaried jobs. This has resulted in serious tension among the youth as well as the individuals who lost their jobs. The pass outs or the freshers in the world of work are finding it difficult to find a job which would give justice to their qualification as well as their expectations. The lack of vacancies and the high eligibility criteria of various jobs has become an issue for every fresher to enter into the professional world and start a career and gain experience. Stress, Anxiety, lack of self-esteem, low confidence etc has become the new normal these days. The excitement of entering into the professional world and achieving success, high expectations and the enthusiasm of being financially independent has all resulted in various mental health problems. The research measures three variables (Psychological Wellbeing, Self-Compassion and Fear of Failure) which would help in knowing this scenario among males and females more clearly.

According to a research conducted by Neff (2004) Self compassion is significantly associated with positive mental health benefits and adaptive functioning.

In a study by Morgan and Sisak (2016) showed that if the threshold for success of the person is sufficiently high, fear of failure induces additional investment. Fear of failure is often demotivating when the threshold for success is equal to the foregone outside choice. Fear of failure is negatively correlated with entry into entrepreneurship, irrespective of the achievement threshold.

### ***Psychological Wellbeing***

“Psychological wellbeing has two important facets. The first of these refers to the extent to which people experience positive emotions and feelings of happiness. Sometimes this aspect of psychological wellbeing is referred to as subjective wellbeing. (Diener, 2000)

According to a research done by Theodossiou (1997) unemployed people are substantially more likely to experience a pronounced increase in anxiety, depression and lack of trust and a decline in self-esteem and the level of general satisfaction relative to people in low-paid employment.

A research done by Muller, Hicks, Winocur (2007) the employed males were considered to have psychological well-being (high levels of self-esteem and vigour, and low levels of psychological distress, tension, fatigue, and confusion). Among unemployed males, there were low levels of self-esteem and vigour, and high levels of psychological distress, tension, and fatigue. There were also low levels of self-esteem and vigour, and uncertainty among women who were unemployed. For working women, there were high levels of psychological distress, tension and fatigue, and confusion.

### ***Self-Compassion***

“Self-compassion is an emotionally positive self-attitude that should protect against the negative consequences of self-judgement, isolation, and rumination (such as depression).” (Neff, 2003).

“Self-compassion involves being kind to oneself when confronting personal inadequacies or situational difficulties, framing the imperfection of life in terms of common humanity, and

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being mindful of negative emotions so that one neither suppresses nor ruminates on them.” (Neff & Beretvas, 2012).

According to a research done by Neff and McGehee (2009), Self-compassion was strongly associated with wellbeing among both adolescents and young adults. As predictors of individual differences in self-compassion, family and cognitive variables were established. Finally, it was found that self-compassion partly mediates the link between family/cognitive factors and well-being. Results suggest that self-compassion for teenagers suffering from negative self-views can be an important intervention goal.

Another research done by Kreemers, Hooft, Vianen (2018) showed that job seekers high on self-compassion reported less negative affect and more positive affect during job search episodes in which progress was lacking than job seekers low on self-compassion.

### ***Fear of Failure***

According to APA Dictionary of Psychology, Fear of Failure is “persistent and irrational anxiety about failing to measure up to the standards and goals set by oneself or others. This may include anxiety over academic standing, losing a job, sexual inadequacy, or loss of face and self-esteem. Fear of failure may be associated with perfectionism and is implicated in a number of psychological disorders, including eating disorders and some anxiety disorders.”

Fear of Failure was earlier defined as “disposition to avoid failure and/or the capacity for experiencing shame and humiliation as a consequence of failure.” (Atkinson, 1966) and the “disposition to become anxious about failure under achievement stress.” (Atkinson & Litwin, 1973)

According to research conducted by Conroy, Willow & Metzler (2010) Fear of failure was associated with (a) high levels of worry, somatic anxiety, cognitive disruption, and sport anxiety, and (b) low levels of optimism. General fear of failure was unrelated to either perceived competence or fear of success.

### ***Purpose***

The purpose of the research is to conduct a comparative study among male and female studying self-compassion, fear of failure and psychological wellbeing among job seeking individuals during the time of COVID-19.

### ***Hypothesis***

- There will be a significant difference between male and female in psychological wellbeing. There will be a significant difference between male and female in self-compassion.
- There will be a significant difference between male and female in fear of failure.
- There will be a significant correlation between psychological wellbeing and self-compassion. There will be a significant correlation between self-compassion and fear of failure.
- There will be no significant correlation between fear of failure and psychological wellbeing.

## METHODOLOGY

### Sample

The sample was collected from 83 individuals (46 females and 37 males) of the age 20-30 years among the individuals who are seeking for a job in the area of Punjab and Chandigarh in India.

### Measures

The standardised tests were used :

- 1. SELF-COMPASSION SCALE–Short Form (SCS–SF):** The Self Compassion Scale was developed by Raes, Pommier, Neff & Van Gucht (2011). It consists of 12 items and the respondents are asked to choose one option among the 5-point scale ranging from 1(almost never) to 5(almost always). The scoring was done as given in the manual.
- 2. THE PERFORMANCE FAILURE APPRAISAL INVENTORY (Short-Form):** The scale was given by Conroy (2003). It consists of 5 items measuring Fear of Experiencing Shame and Embarrassment, Fear of Devaluing One’s Self-Estimate, Fear of Having an Uncertain Future, Fear of Important Others Losing Interest, Fear of Upsetting Important Others. The respondents are asked to choose amongst 5-point response scale from -2(Do not believe at all) to 2(Believe 100% of the times). The scoring was done as per instructed in the manual.
- 3. PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING (18 Items):** The scale was given by Ryff & Keyes (1995). It consists of 18-items measuring Autonomy, Environmental Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relations, Purpose in life, Self- Acceptance and the respondents are asked to choose amongst the 7-point scale from 1(strongly agree) to 7(strongly disagree). The scoring is done as per given in manual.

### Procedure

The participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the questionnaires were filled through Google Forms. The participants were assured about the confidentiality of the information to attain honest responses. Standardised psychological tests were administered to participants.

## RESULTS

Mean, Standard deviation, Correlation and T-test were done to find out the relationship between the variables.

*Table 1.1: Correlation for all variables*

Self- Compassion		Psychological Wellbeing	Fear of Failure
Self-Compassion	—		
Psychological Wellbeing		***	—
Wellbeing	0.468		
	- 0.260		
Fear of Failure		*	-0.030

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

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**Table 1.2: Showing T test**

	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-statistic	df	p
Self-Compassion	Female	46	3.28	0.50	1.83	81.0	0.072
	Male	37	3.08	0.49			
Psychological Wellbeing	Female	46	89.13	89.13	3.60	81.0	<.001
	Male	37	79.62	11.44			
Fear of Failure	Female	46	-0.03	0.36	-1.21	81.0	0.230
	Male	37	2.33	13.30			

**DISCUSSION**

The results show that there is a positive correlation between psychological wellbeing & self-compassion ( $r=0.468$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Further, the results show that there is a negative correlation in fear of failure & self-compassion ( $r=-0.260$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Thus, our stated hypothesis stands true. As the table depicts, the results at self-compassion and psychological wellbeing are significant. The results further show that females are higher than males in self-compassion ( $t=1.83$ ) and females are also higher than males in psychological wellbeing ( $t=3.60$ )

A research by Chiacchia, Greenglass, Katter and Fiksenbaum (2018) showed that Self-compassion can be a valuable resource that is associated with less distress during times of economic crisis.

A research by Burnstein (2016) showed that as fear of failure (FF) increased (a) the prestige of aspired-to occupations decreased, (b) willingness to settle for less satisfying and less prestigious occupations increased, and (c) the person became more likely to perceive that occupations with extremely low probabilities of attainment were within his reach. Effects of achievement motivation were very weak but generally in a direction opposite to that of FF.

**CONCLUSION**

The research aimed at analysing the effect of COVID on psychological wellbeing, fear of failure and self-compassion among males and females among the job seeking individuals. The results showed that there is a positive correlation between psychological wellbeing & self-compassion and there is a negative correlation in fear of failure & self-compassion. This shows that being self-compassionate can help in tackling with fear of failure. Also, high self-compassion results in high psychological wellbeing which can also help during the times of mental distress.

This research also showed that females are higher than males on self-compassion and psychological wellbeing which can also mean they have reduced mental health problems and this can also result in high motivation and self-worth and this can also foster resilience which could help during the times of unemployment.

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### Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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