

Research Paper

Languishing Scale for Indian Young Adults

Shridarshana Pyne^{1*}, Sakshi Adhia², Yashvi Thakkar³, Riya Agrawal⁴, Tanya Jena⁵, Ms. Trina Banerjee⁶, Ms. Grace Maria Jochan⁷

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to construct a Languishing Scale on Indian Young Adults and to test its psychometric properties. The scale constituted 60 items and was administered on the sample consisting of 269 Indian young adults. The psychometric properties were found using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) - version 16. The final reliability for the resulting sixty items scale using Cronbach's Alpha was considered acceptable, $\alpha = 0.83$. The scale constitutes content validity from experts.

Keywords: *Languishing Scale, Indian Young Adults*

The American Psychological Association describes languishing as a state of lack of emotional wellness, characterized by boredom, lack of care, languor, and a deficiency of interest throughout everyday life (*APA Dictionary of Psychology*, n.d.).

The term "languishing" is derived from the early Latin root "languere," which means to feel ill (Gillette, 2021). However, in modern psychology, the concept is frequently described as the opposite of flourishing.

In positive psychology, which focuses on experiences and circumstances that promote well-being, flourishing is considered the state in which a person has positive emotions toward life in general. This positive emotion toward life is what allows them to operate well in all areas of life i.e., mentally, emotionally, and socially. To put it another way, flourishing refers to mental wellness. The concept of languishing, on the other hand, focuses on the lack of such mental wellness. This indicates that the person doesn't have an optimistic view of life, which might lead to encountering mental, emotional, and social difficulties (Gillette, 2021). Dr. Adam Grant, an organizational psychologist, characterizes languishing as a sensation of being "stuck" and "void" in one's life (Grant, 2021).

¹Mount Carmel College, Bengaluru, India.

²Mount Carmel College, Bengaluru, India.

³Mount Carmel College, Bengaluru, India.

⁴Mount Carmel College, Bengaluru, India.

⁵Mount Carmel College, Bengaluru, India.

⁶Mount Carmel College, Bengaluru, India.

⁷Mount Carmel College, Bengaluru, India.

*Corresponding Author

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When an individual is languishing, they might think that they don't know where they are headed in life or that they don't have a sense of direction in their life. They might feel as if they are lost and that happiness and other simple pleasures have just ceased to have any meaning. They might describe that they are feeling just kind of like "blah" (Simon, 2021).

Such absence of emotion and purpose is often found in individuals who experience psychological pain. Questions concerning these feelings are therefore used to screen people for mental illnesses like depression. Having said that, simply experiencing these emotions does not invariably mean that one is burned out or depressed. (Simon, 2021) One may be experiencing what psychologists refer to as "languishing" (Simon, 2021).

Languishing may have some symptoms that are usually found in mental illnesses. However, the presence of those few symptoms does not in any way indicate that people who experience languishing are depressed. Languishing can be considered as a central point in the mental health spectrum that ranges from mental health and wellness to mental health disorders (Gillette, 2021).

A person's sense of mental well-being is linked to positive emotions and life satisfaction. One's life significance and their social communications are firmly connected to them. But there are numerous ways to evaluate these qualities (Simon, 2021).

A number of studies have been found to support the premise that some states and measures of mental well-being exist even when there is no indication of the presence of a psychological maladjustment. One of the studies' authors, Matthew Iaseillo, suggests that people who are languishing experience some of these states. One might look at such individuals and initially perceive them as being depressed even when that is not the case. Be that as it may, simply not being depressed does not necessarily indicate that the individual is flourishing (Simon, 2021).

One may not have serious depressive symptoms when they languish, but they are not functioning psychologically or socially well either. Some experts believe that languishing has to do with overall feelings of emptiness or the inability to feel anything at all. In other words, one may feel different — low — but not necessarily have any significant negative emotions either (van Agteren et al., 2021).

Languishing is certainly not a formal diagnosis of mental illness or health, but the emotions a person is going through are real and valid. (Gillette, 2021) When one is in this state of mind, they may not see the point of things. It's hard to expect new or positive bearings in their day-to-day existence. They're not necessarily feeling hopeless. They're languishing (Simon, 2021). Everyone who is languishing will not experience it in the same manner or even with the same magnitude (Gillette, 2021).

Languishing is not a term that is used frequently but it may be affecting more people than major depression. A few scientists are attempting to make new strategies for evaluating emotional well-being and the focal point through which it has generally been seen. Mental disease has a diagnosis, and it is always the polar opposite of mental wellness. As a result, mental well-being has become an either-or proposition.

One model characterizes mental health or illness across a range. It represents and compares various stages of well-being using four quadrants, or boxes in a square. Consider a cross

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made by the intersection of two lines. The horizontal X-axis represents mental states across a continuum of illness to health. The vertical Y-axis draws the states of mental well-being. People high in mental health and well-being are flourishing and lie on the upper part of the Y-axis. Those with low levels of mental well-being, but no diagnosable mental illness, are languishing, and lie on the lower end of the Y-axis.

By and large, languishing will influence a portion of the choices, practices, and inclinations toward oneself, others, as well as one's environment. For instance, declining invitations to things one ordinarily loves can be a sign of languishing. One may not feel strongly about not attending an event, but one might not see why going there would be any better than sitting at home. For another person, languishing may mean attending an event but ultimately leaving early because it brought them no pleasure.

Languishing may appear to be basically the same as an existential crisis. When one is languishing, they may question whether anything has a purpose — something that one would also do if they were experiencing existential dread (Gillette, 2021).

Bassi et al (2021) studied the mental health of health workers along with the evaluation of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and the impact of positive mental health. Among 653 participants who were studied, 33.4% were flourishing and 8.9% were languishing. 57.7% were moderate. Individuals who were languishing or were moderately healthy mentally were more likely to receive PTSD diagnosis. However, flourishing participants were not likely to receive such a diagnosis.

Bassi et al (2021) investigated the stress and mental well-being of survivors of COVID-19 after they were discharged from the hospital. Various self-report inventories were given to the participants. The findings indicated that merely one fifth were diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. However, half of them were diagnosed with average mental health and flourish. 5% of the total was observed to be languishing. Furthermore, maladaptive coping strategies were observed in those in the category of languishing.

Guzmán et al (2021) aimed to identify the state of languishing in post graduate students, among those who have been dealing with social distancing as a result of covid-19 pandemic. This was done using a mobile application prototype. The authors through this study wanted to motivate people to acknowledge their emotions. This paper's prototype development process responds to an interface design based on human-computer interaction methodologies and tools, and it includes some proposed modifications following the evaluation phase.

Kuettel et al (2021) aimed to investigate the prevalence of depression and anxiety symptoms in elite male and female Danish athletes. This study also wanted to identify latent profiles in the athletes according to their mental health. It also examines if different profiles vary according to selective protective and risk factors which concern mental health. The sample population consisted of 612 Danish athletes. The results indicated that female athletes possessed significantly higher anxiety and depression symptoms as compared to male athletes. Latent profiles showed distinctive differences in languishing. The study concluded that athletes have similar levels of symptoms as the general population. Languishing athletes reported higher levels of stress, low levels of social support and received lower support from private and sport domains.

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Eisele (2020) aims to examine the Mental Health Continuum along with Struggle Continuum Scale. Flourishing and languishing on the vertical scale, whereas struggling and surrendering on the horizontal end of the scale. A quadratic model was suggested for this study. The four corners represented; anxious, depressed, joyful and content. The sample population consisted of 174 females, and 124 males. The mean age was 40.48 and 37.27 years respectively. The results confirm that the two scales are testing the four dimensions.

Fagrell Trygg et al (2019) undertook a scoping review with the goal of mapping, describing, and analyzing the literature on mental health intersectional discrepancies. Self-reported symptoms on validated scales or disorders on diagnostic interviews had to be used to quantify the mental health outcome. The screening method produced 20 studies after the search strategy was used in two databases. There were no observable traits in mental health across studies when intersectional perspectives were combined, although there were both harmful and beneficial impacts. The majority of research applied an objective measurement of inequality, and only a few looked into factors that might explain intersectional inequalities. The results of this paper, taken combined, emphasize the need of examining intersectional inequalities across demographic groups when it comes to determining priorities and taking action on mental health disparities.

Law et al (2019) studied social media (time spent and reasons for going online, cyberbullying, instances of victimization etc.) and mental health profiles of 671 adolescents. This was done using various self-report inventories on depression, anxiety, social acceptance and so on. Findings using the Latent Profile Analysis indicated that the languishing profile constituted high depression and anxiety with low social acceptance whereas the flourishing profile low depression and anxiety along with high social acceptance.

Wissing et al (2019) aimed to investigate the experiences of those with high languishing level versus low languishing levels among 3 cross sectional survey designs of positive mental health. According to the Mental Health Continuum, participants were selected for the quantitative data of languishing and flourishing. For the written responses to the semi structured questionnaire, quantitative analysis was carried out. The result revealed that the well-being of a person differs in degree in terms of languishing and flourishing. It was observed that concepts like manifestation, self-focus, motivation etc. vary. Languishing people usually are motivated in terms of hedonic values such as happiness, whereas flourishing people are more motivated in terms of eudaimonism values.

Hides et al (2018) studied the relationship between distress and mental well-being of the younger generation. 389 participants were taken for the study and five models that studied that relationship were compared. The findings indicated that 90% were flourishing and had moderate well-being and mental health. However, 4% were languishing and faced emotional distress which was higher than the distress faced by those who were flourishing.

Basson & Rothmann (2017) investigated the emotion regulation strategies used by flourishing students when they are compared to those who are languishing or are moderately mentally healthy. Self-report inventories were given to 779 participants and the findings indicated that students who were languishing were more likely to use maladaptive strategies of emotion regulation such as having a fault-finding attitude, perform external attribution and so on. Students who were flourishing used more adaptive strategies of emotion regulation such as behavioral display, capitalizing and so on.

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Knoesen and Naudé (2017) aimed to investigate the experiences of first year university students in languishing and flourishing. Nominal group method was used for data collection of 22 students. Results were further interpreted in terms of thematic analysis. Different dimensions of psychological, emotional and social wellbeing are taken into consideration as an essential experience for either languishing or flourishing. The results evidently showed that students are more vulnerable to languishing during the beginning of university. For several reasons like being confronted with practical difficulties, social isolation, academic adjustment, career pressure, victim to bullying, etc. However, students experience flourishing once the achievement of academic mastery, have some amount of personal growth and feel secure in a social support system.

Faulk et al (2012) studied the impact of adaptive as well as maladaptive coping profiles among individuals who either flourish or languish or are depressed. The participants in the study were 367 military spouses along with 267 teachers of public school. The findings indicated that those individuals who fit into the category of flourishing were able to adopt more adaptive coping strategies. However, languishing and depressed participants used maladaptive coping strategies.

Keyes (2002) studied how mental health encompassed subjective well-being, positive feelings and positive functioning. Both languishing (absence of mental health criteria) and flourishing (presence of mental health criteria) were assessed on 3,032 participants, aged between 25-74 years. However, findings indicated that 17.2% were only fit to be flourishing whereas 12.1% adults were fitting into the criteria for languishing. The rest had moderate mental health. It was also found that languishing individuals were twice more likely to suffer from a major depressive episode than flourishing individuals. Further, it was noted that languishing had a significant relationship with depression and also caused impairment in psycho-social aspects of life, perception of emotional well-being and limited daily living.

METHODOLOGY

Objective

The objective of the study is to construct a Languishing Scale on Indian Young Adults and to test its psychometric properties.

Participant Sample

The sample consists of 269 participants ranging from the age of 18 to 25 belonging to India. There were 174 females and 95 males participants.

Materials

- Languishing Scale for Indian Young Adults which consists of 60 items
- Languishing Scale for Indian Young Adults Manual
- Scoring Key and Norms
- Stationery

Administration

The subject is seated comfortably and is given the Languishing Scale for Indian Young Adults containing 60 items. Instructions are given to the subject to answer each item as honestly as possible and to not leave any items unanswered. There is no time limit but usually participants take 15-20 minutes to complete the test. After the participant completes

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answering, the questionnaire is taken back. The responses must be scored according to the scoring key provided in the manual.

Precautions

The following precautions must be taken.

- The subject must be seated in a well-ventilated room.
- Required items for the study should be arranged beforehand.
- The subject must be assured of the confidentiality of the results.
- If a participant has left items unanswered, the reasons for the same must be known.

Scoring

The test constructed has 60 items in total, which the respondent has to rate on a 5-point Likert scale. The response options are Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. Some Items are positively worded and get a score of 1 for Strongly Agree, 2 for Agree, 3 for Neutral, 4 for Disagree and 5 for Strongly Disagree. The following items are negatively worded: 3, 5, 7, 13, 16, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 32, 35, 40, 42, 48, 49, 50, 51, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60 where the respondent gets a score of 5 for Strongly Agree, 4 for Agree, 3 for Neutral, 2 for Disagree and 1 for Strongly Disagree.

Analyses

Data was collected from a total of 269 young adult participants between the ages of 18 and 25 in India. Out of the 269 participants, 174 were females and 95 were males. This was done via Google Forms, which allowed the researchers to create an internet-based questionnaire that was distributed online. The link to the online questionnaire was distributed through convenience sampling and snowball sampling. Individuals were asked to complete a self-report survey administered online consisting of demographic questions (age, gender, relationship status, and occupation) and the new scale items created by the researchers. They were also asked to repost the link or forward to their acquaintances in order to obtain a community sample. The contact details of the researchers were provided in case the participants had any questions. In addition, all participants were informed that their answers on the online survey would be used in the study, and if they started the survey, they gave consent for their data to be used. Furthermore, participants were informed that all the data would be treated as strictly confidential, and that only the researchers would have access to this database.

Scale Items

LANGUISHING SCALE FOR INDIAN YOUNG ADULTS	
S.N	STATEMENTS
1.	I get along with my supervisors/teachers/boss
2.	I call people to wish them on their birthdays.
3.	I feel my life has no point.
4.	If my partner was upset, my first duty would be to cheer them up.
5.	When people start an argument, it instantly makes me irritable.
6.	I feel excited about meeting my friends.
7.	I often have disturbed sleep and wake up during the night.
8.	I have a sense of direction in life.
9.	I am not subject to high and low mood fluctuations very often.
10.	My opinions/suggestions are taken into account in my workplace/college.
11.	I have achieved whatever I aspired to till now.

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12.	I believe that being in a relationship is easy and doesn't require much effort.
13.	Poor sleep makes it hard for me to concentrate.
14.	I like to stay back and talk with my colleagues/batch mates after office/college hours.
15.	I am satisfied with my salary.
16.	I get easily irritated over small setbacks.
17.	I make sure that my partner's needs are being fulfilled in the relationship
18.	I am satisfied with how much and how deeply I sleep.
19.	I do not want to change anything about myself.
20.	I enjoy going out on weekends.
21.	I do not get the motivation to go to work/college every day.
22.	I am content with everything I have got in life.
23.	I need to remind myself that I am special to my partner.
24.	I wake up even if there is slight noise in the surroundings.
25.	If I had the opportunity to start over, I would take it.
26.	People think I am usually sad or unhappy.
27.	I expect that in my relationship, romance will not fade with time.
28.	I get along with my colleagues/batch mates.
29.	I enjoy attending parties and events.
30.	Sleepiness interferes with my everyday life.
31.	My friends and family provide an understanding environment.
32.	I have difficulty falling asleep.
33.	I like to go on trips/travel with my friends.
34.	I like celebrating my birthday with other people.
36.	I like to host parties at my house.
37.	My work/college environment is cooperative and friendly.
38.	I feel refreshed after sleep.
39.	I am mostly calm during stressful situations.
40.	I do not like to plan dates.
41.	I feel joyous and excited in life.
42.	When I am unable to solve a problem, it is because I am not in a 'good' mood.
43.	I can make my relationship work, despite any obstacles.
44.	I get the motivation to do my job.
45.	I consider myself to be a happy individual.
46.	I make efforts to make new friends.
47.	I need to know a person very well before I fall in love with them.
48.	I feel tired after waking up.
49.	I feel people around me have more privileges than I have.
50.	I feel low almost throughout the day.
51.	Poor sleep affects my physical health.
52.	I am satisfied with my job.
53.	I like meeting new people.
54.	I like to go on dates.
55.	I feel no one around me really gets me.
56.	I have difficulty getting out of bed.
57.	I want my partner to spend more time with me.
58.	I do not get promotions/increments.
59.	My previous hobbies are of little interest to me.
60.	I feel that I am unable to keep my partner satisfied.

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Psychometric Properties

A reliability analysis was carried out on the Languishing Scale of Indian Young Adults. A reliability of $\alpha=0.82$ was obtained. Examination of individual item statistics suggested that elimination of negative items would increase the reliability of the scale. The final reliability for the resulting sixty item scale was considered acceptable, $\alpha= 0.83$. The scale constitutes content validity from experts.

Interpretation

The aim of the study is to construct a Languishing Scale on Indian Young Adults and to test its psychometric properties. There are 60 items in the questionnaire having a response of a 5 point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's Alpha were done for 60 items using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) - version 16.

The mean of the items ranged between 1.86 to 3.5. However some items were anomalies. "I feel excited about meeting my friends" was an item where the mean ($\mu = 1.67$) was lower than the mean of most items. "I believe that being in a relationship is easy and doesn't require much effort" and "Poor sleep makes it hard for me to concentrate" are items where the mean value ($\mu = 3.80$ and $\mu = 3.74$, respectively) was greater than the mean value of most items. The Standard Deviation (σ) of the items mostly ranged above 0.6. Hence, no anomalies were found.

A reliability analysis was carried out on the Languishing Scale of Indian Young Adults. A reliability of $\alpha=0.82$ was obtained. Examination of individual item statistics suggested that elimination of negative items would increase the reliability of the scale. Subsequent analysis indicated that alpha could be improved after eliminating each of the following items individually:

"I would initiate a talk with my new neighbor; I do not feel overburdened with work/college at the end of the day; I believe that if it's meant to be then the love of my love will find me and I enjoy staying alone at home." The final reliability for the resulting sixty item scale was considered acceptable, $\alpha= 0.83$.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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Appendix

The hyperlink to the questionnaire has been attached below.

[Languishing Scale for Indian Young Adults](#)