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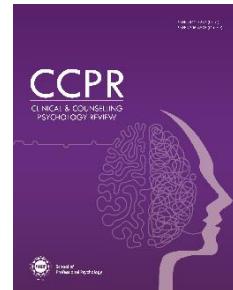
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Perceived Stress, Coping Strategies, and Well-being of Unemployed Adults in Pakistan

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Abstract

This study scrutinized the relationship between perceived stress, coping strategies, and well-being of unemployed adults in Pakistan. By using the purposive sampling technique, data were collected from 180 unemployed adults (men = 78%, women = 22%) within the age range of 20-40 years ($M = 29.58$, $SD = 6.17$ and $M = 26.17$, $SD = 3.44$ for men and women respectively). Urdu versions of the Perceived Stress Scale, Coping Strategies Questionnaire, and Mental Health Continuum-Short Form were used for data collection. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson product moment correlation, hierarchical multiple regression, and independent sample t -test. The findings indicated that perceived stress is significantly but negatively correlated with well-being in unemployed adults. Whereas, coping strategies and their types are significantly and positively correlated with well-being and its domains in such adults. Similarly, perceived stress significantly but negatively predicted well-being. Whereas, active-practical coping significantly and positively predicted well-being and its subscales. While, avoidance-focused significantly but negatively predicted the emotional well-being of unemployed adults. Significant gender differences were found in well-being, emotional well-being, and psychological well-being of these adults. Additionally, significant differences in the emotional well-being of single and married unemployed adults were found to exist. This study aimed to assist the mental health professionals in the sense that they could guide unemployed individuals regarding how to cope with stress caused by unemployment in an effective way. Moreover, it also helped in the implementation of proper interventional programs to introduce adaptive ways of coping. The study also helped policymakers in planning and implementing better strategies to manage this issue in Pakistan.

Keywords: coping strategies, perceived stress, unemployed adults, well-being

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Introduction

Unemployment is one of the serious social issues affecting individuals adversely all around the world (Saleem & Hussain, [2018](#)). Pakistan is also facing this growing social problem (Asif et al., [2023](#)). Evidence revealed that unemployment has major psychosocial consequences affecting an unemployed individual's mental health, self-esteem, and general life satisfaction (Ahmed et al., [2023](#)). Unemployed individuals face financial constraints and lose their value in social circle. This negatively affects their self-worth and incorporates the sense of dissatisfaction (Petros et al., [2015](#)). Consequently, it deteriorates their well-being (Gedikli et al., [2023](#)). Although, being unemployed is one of the major challenges; but the focal point to highlight here is how unemployed individuals cope with these stressors. Coping strategies play an important role to determine an individual's health with pertinent implications for subjective (Ozdemir, [2019](#)) and psychological well-being (Bryden et al., [2015](#); Mohammed et al., [2021](#)). Assuming the crucial role of coping strategies, this research investigated the relationship between perceived stress, coping strategies, and well-being of unemployed adults.

According to Zibaei et al. ([2012](#)), individuals' overall understanding and interpretation of the effects of stressors is referred to as perceived stress. Different stressors are perceived and interpreted differently by different individuals. In the creation of stress and individual interpretation of stress, a variety of factors can play effective roles (Zibaei et al., [2012](#)). Fielden and Davidson ([1999](#)) stated that to reduce or overcome the stress, coping plays a crucial role. The process to cope with stressful events, for instance, unemployment is highly dynamic and complex. Moreover, it is intended to moderate the effect of these events on emotional, physical, and social functioning of an individual as reported by Ganesan et al. ([2018](#)). Coping with unemployment and loss of job refers to behavioral and cognitive efforts to deal with the demands faced by a person as a result of the situation (Fielden & Davidson, [1999](#)). Folkman et al. ([1986](#)) defined coping with loss of job as an individual's cognitive and behavioral effort to deal with internal and external demands imposed by unemployment which surpass the individual's resources (Solove et al., [2015](#)). Ways of coping are divided into two chief types, that is, problem-focused and emotion-focused. Problem-focused coping focuses on altering or dealing with problem which causes stress, while the usage of methods which regulate emotional response to

problem is emotion-focused (Lazarus & Folkman, [1984](#)). McKee-Ryan et al. ([2005](#)) reported that in unemployed individuals, both coping styles, that is, problem-focused and emotion-focused are associated with higher mental health. Individuals try to cope with unemployment stress directly and indirectly. Directly, they deal with stress through problem-focused coping, such as engaging through non-work activities, reframing negative events more positively, moving to an area of enhanced employment opportunity, and enrolling in a retraining program. In indirect coping, such as emotion-focused, they undervalue their previous job, get involved in the community, look for financial help or social support, and distance themselves from job loss (McKee-Ryan et al., [2005](#)). Higher level of well-being has been observed in unemployed individuals who adopt these coping mechanisms (McKee-Ryan et al., [2005](#)). While, Mohammed et al. ([2021](#)), Rabenu et al. ([2016](#)), and Mayordomo-Rodriguez et al., (2015) reported problem-focused coping positively and emotion-focused coping negatively predicted the well-being.

Shoqeirat et al. ([2023](#)) quoted definition of well-being as a good quality of life, characterized by contentment, happiness, good physical and mental health as well as outlook and lower distress level. Huppert ([2009](#)) defined well-being as a blend of good feelings and functioning; acquainting oneself with positive emotions, such as contentment and happiness, growth of one's potential, gaining some control over one's life, having positive relationships, and a sense of purpose (Ruggeri et al., [2020](#)). According to Natvig et al. ([2003](#)) well-being refers to a state when an individual recognizes his/her capabilities to work effectively and fruitfully, deal with normal stresses of life, and contribute to the community. Diener et al. ([2009](#)) broke down the well-being into three dimensions, that is, emotional well-being (happiness and satisfaction in one's life), psychological well-being (living a fulfilling life in which all the potentials are acknowledged), and social well-being (feeling that one values and is valued by the society in which one lives), as reported by Wersebe et al. ([2018](#)).

Pertaining to the impact of unemployment on well-being, Jahoda's ([1982](#)) functional model offers the most influential theoretical explanation (Gedikli et al., [2023](#)). This theory differentiates the latent and manifests functions of employment. The manifest function of employment rewards the employee with financial benefits, whereas the latent outcomes of employment include: (1) disciplined time routine of a working day; (2)

expanded social circle and relationships; (3) motivation to achieve goals beyond their aspirations; (4) maintenance of social status and personal identity (5); and imposition of regular routine work. Thus, unemployment restricts people from becoming a part of social institutions. They suffer psychologically, feel discouraged, and lose their self-esteem, disciplined routine, and respect (Gedikli et al., 2023). Moreover, unemployment exerts negative effects on individual's well-being, leading towards the negation of both manifest and latent functions. However, it is frequently the loss of latent functions that influences the well-being of individuals negatively (Jahoda, 1982).

Many researchers in their areas of study have confirmed the overwhelming impacts of unemployment on individual's well-being. Willemse (2015) and Latif (2010) reported that unemployment has a noteworthy adverse effect on individual's psychological and emotional well-being. While a significant rise in subjective physical health, life satisfaction, and emotional well-being is facilitated by re-employment (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). Studies have reported that people cope up with unemployment in different ways and that coping is recurrently associated with outcome. This suggests that some ways of coping are more influential than others in maintaining an individual's well-being. On the other hand, several researchers reported the relationship between perceived stress, coping strategies, and well-being (Azam et al., 2021; Meng & D'Arcy, 2016; Ryu et al., 2020; Takleh & Nadrmohammadi, 2016). However, all of these studies were conducted in different settings with varied samples. Therefore, the current study examined the relationship between perceived stress, coping strategies, and well-being in unemployed adults.

Furthermore, with regard to demographics, different studies have reported that men have more tendencies to be affected by unemployment than women, though variation exists across countries. Overtime, it has also been seen in some works that little difference exists in the extent to which both genders are affected (Carroll, 2007; Strandh et al., 2013). Longhi et al. (2017) reported that men's well-being is more adversely affected by loss of job than women. Himali (2021) pointed out that unemployed men have adverse mental health than unemployed women as both serve different positions and roles in society as well as in family. Furthermore, Himali (2021) concluded that men who were both unemployed and married had

poorer mental health, whereas according to Colitoy et al. (2023), no major differences were seen in well-being in relation to marital statuses.

As per the literature quoted above, variation exists in findings regarding demographics. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the well-being of unemployed adults with reference to their genders and marital statuses. Furthermore, there is no published study which examines the relationship between perceived stress, coping strategies, and well-being of unemployed adults; so this study aimed to fill the gap in the literature.

Hypotheses

- There would be a significant relationship between perceived stress, coping strategies, and well-being of unemployed adults.
- Perceived stress and coping strategies would significantly predict the well-being of unemployed adults.
- There would be significant gender differences in well-being of unemployed adults.
- There would be significant differences in well-being of single and married unemployed adults.

Method

Sample

By using purposive sampling technique, 180 unemployed adults, including 141 men and 39 women, were taken from four different cities of Pakistan. Participants with the age range of 20 to 40 years, who were unemployed for the last six months, were recruited in this study. While individuals who were not willing to work, full-time students, individuals suffering from physical disabilities, and psychological illnesses were excluded from this study.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Characteristics (N=180)

Characteristics	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>f</i>	(%)
Age (in years)	28.84 (5.85)		
Gender			
Men		141	78
Women		39	22

Characteristics	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>f</i>	(%)
Education	12 (3.63)		
Number of Siblings			
One to Five		100	56
Six to Ten		78	43
Eleven to Fifteen		2	1
Marital Status			
Single		95	53
Married		85	47
Do you have dependents			
Yes		111	62
No		69	38
Duration of Unemployment	6.38(4.71)		
Are you looking for job			
Yes		180	100
No			
Family System			
Joint		124	69
Nuclear		56	31
Residential Area			
Rural		53	29
Urban		127	71

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of unemployed adults. The mean age of participants was 28.84 years, 78% of participants were men and 22% were women. The mean of participant's education was 12. The siblings of 56% participants were one to five, 43% of participants were six to ten siblings, and 1% were eleven to fifteen siblings, respectively. The demographic information revealed that 53% of participants were single and 47% were married, as well as 62% of the participants having dependents. The mean of participants' duration of unemployment (in months) was 6.38; while all of the participants were looking for work/job. Most of the participants had a joint family system and belonged to urban areas.

Measures

Demographic Information Sheet

Information related to age, gender, education, number of siblings, marital status, dependents, duration of unemployment, family system, and

residential area was gathered using a self-constructed demographic information questionnaire.

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)

The PSS-14 is a self-reported measure that evaluates the degree to which the respondent has perceived situations in his/her life within the past month as stressful (Cohen et al., [1983](#)). PSS-14 is a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from “0” *never* to “4” *very often*. PSS scores are obtained by summation of all 14 items and by reverse coding of 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 13 items. PSS scores range from 0 to 40. Higher score indicates more stress. Cronbach's alpha reliability of PSS-14 is .85 (Cohen et al., [1983](#)). In this study, Urdu version of PSS-14 by Tahira and Kausar ([2012](#)) was used and Cronbach's alpha reliability was found to be .70.

Coping Strategies Questionnaire (CSQ)

This questionnaire was developed by Kausar ([2001](#)) for Pakistani population in Urdu language including 62 items. It measures four types of coping strategies, that is, active-practical (16 items), active-distractive (9 items), avoidance-focused (24 items), and religious-focused (13 items). The scales for these coping strategies range from “1” *seldom used* to “5” *always used*. Higher scores represent more usage for a specific coping. For the sample of this study, the overall Cronbach's alpha reliability of this questionnaire was found to be .92 and for subscales .65 to .85.

Mental Health Continuum-short Form (MHC-SF)

Mental Health Continuum-short Form (MHC-SF) was used to assess the construct of well-being, which is comprised of 14 items with three subscales, namely emotional well-being (3 items), social well-being (5 items), and psychological well-being (6 items). MHC-SF is a 6-point Likert-type scale, ranging from “0” *never* to “5” *every-day* (Keyes, [2009](#)). In this study, Urdu version of MHC-SF by Faran and Malik (2015) was used and the overall reliability of this scale was found to be .92 and for subscales .80 to .89.

Procedure

Firstly, the study was approved from concerned authorities of the university. After that, permission was sought from the authors of scalesto use assessment measures. Then, unemployed adults were approached personally, with the help of relatives, as well as colleagues. The nature of

this research was briefed to them to pursue their formal permission in order to gather the data. After achieving the consent, questionnaires comprising instructions, demographic information sheet, and assessment measures were given to participants. After that, they were instructed about how to fill up questionnaires. Participant's queries related to the study were also addressed by the researcher. Only those participants were included in the study who met the inclusion criteria and showed willingness to participate. Participants were requested to give their responses accurately without leaving any question. Finally, the gathered data were analyzed using the SPSS-20 version.

Results

Firstly, reliability analyses was run to determine the psychometric properties of scales used. After that, Pearson product-moment correlation, hierarchical multiple regression, and independent sample *t*-test were run for hypotheses testing.

Table 2

Reliabilities and Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables (N = 180)

Variables	<i>k</i>	α	<i>M (SD)</i>	Range	
				Potential	Actual
PSS	14	.70	28.52 (6.56)	0-70	7-46
CSQ	62	.92	197.21 (26.32)	62-310	118-280
APC	16	.85	53.76 (8.59)	16-80	32-76
ADC	9	.65	26.65 (4.65)	9-45	14-41
AFC	24	.84	71.38 (11.07)	24-120	36-105
RFC	13	.82	45.41 (7.79)	13-65	24-64
MHCSF	14	.92	40.55 (14.52)	0-84	4-70
EWB	3	.87	9 (3.59)	0-18	0-15
SWB	5	.80	13.49 (5.78)	0-30	0-25
PWB	6	.89	18.06 (7.07)	0-36	1-30

Note. PSS=Perceived Stress Scale, CSQ=Coping Strategies Questionnaire, APC=Active Practical Coping, ADC=Active Distractive Coping, AFC=Avoidance Focused Coping, RFC=Religious Focused Coping, MHCSF=Mental Health Continuum-Short Form, EWB=Emotional Well-being, SWB=Social Well-being, PWB=Psychological Well-being

Table 3

Correlation Between Perceived Stress, Coping Strategies, Well-being, and their Subscales of Unemployed Adults (N = 180)

Variables	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. PSS	.15*	.01	.00	.24***	.12	-.28***	-.32***	-.26***	-.20**
2.CSQ	-	.81***	.75***	.85***	.81***	.37***	.21**	.27***	.43***
3.APC	-		.55***	.48***	.63***	.51***	.37***	.38***	.54***
4.ADC			-	.64***	.41***	.30***	.20**	.21**	.35***
5.AFC				-	.55***	.18**	.02	.14	.23***
6.RFC					-	.26***	.17*	.18**	.31***
7.WB						-	.79***	.87***	.93***
8.EWB							-	.55***	.67***
9.SWB								-	.70***
10.PWB									-

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. PSS=Perceived Stress Scale, CSQ=Coping Strategies Questionnaire, APC=Active Practical Coping, ADC=Active Distractive Coping, AFC=Avoidance Focused Coping, RFC=Religious Focused Coping, WB=Well-being, EWB=Emotional Well-being, SWB=Social Well-being, PWB=Psychological Well-being

Table 4

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis: Examining the Effect of Perceived Stress and Coping Strategies on Well-being, Emotional Well-being, Social Well-being, and Psychological Well-being of Unemployed Adults (N = 180)

Variables	WB		EWB		SWB		PWB	
	ΔR^2	β						
Step 1 (Control Variables)		.11**		.10*		.09		.11**

Variables	WB		EWB		SWB		PWB	
	ΔR^2	β						
Age		-.06		-.07		-.01		-.06
Gender		.02		.09		-.08		.08
Education		.03		-.08		.08		.04
No. of Siblings		-.10		-.09		-.16*		-.03
Marital Status		.14		.05		.17		.13
Dependents		-.15		-.08		-.17		-.12
Dur. of Unemp.		.02		-.03		.01		.04
Family System		-.03		.00		-.00		-.06
Residential Area		.16*		.19*		.11		.16
Step 2	.33***		.25***		.21***		.32***	
Perceived Stress		-.26***		-.26***		-.25***		-.19**
APC		.51***		.38***		.44***		.51***
ADC		.06		.08		.00		.09
AFC		-.07		-.19*		-.01		-.05
RFC		.01		.08		-.07		.03
Total R^2		.44		.35		.30		.43
<i>F</i>		9.36***		6.42***		5.04***		8.96***

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. WB=Well-being, EWB=Emotional Well-being, SWB=Social Well-being, PWB=Psychological Well-being, No. of Siblings=Number of Siblings, Dur. of Unemp=Duration of Unemployment, APC=Active Practical Coping, ADC=Active Distractive Coping, AFC=Avoidance Focused Coping, RFC=Religious Focused Coping

Table 5

Comparison of Unemployed Adults on Well-being, Emotional Well-being, Social Well-being, and Psychological Well-being (N=180)

Variables	Men (n=141)		Women (n=39)		<i>t</i> (178)	<i>p</i>	95% CI		Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
WB	39.25	14.77	45.25	12.68	-2.311	.022	-11.12	-.87	0.43
EWB	8.66	3.54	10.21	3.57	-2.394	.018	-2.81	-.27	0.43
SWB	13.19	6.06	14.56	4.52	-1.541	.127	-3.12	.39	
PWB	17.39	6.95	20.48	7.06	-2.454	.015	-5.58	-.61	0.44

Note. WB=Well-being, EWB=Emotional Well-being, SWB=Social Well-being, PWB=Psychological Well-being

Table 6

Comparison of Single and Married Unemployed Adults on Well-being, Emotional Well-being, Social Well-being, and Psychological Well-being (N=180)

Variables	Single (n=95)		Married (n=85)		<i>t</i> (178)	<i>p</i>	95% CI		Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
WB	41.88	14.33	39.07	14.67	1.300	.195	-1.45	7.08	
EWB	9.56	3.75	8.36	3.32	2.266	.025	.15	2.25	0.33
SWB	13.69	5.81	13.27	5.77	.490	.625	-1.28	2.13	
PWB	18.62	6.81	17.43	7.34	1.124	.263	-.89	3.26	

Note. *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation, WB=Well-being, EWB=Emotional Well-being, SWB=Social Well-being, PWB=Psychological Well-being

Table 2 shows the psychometric properties of scales used in this study and it is clear that all scales including subscales have moderate to high reliabilities, except ADC.

Table 3 illustrates perceived stress shows a significant negative relationship with well-being, emotional well-being, social well-being, and psychological well-being. This indicates that high level of stress decreases the well-being, emotional well-being, social well-being, and psychological well-being of unemployed adults. Whereas, coping strategies, active-practical coping, active-distractive coping, and religious-focused coping have a significant positive relationship with well-being, emotional well-being, social well-being, and psychological well-being. This shows that more usage of coping strategies including active-practical coping, active-distractive coping, and religious-focused coping increases the well-being, emotional well-being, social well-being, and psychological well-being of unemployed adults. While, avoidance-focused coping has a significant positive relationship with the well-being and psychological well-being. This indicates that more usage of avoidance-focused coping increases the well-being and psychological well-being of unemployed adults. Hence, hypothesis 1 of this study is supported by these findings.

Table 4 shows that for well-being, first model of demographic variables explained 11% variance as $F(9, 170) = 2.47, p < .05$, while residential area significantly positively predicted the well-being. In second model, 33% variance was explained by independent variables as $F(5, 165) = 19.35, p < .001$. Whereas among the independent variables perceived stress exhibited significant negative relationship with well-being.

For emotional well-being, the first model of demographic variables explained 10% variance as $F(9, 170) = 2.19, p < .05$, while residential area significantly positively predicted the emotional well-being. The second model explained 25% variance in emotional well-being as $F(5, 165) = 12.68, p < .001$. Furthermore, perceived stress and avoidance-focused coping strategy was found to be the significant negative predictors of well-being.

For social well-being, the first model of demographic variables did not significantly predict social well-being as $F(9, 170) = 1.88, p > .05$; but the number of siblings significantly negatively predicted the social well-being. In second model, 21% variance was explained by independent variables as

$F (5, 165) = 9.86, p < .001$. Perceived stress emerged as a significant negative predictor of social well-being of unemployed individuals, while reverse was observed for active-practical coping.

For psychological well-being, the first model of demographic variables explained 11% variance as $F (9, 170) = 2.39, p < .05$. In second model, 32% variance was explained by independent variables as $F (5, 165) = 18.54, p < .001$. Among the independent variables, perceived stress significantly negatively predicted psychological well-being, while active-practical coping significantly positively predicted the latter. So, the second hypothesis of this study is supported.

Table 5 shows that there are significant gender differences in the well-being of unemployed adults. Women scored higher on well-being, emotional well-being, and psychological well-being than men. The values of Cohen's d also indicate a medium effect size. So, the third hypothesis of this study is supported by these findings.

Table 6 shows that there are significant differences in emotional well-being of single and married unemployed adults. Single unemployed adults have higher emotional well-being than married adults. The value of Cohen's d also indicates medium effect size. Thus, hypothesis four is supported by these findings.

Discussion

This study was conducted to examine the relationship between perceived stress, coping strategies, and well-being of unemployed adults. Findings indicated that perceived stress has a significant negative relationship with well-being and its all subscales. These findings were consistent with the study of Yadav et al. (2023), Yang et al. (2022), Kumar et al. (2020), Anand and Nagle (2016), and Clemente et al. (2016) who reported that a significant inverse relationship exists between perceived stress and psychological well-being of individuals. Numerous researches suggest that unemployed individuals report lower psychological well-being (Latif, 2010; Willemse, 2015). The above-mentioned results are also consistent with this study. Although, there is sufficient empirical evidence, which suggests that unemployment is related to decreased emotional well-being and increased physical complaints (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). The aforementioned findings also support this study. The results of this study, that perceived stress decreases well-being of unemployed adults, are consistent with

theoretical perspective of *latent deprivation theory* given by Jahoda (1982), in accordance with this theory, being unemployed restricts people from becoming part of social institutions. They experience psychological distress and feel discouraged, gradually losing their self-esteem, sense of respect, and structured routine (Gedikli et al., 2023). Thus, unemployment exerts negative effects on individual's well-being, leading towards the negation of both manifest and latent functions (Jahoda, 1982).

The second major finding of this study was that problem-focused coping (active-practical and religious-focused) and emotion-focused coping (active-distractive) have a significant positive relationship with well-being and its all subscales. While avoidance-focused coping (emotion-focused coping) has a positive significant relationship with well-being and psychological well-being of unemployed adults. Moreover, it is a well-known fact that the ways of coping are one of the main strategies that buffer the adverse influence of stressful situations on the well-being of individuals. The findings are consistent with the earlier meta-analytic study conducted by McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) which revealed that in unemployed individuals, both coping strategies, that is, problem-focused and emotion-focused, are linked to higher well-being. Most of the previous researches related to coping strategies and well-being were conducted on varied samples except unemployed individuals. Most of the previous researches reported that problem-focused is positively, whereas emotion-focused is negatively linked with the well-being of individuals (Mayordomo-Rodriguez et al., 2015; Mohammed et al., 2021; Rabenu et al., 2016).

Another finding was that perceived stress negatively predicts well-being and its all domains in unemployed adults. These findings are consistent with the previous researchers of Anand and Nagle (2016) as well as Hui and Ramzan (2017). This is because they reported that perceived stress negatively predicts the psychological well-being of individuals. It was also found that active-practical coping positively predicts well-being and all of its domains. Whereas, avoidance-focused coping negatively predicts the emotional well-being of unemployed adults. These findings are consistent with Mayordomo-Rodriguez et al. (2015), who reported that problem-focused coping positively predicts, whereas emotion-focused coping negatively predicts the well-being of youth.

The current study also explored gender differences in relation to well-being including emotional and psychological well-being, that is,

unemployed women have better well-being than men. Previous researches reported that women are less affected by unemployment than men (Blanchflower & Oswald, [2004](#); Himali, [2021](#)), and men show lower well-being than women (Lahelma, [1989](#); Longhi et al., [2017](#)). Similarly, Muller et al. ([1993](#)) and Lahelma ([1992](#)) found that for men the situation of unemployment is more stressful which lowers their psychological well-being. Pakistan has a patriarchal structure where men are appointed as the head of family and breadwinner. They are subjected to societal expectations to behave and perform according to the roles that society assigns them (Adil et al., [2017](#)). So, men are unable to meet these societal expectations when they are unemployed.

Earlier research has reported that unemployment negatively influences the married individuals more than single ones since they are financially more responsible for their family members, especially their children. Therefore, unemployment exerts a strong negative effect on those individuals who have more responsibilities (Fielden & Davidson, [2001](#)). The current study provided the same conclusion in the context of Pakistan. It was demonstrated that being unemployed and married had a considerable negative influence on the emotional well-being than being unemployed and single. These findings are also consistent with Himali ([2021](#)) that men who were both unemployed and married had poorer mental health.

Conclusion

The current study concluded that perceived stress adversely affected the well-being of unemployed adults, whereas coping strategies helped the unemployed adults in maintaining their well-being. With regard to gender differences, unemployed men had lower well-being, emotional well-being, and psychological well-being than unemployed women. Similarly in the context of marital status, married unemployed adults had lower emotional well-being than single unemployed young adults.

Limitations and Suggestions

The current study proposed the following limitations:

- Assessment measures used in this study were self-reported and all inferences and findings were centered particularly on the feelings and perceptions of every individual.

- Also, exclusion criteria (not including individuals more than 40 years older) restricts the sample from being representative of the general population which makes it difficult to generalize findings to a diverse public. So, it is suggested for future researchers to include unemployed individuals who are above 40 years.
- Moreover, this study needs to be replicated and further explored for more reliable results.

Implications

- The results of this study would help psychologists to guide unemployed individuals towards seeking operative and timely stress management skills. The findings would also help psychologists in developing therapeutic programs that promote overall well-being among unemployed individuals.
- Similarly, findings may be helpful for policymakers in devising and implementing better strategies to manage this issue in Pakistan.
- The investigation of perceived stress, coping strategies, and well-being of unemployed adults may contribute to current knowledge as to what extent stress affects the well-being of unemployed individuals.
- This study may facilitate in understanding theoretical links and advance empirical knowledge resultantly.
- Furthermore, this study may guide future academic researchers in devising their upcoming researches.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

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