

EXAMINING THE PREDICTORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING  
AMONG NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATES

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

BÜNYAMİN ATAY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN  
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES, GUIDANCE AND  
PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING

AUGUST 2021



Approval of the thesis:

**EXAMINING THE PREDICTORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING  
AMONG NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING  
UNIVERSITY GRADUATES**

submitted by **BÜNYAMİN ATAY** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Science in Educational Sciences, Guidance and Psychological Counseling, the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University** by,

Prof. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI  
Dean  
Graduate School of Social Sciences

---

Prof. Dr. Cennet ENGİN DEMİR  
Head of Department  
Department of Educational Sciences

---

Prof. Dr. Ayhan DEMİR  
Supervisor  
Department of Educational Sciences

---

Prof. Dr. Oya YERİN GÜNERİ  
Co-Supervisor  
TED University  
Department of Educational Sciences

---

**Examining Committee Members:**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zeynep HATİPOĞLU SÜMER (Head of the Examining  
Committee)  
Middle East Technical University  
Department of Educational Sciences

---

Prof. Dr. Ayhan DEMİR (Supervisor)  
Middle East Technical University  
Department of Educational Sciences

---

Prof. Dr. Oya YERİN GÜNERİ (Co-Supervisor)  
TED University  
Department of Educational Sciences

---

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yeşim ÇAPA AYDIN  
Middle East Technical University  
Department of Educational Sciences

---

Assist. Prof. Dr. Gökçen AYDIN  
Hasan Kalyoncu University  
Department of Educational Sciences

---



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**Name, Last Name:** Bünyamin ATAY

**Signature:**

## **ABSTRACT**

### **EXAMINING THE PREDICTORS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING AMONG NOT IN EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION OR TRAINING UNIVERSITY GRADUATES**

ATAY, Bünyamin

M.S., The Department of Educational Sciences, Guidance and Psychological  
Counseling

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ayhan DEMİR

Co-supervisor: Prof. Dr. Oya YERİN GÜNERİ

August 2021, 207 pages

The present study aimed to explore the direct and indirect relationships between personal resources (i.e., self-esteem, self-efficacy and employment hope), social resources (i.e., social support as a whole, social support from friends, social support from family, social support from significant others) and work resources (i.e., work-involvement, external attribution unemployment, internal attribution of unemployment) with psychological wellbeing of not in employment, education or training university graduates. In that regard, Hypothesized Model-1 (with overall social support) and Hypothesized Model-2 (with social support from friends, social support from family, social support from significant others) were tested. An online survey provided quantitative data from 305 NEET participants. The demographic form, Flourishing Scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, General Self-Efficacy Scale, Employment Hope Scale, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, Work

Involvement Scale, Attribution of Unemployment Scale and Job Search Motivation Scale were used as data collection instruments. Path analyses results indicated a direct significant relationship between self-esteem, employment hope, social support from family and psychological wellbeing. In addition, self-esteem, self-efficacy, work involvement, overall social support, job search motivation were indirectly related to psychological wellbeing among NEETs. However, there was no statistically significant relationship between attributions of unemployment, social support from family and significant others, and psychological wellbeing. These findings were discussed in light of the extant literature, and suggestions were identified for future research and intervention programs.

**Keywords:** NEET, Psychological Wellbeing, Personal Resources, Social Resources and Work Resources

## ÖZ

### NE EĞİTİMDE NE DE İSTİHDAMDA YER ALAN ÜNİVERSİTE MEZUNU BİREYLERİN İYİ OLUŞLARINI YORDAYAN DEĞİŞKENLERİN İNCELENMESİ

ATAY, Bünyamin

Yüksek Lisans, Eğitim Bilimleri, Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Ayhan DEMİR

Ortak Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Oya YERİN GÜNERİ

Ağustos 2021, 207 sayfa

Bu çalışmada kişisel kaynakların (benlik saygısı, öz yetkinlik ve iş umudu), sosyal kaynakların (genel, aileden, arkadaştan ve özel birinden gelen sosyal destek) ve iş kaynaklarının (işe bağlılık, işsizliğin içe ve dışa atfı ve iş arama motivasyonu) üniversite mezunu NEİY bireylerin psikolojik iyi oluşlarıyla doğrudan ve dolaylı ilişkileri incelenmiştir. Bu kapsamda önerilen birinci model (genel sosyal destekle) ve önerilen ikinci model (arkadaştan gelen sosyal destek, aileden gelen sosyal destek ve özel birinden gelen sosyal destek) test edilmiştir. Çevrimiçi anket formu aracılığıyla 305 NEİY bireyden veri elde edilmiştir. Veri toplama aracı olarak bir demografik form, Psikolojik İyi Oluş Ölçeği, Rosenberg Benlik Saygısı Ölçeği, Genel Öz Yetkinlik Ölçeği, İş Umudu Ölçeği, Çok Boyutlu Algılanan Sosyal Destek Ölçeği, İşe Bağlılık Ölçeği, İşsizliği Atfetme Stili Ölçeği ve İş Arama Motivasyonu Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Yol analizleri sonuçları istatistiksel olarak anlamlı ve anlamlı olmayan doğrudan ve dolaylı ilişkileri ortaya koymuştur. Özellikle, üniversite mezunu NEİY

bireylerin psikolojik iyi oluřlarıyla benlik saygısı, iř umudu ve arkadařtan gelen sosyal destek doęrudan; benlik saygısı, öz yetkinlik, iře baęlılık, genel sosyal destek, iř arama motivasyonu ise dolaylı olarak iliřkili bulunmuřtur. Ancak psikolojik iyi oluřla iřsizlięin iře ve dıřa atıfı, aileden gelen sosyal destek ve özel birinden gelen sosyal destek arasında istatistiksel olarak herhangi anlamlı bir iliřkiye rastlanmamıřtır. Bulgular mevcut alanyazın ıřıęında tartıřılmıř, ve gelecekteki mődahale programları ile arařtırmalara yőnelik önerilerde bulunulmuřtur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** NEİY, Psikolojik İyi Oluř, Kiřisel Kaynaklar, Sosyal Kaynaklar, İř Kaynakları

*To my father, whose entire life was a constant struggle for getting a decent job ...*

*“Each and everyone shall have the right to work, to a free choice of occupation, to fair and satisfying working conditions, and to protection against unemployment.”*

*UN Declaration of Human Rights, Article XXIII*

*“All my hope is in youth.”*

*Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, The Father of Turks*

*“We guide our boys and girls to some extent through school, then drop them into this complex world to sink or swim as the case maybe. Yet there is no part of life where the need for guidance is more emphatic than in the transition from school to work...”*

*Frank Parsons*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

At the very beginning of my master education I was very doubtful whether I would see the light at the end of the tunnel. Now, this thesis marks the end of this journey in my life. As Kline reminds us “Such journeys (learning SEM 😊) require a commitment of time and the willingness to tolerate the frustration of trial and error, but this is one journey that you do not have to make alone.”, this journey was also filled with commitment, frustration, joy, sadness, hope, despair and would not be possible without the company and guidance of my significant others.

First of all, I would like express my particular thanks to Prof. Dr. Oya Yerin Güneri. Without her guidance this study would not have been what it is. The most precious lesson I have learnt from her throughout my master education and the thesis process is self-compassion. Before, I would harshly criticize myself whenever I make a mistake. However, she has always approached me with an unconditional love and taught me, “the other way is possible and be mindful of it!”. Actually, I have still difficulties in applying this recommendation to my life but I have started to accept myself as who I am and this acceptance paved the way for writing this thesis. I am not quite sure what would be the result of this process if she had not helped me in that way.

Secondly, I also would like to thank the examining committee members, Prof. Dr. Ayhan Demir, Assoc. Dr. Yeşim Çapa Aydın, Assoc. Dr. Zeynep Hatipoğlu Sümer and Assist. Prof. Dr. Gökçen Aydın for being the committee members of my thesis and for their constructive criticism which made my study valuable. Moreover, except being committee members, these distinguished individuals provided significant contributions to my academic background. Prof. Dr. Ayhan Demir provided critical support by accepting me as his thesis student when Prof. Dr. Oya Yerin Güneri could not continue to be as my supervisor, due to the legal procedures. Assoc. Dr. Yeşim Çapa Aydın, The Lady Tasting Tea, has provided me with an endless love of statistics.

Since her statistics course, I became curious about learning new statistical packages, new statistical analyses and I have tried to look at life through the lens of statistical way. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zeynep Hatipođlu Sümer, from whom I took the first course of my master education, introduced me with openness and richness of the counseling field.

I would also like to express sincere gratitude to my colleagues who have supported me throughout this journey. Prof. Dr. Nilüfer Voltan Acar helped me whenever I had a need. Assist. Prof. Dr. Olcay Yılmaz has always been a big brother to me in addition to his academic advices. Likewise, Assist. Prof. Dr. Begüm Serim Yıldız has always been a big sister to me in addition to her academic guidance. In an indirect manner, I have learnt the scientific way of thinking from Assist. Prof. Dr. Kürşad Demirutku. Assist. Prof. Dr. Onur Özmen also provide insightful recommendations throughout my master education. Besides, Prof. Dr. Tuncay Ergene mentioned the term NEET to me for the first time. But he is currently having some health issues and I hope he will have a speedy recovery and I can thank him face to face.

Additionally I wish to extend my thanks to my friends, Ayşe Biliciođlu, Batur Özbilgiç, Emir Ertunç Havadar, Fatih Balcı, Mehmet Sak, Mete Han Kutlusan, Nergis Hazal Yılmaztürk, Tuba Özgül and Zehra Yeler for their support, advices, help and their lovely and warm company.

Last but not least, I am forever grateful to my family. I firmly believe my gratitude and my indebtedness to my family can not be expressed with words. I was born in a small village and as my father struggled to get a decent job throughout his entire life, the foremost concern of my father and mother was whether they would have the financial means to provide us with an adequate education to hold a decent job. Now, I present my master thesis in METU and my thesis topic is a personal matter (unemployment). Furthermore, my father and mother have distilled me with a love for hardwork, patience and dedication to work. I sincerely believe that these qualities have allowed me to flourish in life. My brother and sister are the source of joy, happiness, love and friendship in my life. Without the advice, help, guidance, support, tolerance, patience and the love of my whole family, it would be impossible for me to attain such an academic career.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CFA: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

EHS-14: Employment Hope Scale

EVT: Expectancy Value Theory

EFA: Exploratory Factor Analysis

FS: Flourishing Scale

GHQ-12: General Health Questionnaire

GSE: General Self-efficacy Scale

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

ILO: International Labor Organization

JSMS: Job Search Motivation Scale

MSPSS: Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support

NEET: Not in Employment, Education or Training

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PWB: Psychological Wellbeing Scale

PWT: Psychology of Working Theory

QOL: Quality of Life

POSH: Professionals, Engaged in official work in the formal economy, Safe from institutionalized discrimination, and in High income countries

RSE: Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale

STWT: School to Work Transition

SDT: Self-Determination Theory

SEM: Structural Equation Modeling

JOBS: The Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program

WWII: The Second World War

ISKUR: Turkish Employment Agency

WEIRD: Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich and Democratic

WIS: Work Involvement Scale

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of the thesis gave a brief overview of the present study and was organized in the following way: Firstly, the background to the study was presented. Secondly, the purpose of the study was laid out. Then, the purpose and the research question of the current study were addressed. Next, significance of the thesis was clarified. Finally, the terms used throughout the study were defined.

#### **1.1. Background to the Study**

According to the definition provided by World Health Organization (WHO), health is “*a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*” (WHO, 2020, p.1). Based on this definition, the psychological wellbeing of individuals is considered not only by the absence of psychological illnesses but also by the existence of a flourishing, thriving and fulfilling life. This definition has roots in the movement of positive psychology (Diener et al., 2009, 2010; Jahoda, 1958; Keyes, 2013; Ryff & Singer, 2003; Seligman, 2002). Over nearly three decades, psychological wellbeing has received considerable attention given its prominence, both in scholarly and popular literature.

At the individual level, it has been conclusively shown that impaired wellbeing might have a harmful effect upon health, but positive wellbeing might play a protective role for health (Diener & Chan, 2011; Howell et al., 2007; Steptoe et al., 2015). Consequently, counseling interventions are aimed to improve psychological wellbeing of individuals (Diener et al., 2016; Lent, 2004).

Until recently, at the country level, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been considered as a key performance indicator of social and economic progression for countries (O'Donnell et al., 2014). If a country has high GDP rates, it is automatically presumed that the welfare of citizens of this country is enhanced. However, the idea that GDP is a genuine reflector of citizens' welfare has been challenged and GDP has been come to gain acceptance "as only a means to end", which is wellbeing (World Economic Forum, 2012). Therefore, rather than relying on their GDP, governments become interested in the wellbeing of their citizens as an indicator of development and devise social policies to enhance the wellbeing of citizens (Diener, 2000; Diener et al., 2015).

Psychological wellbeing is profoundly connected with the work life of individuals (Duffy et al., 2016; Richardson, 1993). Work has a broad relevance and central importance to human life due to its opportunities to individuals and societies (Blustein, 2019; Blustein et al., 2019). Through work, individuals connect with the broader social, political, and economic spheres of life and fulfill their fundamental psychological needs (e.g., purpose and meaning) as well as gaining money to maintain their lives (Blustein, 2006, 2019; Blustein et al., 2019; Duffy et al., 2016; Jahoda, 1981). Therefore, work and work-related issues are always significant concerns throughout one's life (Miller, 2010). Earlier years of life pass with striving to cultivate the necessary educational qualifications of an occupation which one intends to pursue (Bergqvist, 2016). After graduating, getting a decent job constitutes the most important concern of this life period as establishing an independent life closely depends on it (Blustein et al., 1997; Miller, 2010). Then, attending a job, getting satisfaction from one's job and pursuing one's career goals are important (Hettich, 2010). Lastly, withdrawal from the job market, namely retirement, poses a severe challenge for one's later life (Holcomb, 2010).

As Erikson (1993) put forward, life comprises several transitions and each transition produce its unique stressors on psychological wellbeing (Miller, 2010). Certainly, school-to-work-transition is one of those pivotal movements considering the

centrality of work in one's life (Blustein, 2008; Fouad & Bynner, 2008). School to work transition (STWT) has come to mean the movement of young adults from education to the labor market. Young individuals who complete their formal education move to the labor market to earn their money. This transition constitutes a major challenge for individuals and society due to the lack of employment, high unemployment rates, and uncertainty regarding the labor market (Byun, 2018; Lowe et al., 1988; Van der Horst et al., 2021). Consequently, a failed school to work transition would eventually result in unemployment (Lowe et al., 1988).

Considering that work is interwoven into the fabric of the individuals' everyday lives and the structure of societies, unemployment poses a serious threat to the psychological wellbeing of individuals (Blustein, 2008, 2019; Blustein et al., 2019). From the early 30s, substantial evidence has accumulated on the association between psychological wellbeing and unemployment. These studies (e.g., Bartelink et al., 2020; Björklund & Eriksson, 1998; Blustein, 2019; Eisenberg & Lazarsfeld, 1938; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Thern et al., 2019; Wanberg, 2012; Warr et al., 1988; Winefield, 1993) have left little doubt about the detrimental effects of being unemployed on psychological wellbeing. However, inevitably, ambiguities, inconsistencies and deficiencies would emerge in such a topic which touches upon all aspects of the lives of individuals and attract researchers from a diverse range of fields.

These shortcomings received attention from the earlier studies. By way of illustration, Breakwell et al. (1984) argued that most of the unemployment studies suffered from three serious shortcomings. Firstly, most of them drawn on cross-sectional design while they aimed to propose cause and effect relationship. Secondly, studies were mostly conducted with middle-aged men who had become unemployed for redundancy, consequently samples were biased. Lastly, psychological constructs were mostly not measured by objective and validated instruments.

Departing from the remarks of Breakwell et al. (1984), it can be asserted that unemployment studies which investigated the psychological wellbeing of

unemployed individuals had several shortcomings. Firstly, youth unemployment has been overlooked and there has been a tendency for examining the situation of adult middle-aged unemployed males. A great deal of research (e.g., Farre et al., 2018; Krug & Eberl, 2018; Reneflot & Evenson, 2014; Stam et al., 2015; Waters et al., 2014; Yang et al., 2016; Zuelke et al., 2018) has devoted to understanding of job loss and the psychological wellbeing of adult population. Even in the meta-analysis studies (e.g., McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Murphy & Athanasou, 1999; Paul & Moser, 2009), this tendency can be recognized.

In stark contrast to this lack of attention in youth unemployment, one of the most vulnerable groups in the face of unemployment and its detrimental effects on psychological wellbeing is youth population for several reasons (Arnett et al., 2014; Backeberg & Busse, 2018; Fend, 1994; Furnham, 1994; Konstam et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2021). First of all, from a developmental perspective, one of the most consequential periods in one's life is the transition from the youth to adulthood as individuals establish an independent life from their parents and families (Eisenberg & Lazarsfeld, 1938; Hammer, 1996; Lahusen & Giugni, 2016). Apart from its prominence, it is also evident that the future of a given society is heavily dependent upon successful integration of the youth population into the very fabric of social life (Mortimer & Larson, 2002; Petersen & Mortimer, 1994). By endorsing several adult roles, young individuals get involved in the mainstream society and to establish an independent life. Moving from school to work, departing from parental home, establishing their own families can be mentioned as markers of adulthood (Arnett et al., 2014; Hammer, 1996; Monticelli et al., 2016).

Among various adult roles, holding a permanent and paid job is of paramount importance since other roles rely heavily upon the successful accomplishment of getting a job (Lorenzini & Giugni, 2016; Monticelli et al., 2016). Through employment, young individuals reap the benefits of a wide variety of opportunities. Interacting with individuals other than from their family and peer environments, feelings of responsibility and of contributing to wellness of others and earning their

own money can be listed among these opportunities (Jahoda, 1981). Concisely, a healthy transition to adulthood at that period is closely linked with attaining an occupational identity (Goldsmith et al., 1997).

Secondly, unemployment which takes place at the very earlier period of one's life might have a long-lasting repercussion (Blustein et al., 2017; Eisenberg & Lazarsfeld, 1938; Hammer, 1993; Winkelmann & Winkelmann, 1998). According to Hedonic Treadmill Approach (Brickman & Campbell, 1971), individuals incline to adapt new circumstances and thus their level of happiness remain steady in the long run. Further line of research, however, lend partial support to this claim and it has been put forward that major life events (such as unemployment) might have long-lasting impact on individuals' subjective wellbeing (Diener et al., 2006; Lucas, 2007). This phenomenon, the adverse long-term impact of the initial unemployment on young individuals, has been termed as "scarring-effect" and might take different forms (Blustein et al., 2012; Daly & Delaney, 2013; Lahusen & Giugni, 2016; Strandh et al., 2014).

It has been evidenced that the earlier one is out of work, the most likely one stays in prolonged unemployment (Hammer, 1993, 1997; Hammer & Hyggen, 2010; Kahn, 2010; Winkelmann & Winkelmann, 1998). For instance, employers had not recruited long-term unemployed individuals and had rather taken fresh graduates during 1990s in Japan (Tholen, 2014). Similarly, Helgesson et al. (2014) carried out a prospective cohort study with 199, 263 young individuals to investigate the role of the earlier unemployment record of young individuals on their following labor market status in Sweden. They reported that after controlling the one's immigrant status, being unemployed at earlier periods of their lives of young individuals was a risk for being unemployment in later ages even after 15 years for both native Swedes and immigrant young people in Sweden. Additionally, early unemployment is also associated with low future earnings (Mroz & Savage, 2006) decreased happiness (Clark & Lepinteur, 2019; Tholen, 2014), diminished job satisfaction (Tholen, 2014) and impaired health (Tholen, 2014). Lastly, it has been demonstrated that

unemployed young individuals had more mental health problems in comparison with their working and studying parents (Axelsson & Ejlertsson, 2002).

Another salient shortcoming of unemployment research regarding with youth unemployment are the age classification of unemployed young individuals and definition of unemployment (Björklund & Eriksson, 1998; Fend, 1994; Heinz et al., 1994). To date, there has been no clear-cut classification of youth population put forward. For example, individuals aged between 16-18 (Fergusson et al., 2014; Heinz, 1994; Warr et al., 1988), 15-24 (Çelik & Lüküslü, 2018; Heinz, 1994), 15-29 (Bartelink et al., 2020), 18-25 (McGee & Thompson, 2015), 18-29 (Blustein et al., 1997) were considered as young people. Additionally, the definition of unemployed individuals was ambiguous. While some studies (Goldman-Mellor et al., 2016; Zuelke et al., 2018) drew on self-report questions (e.g., "Are you currently unemployed?") to select individuals into the study, others (Axelsson & Ejlertsson, 2002; Bjarnason & Sigurdardottir, 2003; Thern et al., 2020) necessitated registered unemployment and a cut-off value for the duration of unemployment (e.g., at least three months).

To overcome difficulties associated with the definition, a body of United Kingdom government published a report and came up with a new concept that would enable researchers to handle complexities in youth unemployment (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999): Not in Employment, Education or Training (hereafter abbreviated to NEET). The principal characteristic distinguishing NEETs from their peers is that NEETs are out of education and labor system in the 16-18 years old age group (Baggio et al., 2015), which are crucial protective factors for individuals. Benjet et al. (2012) asserted that education equips young individuals with problem-solving abilities and provide supervision and structure under which they can operate. In addition to these opportunities, school keeps youth out of high-risk environments. Thus, being distant from abovementioned social institutions, namely labor market and educational institutions, might deprive youth from protective factors which are supplied by these institutions. Deprivation of protective factors and exclusion from social institutions

have potential to leave young individuals vulnerable to serious maladaptive behaviors and poor mental health conditions. Substance use (Baggio et al. 2015; Benjet et al., 2012; Hale et al., 2015), crime (Baggio et al. 2015), social disconnectedness (Hale et al., 2015), low wellbeing (Hale et al., 2015), lack of trust in social institutions (Ruesga-Benito et al., 2018), obesity (Hale et al., 2015) and suicidal behavior (Benjet et al., 2012) have been stated to be associated with NEET status.

After the report of “Bridging the gap: New opportunities for 16-18 years old not in education, employment or training” published in 1999, there has been an increasing interest in the concept of NEET and it has become instrumental in our understanding of youth unemployment. However, the dispute over age groups did not dissolve in these studies. For example, while Gutiérrez-García et al. (2018) classified NEET individuals into homemakers and nonhomemakers and their participants’ age were 19-26, Juberg and Skjefstad (2019) asserted that classification of NEET youth in terms of age in Norway is 18-30 years old and Salvà-Mut et al. (2018) performed their study on Spanish youths aged 25-29 years. In stark contradiction with these age range, Benjet et al. (2012) obtained their data from individuals whose age were between 12-17 years old.

At that point, it is evident that a criterion for selection of young individuals into the study is needed. Çelik and Lüküslü (2018) reminded that youth is not a biological category but as a social construct. Based on this claim, a recent definition of youth population has the potential to serve as a basis. In most countries, the age individuals are accepted as adult is 18 years old (Hess et al., 1994). However, as we mentioned above, individuals do not establish their own adult identities and endorsing adult roles at this period as withholding a decent job is getting difficult. Arnett (2000), therefore, put forward that this new generation of youth should be classified as a different entity: “*Emerging Adults*”. Initially, individuals whose age are 18 to 25 years old are considered as emerging adults, but in the following studies the age interval enlarged to the age group of 18-29 years old (see, Arnett, 2000; Arnett et al.,

2014). Additionally, the latter age group is also in concert with the reports of international organizations, including OECD and ILO.

Mediterranean countries (e.g Italy, Greece, Spain, and Portugal) are frequently mentioned as having youth unemployment problem and having lack of emphasis upon life course perspective for their young individuals. As a result, young people in these countries are left with the feeling of exclusion and poor psychological wellbeing (Backeberg & Busse, 2018). In a similar fashion, Turkey can be added into these countries (Çelik & Lüküslü, 2018). The ever-increasing economic turmoil in Turkey and world in general has posed many challenges for individuals and society as a whole. In particular, youth has confronted with specific problems due to economic uncertainty. Among these troubles, the problem encountered in access to labor market has become apparent, and youth is placed in jeopardy due to a reduction of the labor force; hence, unemployment has become a severe issue (Çelik & Lüküslü, 2018; Sümer et al., 2013). The NEET rate has reached at alarming level in Turkey. Just over one-third of youth population between the ages 20-29 are NEET and at risk due to their NEET status. Additionally, there is a gender gap in terms of NEET status. For instance, among 25-29 years old NEETs, while 21.8% are male, 56.3% are female (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2020b). Furthermore, in comparison with OECD countries, it is evident that Turkey is in great peril in terms of number of NEET youth (see International Labour Organization, 2021b).

A close look at the NEET population in Turkey revealed a further gloomy picture: the rising number of unemployed graduates. The majority of previous studies on youth unemployment and school to work transition have been interested in school-leavers of high schools (e.g. Blustein et al. 1997; Ryan, 2001; Winefield, 1993; Winefield & Tiggemann, 1985; Worthington & Juntunen, 1997). The underlying assumption behind that focus is that graduates of university have already had the necessary qualifications to enter the job market but graduates of high schools were more vulnerable to become unemployed (cf. Mortimer & Larson, 2002). Consequently, participating in tertiary education and getting a four year university

diploma has been seen the only way to overcome the obstacles of non-college bound youth faced in school to work transition (Arnett et al., 2014). However, the skyrocketing number of young individuals held college diploma added further complexity to the existing problems (Arnett et al., 2014; Bynner & Parsons, 2002; Worthington & Juntunen, 1997).

In 60s, 70s and 80s tertiary education has been enlarged with the hope of bringing a solution to the youth unemployment problem across Europe (see Bertram, 1994, for a detailed discussion of that process and its outcomes for youth unemployment across Europe). In a similar fashion, Turkey has witnessed a same process for nearly last twenty years. While there were just 69 universities in 1997, there are 208 university provide tertiary education to students in 2021 (Günay & Günay, 2011; Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu, 2021). In other words, the number of universities has been more than tripled in the last two decades. Notwithstanding with the increasing count of universities, vacant positions for young individuals holding an undergraduate degree are seriously insufficient. Therefore, holding a university diploma has not open the gates of labor market (Bertram, 1994).

Both labor market statistics and analysis of youth unemployment in Turkey presented the bleak picture of NEET population in Turkey. Approximately 40% university graduates are NEET in Turkey. Furthermore, a gender gap was also mirrored. While 35.7% of university graduate NEETs was male, 44.7% was female (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2020a). Additionally, in his comparative analysis of unemployment characteristics in Turkey, Apaydın (2018) claimed that there was a negative association between education and unemployment. According to Apaydın, two striking reasons lay behind the high unemployment rate in Turkey: unemployed graduates and unemployed women. Unemployment among graduates became widespread, in specific, among women who graduated from higher education. The number of unemployed graduate young women were twice as high as the number of unemployed graduate young men. In other words, getting a higher education might be seen a risk factor for unemployment among young individuals, specifically for

women. Similar to these findings, Görmüş (2019) found that graduating from university did not provide a stable job in labor market for young individuals in Turkey.

In stark contrast to the severity of unemployment in Turkey, it is quite striking that only a handful of study (e.g., Bilgiç & Yılmaz, 2013; Kantaş-Yorulmazlar, 2018; Khojazada, 2019; Sümer et al., 2013; Yılmaz, 2002) were carried out in the field of mental health. Additionally, whereas NEET phenomena has gained wide currency both in academic circle and media, it has not received considerable scholarly attention in Turkey (Dama, 2017) and extant literature did not encompass the psychological wellbeing of university graduate NEETs. Therefore, there is an urgent need to investigate psychological wellbeing of graduate NEETs in Turkey.

Stress and Coping Approach posits that stress is likely to occur if individuals feel that their available resources (e.g., personal and social) fall short of dealing with stressful life events (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Likewise, Conservation of Resources Theory points out that individuals have more resources (psychological and social) fare better in terms of their mental health (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002). Departing from these assumptions, it may reasonable to suppose that unemployed young individuals with higher resources is much likely to maintain their psychological wellbeing than individuals with less resources (Hoare, 2007; Hoare & Machin, 2006, 2009; Merino et al., 2019). In particular, personal resources (i.e., self-esteem, self-efficacy and employment hope), social resources (i.e., overall social support, social support from family, social support from friends, social support from significant others) and work resources (i.e., work involvement, attribution of unemployment and job search motivation) were stood out as being of crucial importance for psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals (see McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). These resources were investigated to get a parsimonious model of the psychological wellbeing of NEET youth in Turkey.

## **1.2. Purpose of the Study and Research Question**

This investigation set its sight on studying the possible predictors of psychological wellbeing of NEETs in Turkey. In the extant literature on psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals, personal resources (i.e., self-esteem, self-efficacy, and employment hope), social resources (i.e., social support as a whole, social support from friends, social support from family, social support from significant others) and work resources (i.e., work-involvement, external attribution unemployment, internal attribution of unemployment and job search motivation) have been found to be related to mental health of unemployed individuals. In specific, these possible predictors of psychological wellbeing were investigated rather than merely relying on direct relationships but also including indirect associations. Furthermore, on the basis of the distinction between social support in general and different sources of social support (i.e., family, friends and significant others), two path models (i.e., Hypothesized Model 1 and Hypothesized Model 2) were tested.

This study aimed to address the following research question:

To what extend personal resources (i.e., self-esteem, self-efficacy and employment hope), social resources (i.e., social support as a whole, social support from friends, social support from family, social support from significant others) and work resources (i.e., work-involvement, external attribution unemployment, internal attribution of unemployment, job search motivation) explain the psychological wellbeing of university graduate NEETs in Turkey?

## **1.3. Path Models and Hypotheses of the Study**

On the ground of the possible distinction between social support as a whole and sources of social support, two path models were proposed. In the Hypothesized Model 1 (see Figure 1.1), self-esteem, self-efficacy, internal attribution unemployment and external attribution of unemployment, work involvement, general social support were considered as exogenous predictor variables; job search motivation and employment hope were considered as endogenous mediator

variables; and psychological wellbeing was considered as endogenous outcome variable. Given that there is a growing concern in the literature that different sources of social support might have a complex relationship with psychological wellbeing (see Bergqvist, 2016; Chabanet et al., 2016; Grimmer, 2016; Lahusen & Giugni, 2016; Lorenzini & Giugni, 2011, 2016), a further model which included different sources of social support was required. Thus, in the Hypothesized Model 2 (see Figure 1.2), the only difference from Model 1 was that social support from friends, social support from family and social support from significant others were considered as exogenous predictor variables in place of overall social support. The following hypotheses are common in both models:

Hypothesis 1: Self-esteem would be directly associated with employment hope and psychological wellbeing of NEETs.

Hypothesis 2: Self-esteem would be indirectly related with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through employment hope.

Hypothesis 3: Self-efficacy would be directly associated with job search motivation, employment hope and psychological wellbeing of NEET s.

Hypothesis 4: Self-efficacy would be indirectly related with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through job search motivation and employment hope.

Hypothesis 5: Work involvement would be directly associated with job search motivation of NEETs.

Hypothesis 6: Work involvement would be indirectly related with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through job search motivation and employment hope.

Hypothesis 7: External attribution of unemployment would be directly associated with job search motivation of NEETs.

Hypothesis 8: External attribution of unemployment would be indirectly related with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through job search motivation and employment hope.

Hypothesis 9: Internal attribution of unemployment would be directly associated with job search motivation of NEETs.

Hypothesis 10: Internal attribution of unemployment would be indirectly related with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through job search motivation and employment hope.

Hypothesis 11: Job search motivation would be directly associated with employment hope of NEETs.

Hypothesis 12: Job search motivation would be indirectly related with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through employment hope.

Hypotheses specific to Model 1 are:

Hypothesis 13: Overall social support would be directly associated with employment hope and psychological wellbeing of NEETs.

Hypothesis 14: Overall social support would be indirectly related with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through employment hope.

Hypotheses specific to Model 2 are:

Hypothesis 15: Social support from family would be directly associated with employment hope and psychological wellbeing of NEETs.

Hypothesis 16: Social support from family would be indirectly related with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through employment hope.

Hypothesis 17: Social support from friends would be directly associated with employment hope and psychological wellbeing of NEETs.

Hypothesis 18: Social support from friends would be indirectly related with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through employment hope.

Hypothesis 19: Social support from significant others would be directly associated with employment hope and psychological wellbeing of NEETs.

Hypothesis 20: Social support from significant others would be indirectly related with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through employment hope.

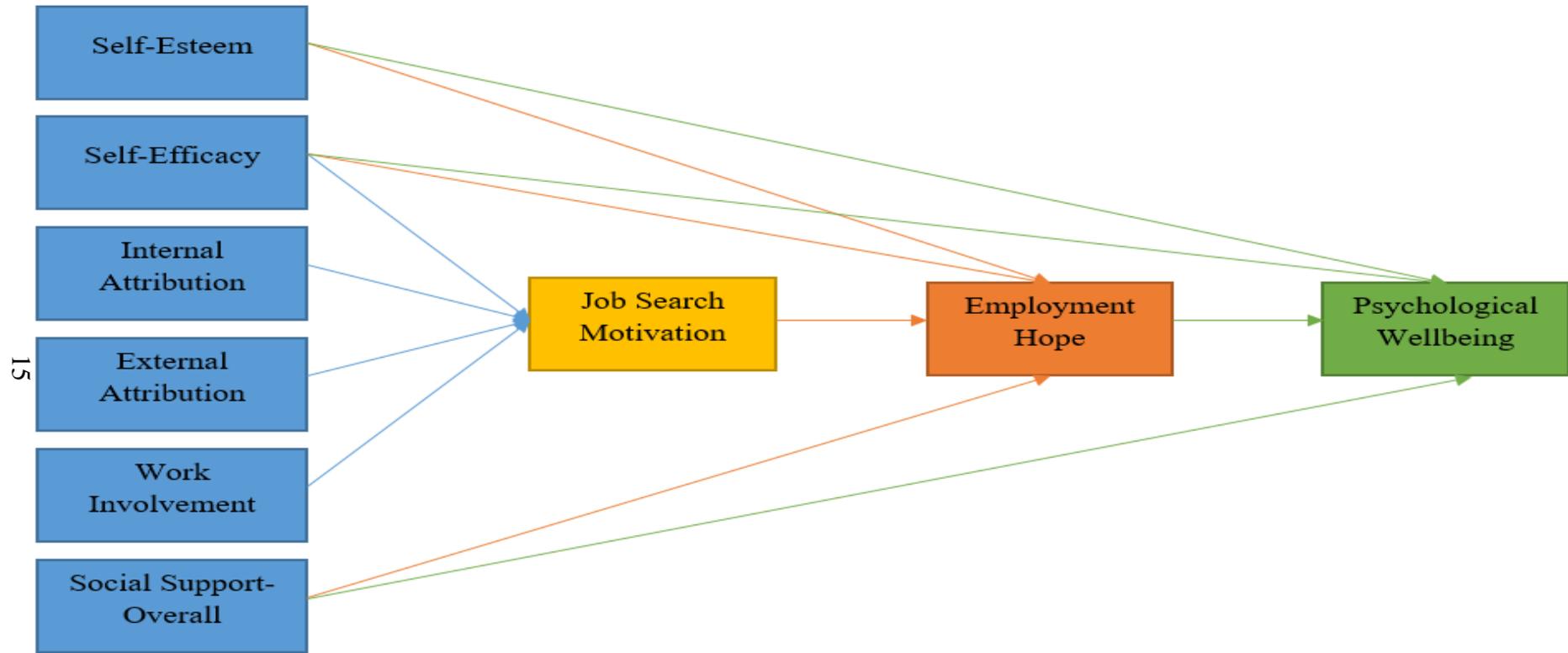


Figure 1.1

*Hypothesized Model 1*

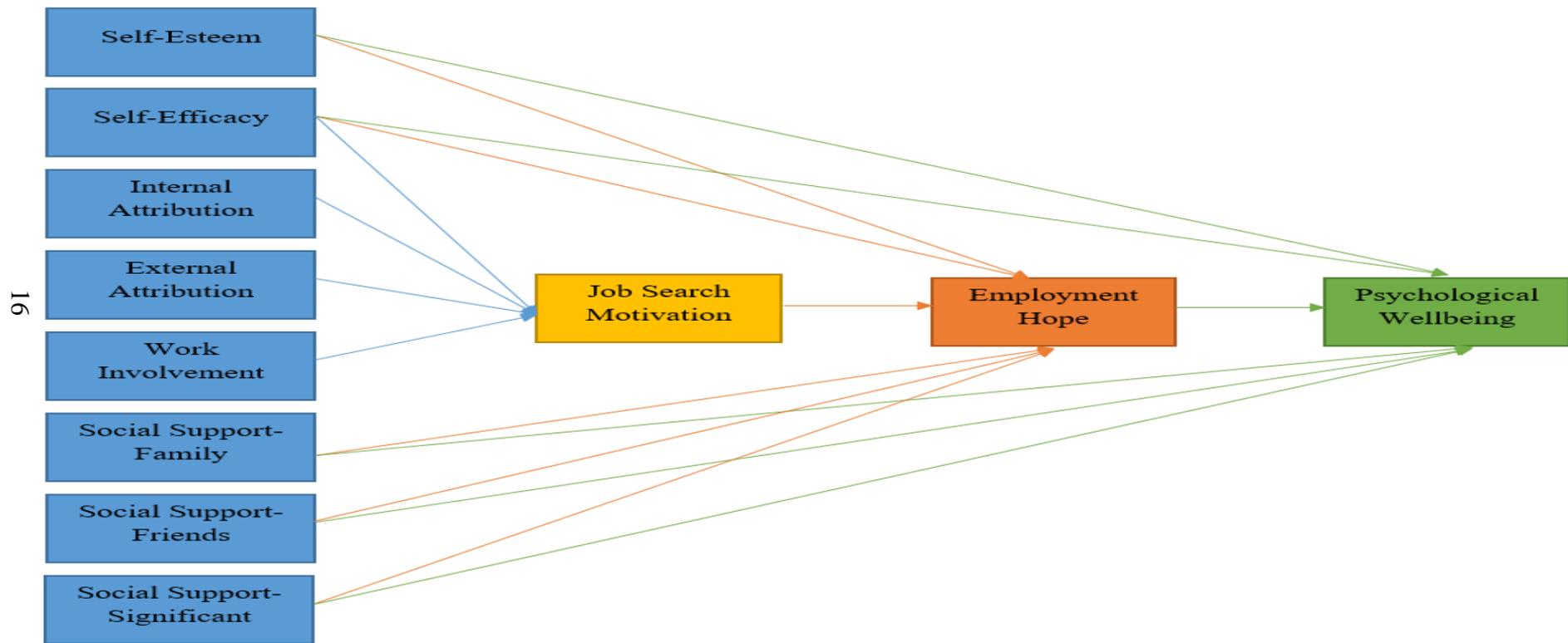


Figure 1.2

*Hypothesized Model 2*

#### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

The current study aimed to examine the direct and indirect relationship between personal, social and work resources on the psychological wellbeing of NEETs in Turkey. Historically, counseling psychology is closely connected with individuals' career development and mental health issues (Blustein, 2006, 2008; Tang et al., 2021). The potential role of counseling psychology in assisting school to work transition dates back to the earlier roots of counseling psychology. As Parsons (1909) stated, the transition from school to work is like building a house. Just as it is not possible to build an unshakable house without solid and necessary equipment, it is also impossible to navigate one's career without the solid and thoughtful guidance (Worthington & Juntunen, 1997). Based on this argument, Parsons put a great deal of effort to help individuals find suitable jobs. Indeed, striving to help individuals manage their careers eventually led to the flourishing counseling psychology (Blustein, 2008; Worthington & Juntunen, 1997). However, studies about the psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals are largely conducted by economists and sociologists, emphasizing societal costs of unemployment. In contrast the historical roots of vocational counseling, unemployment and psychological repercussions of unemployment have still not yet adequately addressed in the counseling interventions (Blustein, 2008; McWhirter & McWha-Hermann, 2021; Tang et al, 2021).

Most of the research efforts also revolved around decision making issues of relatively privileged individuals (Ali et al., 2013; Blustein, 2006, 2011; Duffy et al., 2016). Moreover, the WEIRD (western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic) and POSH (professionals, engaged in official work in the formal economy, safe from institutionalized discrimination, and in high income countries) samples have been at the center of much attention in vocational psychology, industrial and organizational psychology (McWhirter & McWha-Hermann, 2021). Additionally, a closer look at the vocational psychology literature immediately uncovers that unemployed groups received scant attention in career management studies. The relationship between job search and mental health has not been adequately considered (see Brouwer et al., 2015; Hirschi & Koen, 2021 for a thorough review). However, counseling psychology has

certain implications and potentials to assist this process in order to enhance the quality of life of marginalized individuals such as unemployed young people (Blustein, 2006, 2011, 2019; McWhirter & McWha-Hermann, 2021; Richardson, 1996; Tang et al., 2021; Worthington & Juntunen, 1997). Given that young individuals lack proper and beneficial career guidance, they are likely to move from unemployment to floundering in jobs or move into blind-alley jobs (Eisenberg & Lazarsfeld, 1938; Hess et al., 1994; Worthington & Juntunen, 1997). Thus, the findings of the current study may contribute literature regarding the design and development of counseling interventions beneficial for young unemployed individuals in navigating their career prospects in a turbulent world.

In the current study, psychosocial functioning (e.g., flourishing and growth) was used as an indicator of mental health. It is a widely held view that negative aspects of mental health (e.g., pathology, minor psychiatric disorders) have been the subject of much systematic investigation in the mental health studies. However, research into mental health fails to consider positive aspects of mental health. A similar pattern also exists in unemployment studies and extant literature was mainly concerned with stress and minor psychiatric disorders (see Bartley, 1994; Björklund & Eriksson, 1998; Warr, 1978; Warr & Parry, 1982). However, Backeberg and Busse (2018) underlined that not merely ill-being taken into account, but also positive development should be given consideration in the discussion of youth wellbeing. Indeed, this approach also in line with the historical mission of psychological counseling field (Lent, 2004). From this point of departure, in this study, psychological wellbeing is conceptualized as personal growth and positive development apart from most of the unemployment studies.

The present study contributed to a deeper understanding of psychological wellbeing by investigating the direct and indirect effects of predictors. In the literature, more theoretical and empirical attention has been paid to elucidating the relationship between unemployment and worsening psychological wellbeing than understanding which factors are associated with psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals. However, the pathways to psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals remains poorly understood (Wanberg, 2012). As McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) indicated

this situation is caused by the domination of the research that investigates the determinants of mental health among unemployed adults. It can be reasonably claimed that the context of young individuals is far from similar to adults. Recent changes which have been taken place in several domains of life (e.g., globalization, economy, education) have provided young individuals a wide variety of opportunities that most of them had been non-existent for previous generations. Notwithstanding those opportunities, however, a myriad of transformations has posed great difficulties to young individuals in the way of getting a full-time decent job (Kerckhoff, 2002; Mortimer & Larson, 2002). Protective factors might attenuate the long-run deleterious effect of youth unemployment on mental health (Lahusen & Giugni, 2016). Thus, the current study will significantly contribute to the preventive studies with a closer look at the predictors of psychological wellbeing among NEET youth.

In a traditional sense, school-to-work transition has been conceptualized as a straightforward and smooth process. Therefore, the majority of previous studies have been interested in school-leavers of high schools (e.g., Blustein et al. 1997; Ryan, 2001; Worthington & Juntunen, 1997). The underlying assumption behind those foci is that university graduates have already had the necessary qualifications to enter the job market but graduates of high schools were more vulnerable to become unemployed. Similarly, sociologists (e.g., Bertram, 1994; Hess et al., 1994; Mortimer & Larson, 2002) stated that young adults who do not hold a four-year university degree struggled with gaining a foothold in labor market. To overcome the obstacles of non-college bound youth faced in school to work transition, to participate in tertiary education and getting a four year university diploma has been seen the only way (Arnett, 2014; Bertram, 1994). However, the increasing number of young individuals held college diploma added further complexity to the existing problems. In the past, especially in the 70's and 80's, Europe have been witnessing an upsurge in the number of universities without supplying necessary employment opportunities to the graduates (Bertram, 1994; Bynner & Parsons, 2002; Worthington & Juntunen, 1997). Even in the early 90's the emerging problem regarding the link between the labor market and higher education has been mentioned as upcoming trouble. For instance, Pearson

(1989, 1990) put forward that if necessary, measures have not been taken to adjust the demand and supply balance between the labor market and higher education, graduates would have suffered from locating themselves at the labor market.

In line with this foresight, in across the developed and developing countries, many students are concerned about their future career most of their times and one of the most frequently addressed issue by young individuals is whether their education leads themselves to enter appropriate labor market opportunity (i.e., whether they work in decent jobs in following their education or in McDonald's) (Arnett, 2015). Additionally, they are much worried over the uncertainties surrounding being employed and they have painted a bleak picture about their career prospects (Buckham, 1998; Lairio & Penttinen, 2006). In line with their worries and apprehensions, there is less opportunity for labor market entrants and newly graduate young individuals are at the risk of being out of work (Tholen, 2014). Thus, in the current global context young adults have been faced with a long and winding path (Arnett, 2015). They have followed a less stable career trajectory and entered into fragmented (i.e., unemployment, NEET), unstable (i.e., constantly changing job) and part-time employment/underemployment (see Arnett, 2000, 2015; Bynner & Parsons, 2002; Byun, 2018; Hammer, 1996; Hess et al., 1994; Ryan, 2001).

In addition to the issues mentioned above surrounding youth unemployment, what makes youth unemployment as an urgent issue which should be put at the top of the scientific and social policy agendas is fourfold. First of all, the nature and dynamics of the present period in which we have embedded are characterized by uncertainty and fluidity (Bauman, 2007b). Secondly, this uncertainty is entirely echoed in the structure of the labor market and rather than the previous stable career prospects of individuals in the 60s and 70s, most of the newly arising jobs are defined as flexible, short-termed, contracted and low job security (Arnett, 2015; Blustein, 2019, Mortimer & Larson, 2002). Thirdly, an ultimate and inevitable result of this uncertainty is prolongation of the upper age limit of the youth population from 25 to 30s and this prolongation of transition to adulthood puts much stress on young individuals (Arnett, 2000, 2015; Mortimer & Larson, 2002; Ryan, 2001). Therefore, the third decade of life should be

given attention since critical career related choices have been delayed to the late 20s (Arnett, 2000; Mortimer & Larson, 2002). Last but not least, being a graduate unemployed might produce its unique stressors. Based on the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002), Merino et al. (2019) claimed that distress is likely to occur for young graduates as they cannot receive the return of their educational investment. Based on this claim, as education is seen as an investment to the future, it can be reasonably stated that not getting what was aimed (i.e., getting a stable job) might have a detrimental impact on young individuals' psychological wellbeing in tertiary-level education.

Lastly, this work offered insight for the first time into the predictors of psychological wellbeing of university graduate NEETs in Turkey. Unemployment is a perennial problem in Turkey and an ever-increasing number of Turkish unemployed youth reached an alarming level (Kantaş-Yorulmazlar, 2018; Sümer et al., 2013). Even worse, the Covid-19 pandemic was coupled with economic turmoil and become a further burden on the Turkish economy. Based on the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, Kahn (2010) found that young individuals who graduated from college in a time of poor economy could not easily find their way in the labor market and the negative outcomes of these earlier attempts are likely to persist in the long run. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that COVID-19 pandemic created additional pressures on Turkish youth in obtaining a job (see a recent report on COVID-19 and NEET individuals in Turkey, ILO, 2021b).

In stark contrast with this bleak picture, Turkey has experienced a demographic window opportunity. Demographic window opportunity is characterized by the increase in working age population while there is a decrease in the growth rate of population (Rittersberger-Tılıç & Çelik, 2016). This situation set a convenient stage for countries to prosper in the socio-economic arena and countries have this opportunity only once throughout their history (Çelik & Lüküslü, 2018). Therefore, considering the short-term and long-term (i.e., scarring effect) implications of unemployment on young people and the dearth of knowledge with regarding Turkish

unemployed youth, it is imperative to undertake a study of psychological wellbeing of NEETs in Turkey to pass efficiently through this demographic window opportunity.

Much of the current literature on psychological wellbeing of unemployed youth pays particular attention to the young persons in developed countries (see the only review of youth unemployment studies, Bartelink et al., 2020). However, developed countries and developing countries differ in terms of their cultural, social and economic assets. For instance, unemployment insurance benefits are high in Nordic countries and protect individuals from the material deprivations from unemployment. However, in Turkey, such insurance is not provided (Çelik & Lüküslü, 2018). Since, cultures and contexts might be quietly different from country to country, school to the work transition process of youth in each country would bring its unique challenges. Similarly, Hammer (2000), in her study comparing five Nordic countries, stressed that the cultural differences might be a factor affecting the relationship among employment status, social support and mental health problems. Consequently, there is an urgent need for country-specific examination in terms of the variables in question. Bearing in mind that cultural differences between countries might play an influential role in the linkage among psychological wellbeing, personal, social and work resources for unemployed individuals, it is plausible to test these associations in Turkish context.

### **1.5. Definition of the Terms**

**NEETs:** In the current study the abbreviation NEET referred to emerging adults who were graduated from a four year university and are currently neither in employment, education nor training.

**Psychological Wellbeing:** The terms ‘psychological wellbeing’ was used to mean psychosocial functioning (e.g., flourishing, having purpose and meaning, growth) of individuals (Diener et al., 2009, 2010).

**Self-esteem:** The phrase ‘self-esteem’ was used to describe the individuals’ overall evaluation of their self-worth (Rosenberg, 1965).

Self-efficacy: In the current study, the concept ‘self-efficacy’ referred to individuals’ own beliefs to accomplish a given task (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1997).

Social support: Social support means assistance given by others to the individual. The term ‘overall social support’ was used in the current study as its broadest sense to refer all social support resources which provide social assistance to individuals. Social support from friends described as social support comes from friends. Social support from family referred to social support obtained from family. Social support from significant others was used to mean social support gleaned from significant others such as boyfriends/girlfriends, neighbors, doctors (Lahusen & Giugni, 2011, 2016; Zimet et al., 1988; Zimet et al., 1990).

Employment Hope: The term ‘employment hope’ was used to describe perceived employment barriers and employment hope of individuals (Hong et al., 2012, 2018).

Attribution of Unemployment: The term ‘attribution of unemployment’ described as sources (i.e., internal or external) unemployed individuals attribute their reasons of unemployment (Feather & Davenport, 1981).

Work Involvement: Referred to what extent being employed is central to individuals’ lives (Stafford et al., 1980; Wiener et al., 1999).

Job Search Motivation: The term ‘job search motivation’ meant degree individuals intend to seek a job (Feather & Davenport, 1981; Van Hooft, 2018).

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The second chapter of the study provided a general overview of the literature on the psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals. Initially, the central role of work in the lives of people was presented. In the next section, the link between unemployment and deteriorated psychological wellbeing and the research on psychological wellbeing within the context of unemployment was summarized. The following section introduced the possible predictors of psychological wellbeing (i.e., personal, social and work resources). The final section concluded with the summary of the chapter.

#### **2.1. The Centrality of Work**

As Adler (1927) once put it, work represents one of the three challenges of life. According to early followers of Adler, work has always been considered a critical element in understanding the suffering of individuals (Dreikurs & Mosak, 1966). Consistently, Wellness Model (Myers & Sweeney, 2008), based on the Adlerian approach, includes work as a core area of an individual's wellbeing. Why work is located at the center of human life are more complicated than just providing economic earnings (Blustein, 2006, 2019; Evans & Banks, 1992). Even after controlling income, Young (2012), for instance, demonstrated that being out of work significantly correlated with low subjective wellbeing. This finding indicated that unemployment brings about nonpecuniary cost along with the pecuniary price.

Several researchers emphasize on different benefits and outcomes of holding a job. Jahoda (1981), for instance argued that employment has both explicit and implicit

implications for individuals. Earning a living is a critical overt consequence of employment and individuals mainly intend to make their living through holding a job. Even though the main aim of work is to make money, it also produces unintended by-products. Having a time structure, contact with individuals outside of family and friends, having status and identity are important unexpected outcomes of employment (Jahoda, 1981). Winkelmann and Winkelmann (1998) investigated the non-pecuniary consequences of unemployment by comparing with pecuniary outcomes over the psychological situation and whether there was a difference between employed and unemployed persons in a German-based longitudinal panel data. Their representative sample and longitudinal data indicated that non-pecuniary impacts of unemployment exceeded by far pecuniary ones over psychological wellbeing.

Similarly, a recently emerging theory (i.e., Psychology of Working Theory-PWT), which intent to throw light on the working lives of individuals in the age of uncertainty, took a similar stand and maintained that paid work is an indispensable aspect of our lives. PWT put forward that individuals express themselves in a unique way, identify who they are, find a purpose and meaning in their lives and sustain themselves through decent work. Without it, individuals have to struggle with economic, social and individual hurdles (Blustein, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2019; Duffy et al., 2016; Kossen & McIlveen, 2018).

## **2.2. Psychological Wellbeing and Unemployment**

Psychological wellbeing is a broad term. There is no definition which all researchers agree on what constitutes the wellbeing (see Jahoda, 1958 for an earlier eloquent and illuminative discussion of the term mental health). To date, a wide array of definitions of psychological wellbeing were put forward. This complexity and ramification were also mirrored in measurement efforts of wellbeing (Huppert & So, 2013). Cooke et al. (2016), for example, undertook a study in which the instruments of wellbeing were reviewed. They detected 42 instruments that assess psychological wellbeing and related concepts. Built upon their review, they further contended that what is

psychological wellbeing and how to appropriately evaluate it are far from being understood.

In the field of psychology, following WWII, a disease model predominated over psychosocial functioning (Seligman, 2002). Even the term of mental health became exclusively corresponds to the absence of illness instead of existence of wellness (Jahoda, 1958; Ryff & Singer, 1996). This dominance led psychologists to overlook the strengths of individuals and pay attention to weaknesses. However, enabling individuals to live their lives more fully and meaningfully is among the three core missions of psychology. The underlying assumption for this mission is that identifying and fostering strengths of individuals act as a buffer against psychological difficulties and is much cost-effective strategy compared to curing illnesses. Hence, fully functioning individuals and communities might be built in this way (Lent, 2004; Seligman, 2002).

Against this background, in his landmarking review of wellbeing, Lent (2004) maintained that two distinct approaches have traditionally been utilized in scientific studies: hedonic or subjective wellbeing (Diener, 1984; Diener et al., 1985; Diener et al., 2016) versus/and eudemonic or psychological wellbeing (Huppert & So, 2013; Jahoda, 1958; Ryff& Singer, 2003; Seligman, 2002). At the one end of the spectrum, the happiness model stands. “The pursuit of happiness” is as old as humanity itself. From the earlier ages, humankind has sought ways of how to be happy (Diener et al., 2002). As ambiguity accompanies the term of happiness, a more explicit term was brought out in scientific literature: subjective wellbeing (Diener, 2000).

Subjective wellbeing is a general construct that comprises one’s life evaluation (i.e., satisfaction with life and domain satisfactions) and emotional experience (i.e., positive and negative affect). Subjective wellbeing has been investigated nearly for four decades and a formidable body of knowledge revealed that subjective wellbeing is associated with several aspects of the everyday life of individuals (Diener, 2000; Diener et al., 1999, 2002, 2016). For instance, individuals with higher subjective wellbeing are healthier and live much longer (Diener & Chan, 2011; Steptoe et al.,

2015) and they have more satisfying social relationships (Goswami, 2012; Kamp Dush & Amato, 2005; Siedlecki et al., 2014). Apart from being researched at the individual level, subjective wellbeing has been of research interest at a country level and used as an indicator of development of countries (Diener, 2000; Diener et al., 2015). In brief, subjective wellbeing is of vital importance to provide information about the mental health of individuals.

Nevertheless, many researchers (Huppert, 2009; Huppert et al., 2009; Huppert & So, 2013; Marsh et al., 2020; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ruggeri et al., 2020) hold the view that life satisfaction or hedonic wellbeing is not adequate to offer a rich source of information on the psychological wellbeing of individuals. What is worse is that equating psychological wellbeing with life satisfaction might lead information loss (Huppert, 2009; Huppert et al., 2009; Huppert & So, 2013; Marsh et al., 2020). Furthermore, whether happiness and satisfaction with life is an end in itself or a byproduct of a meaningful life poses an important question to be solved (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Thus, at the other end of the spectrum, eudemonic wellbeing refers to growth, self-actualization, purpose in life, competence, engagement, autonomy appears (Diener et al., 2009, 2010). Likewise, ancient philosophers preoccupied themselves with authentic happiness, which is far beyond hedonic happiness. From the studies of Aristotle, this line of thinking assumes that flourishing, growth, self-actualization lies at the heart of the mental health of persons (Huppert & So, 2013). Even more importantly, recent studies call to investigate positive psychology rather than simply relying on the mental illness model at the times of Covid-19 (Waters et al., 2021)

A growing number of publications focusing on the relationship between psychological wellbeing and diverse outcomes revealed that individuals with high psychological wellbeing are in more advantageous positions than individuals with low psychological wellbeing (Huppert & So, 2013). For instance, while low psychological wellbeing is associated with deteriorated health, high psychological wellbeing is found to improve health (Diener & Chan, 2011; Howell et al., 2007; Steptoe et al., 2015).

Claiming work and psychological wellbeing are central to the lives of individuals and being unemployed has deleterious consequences on psychological wellbeing, unemployment research has a long and voluminous history within the different fields (e.g., psychology, economy, sociology, public health).

Social psychologists (e.g., Erikson, Jahoda, and Seligman) discussed that the psychological wellbeing of individuals might be adversely affected by major life events such as joblessness (Goldsmith et al., 1997). Considering the centrality of work in human life, it is plausible to assume that being out of work carry serious weight for the lives of individuals and societies they live in (Björklund & Eriksson, 1998; Blustein, 2006, 2019; Rantakeisu et al., 1997; Richardson, 1993; Tefft, 2011; Vancea & Utzet, 2016; Warr, 1982; Winefield et al., 1993; Winkelmann & Winkelmann, 1998). At the individual level, unemployment has pernicious consequences on social life, physical health and mental health of unemployed individuals (see Blustein, 2019; Eisenberg & Lazarsfeld, 1938; Feather, 1990; Kieselbach et al., 2006; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Paul & Moser, 2009; Winefield et al., 1993 for a thorough review). For instance, unemployment can be viewed as an isolating experience for young individuals in which they cannot attend meaningful and valuable social activities (Heinz, 1994; Lahusen & Giugni, 2016; Lorenzini & Giugni, 2016). Furthermore, unemployment carries importance for both unemployed individuals and their families (Marcus, 2013; Sümer, 2013). At the societal level, unemployment is also deeply linked with social disintegration and polarization in society (Rantakeisu et al., 1997). In sum, unemployment and deteriorated mental health/psychological wellbeing are closely intertwined.

Studies of psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals can be roughly divided into three eras: the Great Depression/Pre-Second World War (WWII) period, the collapse of the golden age of capitalism period and the post-great recession period. In the following paragraphs, the research on the psychological wellbeing of unemployed persons spanned nearly 80 years were briefly covered. Studies related to psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals trace its root back to Great Depression which took place in 1929 to 1939. The year 1929 marked a momentous period in world

history. In the October of 1929 US, the stock market suddenly collapsed, and an unprecedented economic downturn burdened the lives of millions. In the following period, thousands of factories and companies were shut down and millions of individuals were laid off from their jobs. For this reason, the vast and growing mass of unemployed individuals were of urgent concern in terms of economic, social and psychological aspects (Hobsbawm, 1995).

In that period, several scientific studies were conducted to investigate the impact of job loss and joblessness on the everyday experience of individuals. “*The Marienthal Study*” is the first, well-known, most cited and monumental research effort in the history of unemployment studies. In 1933, a group of scholars (Marie Jahoda, Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Hans Zeisel) went to Marienthal a small city in Austria and had been swept by massive lay-offs to study the impact of job loss on the lives of people. Jahoda et al. (1933/2002) conducted their investigation utilizing a burgeoning research design at that time, which can be accepted as mix method approach nowadays. They collected quantitative and qualitative data regarding nearly the whole aspects of the unemployed individuals living. They furnished a rich amount of information on how unemployed individuals struggled with psychological, emotional, social, and financial problems.

Secondly, in 1931, the Institute for Social Economy in Warsaw organized a competition to gather autobiographies of unemployed individuals. Zawadzki and Lazarsfeld (1935), later, chose 57 autobiographies out of 774 applications by considering reliability and generalization issues. They analyzed the autobiographies in order to gain a clear understanding of psychological conditions of the unemployed. According to results, the central role of work on the lives of unemployed was evident and the desire for finding a job through which they earn their living was of utmost concern in their agendas. Because they relied upon doles and backing of others, they considered themselves a burden and useless and felt themselves as excluded from society. Emotional situations of jobless individuals also were unstable, and they experienced excessive suffering and were in ultimate desperation.

Lastly, Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938) systematically reviewed all the relevant literature that examined the psychological effects of unemployment to that date. They realized that the resulting effects of unemployment was not straightforward, instead it was perplexing. Unemployment could be considered as a serious threat to one's economic security, one's prestige both in the eyes of oneself and others and therefore s/he might develop the feeling of inferiority. The devastating effects of long-lasting unemployment could not be easily reverted. They contended that the depressing effects of unemployment could be taken as unsurprising considering that employment provides people with status and prestige.

However, these earlier and noteworthy efforts for understanding the detrimental influence of job loss had been halted by the outbreak of WWII. The second period for the unemployed studies had begun around 70s and 80s by the decline and dissolution of golden age of capitalism. During that period, the rapid growth of post-war economics had been slowed and the rate of unemployed had swiftly escalated once again (Hobsbawm, 1995). Consequently, several considerable attempts were made to obtain solid knowledge on the mental health of unemployed individuals. As it was not feasible to address this exhaustive literature, only a handful of research were presented in below.

During that period, several cross-sectional and longitudinal research were performed to investigate the relationship between unemployment and mental health. As earlier, Banks and Jackson (1982) interviewed with two age cohort of young individuals following their school leave to examine the association between minor psychiatric problems and being out of employment. Cross sectional analysis documented that unemployed individuals were at the risk of having minor psychiatric disorders even controlling the sex, ethnic and educational differences. Moreover, the longitudinal analysis demonstrated that unemployment was likely to cause minor psychiatric concerns rather than having psychiatric issues led to the unemployment. Similarly, Furnham (1983) investigated the differences in mental health in terms of different employment status (i.e., full-time employed, part-time employed, unemployed, retired

and full-time students). The study found that among the five employment groups, unemployed participants had the highest level of psychological disturbance.

Additionally, Warr and Jackson (1985) designed a longitudinal study in order to eliminate the weaknesses arise out of cross-sectional designs. A group of unemployed men (n = 954) were interviewed in terms of psychological ill-health, reported health, employment commitment, job seeking, financial distress and social support (composed of emotional and financial support) at the beginning of the study. Those participants were re-interviewed 9 months later on the same measurements. The findings of the study clearly established that while the psychological wellbeing, general health and financial stress of continuously unemployed individuals were deteriorated, reemployed individuals had shown improvements in those dependent variables.

Besides these single studies, Warr et al. (1988) conducted a review to examine the unemployment and mental health studies conducted so far. Their review revealed that unemployed individuals had higher levels of depression, general distress and lower self-esteem. Status change also indicated the detrimental impact of unemployment. Moreover, continuing unemployment added further burden on unemployed people. Women and men were seen equal in terms of the level of psychological wellbeing. Likewise, Björklund and Eriksson (1998) reviewed the studies of mental health of unemployed individuals conducted in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. They concluded that both cross-sectional studies and longitudinal analyses proved the deleterious of effect of unemployment on the mental health of individuals.

In addition to the studies cited above, Winefield and his colleagues (Winefield, 1993; Winefield & Tiggemann, 1985, 1989, 1990a, 1990b; Winefield et al., 1987; Winefield et al., 1988, 1991, 1993) conducted a longitudinal study from 1980 to 1988. The main aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between employment status of young individuals who were school-leavers and their psychological wellbeing via a longitudinal study. In 1980, they collected data from 3,130 high school students on several psychological wellbeing indicators (e.g., self-esteem, depressive affect,

negative mood). From 1980 to 1988, participants were annually asked in terms of reviewed versions of psychological wellbeing indicators.

Winefield et al. (1988) and Winefield and Tiggemann (1989) reported the results of the first four year of their longitudinal study. According to results (Winefield et al., 1988; Winefield & Tiggemann, 1989) both unemployed individuals and dissatisfied employed youngster were worst off on the basis of their self-esteem, depressive affect, and minor psychiatric problems in comparison with their satisfied employed peers. Moreover, these differences, they claimed, could not be ascribed to base-line scores, which implied a cause and effect relationship between employment status and psychological wellbeing. Winefield and Tiggemann (1990), similarly, showed that psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals was worse off than full-time students and employed individuals. Additionally, individuals who were unemployed for six months or around it was worse off in terms of psychological wellbeing. Specifically, after 12 months psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals showed improvement.

The second four year of the longitudinal study also shown a similar pattern (Winefield, 1993; Winefield et al., 1991). Winefield et al. (1991) documented that in comparison with student and satisfied employed young individuals, dissatisfied and unemployed youth took lower point in several measures of psychological wellbeing. Men and women were departed from each other in relation to morale (i.e., affective mood). While unemployed men were significantly influenced in terms of morale in comparison with dissatisfied employed men, dissatisfied women took lower score on morale (i.e., affective mood) as compared with unemployed women. Self-esteem was not found to be effected from employment status.

Winefield (1993) investigated whether their time use was associated with the psychological wellbeing of unemployed, dissatisfied and satisfied employed young adults. A significant aspect of this study was that individuals did not differed on their time use at school. In turn, this feature lends this study to make causal relationships. In 1981-1983, employed individuals were in better conditions in terms of self-esteem,

depressive affect, negative mood in comparison with unemployed individuals. Also, time spent was found associated with psychological wellbeing for unemployed group but not for employed group. For the years 1984-1988, dissatisfied employed and unemployed individuals have taken lower points in several psychological wellbeing measures in contrast with employed individuals. Additionally, dissatisfied employed and unemployed individuals have not differentiated from each other in relation to their psychological wellbeing. While satisfied employed group did not differ on time use in each year, there was a significant change in time use for both dissatisfied employed and unemployed.

Like the efforts had been attempted during the period of 1980-1988, a similar project had been designed by Winefield and his colleagues recruiting a comprehensive sample over a ten-year period in recent years. Winefield et al. (2017) assessed the individuals' psychological wellbeing through self-esteem, negative mood, general health questionnaire, life satisfaction, anomie, and suicide ideation. Employed young adults showed improvements in those psychological wellbeing domains except for suicide ideation. Neither employed individuals nor unemployed people differed in terms of suicide ideation.

The Great Recession of 2008 has fiercely stroked the economies and therefore unemployment rates in the world have had a similar sharp spike akin to which was witnessed in the 1930 (Hoffmann & Lemieux, 2016). Thus, apart from the abovementioned studies, the interest in the studies of unemployment and mental studies has revived in recent years. There are large number of published cross-sectional, longitudinal, cohort, and panel studies that revealed the relationship between unemployment and psychological wellbeing during that era, which furnished robust empirical evidence to negative outcomes of unemployment on psychological wellbeing.

For instance, Benjet et al. (2012) examined the mental health status (i.e., psychiatric diagnoses, substance use and suicidal behavior) of young individuals in terms of their employment status. They found that NEET individuals were at risk of mental health

problems in comparison with their peers. Similarly, with the aim of examining the relationship between employment status and mental health among youth, Huegaerts et al. (2017) gathered data from around 7000 young individuals who were in the transition period from school to work. They detected that unemployed young individuals had poor mental health conditions in comparison with their employed peers. The most alarming result of this study was that the mental health gap between employed and unemployed youth were in increase.

In addition to these studies, Stam et al. (2015) and Yang et al. (2016) found that unemployed individuals were differed from employed persons in terms of psychological wellbeing. Stam et al. (2015) carried out a study to explore the extent which social norm regarding work moderates the relationship between subjective wellbeing and employment status drawn on data from 45 European countries. As expected, unemployed individuals are worse off than employed individuals in terms of subjective wellbeing. Yang et al. (2016) to describe Quality of life (QOL) among unemployed Chinese people and explore its related factors. In comparison with the employed Chinese population, unemployed Chinese individuals have lower levels of QOL. Moreover, their mental health was worse than their physical health. Women and men were not differed in terms of mental health, whereas physical health of women were found much disrupted.

Aside from cross-sectional studies cited in above, a crucial feature of the studies in that era was that they furnished also prospective data relying on cohort and panel studies. By means of cohort studies and panel studies, it was possible to establish a cause and effect relationship between unemployment and psychological wellbeing. For example, a cohort of 1265 individuals were monitored from birth to 21 years old (Fergusson et al., 2001) and to 30 years old (Fergusson et al., 2014). Drawn on this data, Fergusson et al. (2001) and Fergusson et al. (2014) analyzed the relationship between exposure to unemployment and psychological adjustment problems after they left school. Even controlling the confounding variables, they found that unemployment was related increased psychological maladjustment.

Along with cross-sectional studies, longitudinal research attempts also lend empirical support for deteriorating psychological health of unemployed individuals. Reneflot and Evensen (2014) emphasized that unemployment studies gained a renewed interest due to the Great Recession and therefore they aimed to review the unemployment studies conducted from 1995 in Nordic countries. Cross-sectional studies showed that unemployed individuals suffer more psychological problems than employed individuals and longitudinal studies demonstrated that unemployed individuals were more likely to experience psychological distress and to attempt suicide even after confounding factors were controlled. Additionally, poor social support and shame regarding being unemployed were found associated with higher psychological distress.

Daly and Delaney (2013) drew on National Child Development Study and investigated the long term psychological impact of unemployment on psychological distress throughout a 34 years period from 1974 to 2008. The results clearly indicated that earlier unemployment was linked with increased psychological distress at age 50 even after controlling the demographic variables.

In the same vein, Strandh et al. (2014) explored the detrimental and long-term (i.e., scarring effect) of youth unemployment over the course of life. Participants ( $n = 1083$ ) were, initially, included into the study in 1981 while they were in the last year of school and were followed in a regular manner while they were in 18 years old, 21 years old, 30 years old and 42 years old. At the last phase of follow-up study (i.e., 42 years old), almost all of the participants ( $n = 1010$ ) were still in the study. The findings of the study evidently pointed out that youth unemployment was closely associated with poorer mental health throughout the life span.

Meta-analysis studies also examined relationship among, job loss, reemployment and mental health. Firstly, Murphy and Athanasou (1999) investigated whether job loss and reemployment had a significant effect on the mental health of individuals. They reviewed the 16 longitudinal studies which addressed the impact of job loss or reemployment upon mental health. The studies examined the job loss yielded a significant negative impact of job loss on mental health ( $d = .36$ ) while studies

analyzed the reemployment furnished evidence for significant positive impact of reemployment on mental health ( $d = .54$ ). Secondly, Mckee-Ryan et al. (2005) carried out a comprehensive meta-analytic study in which 104 studies investigated the impact of job loss or reemployment on both physical and mental health were reviewed from several theoretical perspectives. The results of cross-sectional analyses demonstrated that unemployed individuals were in lower life satisfaction ( $d_c = -.48$ ) and mental health ( $d_c = -.57$ ); longitudinal studies indicated that while job loss resulted in decline of mental health ( $d_c = -.38$ ), regaining employment improved the mental health ( $d_c = -.89$ ) and life satisfaction ( $d_c = -3.04$ ).

To sum, the literature cited above firmly established that work has a central role in the everyday lives of individuals and, therefore, unemployment has devastating effects and is closely linked with deteriorated psychological wellbeing.

### **2.3. Psychological Wellbeing and Related Variables**

#### **2.3.1. Psychological Wellbeing**

In addressing the psychological wellbeing of young unemployed individuals, two issues which are the very meaning of psychological wellbeing and the associated variables with psychological wellbeing arise. Inconsistencies regarding psychological wellbeing have also been mirrored in the studies of psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals. During review of the literature it was repeatedly seen that the terms mental health, wellbeing, psychological distress, psychological wellbeing, affective wellbeing has been used interchangeably. In parallel with this ambiguity, different researchers employed a diverse set of mental health criteria and assessment tools (Axelsson & Ejlertsson, 2002; Björklund & Eriksson, 1998; Warr, 1978, 1990; Warr & Parry, 1982). A comprehensive review of conceptualizations and measurement tools can be seen in the systematic review studies (see Bartelink et al., 2020; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Paul & Moser, 2009).

In the unemployment literature, particularly concerning psychological wellbeing, General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) has been widely used as a measurement tool

of mental health/wellbeing/psychological distress of unemployed individuals (Bartley, 1994; Björklund and Eriksson, 1998; Lai, Chan and Luk, 1997). However, GHQ-12 was mainly designed and implemented to detect minor psychiatric problems, disruption of normal functioning and detecting the newly arisen psychological problems (Bartley, 1994; Björklund & Eriksson, 1998; Breakwell et al., 1984; Lai et al., 1997; Sabroe & Iversen, 1992; Stafford et al., 1980).

Additionally, Furnham (1983) stated utilizing General Health Questionnaire might not be effective and fruitful as it might be easily deceived. Therefore, there is a need for more sensitive measurement tools. Axelsson and Ejlertsson (2002) criticized this incongruity by mentioning different measurement tools. In their study, authors determined the essential components of mental health via principal component analysis. They identified that tearfulness, dysphoria, sleep disturbance, general fatigue, irritability are crucial ingredients of mental health problems. However, his initiative was far from presenting the whole picture of psychological wellbeing.

Several attempts have been made to resolve these inconsistencies and provide a more complete picture of psychological wellbeing in unemployment studies. Warr (1978) alleged that psychological studies, mainly paid attention to characteristics of 'mentally ill' individuals and normal people's everyday lives have been ignored. However, psychological wellbeing studies have the potential to constitute the one branch of that normal psychology. Warr argued that psychological well-being is a far-reaching notion and involves affective sides of everyday life. While negative mental states (e.g. displeasure, discontentment, sadness) are at the one, positive mental health (e.g. growth, positive self-evaluation, obtaining new perspectives from experiences) are at the other end of the spectrum. In the study of Warr, psychological wellbeing was considered as three different but interrelated components, namely positive and negative affect, overall evaluation of present life and anxiety. It has been found that unemployed respondents had low psychological well-being in these three dimensions compared to employed respondents. In addition, the psychological well-being of unemployed individuals with high work motivation was low compared to unemployed

people who had low work motivation. Therefore, the study of everyday psychology as normal psychology was recommended.

In a later study, Warr and Parry (1982) expanded on this spectrum and noted that six components constituted to psychological wellbeing in unemployment studies: suicide and attempted suicide, diagnosed psychiatric illness, psychiatric morbidity, psychological distress, life satisfaction and happiness, and lastly, positive wellbeing. This latter classification is more informative than the other studies (e.g., Young, 2012) claimed two wellbeing schools (i.e., subjective wellbeing and mental health). In line with the recommendations of Jahoda (1958), Warr (1978), Lent (2004) and Kantaş-Yorulmazlar (2018), in the current study psychological wellbeing was conceptualized as everyday functioning of university graduate NEETs.

Although studies have recognized the detrimental effect of unemployment on mental health, research has not yet systematically investigated the pathways to psychological wellbeing of university graduate NEETs (see Bartelink et al., 2020 for a thorough review of youth unemployment studies). Previous unemployment studies heavily relied upon group comparisons between employed and unemployed groups rather than focusing on the predictors and correlates of psychological wellbeing (see McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Paul & Moser, 2009; Synard & Gazzola, 2019). Wanberg (2012) reviewed the unemployment literature examining the effect of unemployment on physical and psychological wellbeing and job search and reemployment success. Wanberg drew attention to the bulk of research demonstrating the relationship between unemployment and psychological wellbeing via comparisons between employed and unemployed groups. Then, Wanberg pointed out that further studies should be concerned with how unemployment is related with poorer psychological wellbeing.

Given work and paid job is central to individuals' life, in the last three decades psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals has been examined in terms of a number of variables. For instance, Schaufeli (1992) criticized the extant literature due to the lack of theoretical foundations for mental health of unemployed studies. Schaufeli proposed a hypothesized model which laid a foundation of relationship

between employment status (employed and unemployed) and mental health through mediator (employment commitment, negative attitude to nonwork, lack of social supports, financial difficulties, control) and moderator variables (self-esteem, locus of control and neuroticism).

Apart from the study of Schaufeli (1992), in their most-cited and highly influential meta-analytic study, Mckee-Ryan et al. (2005) reviewed the studies which investigated the psychological wellbeing of individuals who lost their job and the correlates of psychological wellbeing. They classified these correlates and combined them into a comprehensive taxonomy: Coping resources (personal, social, financial, time structure) work-role centrality, cognitive appraisals (stress appraisal, internal attribution, reemployment expectation) coping strategies (job search effort, problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping) human capital and demographics.

The taxonomy put forward by McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) is a useful road-map for understanding the associates of unemployed individuals. So far, to the best of our knowledge, two studies were drawn out based on this taxonomy. First and foremost, the doctoral dissertation of Hoare (2007) is the most comprehensive and all-inclusive study which encompassed aforementioned variables. It is not possible to cover all aspects of this research. Therefore, only a small and related portion of this research was introduced.

Hoare (2007) conducted a cross-sectional study with 371 unemployed individuals aged between 16 and 65 years old and a follow-up study six months later with 115 individuals of the same participants. She included almost all the variables related mental health of unemployed individuals mentioned in McKee-Ryan et al. (2005). Hoare (2007) aimed to investigate the relationship among coping resources, cognitive appraisal, coping behaviors and mental health and which factors within coping resources, cognitive appraisal and coping behaviors best predicted mental health of individuals at T1 and T2. According to her conceptual model, coping resources, cognitive appraisal and coping behaviors had associated each other and in turn had an impact on mental health. Correlation analyses revealed that positive self-concepts (i.e.,

self-esteem, efficacy, positive affect and negative affect) had related each other and employment commitment were not found related with personal resources. Additionally, higher self-esteem, efficacy, and positive affect were found significantly associated with higher employment expectation. Initial multiple regression analysis revealed that self-esteem positively predicted mental health at T1 while employment commitment negatively predicted mental health at t1.

However, when only several variables incorporated into multiple regression analyses to obtain a more parsimonious model, employment commitment was not found a significant predictor of mental health. Qualitative analysis of T1 revealed that self-esteem, self-efficacy, and hope were associated with emotional distress. Additionally, it was documented that employment expectation was preceded by personal resources. In the follow-up study (T2), employment expectation was found correlated with efficacy and employment commitment. She concluded that it was not possible to direct, indirect and mediating effects on mental health in her study. Therefore, she suggested, a more parsimonious model with key variables might will be tested the mediator role of cognitive appraisals (e.g., employment expectation) between personal resources and mental health (Hoare & Machin, 2006; Hoare, 2007).

Secondly, Blau et al. (2013) conducted a cross-sectional study in which they tested the taxonomy as a correlates of life satisfaction of unemployed individuals, which were given by McKee-Ryan et al. (2005). A hierarchical regression analysis was performed in order to shed light on the possible mediator roles of cognitive appraisals (e.g., reemployment expectations) and job search effort (e.g., proactive job search). Human capital and demographical variables (e.g., gender, race and educational level), personal and coping resources (e.g., optimism, depression), cognitive appraisal, escaped focused coping (e.g., job devaluation), problem focused coping set (e.g., positive self-assessment) and job search efforts were respectively entered the regression analysis. According to results, personal and coping resources were found as strongest predictors of life satisfaction. Additionally, reemployment expectations slightly predicted the scores of life satisfaction, which implies a potential mediator role for reemployment

expectations on the life satisfaction. However, any significant additional predictor impact of job search effort on life satisfaction was not found.

While the study of Blau et al. (2013) was one of the comprehensive studies assessed the taxonomy of Mckee-Ryan et al. (2005), it suffered from several limitations. It did not include the self-esteem and self-efficacy into the group of coping resources. However, as it was provided in below sections, self-efficacy and self-esteem were core variables representing coping resources. In addition, depression was considered as a coping resource and tested its predictor role on life satisfaction. Yet, a vast body of literature on mental health of unemployed individuals regarded the depression as a component of mental health rather than a predictor of it (see Huppert & So, 2013; Kantaş-Yorulmazlar, 2018). Furthermore, work centrality which was a most studied variable in the unemployment studies was not integrated into the research. Lastly, hierarchical regression analysis provides a glimpse into the mediator roles of variables since it takes into consideration only total effects rather than assessing direct, indirect, and total effects.

Thirdly, however, they did not draw on the taxonomy of McKee-Ryan et al. (2005), Yılmaz (2002) and Sümer et al. (2013) sought to investigate the predictors of psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals. Yılmaz (2002) posited that self-esteem, negative mood and job search motivation would be associates of mental health of unemployed person. Nevertheless, Yılmaz found that only self-esteem and negative mood predicted psychological wellbeing. Sümer et al. (2013) examined the effects of unemployment on individuals and families. The findings of the study demonstrated that unemployed individuals were more likely to report depression, anxiety, anger. Furthermore, Sümer et al. indicated that social support had a moderator role on life satisfaction and perceived employability had a moderator role on life satisfaction and depression.

Lastly, although, it did not aim to investigate the taxonomy of McKee-Ryan (2005), Gabriel (2015) reached a result that similar factors were important in the transition from school to work in the lives of emerging adults. In her doctoral dissertation,

Gabriel (2015) investigated which factors support to NEET emerging adults and which barriers hinder their transition from school to work. Within this scope, she interviewed with 9 emerging adults who experienced a NEET period in recent times and moved to school or job nowadays and 4 professionals who engaged with activities toward NEET emerging adults. From the perspective of emerging adults, self-efficacy, optimism and hope, motivation, supportive family/friends and others, a desire to work were prominent supportive factors which assisted themselves during school to work transition.

However, having a bleak picture about future and unsupportive family/friends were cited as barriers in moving to employment. Furthermore, negative self-perceptions about themselves and regarding themselves as responsible to some extent for their situation were emerging themes of interviews. Besides, the relationship with family was not straightforward. According to remarks of young emerging adults, some families were supportive while others were being critical and rejecting. These points were also substantiated with the observations of professionals. Professionals remarked that having supportive adults was supportive factors while low self-esteem and difficulties in family relationships impeded the navigation of school to work transition. In sum, self-esteem, self-efficacy, hope, motivation, internal attribution, desire to work and social support are crucial elements for psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals (Gabriel, 2015).

Therefore, on the basis of the abovementioned research, it can be reasonably put forward that personal resources (i.e., self-esteem, self-efficacy and employment hope), social resources (i.e., overall social support, social support from friends, social support from family and social support from significant others) and work resources (i.e., job search motivation, work involvement, attribution of unemployment) might be effective in dealing with the burden of unemployment (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Merino et al., 2019).

### **2.3.2. Employment Hope**

Hope is regarded as a prominent personal resource and is a major area of interest within the field of positive psychology (Lo Presti et al., 2020; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Virga et al., 2017). Optimism, having a positive outlook or positive outcome expectations and hope are used interchangeably in the literature. In general, hope is characterized by setting goals, knowing pathways to reach those goals, and having an agency to attain those goals (Snyder et al., 2002). From the earlier works of Snyder and his colleagues, hope received considerable interest in psychology and counseling and adapted to individuals' working life. So far, three hope constructs were emerged within the employment/unemployment context: Work Hope (Juntunen and Wettersten, 2006); Vocational Hope (Diemer and Blustein, 2007); and Employment Hope (Hong, et al., 2009, 2012). Besides, Perceived Employability which is akin to employment hope and work hope also investigated in the employment studies (Berntson & Marklund, 2007).

Firstly, Juntunen and Wettersten (2006) pointed out that hope has the potential of explaining career success and career decision making process of individuals. Therefore, they applied the construct of hope to work as a motivational construct and developed a scale for measuring work hope. A sample of 224 university students participated to the study and three sub-constructs (i.e., goals, pathways, and agency) were appeared under the work hope in line with the hope theory. They concluded that there is a need for giving attention to the populations which disregarded by career counseling theories. Work hope as a motivational construct, they claimed, hold promise to provide a ground in which further research attempt for delineating on work life of individuals will be nourished. In line with this claim, Kenny et al. (2010) found that work hope explained a unique variance in achievement-related beliefs of urban high school students.

Secondly, Diemer and Blustein (2007) put an emphasis on the examination of career developments of urban adolescents. They conducted an exploratory factor analysis for the whole items of the three scales concerning career development (i.e., vocational

identity, career commitment, work salience) with urban high school students. EFA revealed that all items derived from the three scales fell under four subgroups: future career identification, vocational identity, work role resilience and salience of chosen career. Authors stated that future career identification represented the vocational hopes of urban adolescents. Thus, they went on, further research initiatives were necessitated to establish the importance of vocational hope.

A similar point of view was echoed in the Social Cognitive Model of Vocational Hope. Brown et al. (2012) expanded on Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994) and set forth the Social Cognitive Model of Vocational Hope. They noted that vocational hope depicts “*a positive motivational state associated with envisioning a future in which meaningful work is attainable*” (Brown et al., 2012, p. 383). Rather than being a trait, vocational hope is responsive to changes, future oriented and represents the motivational aspects of career development. Brown et al. speculatively asserted that vocational hope might mediate the effect of self-efficacy and outcome expectations on the career outcomes. Based on this speculation, for the first time, Carr (2015) developed the Vocational Hope Scale and tested the theoretical relationship among self-efficacy, vocational hope, and career outcomes in her doctoral thesis. A sample of 147 adolescents participated to the study and SEM results lend an empirical support to mediational role of vocational hope.

Thirdly, Hong et al. (2009) aimed to capture the voices of low-income job seekers in terms of self-sufficiency. They conducted a focus group study with 14 low-income job-seeker participants. The focus group discussion revealed that self-sufficiency was understood as a psychological strength which facilitate to surmount the barriers of finding a job and being economically independent from others and the state rather than simply not needing anyone or any organizations to sustain life. Inspired by this bottom-up perspective to self-sufficiency, Hong et al. (2012) constructed a short self-sufficiency scale and labeled it as employment hope and in further studies they evaluated the cross-cultural validation and structural properties (Hong et al., 2014, 2016).

Last but not least, perceived employability which is a related construct akin to employment hope and work hope has also been attracting considerable interest. Berntson and Marklund (2007) maintained that individuals with higher perceived employability are more likely to experience better physical health and mental health. They provided also empirical evidence to their claim by documenting that perceived employability predicted mental health and global health in their working sample. Apart from being studied with working samples, perceived employability was also studied within unemployed sample.

Similar to the proposition of Social Cognitive Model of Vocational Hope which points out the potential mediator role of vocational hope, perceived employability has also been an object of research as a mediator variable. For example, Virga et al. (2017) stated that perceived employability can be regarded as a personal resource and they found that perceived employability predicted mental health over and above core self-evaluations and job resources, which might point out a possible mediator role for perceived employability. A similar point of perceived employability was also recently investigated. Lo Presti et al. (2020) put forward that perceived employability is a personal resource like self-esteem. Additionally, they substantiated evidence which showed the mediator role of perceived employability on the association between self-esteem and psychological wellbeing.

In the unemployment studies, rather than resort to vocational hope, work hope or employment hope and perceived employability, a formidable body of published studies (e.g., Blau et al., 2013; Feather & Davenport, 1981; Hoare, 2007; Vansteenkiste et al., 2004; Vansteenkiste et al., 2005; Vinokur & Kaplan, 1987; Wang & Wanberg, 2017) also utilized on reemployment expectations of unemployed individuals. In the taxonomy of McKee-Ryan (2005), expectations of reemployment was classified under the heading of cognitive appraisal of unemployment. McKee-Ryan et al. expected that reemployment expectations might be positively associated with psychological wellbeing. They found that unemployed individuals who had higher levels of reemployment expectations were in better positions in terms of mental health ( $r_c = .29$ ) and life satisfaction ( $r_c = .54$ ). Likewise, Wang and Wanberg

documented that while job search deteriorated individuals' wellbeing, unemployed individuals who felt confident to get into employment were exception to this decrease in mental health.

These meta-analytic findings echoed throughout from the earlier unemployment studies to the recent research initiatives. What is apparent in the Marienthal Study (Jahoda et al., 1933/2002) and the systematic review of Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938) individuals who lost their jobs due to shut downs grappled with bleak outlook of their working lives. Similarly, Murphy et al. (2010) interviewed with 10 emerging adults who moved from school to work in recent three years to investigate the which factors were significant during that transition. Optimism and social support were found as the fundamental themes in this study. Likewise, Merino et al. (2019) examined the differences between employed and unemployed individuals recently graduated from university in Spain. They found that individuals who scored high on optimism were more likely to obtain a job. Additionally, unemployed individuals were negatively affected in several psychological domains (e.g., optimism, self-efficacy and life satisfaction). In a similar fashion, Blustein (2019), in his staggering effort to discuss the role of work in the lives of individuals, depicted how unemployed individuals struggled with bleak future in terms of their unemployment status.

A cross-cultural study, also, yielded empirical evidence to the importance of hope in unemployed young individuals. A group of scholars (see Lahusen & Giugni, 2016) conducted a project in 6 different countries in order to gain a perspective how young individuals construe their unemployment status. An important theme emerged from this study is that the perceived future outlook of unemployed individuals swift from optimism to hopelessness. At the times of optimism, individuals searched for job, arranged their everyday life and issues. On the other hand, unemployed jumped into a stagnation and passivity at periods of unemployment (Bergqvist, 2016). Furthermore, having a fear about one's future prospects in terms of employment creates a tension on psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals (Binder, 2016). Lastly, Lorenzini and Giugni (2011) documented that the hopes of getting a job was related with decreased anxiety within the young unemployed sample.

Based on the research outlined above, employment hope was assumed to be directly associated with psychological wellbeing of NEETs. Furthermore, in line with the arguments of social cognitive model of vocational hope and perceived employability, employment hope was expected to mediate the effects of self-esteem, self-efficacy, job search motivation, work involvement, attribution styles and social support (i.e., as a whole and from different sources) on psychological wellbeing of NEETs.

### **2.3.3. Self Esteem**

Self-esteem has come to be used to refer to one's own positive or negative evaluation about oneself. In the field of psychology, the construct of self-esteem was first articulated by William James in his seminal book (1890/1950) and popularized during "the so-called self-esteem movement" in the 1970s and 1980s (Zeigler-Hill, 2013, p.1). Self-esteem has a wide-ranging of functions for individuals and one of them is its protective role in the face of adversity. Self-esteem might provide a bulwark against the detrimental impacts of failure (Pyszczynski & Kesebir, 2013).

Individuals with high self-esteem can establish own wellbeing more quickly following a failure as they have numerous coping resources and regard themselves in a more positive manner (Zeigler-Hill, 2011; Zeigler-Hill, 2013), since viewing oneself as a good person is one of the primary priorities of human-beings and our self-regard has a substantial influence on our relationship with others and the world in which we live, how we deal with the problems we encounter and our mental health (Pyszczynski & Kesebir, 2013). On the other hand, those with low self-esteem withdraw from dealing with the adversity so to do maintain their self-regard (Park & Crocker, 2013; Pyszczynski & Kesebir, 2013). This protective role of self-esteem is commonly conceptualized under the various labels such as stress-buffering model of high self-esteem or vulnerability model of low self-esteem (Zeigler-Hill, 2011, 2013).

As a result of the studies which documented the association between self-esteem and a wide array of social problems plaguing the society and its potential protective role, self-esteem has been studied in related with a diverse range of social concerns (Park

& Crocker, 2013; Zeigler-Hill, 2013). Among those social issues, unemployment studies are of great significance as unemployment is connected with diminished self-esteem (Feather, 1990; Furnham, 1994; Winefield et al., 1993). There are several reasons for this decline. First and foremost, employment furnishes individuals with an occupational and social identity through which individuals gain a place in social life (Blustein, 2006, 2019). All participants in the study of Monticelli et al. (2016), for instance, revealed that employment delivers a social status and identity to them. Therefore, being unemployed means not having a recognizable identity, which eventually diminishes one's self-esteem.

Secondly, stigma and shame are closely interconnected with unemployment, which in turn damage self-esteem of unemployed individuals (Rantakeisu et al., (1997). Rantakeisu et al. (1997) claimed that economic hardship and social aspect linked with the shame and pride by and far large did not receive considerable attention. The money provides us to maintain a regular lifestyle and opportunities to attend social and cultural events. It also furnishes us with having a sense of power and control over life. Not having a money is linked with inexorably shame and embarrassment in the eyes of society. The highly praised characteristic of newly emerging middle class is self-control and purposefulness. Financial success, in modern context deeply connected with the ones self-esteem. Therefore, having a job and making one's own money closely intertwined with self-esteem. Thirdly, job search process is filled with failure to obtain a job. Discouragement ensuing from refusals of their job application might lead to a state of apathy, demotivation and a lack of energy, which shape the course of behavior of unemployed individuals in their everyday life. Moreover, self-esteem forms the basis for managing the loss of motivation and to overcome the unfavorable emotions regarding unemployment (Lorenzini & Giugni, 2016).

Given its protective role, consequently, self-esteem has been attracting considerable interest within unemployment studies as both predictor and outcome variables since 1970s. It is evident that self-esteem was evaluated as an outcome variable in earlier unemployment studies (e.g., Furnham, 1994; Winefield, 1993; Winefield &

Tiggemann, 1985, 1989, 1990a, 1990b; Winefield et al., 1987, 1988, 1991, 1992, 1993).

For instance, Warr and Jackson (1983) to examine the negative and positive self-esteem of young workers in terms of their employment status (i.e., employed vs. unemployed) utilized on cross-sectional and longitudinal data. Cross-sectional analysis revealed a significant difference in negative self-esteem between unemployed and employed individuals. Additionally, differences also held true for sex differences. Both unemployed men and women had lower self-esteem in comparison with their employed counterparts. Longitudinal analyses indicated that employment status accompanied to these differences. In other words, these differences could not be ascribed to selection hypothesis. Similarly, Goldsmith et al. (1997) analyzed the impact of unemployment and being out of labor force status on self-esteem which was considered emotional component of psychological wellbeing. Draw on National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, they showed that unemployment had an adverse psychological influence on unemployed young women.

Yet, as Feather (1990) clearly indicated, self-esteem might provide a strong protection against the negative impact of unemployment on psychological wellbeing. Thus, there is a growing body of literature that recognized the predictor role of self-esteem on psychological wellbeing of unemployed persons. Virkes et al. (2017) investigated, for instance, the effect of core self-evaluations on mental health of individuals who involuntarily lost their jobs from the perspective of transactional stress model. They claimed that unemployed individuals who had higher core self-evaluations were more likely to have positive experience and less likely to negative experience (e.g. anxiety) thorough various coping mechanism (i.e., job devaluation and job search). They gathered data from 178 unemployed individuals who involuntarily lost their job at least one month ago in Spain. Hierarchical regression analyses' results of their study demonstrated that core self-evaluations explained additional and significant variance in how unemployment experienced after controlling demographic characteristics and previous work experiences.

Similarly, in a recent study, Alvaro et al., (2019) investigated the mediator role of self-esteem between unemployment status and depressive symptoms. In total, 264 participants participated to the study and the age participants attended the study ranged between 18-70 years old. The findings of the study indicated that there was a strong correlation between self-esteem and depressive symptoms for unemployed individuals but the mediator role of self-esteem between unemployment and depression was found on for men. Likewise, Peláez-Fernández et al. (2019) explored the predictor role of core self-evaluations on psychological distress of unemployed individuals in Spain with 1796 unemployed individuals. They identified that core self-evaluations predicted the scores of happiness, depression, anxiety and stress of unemployed participants.

In addition to being investigated as a sole predictor of psychological wellbeing, self-esteem has also been jointly studied with other variables. For example, Herbig et al. (2013) found that the situation of unemployed individuals is often complicated by low levels of social support, life satisfaction, and self-esteem. Moreover, in the study of Yılmaz (2002), an important portion of variance in psychological distress was explained by self-esteem scores of individuals. Therefore, numerous studies took into consideration the effect of social support and self-esteem in together.

By way of example, Axelsson and Ejlertsson (2002) studied the relationship between self-esteem, social support and self-reported health. 158 unemployed individuals and 357 employed individuals were compared in terms of their mental health. The results indicated that unemployed individuals had more mental health problems than employed individuals. Additionally, it was found that unemployed individuals who had less social support and self-esteem were more vulnerable to mental health problems.

A similar finding was also found in a different region of the world. In the longitudinal study of Sverko et al. (2008) in Croatia, two of the strongest correlates of psychological health were social support ( $r = .31$ ) and self-esteem ( $r = .46$ ). Likewise, Solove et al. (2015) examined the role of self-esteem and social support as coping

resources on coping strategies and reemployment success of unemployed individuals who lost their job using a two-wave survey. They found that being reemployed was more likely to those individuals who have higher level of self-esteem and higher social support.

Lastly, Rey et al. (2016) examined the association between social support, core-self evaluations and psychological distress (i.e., anxiety, depression and stress) as well as the possible moderation role of core self-evaluations on the relationship between social support and psychological distress. They recruited 613 middle-aged unemployed individuals into the study. Hierarchical regression analyses results revealed that perceived social support explained small but significant variance in anxiety, depression and stress scores. Additionally, core self-evaluations explained medium and significant variance in anxiety, depression and stress scores over and above perceived social support scores. Moreover, it was found that core-self evaluations moderated the relationship between social support and anxiety and stress but not depression.

Based on the research outlined above, self-esteem was assumed to be both directly and indirectly associated with psychological wellbeing of NEETs.

#### **2.3.4. Self-Efficacy**

Bandura (1982, 1997, 1999), the leading theorist of self-efficacy, maintained that individuals are not merely the passive victims in the face of major life events, and they have, to some extent, the capacity of altering environmental conditions, dealing with hurdles of everyday life and contributing their psychosocial functioning. Consequently, self-efficacy of individuals has an impact on their behavior to succeed in a given domain (e.g., work life) and in general (see, Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Bandura et al., 2001). In line with this proposition, Bandura (1977, 1982, 1997) broadly defined the self-efficacy as the perception of one's own capacity to plan and carry out certain steps in order to attain desired outcomes in his social cognitive theory.

Based on the social cognitive theory of Bandura (1997, 1999), Lent et al. (1994) proposed the social cognitive career theory in which they explained the career choices of individuals. Later, Lent and Brown (2013) extended this theory to include career management process of individuals (e.g., school to work transition and job-seeking after job loss). In this social cognitive career management theory, self-efficacy is one of the three cognitive-person variables, which influences outcome expectations and career outcomes (Thompson et al., 2017). Therefore, there are large number of published studies (e.g., Wiener et al., 1999; Zenger et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2016; Virga & Rusu, 2018; Wang et al., 2014) that describe the link between self-efficacy and psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals.

Emphasizing the inadequacy of existing theories which explained the deteriorating effects of unemployment on mental health, Wiener et al. (1999) conducted a comparative study in which both unemployed (n = 118) and employed individuals' (n = 120) work involvement, self-efficacy and psychological wellbeing were contrasted. The results showed that while the level of work involvement of unemployed and employed people were not differed, it was indicated that unemployed individuals had low self-efficacy and poor psychological wellbeing than employed individuals. Additionally, the relationship between intention to seek work, need to employment, self-efficacy, employment commitment, psychological wellbeing and confidence in finding employment of unemployed sample were investigated. According to the results, individuals with higher self-efficacy were more likely to have higher work involvement, higher confidence for obtaining employment, higher employment need, higher job search intent and lower psychological distress.

Similarly, self-efficacy was found associated with job search motivation in further studies. For instance, Noordzij et al. (2013) claimed that reemployment after job loss is necessitated demanding job search motivation and self-regulation. In order to bolster unemployed individuals' intentions to seek work and self-regulation, they designed a training program and tested the effectiveness of this training program via quasi-experimental design. One of the byproducts of statistical analysis of this research was

that self-efficacy had a direct, significant, and positive impact upon job search intentions.

More recent studies have also shown the strong relationship between unemployment and self-efficacy and the buffering role of self-efficacy. Pohlan (2019) investigated the social costs of job loss using a German panel study. Pohlan reported that losing one's job deteriorated the life satisfaction of individuals and self-efficacy of individuals was also decreased due to being unemployed. Furthermore, the detrimental effects of unemployment persisted even after obtaining a job. In the same vein, in order to examine the relationship between self-efficacy, transition to work and self-rated health, Andersén et al. (2018) obtained data from young adults with disabilities aged between 19 to 29 years in a prospective cohort study in Sweden. What they found is that individuals with high self-efficacy were more likely to move to work and individuals with low self-efficacy indicated decreased health.

In a similar prospective cohort study in Germany, the role of self-efficacy on duration of unemployment and physical and mental health complaints were examined over a period of seven years. According to results, Zenger et al. (2013) documented that individuals with higher self-efficacy were less likely to have mental and physical health complaints and also experienced a shorter spell of unemployment in comparison to individuals with low self-efficacy. They concluded that the findings substantiated further evidence for the protective role of self-efficacy.

In a similar fashion, Virga and Rusu (2018) conducted a study to investigate the relationship among core-self evaluations, job search efficacy and health complaints (comprised of mental health complaints and physical complaints). Two hundred sixteen Romanian unemployed individuals participated the study. SEM analysis showed that core self-evaluations was negatively associated with health complaints but positively related with job search self-efficacy. Furthermore, core self-evaluations had both direct effect and indirect effect through job search self-efficacy on health complaints.

Apart from being studied as predictor variable, self-efficacy was also researched as a mediator factor. By way of illustration, Wang et al. (2014) studied the mediator role of self-efficacy between personality and depression among unemployed Chinese people (n = 1,832). Hierarchical multiple regression analysis indicated that perceived general self-efficacy was found negatively related with depression and explained a large variance in the scores of depressive symptoms over and above demographic characteristics and big five personality traits. Furthermore, Schaffer and Taylor (2012) investigated the role of self-efficacy as internal resource and social support as external resource through the mediation of coping strategies on job search behaviors of unemployed African-American people (n = 223). They found that individuals with higher level of social support and self-efficacy demonstrated intense job search behaviors.

In the same manner, Yang et al. (2016) carried out a study to studied how quality of life (consisting of physical and mental component) of unemployed people (n = 1,825) were differed and which factors were related to quality of life in China. They found that mental aspects of unemployed individuals' quality of life were much heavily affected than physical component. Hierarchical regression analyses resulted that coping styles explained much of the variance in both mental component and physical component. Additionally, general self-efficacy explained small but significant variance in both mental and physical component over and above coping styles. Therefore, they further investigated the possible mediator role of self-efficacy between coping styles and quality of life. They found that coping styles both directly and indirectly through self-efficacy affected mental and physical aspects of quality of life.

The importance of self-efficacy as a coping resource did not only come from cross-sectional and longitudinal data. Randomized field experiments also yielded significant findings for the role of self-efficacy coupled with the other sources (e.g., self-esteem and social support). The JOBS program was one of those programs, which was the well-known and applied in wide variety of settings and cross-cultural context (Price & Vinokur, 2018). Caplan et al. (1989) initially developed an intervention program to impede the negative impacts of job loss and to increase the job-seeking motivation of

individuals via building their coping resources in order to accelerate the process of reemployment. They recruited a comprehensive sample who came from all walks of life. Individuals who were in the experiment group shown improved mental health, higher job seeking motivation and were more successful at reemployment after four months. These findings were also corroborated with the two and a half year follow-up study (Vinokur et al., 1991) and the JOBS II program with a high risk group (Vinokur et al., 1995, 2000). Additionally, Eden and Aviram (1993) developed and implemented a similar intervention program to 66 unemployed individuals. In the program, it was shown that boosting general self-efficacy for unemployed individuals with lower general self-efficacy was motivated to individuals to seek job.

As self-efficacy is related with job search motivation and employment hope, other studies concerning self-efficacy were presented in the sections of job search motivation and employment hope. It is now time to turn attention to a critical conceptual issue concerning self-efficacy and self-esteem. An important consideration in discussing self-efficacy is whether it is different from self-esteem or both self-esteem and self-efficacy represent a unitary construct. What is apparent in above-mentioned studies is that in psychological wellbeing of unemployment studies, self-esteem and self-efficacy were both separately and uniformly (i.e., under the construct of core self-evaluation) studied.

Considering the high correlations between self-esteem and self-efficacy as well as locus of control and optimism, Judge et al. (1997) proposed that self-esteem, self-efficacy, optimism and locus of control are a uniform construct rather than distinct constructs. In accordance with the core-self evaluations proposition, McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) and Wanberg et al. (2005) posited that core self-evaluations constituted of self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control and emotional stability are pivotal components for effectively coping with unemployment. In line with this assumption, a great deal of previous research has utilized the construct of core self-evaluation (e.g., Hoare, 2007; Merino et al., 2019; Peláez-Fernández et al., 2019; Virga et al., 2017; Virga & Rusu, 2018; Virkes et al., 2017).

However, Chen et al. (2004) claimed that self-efficacy and self-esteem operate on different levels even if they are reported highly correlated in the literature. Chen et al. argued that self-efficacy functions in motivational domains while self-esteem mainly related with affective domains. A similar conclusion was also made by Bandura nearly three decades ago. According to Bandura (1997), as self-esteem is related to one's perception on self-worth and self-efficacy is associated with one's perception on capabilities for tasks, self-efficacy represents the motivational, goal attainment and behavioral aspects.

Consequently, given its impact, self-efficacy carries considerable implications for youth unemployment. Young individuals are seen as an agent rather than a passive audience of their life. They are supposed to make their own decisions so as to "find their own paths" in the adulthood (Mortimer & Larson, 2002). Thus, it is critical to address their self-efficacy when discuss youth unemployment. On the basis of both empirical research on self-efficacy and the theoretical assumption regarding self-efficacy, it was proposed that self-efficacy was directly associated with job search motivation, employment hope and psychological wellbeing of NEETs. Additionally, it was expected that self-efficacy was indirectly related with psychological wellbeing thorough job search motivation and employment hope. What is clear from this hypotheses is that different from the hypotheses of self-esteem, given the potential difference between self-efficacy and self-esteem, self-efficacy was also related with job search motivation rather than merely associated with employment hope and psychological wellbeing.

### **2.3.5. Social Support**

The broad use of the term social support is equated with the functions performed by others to the individual (Thoits, 1995, 2011). Social support is protective against major life events from birth to death by smoothing the way for individuals to tackle with the crisis and major life events (Thoits, 2011). Winefield et al. (1992) stated that it has been a well-known fact that caring and support from our social environment is vital for both our physical and psychological survival. Accordingly, studies which seek to

establish the correlates of psychological wellbeing need to include social support as a variable.

Considering that social support is mentioned as a critical resource in coping with stressful life events, it has received attention from psychological wellbeing studies (see Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). However, Cobb (1976) noted that studies on the effect of social support on transition to adulthood (e.g., first job and marriage) were not existed and there is a need for systematic research in that area. Cobb suggested that employment termination is one of the major life crisis and social support was found associated with ill health of unemployed individuals. Similarly, Blustein (2006) drawn attention to the need of elaborating on the association of social relationships and working or nonworking individuals.

Given the fact that being employed provide a social recognition and status at a society, being out of labor market tantamount to be excluded from major social institutions including labor market (Lorenzini & Giugni, 2011). Not having a job moves individuals from at the center of the society to at its periphery and unemployment for young individuals is coupled with stigmatization and marginalization (Bergqvist, 2016; Binder, 2016; Grimmer, 2016; Kieselbach, 2003). During each social encounter, they experience guilt and shame since they have to talk on their unemployment status. As social encounters have the potential to turn into a strenuous place, it is quite natural that unemployed individuals tend to avoid attending social meetings (Chabanet et al., 2016; Monticelli, 2016; Rantakeisu et al., 1997). The most problematic side of meetings is that other individuals, explicitly or tacitly, put the whole blame on unemployed individuals. Consequently, there might be greater risk for unemployed individuals to embrace those stigmatizing views and keep themselves away from close friends, new persons and society. Thus, a process of self-marginalization and social exclusion is underway (Bergqvist, 2016; Lorenzini & Giugni, 2016).

As it is a widely held view that one's social network always positively contributes to one's psychological wellbeing, social support is of vital importance to unemployed young persons to maintain their psychological wellbeing in the face of social exclusion

(Kieselbach, 2003; Ratcliff & Bogdan, 1988; Sabroe & Iversen, 1992; Thoits, 1995; Winefield et al., 1993). Additionally, from a social cognitive career theory perspective, social support provides a cushion against harmful effects of unemployment (Thompson et al., 2017). Based on its importance, consequently, there has been a surge of interest in the role of social support on the psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals. Hence, in the systematic review of unemployment studies, social support was categorized under the coping resources (McKee et al., 2005).

Several investigations of the relationship between social support and psychological wellbeing within unemployed groups identified that social support shield unemployed individuals from the negative outcomes of unemployment. Recently, Milner et al. (2016) examined the protective role of social support on mental health of individuals when they are both employed and unemployed. Based on a national survey spanned 12 years ( $n = 3190$ ), they found that the increase on social support predicted improvements in mental health. Additionally, even unemployed individuals with high levels of social support were in good mental health in comparison with when they employed but not having social support. Similarly, Huegaerts et al. (2017) examined the relationship between social support and mental health among nearly 7000 young individuals who were in school to work transition period in Brussel. They indicated that mental distress was correlated with young people's social support.

Likewise, Lim et al. (2018) investigated the relationship between depression, suicidal ideation, stress related to job seeking and social support in an unemployed university graduates' ( $n = 124$ ) in South Korea. A moderated mediation analysis indicated that job seeking stress had an indirect effect on suicidal ideation through depression. Additionally, it was found that social support moderated the relationship between job seeking stress and depression and between depression and suicidal ideation. The increase in social support had an attenuating effect on the relationship between depression and suicidal ideation. Lastly, Solove et al. (2016) reported that higher social support is associated with reemployment.

The studies mentioned above emphasized the pivotal role of social support for unemployed young individuals. Such studies, however, have failed to acknowledge the possible distinction between the sources of social support. Yet, over the three decades, most research in social support has emphasized the need for such a distinction. Zimet et al. (1988) and Zimet et al. (1990) emphasized that it is critical from which sources (i.e., family, friends, significant one) social support come. In concert with this proposition, a group of researchers investigated to what extent social support constitute protection against deleterious effects of unemployment within unemployed young individuals across Europe with an emphasis on different sources of social support (see Bergqvist, 2016; Chabanet et al., 2016; Grimmer, 2016; Lahusen & Giugni, 2016; Lorenzini & Giugni, 2011, 2016). Consequently, it was shown that it is of great significance to draw a distinction between different sources of social support in order to develop a better understanding of psychological wellbeing of NEETs.

From the vantage point of Zimet et al. (1988), social support from family, social support from friends and social support from significant others form the sources of social support. Most of the unemployed young persons are living with their parents (ILO, 2021b), and being with family imply a time for sense of unity in such a hardship. Since they have not adequate source of income, their families might deliver financial aids, housing and food which prevent young individuals from the deprivation of lack of money. Furthermore, the families might share their burden relating to unemployment (Binder, 2016). In line with this claim, Axelsson and Ejlertsson (2002) found that parental support played a protective role in psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals.

Similarly, Bjarnason and Sigurdardottir (2003) analyzed the outcomes of different labor market status on young individuals aged 18-24 years old in Nordic countries (i.e., Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Scotland and Sweden). They reported that parental support could be a buffer against the detrimental impacts of unemployment on psychological distress. Lastly, Huffman et al. (2015) asserted that family social support might functions as resource to compensate negative outcomes of unemployment on psychological wellbeing based on the Conservation of Resources

Framework (Hobfoll, 1989). In an adult sample, they found that social support from family was positively associated with psychological wellbeing of unemployed persons.

Nonetheless, families cannot come to realize the situation of the unemployment crisis in the world in general and what their children undergo due to that crisis. This unawareness might be coupled with embracing the stigmatizing attitudes toward unemployed individuals and lead to conflict between unemployed young individuals and their families (Lorenzini & Giugni, 2016). Additionally, families might put a pressure on unemployed individuals for finding a job or remind them to their unemployment status (Chabent et al., 2016). These discussions might give rise to serious problems (Binder, 2016). Consequently, a never-ending issue of conflict emerges between young individuals and their families (Bergqvist, 2016).

Furthermore, in above, it was mentioned that financial support was provided by families of unemployed. However, this claim is limited with the families which have enough financial possibilities. Disadvantaged families have their own predicaments such as low income, having unemployed parents, having disables individuals in the family. Since they do not get along with their own challenges, they cannot provide necessary opportunities to their unemployed young individuals. At this families, young unemployed individuals are under great strain. They might be expected to bring a solution to the predicaments of family. Thus, family might be another source of anxiety and stress rather than as a backing. The participants in the study of Monticelli et al. (2016), for instance, frequently mentioned that they had tensions with their families over their unemployment status.

This contradiction regarding the role of family support on maintaining mental health and coping unemployment well and whether they are a source of support or of distress and disturbance was even reflected in the earlier studies. Hendry and Raymond (1986) stated that while some studies argued that family might has a potential source of support, other studies documented that family might also become a source of tension, conflict and apprehension. Based on these assertions, Hendry and Raymond (1986)

interviewed with unemployed young individuals and found that support from family had taken a both supportive and conflicting forms toward unemployed young individuals. To sum, the studies cited above implied that social support from families might be a source of protection and a further psychological burden.

Social support from friends is another source of social support. Unemployed young individuals can share their worries and concerns with their close friends without being judged as they also go thorough similar distress. Sharing their loneliness which is arouse out of not being understood and their predicaments with regard to unemployment might have the potential to relieve themselves of the psychological burden of unemployment. Simply talking with friends might come to mean that there is somebody to turn to at the time of despair and helplessness. Another reason why the existence and support of friends is important is that they provide young individuals a chance to go out of the family circle. By means of these kind of support (social and psychological) unemployed individuals might take a fresh breath from their cloudy thought related with their employment status and feel to be alive (Lorenzini & Giugni, 2011, 2016).

Lee and Goldstein (2016) stated that social support protect individuals from the negative effect of hardships they encounter. They claimed, however, sources of social support (i.e., friends, family and romantic partner) might provide a more complete understanding of social support. They recruited 636 college students to examine the buffering role of sources of social support between perceived stress and loneliness. The results of the study indicated that only social support from friends provided buffer against the relationship between perceived stress and loneliness for emerging adults.

However, the support coming from friends is restricted since they can only deliver solely emotional support and the dilemmas concerning finding a paid job is still existed (Lorenzini & Giugni, 2016). Additionally, friends support has its own drawbacks as well. Being assisted from their peer might give the impression of weakness and incapability. Consequently, individuals might not to be perceive themselves as depended upon others (Lorenzini & Giugni, 2011, 2016). Furthermore, passing the

time with friends also generate a serious challenge for unemployed individuals since they have lack of finance and try to avoid from any unnecessary expenses. The relations with wider group of friends also gradually diminishes (Binder, 2016).

The third source of social support is significant others (e.g., romantic partners, fiancée, neighborhood). In the study of Lorenzini and Giugni (2011, 2016), in comparison with friends and family, participants hardly mentioned about partner support in this study. This might be explained from two different angles. Firstly, participants did not want to mention the very special realm their life. Secondly, not having a paid job also severely strike the partners of unemployed individuals (Lorenzini & Giugni, 2016). Similarly, in other studies (e.g., Monticelli et al., 2016) participants unequivocally revealed that having a partner is not possible and a burden for themselves since they do not enough material capitals for sustaining a relationship.

From the aforementioned studies, overall social support, social support from friends, social support from family and social support from significant others was expected to be directly related with psychological wellbeing of NEETs. Furthermore, it was assumed that these relationships would be mediated by employment hope.

### **2.3.6. Work Involvement**

Work involvement, in general, implies to the extent which employment is important in one's life and has been focus of much investigation in the psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals. A wide range of name were used to describe work role centrality such as work role centrality (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005), valence of work (Feather & Davenport, 1981), employment value (Vansteenkiste et al., 2005), employment commitment (Hoare, 2007; Jackson & Warr, 1984; Jackson et al., 1983; Patterson, 1997; Van der Wel & Halvorsen, 2015; Wanberg et al., 2010), job commitment (Vansteenkiste et al., 2004) and work involvement (Wiener et al., 1999). Individuals with higher work involvement was found more likely to suffer from psychological distress (Hoare, 2007; Hoare and Machin, 2006; Jackson & Warr, 1984; Warr & Jackson, 1985; Wiener et al., 1999).

Work involvement has long been a question of great interest in the studies of psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals. Stafford et al. (1980) investigated the predictors of unemployment and the psychological wellbeing of individuals who were in school to work transition. They interviewed with 647 individuals during the following seven months of those individuals' school leaving. Findings indicated that the strongest predictor of psychological wellbeing was employment status among school leavers. But work involvement has not been found to have a direct effect on psychological wellbeing. In other words, being employed or unemployed was more likely to predict the psychological wellbeing of school leavers than sex, social class, employment status of the father, level of work involvement predicted. Unemployed young individuals reported a lower level of psychological wellbeing in comparison with their employed peers. After controlling employment status, it has been found that employed youngsters with high work involvement have better psychological wellbeing than unemployed young individuals with high work involvement. Put it differently, having high work involvement had a deleterious impact on the psychological wellbeing of unemployed young individuals, and just the opposite was a matter for their employed peers.

In a more comprehensive manner, Feather and Davenport (1981) studied the relationship between work involvement, causal attribution of unemployment, expectation of success, motivation to seek work, and depressive affect. They recruited 212 unemployed youth who recently left to high school in a metropolitan city of Australia. They demonstrated that there was a positive correlation between depressive affect and confidence to find work, work involvement, job seek motivation and external attribution, but a negative relationship with internal attribution. In other words, individuals who were high in confidence, motivation to seek work, work involvement and external attribution but less in internal attribution were likely to show depressive affect.

Likewise, Jackson and Warr (1984) studied the predictor role of employment commitment on psychological ill-health of 954 unemployed individuals whose ages ranged between 16-59 years old. It was found that greater psychological distress was

associated with higher employment commitment. Additionally, Warr and Jackson (1985) designed a longitudinal study to eliminate the weaknesses arising out of cross-sectional designs. A group of unemployed men ( $n = 954$ ) was interviewed regarding psychological ill-health, reported health, employment commitment, job seeking, financial distress, social support (composed of emotional and financial support) at the beginning of the study. Those participants were re-interviewed 9 months later on same measurements. The initial employment commitment of continuously unemployed individuals negatively predicted their psychological ill-health, general health and physical health change, while a similar negative predictor role of employment commitment was not found within the reemployed group. In addition, continuously unemployed individuals' level of employment commitment shrunk between the initial and final assessment period.

In a similar vein, Nordenmark and Strandh (1999) claimed that latent benefits of work mentioned by Jahoda (1981) did not address the whole issue in mental wellbeing of unemployed individuals and draw attention to the need for inclusion of work involvement in explaining mental wellbeing. They argued that work involvement represented a psychosocial need for employment and had a predictive role. In order to assess their assertion, they randomly gathered data from nearly 3,500 individuals in Sweden. They found that the psychosocial need for employment was a stronger predictor of mental wellbeing of unemployed individuals.

More recently, Goldman-Mellor et al. (2016) examined the several work related perceptions and mental health of NEET young individuals at 18 years old in England drawing on data from the Environmental Risk (E-Risk) longitudinal study. They found that NEET young were more diligent in their job search and more committed to work but less optimistic about getting ahead in life than to their non-NEET peers. Additionally, even after controlling the previous mental health, NEET young individuals suffered from mental health problems.

In addition to being a predictor of psychological wellbeing, work involvement has also been studied within the context of job search motivation. For example, Sverko et al.

(2008) investigated the predictor role of a set of variables on the job search intensity and reemployment success. A three-wave longitudinal study was conducted with 1,138 unemployed individuals in Croatia. They found that employment commitment of unemployed individuals was the strongest predictor of the job search behavior of unemployed people. Similarly, Wanberg et al. (2010) proposed a framework that aimed to explain unemployed individuals' daily job search behavior. They obtained data from 263 unemployed persons spanned three weeks. The results of hierarchical regression analyses demonstrated that employment commitment positively predicted positive affect and the time spent in the job search.

Contrary to previously mentioned studies, other researchers documented that work involvement was not directly associated with the psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals but was directly related to job search motivation. For instance, in the study of Yılmaz (2002) work involvement was hypothesized as the predictor of job search motivation and psychological distress. However, it was shown that work involvement significantly predicted job search motivation but not psychological distress. Yılmaz argued that this result was inconsistent with the previous studies (Jackson et al., 1983; Wiener et al., 1999) and cross-cultural differences might be the possible reason for this inconsistency. Thus, in the present study it was expected that work involvement will be directly associated with job search motivation and indirectly related to NEETs' psychological well-being through job search motivation and employment hope.

### **2.3.7. Attribution of Unemployment**

Attribution can be concisely defined as one's perception of the causes of behavior, affect and expectancies of oneself or others (Kelley & Michela, 1980). Attributions are a significant area of interest within social psychology and have been the subject of many systematic investigations (Weiner, 2004). The attribution theory of Weiner (1985, 1986) asserted that internal attribution of failure (in the current context it is unemployment) is more likely to associate with depression and negative feelings. Additionally, to which sources individuals attribute determines individuals' emotions

and course of actions of individuals in each event (Weiner, 1985, 1986). From this standpoint, it was supposed that the causal attributions might be an explanatory factor in the reaction of unemployed individuals against unemployment (Feather, 1990; Winefield et al., 1993).

From the very point of the Learned Helplessness Theory (Abramson et al., 1978), individuals who attribute adverse outcomes to themselves are more likely to have decreased self-esteem and psychological wellbeing. On the other hand, if individuals justify their unsuccessful outcomes by external forces rather than internal qualities, they are less likely to be affected by the psychological outcomes of those unsuccessful outcomes. Based on this frame of reference, Winefield et al. (1993) maintained that unemployed young individuals who attribute failure to internal and stable factors and success to external and unstable things are more likely to be defenseless against depression. In a similar vein, some authors put forward that external attribution of unemployment might serve as a barrier against detrimental impacts of unemployment on mental health (Bergqvist, 2016; Furnham, 1994; Grimmer, 2016; Warr et al., 1988). On the other hand, it is also argued that external attribution unemployment might be coupled with anger and longer unemployment duration (Furnham, 1994).

In the context of youth unemployment, to which source young individuals attribute their unemployment status is central to how young individuals adapt themselves to labor market (Lowe et al., 1988). In addition, the long-lasting impact of unemployment might be thwarted by how unemployed individuals explain their reasons for unemployment (Furnham, 1984). Blaming oneself results in inertia while, blaming external factors leads to sustain motivation to the seek job. Likewise, it can be claimed that internal attributions are much associated with depression than external attributions. Contrary to this relationship, expectancy value theory posits that external attribution is related to depression (Furnham, 1984). Nevertheless, the dispute over the effect of attribution of unemployment on mental health is not settled.

The earliest contribution regarding attribution of unemployment and its relation with depression was done by Feather and Davenport (1981). They hypothesized that

unemployed individuals with higher motivation to seek job were more likely to show depressive affect. Additionally, they investigated the relationship between attribution of unemployment, valence of work and depressive affect. A total of 212 unemployed youths were recruited into the study in Australia. The results of the study demonstrated that unemployed youth who had higher depressive affect attributed their unemployment toward external factors and economical conditions and less likely to put blame on themselves. Additionally, they concluded that there was a need for longitudinal studies to generalize the findings. To fill this longitudinal study gap, Feather and O'Brien (1986) conducted a longitudinal study with a large sample size ( $n = 2976$ ) and monitored young individuals both in high school and after they left from 1980 to 1982. They found that unemployed young people were in decreased psychological wellbeing and they tended to attribute their unemployment status to external factors than lack of motivation and internal factors.

Winefield et al. (1987) hypothesized, drawn on reformulated learned helplessness theory, that unemployed young individuals who attribute to failure to internal and stable factors in finding employment were more likely to had lower self-esteem and higher depressive affect. Based upon this proposition, they examined the effects of attributional styles of unemployed and employed young individuals on their psychological wellbeing (i.e., self-esteem and depressive affect) using both cross-sectional and longitudinal data. Their results were inconsistent with the reformulated learned helplessness theory. According to the findings, how individuals attribute their unemployment status was not associated with their self-esteem and depressive affect scores. Even, young unemployed women with higher self-esteem scores shown more internal attributional style for their unemployment, which was in opposite to the theory.

Yılmaz (2002), hypothesized attributional styles as the predictor of job search motivation. However, neither internal attribution nor external attribution were demonstrated as significant predictors of job search motivation. It was claimed that Turkish unemployed individuals perceived themselves as having been motivated to seek job; attributional styles might not be an important factor in job search motivation.

Additionally, it was found that internal attribution was a negative predictor of psychological distress. In other words, unemployed individuals who attributed the reasons for their unemployment to internal factors were likely to be psychologically distressed.

In a recent attempt, Pultz et al. (2019) drawn attention to paucity in research regarding attribution of unemployment and subjective wellbeing. To address this gap, they designed a mixed methods study in which investigated the attribution styles of unemployed university graduates. They construed a scale in which 12 items (9 for internal attribution and 3 for external attribution) and asked participants (n = 357) to rate them. Additionally, they conducted in-depth interview with 33 participants and asked them to possible reasons of their unemployment. The quantitative analysis revealed that unemployed individuals were more likely to blame the system rather than blaming themselves. Qualitative analysis, however, depicted a more complicated picture regarding attribution of unemployment. All participants attended in-depth interview applied to both internal and external explanations in terms of their unemployment status. In some instances, self-blame was utilized as a protective factor, which demonstrated that unemployed individuals were still in control in their life. However, at other times, system-blame was also used to protect from the detrimental effects of being unemployment as claiming that the main responsible person for was not themselves. This study proved that internal (self-blame) and external (system-blame) attribution of unemployment were distinct constructs, while the relationship between internal and external attribution and psychological wellbeing was not straightforward.

However, at other times, system blame was also used to protect from the detrimental effects of being unemployed as claiming that the main responsible person was not themselves. This study proved that internal (self-blame) and external (system-blame) attribution of unemployment were distinct constructs, while the relationship between internal and external attribution and psychological wellbeing was not straightforward (Pultz et al., 2019).

Lastly, Baluku et al. (2021) asserted that locus of control and psychological capital (consists of self-efficacy, resilience and hope) serve as a cushion against the detrimental impact of unemployment on psychological wellbeing. They reported that while external locus of control was negatively associated with psychological wellbeing, internal locus of control and psychological capital positively related to psychological wellbeing.

Based on the studies cited above, it was expected that attributional styles of NEETs were directly associated with job search motivation and indirectly associated with psychological wellbeing through job search motivation.

### **2.3.8. Job Search Motivation**

Krumboltz and Worthington (1999) drawn attention to the need of expanding of career counseling efforts. Krumboltz (1993) established a potential list of domains which should be addressed by career counselors and job search motivation was listed as one of those concerns. In that conceptualization, job search motivation was defined as how individuals continue their job search in front of rejection. From a similar perspective, Van Hooft (2018) stated that one's own job search intention represents one's job search motivation. Thus, intent to seek work, job search motivation and job seeking were used interchangeably to evaluate their effects on psychological wellbeing.

There is a relatively small body of literature that is concerned with the relationship between psychological wellbeing and job search motivation. Feather and Davenport (1981), contributed to literature by designing one of the earlier studies regarding motivation to seek work along with other variables such as attributional styles, depressive affect and reemployment expectations. They found that, as mentioned above, unemployed youth with external attribution style, higher motivation to seek work, higher work involvement was more likely to have depressive affect. Similarly, Vinokur and Caplan (1987) conducted a longitudinal survey in which 297 unemployed individuals were assessed in terms of job seeking behavior and mental health. Results

indicated that one's intention to try hard for getting job was the main predictor of individuals' job seeking behavior.

Apart from these earlier studies, Vansteenkiste et al. (2004) and Vansteenkiste et al. (2005) conducted comprehensive studies on relationship among work involvement, job search motivation, employment hope and psychological wellbeing from the perspective of self-determination theory. Vansteenkiste et al. (2004) investigated why individuals seek employment and why individuals do not seek employment via two study. In the first study (n = 254), initially, job search regulation questionnaire (SRQ-JS) developed and validated and related constructs were studied in terms of subscales of SRQ-JS. In the next step, then, subscales of SRQ-JS (Motivation to search – autonomous motivation, controlled motivation and amotivation; Motivation not to search - autonomous motivation, controlled motivation) were tested as predictors of job search intensity, negative experience of unemployment, positive experience of unemployment, general health, and life satisfaction. Findings indicated that job commitment was positively and significantly correlated with autonomous and controlled motivation to job search and were negatively correlated with autonomous motivation not to job search. Expectation to find a job and job search optimism were positively associated with autonomous motivation to job search and were negatively associated with autonomous and controlled motivation not to job search. Furthermore, regression analyses results reported that controlled motivation and amotivation negatively predicted general health and life satisfaction. However, autonomous motivation to search was found significant predictors of general health and life satisfaction.

In the second study, the findings of study 1 were evaluated and self-actualization was additionally included. Similar to the findings of study 1, controlled motivation and amotivation to job search were determined as negative predictors of general health and life satisfaction (as an indicator of hedonic wellbeing) while autonomous motivation was not observed as significant predictors of them. Whereas controlled motivation to search and amotivation negatively predicted self-actualization (as an indicator of eudaimonic wellbeing), autonomous motivation to job search positively predicted self-

actualization. Consequently, it was concluded that having autonomous motivation to job search but not obtaining employment exposed unemployed individuals to somatic problems and dissatisfaction with life while autonomous motivation to job search bolstered unemployed individuals' eudaimonic wellbeing Vansteenkiste et al., 2004).

Vansteenkiste et al. (2005) emphasized that current unemployment rates call into designing theory-driven studies in order to develop effective policies and programs. They stated that most of the studies were rested on expectancy-value theory (i.e., employment value and expectation of finding a job) and any alternative models were not compared with this theory. To respond this need, they investigated the predictive strength of self-determination theory (i.e., autonomous and controlled motivation to job search) on job search intensity, negative experiences of being unemployed, life satisfaction and general mental health over and beyond the predictive strength of expectancy value theory (EVT). The first regression analysis results presented that employment value positively predicted job search intensity and negative experiences of being unemployed while negatively predicted mental health and life satisfaction. Second regression analysis result revealed that autonomous motivation to job search positively predicted job search behavior while controlled motivation to job search negatively predicted life satisfaction and psychological wellbeing. The third regression analysis, which was hierarchical analysis and included the variables of EVT and SDT were analyzed jointly, demonstrated that expectation to finding a job positively predicted general mental health and negatively predicted job search intensity while employment value negatively predicted general mental health and life satisfaction and positively predicted job search intensity. Over and beyond the employment value and job expectation, autonomous motivation to seek employment positively predicted job search intensity and mental health while controlled motivation to search of job negatively predicted life satisfaction and general mental health.

Contrary to abovementioned studies, other researchers failed to provide empirical evidence on the relationship between psychological wellbeing and job search motivation. For example, Yılmaz (2002) hypothesized job search motivation as the predictor of psychological wellbeing. Results showed that employment commitment

of individuals significantly and positively predicted job search motivation scores of participants. However, Yilmaz reported that job search motivation of unemployed Turkish individuals was not a significant predictor of psychological wellbeing.

Therefore, based on the aforementioned studies, it was expected that job search motivation was indirectly associated with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through employment hope.

#### **2.4. Summary of the Literature**

This section provided a brief overview of the research concerning psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals. Work is central to the lives of people and therefore, unemployment carries certain weights for psychological wellbeing of individuals who do not hold a paid job. Despite the ubiquity of unemployment, the extant published research has yet systematically investigated the predictors of psychological wellbeing of unemployed persons by drawing on a taxonomy and direct and indirect relationships. A large and growing body of literature has shown that personal resources (i.e., self-esteem, self-efficacy and employment hope), social resources (overall social support, social support from friends, social support from family and social support from significant others) and work resources (i.e., work involvement, attribution of unemployment and job search motivation) were linked with psychological wellbeing of young unemployed persons to some extent. Although there is a tendency towards a preference for examining the personal resources as a unitary construct, it has been also maintained that self-esteem, self-efficacy and hope function differently. Specifically, the mediator role of employment hope between the predictor variables and psychological wellbeing has been emphasized in the context of unemployment. From a similar perspective, the important role of social support has always been taken into account in the studies of psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals. More recently, however, there has been a surge of interest in different sources of social support (i.e., family, friends and significant others) instead of merely considering overall social support. Lastly, previous research lends empirical support to the relationship between work resources and psychological wellbeing, but

research investigating these relationships produced equivocal results in Turkish context.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHOD**

This chapter covers the methodology utilized in the study. Firstly, the research design was described. The second part includes the participants and sampling. In the third section, the instruments utilized in the present study were explained. The procedure was presented in the fourth section. Finally, the statistical analysis and the limitations of the study were explained.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

The present study aimed to investigate the direct and indirect relationships between several variables and psychological wellbeing of university graduate NEETs. Specifically, personal resources (i.e., self-esteem, self-efficacy and employment hope), social support resources (i.e., overall social support, social support from family, social support from friends and social support from significant others) and work resources (i.e., work involvement, attribution of unemployment and job search motivation) were examined as potential predictors of psychological wellbeing. As the primary purpose was to reveal the predictive strength of independent variables on the dependent variable and not to establish any cause-and-effect relationship between independent and dependent variables at one time, a correlational research design was used (Fraenkel et al., 2012; Shaughnessy et al., 2012). In order to analyze the data, descriptive and inferential statistics were run by IBM Statistical Packages of Social Sciences (SPSS) 24 and STATA 16.

### 3.2. Participants and Sampling

The criteria for inclusion in this study were the participants' educational status, and employment status. Emerging adults in Turkey who were currently unemployed and were not enrolled in any educational institution or training program and had at least a bachelor's degree constituted the accessible population of this study. The snowball and purposive sampling method was used for reaching out to the participants, and data for the study were collected from July 1 through September 1, 2020.

A total of 305 participants completed the survey. Fourteen participants were removed from the sample owing to being multivariate outliers. The final study sample consisted of 291 NEETs (215 female and 76 male) with an age range of 21 to 29 years ( $M = 24.12$ ,  $SD = 1.53$ ). As it was seen, the sex ratio of participants was nearly 3 (female) to 1 (male). At first blush, it can be argued that the results of this study cannot be generalized. However, a possible counterargument to this claim might be that the ratio of males to females in this study to some extent represented the NEET population in Turkey. As evident in the recent report of ILO on the NEET youth in Turkey, there is a huge gap between rate of NEET youth men (17.3%) and women (44.7%) in Turkey (see ILO, 2021b).

A rule of thumb for sample size was revealed that 100 participants were adequate for generalization of the path analysis results with structural equation modeling (Hair et al., 2019; Keith, 2019). The total spell of unemployment of NEETs varied between less than 1 month and 60 months ( $M = 12$ ,  $SD = 11.33$ ) for their graduation. The CGPA scores of participants ranged from 2.05 and 3.94 ( $M = 2.97$ ,  $SD = .39$ ). An overwhelming majority of NEETs (88.3%) stayed with their parents, 8 (2.7%) of them lived with their friends, 3 (1%) of them resided in a dormitory, and 23 (7.9%) marked other options for their living arrangements. Most of the participants had two siblings (44%), others had three siblings (89, 30.6%), four siblings (40, 13.7%) or five or more siblings (21, 6.9%). A total of 14 (4.8%) participants were single child. Most of the participants' mothers were unemployed/housewives (72.5%). Others were 23 (7.9%) civil servants, 23 (7.9%) private sector employees, 26 (8.9) retired, and 8 (2.7%) self-employed. The 43% of participants' fathers were retired, 52 (17.9%) civil servants, 50

(17.2%) self-employed, and 48 (16.5%) private sector employees. A total of 16 (5.5%) fathers was unemployed.

In Table 3.1, demographic characteristics of participants including, age, gender, total duration of unemployment, job history, GPA, living arrangements, employment status of parents, and siblings were provided.

Table 3.1

<i>Description of Demographic Variables in NEET Sample</i>				
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Age	24.12	1.53		
Gender				
Female			215	73.9
Male			76	26.1
Total spells of unemployment (month)	12	11.33		
Job History				
Yes			58	19.9
No			233	80.1
GPA	2.97	.39		
Living arrangements				
With families			257	88.3
In a dormitory			3	1.0
With flat-mates			8	2.7
Other			23	7.9
Siblings				
Single child			14	4.8
Two siblings			128	44.0
Three siblings			89	30.6
Four siblings			40	13.7
Five or more siblings			20	6.9
Occupational status of father				
Unemployed			16	5.5

Table 3.1 (cont'd)

Civil servant	52	17.9
Private sector employee	48	16.5
Self-employed	50	17.2
Retired	125	43.0
Occupational status of mother		
Unemployed/housewife	211	72.5
Civil servant	23	7.9
Private sector employee	23	7.9
Self-employed	8	2.7
Retired	26	8.9

### 3.3. Data Collection Instruments

In the present study, a demographic information form, Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2009), Employment Hope Scale (Hong et al., 2012), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al., 1988), Work Involvement Scale (Warr et al., 1979), Attribution of Unemployment Scale (Feather & Davenport, 1981) and Job Search Motivation Scale (Feather & Davenport, 1981) were administered to the participants via an online form.

#### 3.3.1. Demographic Information Form

A demographic information form was developed by the researcher and used to obtain general information about participants, which composed of questions about participants' age, gender, total duration of unemployment, job history, GPA, place of residence, siblings and parental occupation status.

#### 3.3.2. Flourishing Scale (FS)

In the current study, the psychological wellbeing of participants was measured by the Flourishing Scale. Diener et al. (2009), initially developed a brief wellbeing scale in order to measure the psychosocial functioning of individuals and named it as

Psychological Wellbeing Scale (PWB). Subsequently, the same group of authors renamed it as “Flourishing Scale” due to the fact that flourishing is well corresponding to the core part of this scale (Diener et al., 2010). The scale is constituted of 8 items which was associated with having purpose and meaning, having supportive relationships, being engaged, contributing to others, being competent, being a good person, being optimistic, being respected. A sample item from the Flourishing Scale is “I am engaged and interested in my daily activities.” Participants were asked to indicate how strongly they agree with the each given item on a 7-point scale (“1-Strongly disagree”, “7-Strongly agree”). All items phrased in a positive manner; the minimum and maximum scores range from 8 to 56. Higher scores indicate positive perception in various domains of psychosocial functioning. It has one factor structure and accounted for the 53% of the variance. The factor loadings of items varied from .61 to .77 and Cronbach’s Alpha of the scale was found .87. Rather than providing assessment of individuals’ psychological wellbeing across several sub-domain (e.g., meaning, growth), Flourishing Scale provides overall assessment of individuals’ wellbeing. Additionally, as Su et al. (2014) stated, Flourishing Scale composed of items which reflect multidimensional aspects of psychological wellbeing.

Both Telef (2013) and Şenol-Durak and Durak (2019) adapted Flourishing Scale into Turkish. Telef (2013) conducted a study with 529 university students. The exploratory factor analysis results showed that 42% of the total variance explained by one factor. The factor loadings of items were ranged between .54 and .76. Cronbach’s Alpha value was .80. Şenol Durak and Durak (2019) also conducted the reliability and validity study of the measure in Turkey in a sample comprised of students ( $n = 320$ ) and employees ( $n = 180$ ). Confirmatory factor analysis results showed that the Turkish version of the scale had a one factor structure as in the original form. The measure also yielded an adequate Cronbach’s Alpha value for both samples as .86 for students and .89 for employees. In the current study, the Turkish version of Telef (2013) was utilized as there are substantial empirical studies supporting the psychometric properties of the FS.

### 3.3.2.1. Psychometric Properties of the Flourishing Scale (FS) in the Current Study

The construct validity of the FS was analyzed by confirmatory factor analysis. One factor structure of the scale was validated with a good fit statistics [ $\chi^2(17) = 25.962$ ;  $p > .05$ ; RMSEA = .043 (.000, .074),  $p > .05$ ; CFI = .986; TLI = .976; SRMR = .035] (see Figure 3.1). The factor loadings ranged between .46 and .72. Additionally, Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient was .82 and McDonald's omega was ( $\omega$ ) .82 ( $n = 291$ ).

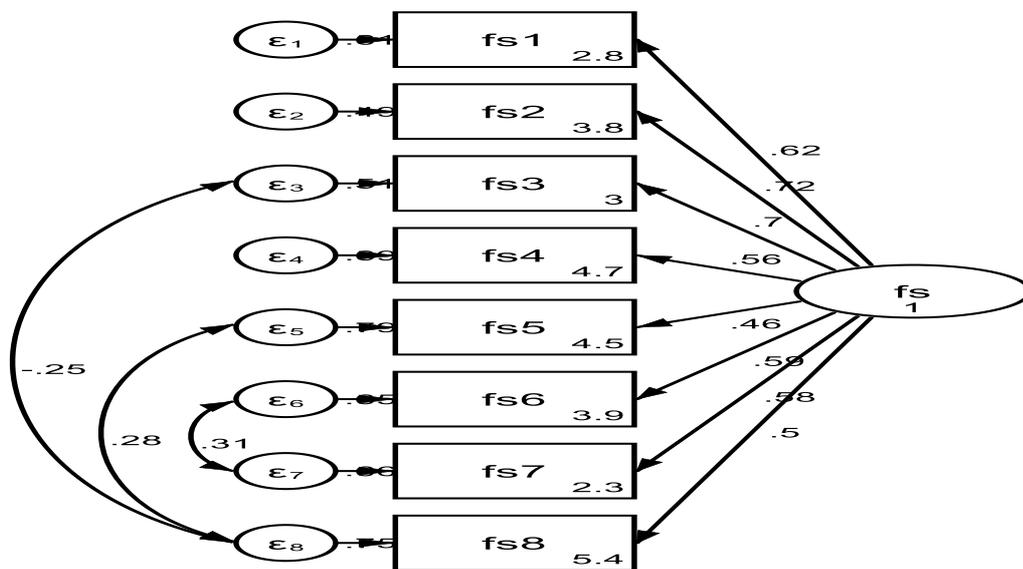


Figure 3.1

*One Factor CFA Model of Flourishing Scale with Standardized Estimates*

### 3.3.3. Employment Hope Scale (EHS-14)

In the present study, participants' hope for holding a job was measured by using the short form of Employment Hope Scale (EHS-14). EHS was originally developed by Hong et al. (2009) as a 24-item with six components to measure hope in employment context for low-income jobseekers. During the validation study of Hong et al. (2012) an exploratory factor analysis was used and 14 items-short form of EHS with two components were validated. However, later, a multisample confirmatory factor analysis (Hong et al., 2014) revealed that a 14-items EHS that has four factors is a

robust and a reliable measure of employment hope. The EHS-14 with four factors have been verified in both America and Korea and has been shown as reliable and valid measure in a cross-cultural setting. The overall Cronbach's alpha was .93 (Hong et al., 2016). In EHS-14 respondents are required to indicate the extent to which they agree with each item on an 11-point scale (sample item: "I am capable of working in a good job"; "0- Strongly disagree", "10-Strongly agree"). A total sum score of scale is calculated and scores range between 0 and 140. Higher scores indicate more employment hope. EHS-14 with two factors has been adapted into Turkish by Akın et al. (2013). The confirmatory factor analysis results showed that Turkish translated version of the EHS-14 is both valid and reliable measure. Furthermore, the Cronbach's coefficient for the reliability of the scale was found .93.

### **3.3.3.1. Psychometric Properties of the Employment Hope Scale (EHS) in the Current Study**

In the current study, the construct validity of the EHS-14 was analyzed by confirmatory factor analysis. With slight modifications confirmatory factor analysis results indicated that goodness-of-fit statistics of employment hope scale were good [ $\chi^2(71) = 268.533; p < .05$ ; RMSEA = .098 (.086, .111),  $p < .05$ ; CFI = .925; TLI = .904; SRMR = .056], corroborating the 2-factor structure of the scale (see Figure 3.2). The factor loadings of psychological empowerment subscale were all high and ranging between .64 and .83. Additionally, Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient was calculated as .80 and McDonald's omega was ( $\omega$ ) .81 for the present study ( $n = 291$ ). The factor loadings of goal-oriented pathway were all high and ranging between .62 and .81. Furthermore, Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient and McDonald's omega ( $\omega$ ) for the present study ( $n = 291$ ) were as follows .92 and .93. Moreover, the factor loadings of the scale as a whole were all high and ranging between .58 and .81. In addition, Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient was found .93 and McDonald's omega was found ( $\omega$ ) .93 for the present study ( $n = 291$ ).

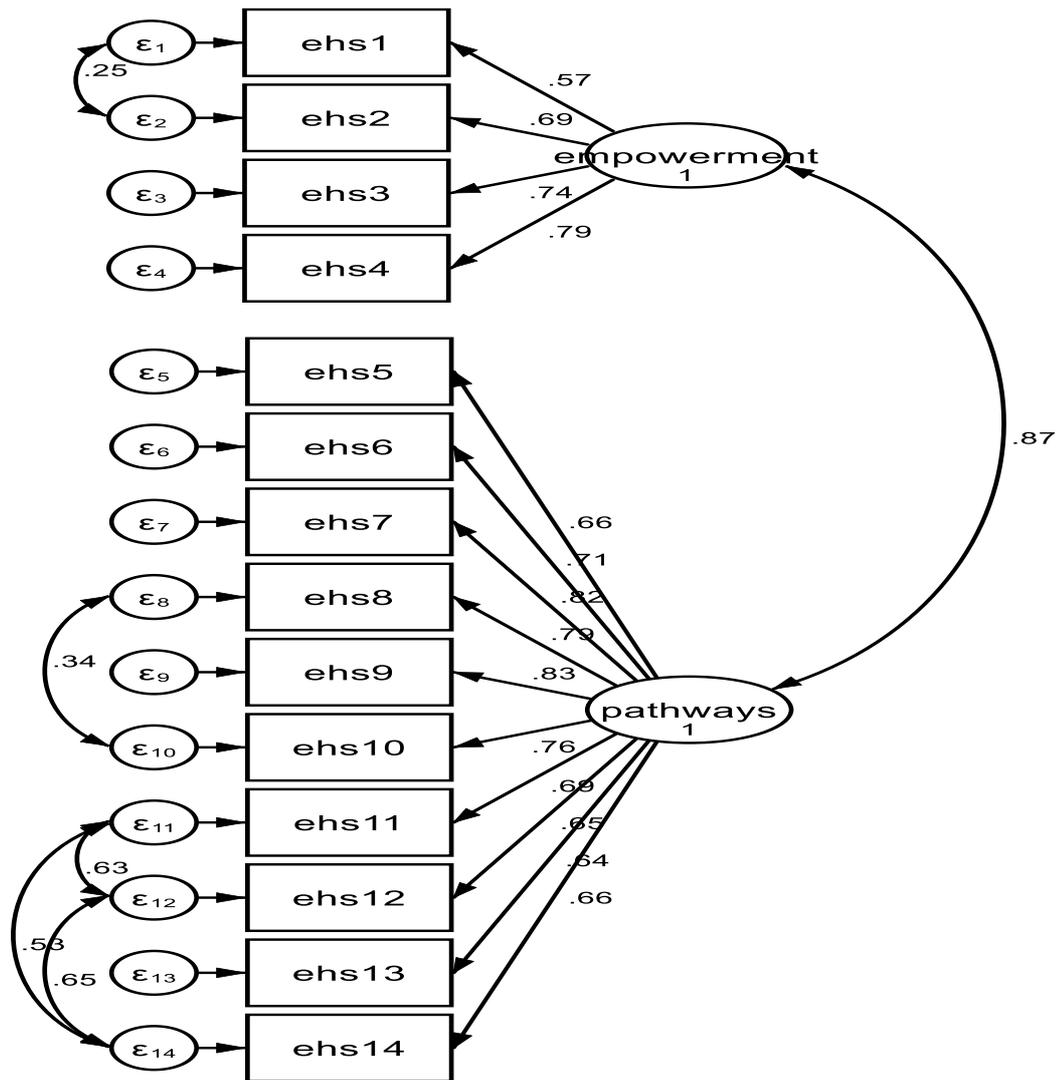


Figure 3.2

*Two Factor CFA Model of Employment Hope Scale with Standardized Estimates*

### 3.3.4. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE)

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used to measure participants' self-esteem. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was originally developed by Rosenberg (1965) as 10-items scale with five positive items and five negative items as an indication of one's self-esteem. A sample item from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is "I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others." For each of the items, the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree on a 4-points scale ranging 1 ("strongly disagree") to 4 ("strongly disagree"). The adaption study of

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale into Turkish was performed by Çuhadaroğlu (1986) and test-retest reliability was found .75. No subscales were available for this instrument, and thus a sum score was utilized. Self-esteem scores were calculated by summing all 10 items, and the range of scores was from 10 to 40. Higher scores indicate high self-esteem.

### 3.3.4.1. Psychometric Properties of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) in the Current Study

One factor structure of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was examined by confirmatory factor analysis in the current study. Confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated that fit indices of the model were good with slight modifications [ $\chi^2(31) = 111.970$ ;  $p < .05$ ; RMSEA = .095 (.076, .114),  $p > .05$ ; CFI = .944; TLI = .919; SRMR = .069] and validating the one factor structure of the scale (see Figure 3.3). The factor loadings of items were ranging between .38 and .83. Additionally, Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient was found .88 and McDonald's omega ( $\omega$ ) was found .88 for the present study ( $n = 291$ ).

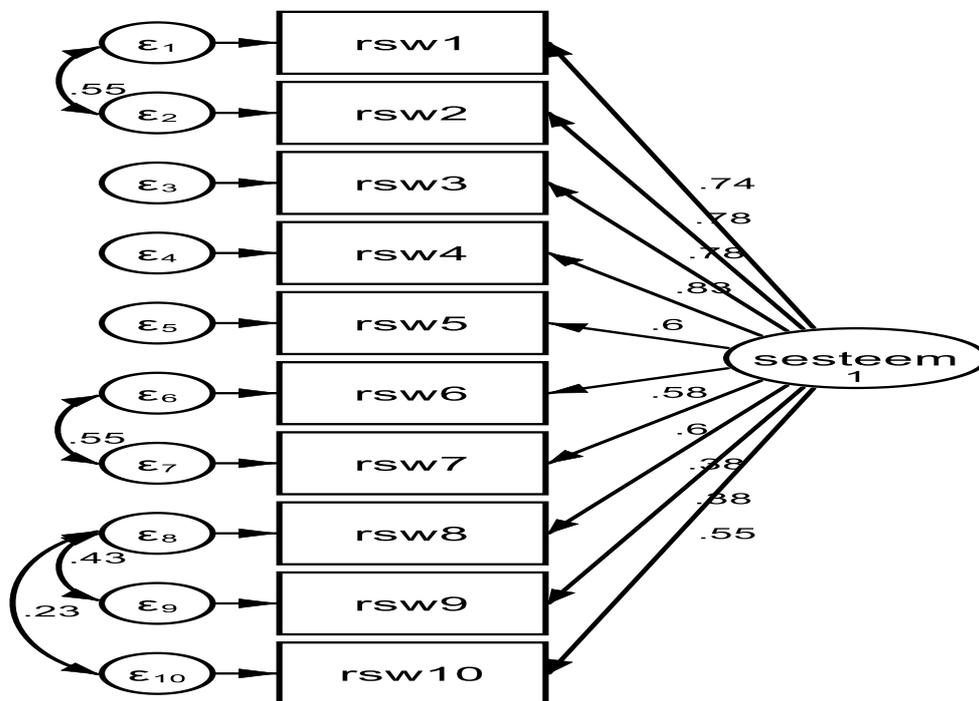


Figure 3.3

*One Factor CFA Model of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale with Standardized Estimates*

### 3.3.5. General Self-Efficacy Scale

Participant’s general self-efficacy was assessed by General Self Efficacy Scale (GSE) developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995) as a 10-item scale. A sample item from the General Self-Efficacy Scale is “When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.” Responses to these items were based on 4-points scale ranging 1 (“Not at all true”) to 4 (“Exactly true”). In the German samples, the Cronbach’s alpha value ranged from .82 to .93. GSE was adapted into Turkish by Aypay (2010) with a good internal reliability ( $\alpha = .83$ ). Sum score of all 10 items yields the final composite score with a range from 10 to 40, which higher scores point out higher self-efficacy beliefs.

#### 3.3.5.1. Psychometric Properties of the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) in the Current Study

A confirmatory factor analysis was run to test the one factor structure of the scale. The results showed a good fit indices for one factor structure of General Self-Efficacy Scale with slight modifications [ $\chi^2(34) = 105.618; p < .05$ ; RMSEA = .085 (.067, .104),  $p < .05$ ; CFI = .959; TLI = .946; SRMR = .038] (see Figure 3.4). The factor loadings of items were between .70 and .83. Additionally, Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient was found .93 and McDonald’s omega ( $\omega$ ) was found .93 for the present study ( $n = 291$ ).

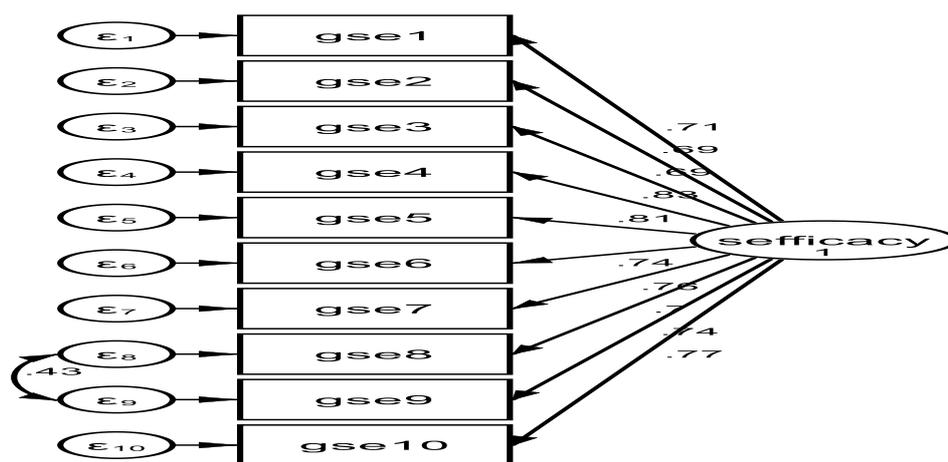


Figure 3.4

*One Factor CFA Model of General Self-Efficacy Scale with Standardized Estimates*

### **3.3.6. Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)**

In order to measure social support, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) was administered (Zimet et al., 1988) to the participants. The MSPSS is a 12 item, self-report inventory designed to assess the degree to which participants derive social support from different sources. These sources are family, friends and significant others. Each of these subscales consisted of four items. Responses to these items were based on a seven-point scale ranging (e.g., “I can count on my friends when things go wrong”; “1-Very strongly disagree”, “7-Very strongly agree”). The initial study of development of MSPSS was conducted within a homogenous university sample (Zimet et al., 1988). A further study was carried out with a heterogeneous sample for validation study and revealed a robust and psychometrically sound factorial structure (Zimet et al., 1990). The Cronbach’s coefficient alpha for family, friends, significant others and the scale as a whole were ranging from .87, .85, .91 and .88, respectively (Zimet et al, 1998; Zimet et al, 1990).

The MSPSS was initially adapted into the Turkish context by Eker and Arkar (1995) and demonstrated good internal reliability across different samples (e.g., university students and psychiatric patients etc.). Due to the fact that several concerns were aroused related to the term of significant others, Eker et al. (2001) undertook a further study with revised version of significant others’ items to avoid any ambiguity. They clarified the term of significant ones by adding flirt, fiancée, neighbor and doctor to significant ones in parenthesis. Their study showed psychometrically sound and similar factorial structure. In order to establish the cross-cultural validation and psychometric properties of MSPSS, a further step was taken by Duru (2007). In line with the recommendation of Eker et al. (2001), they performed a confirmatory factor analysis with a university sample and the study results revealed that the three-factor model of perceived social support had a good fit. The internal reliability of Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was .85 for family subscale, .88 for friend support, .90 for significant others, and .87 for the overall scale (Duru, 2007).

### 3.3.6.1. Psychometric Properties of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) in the Current Study

In the present study, to test the three-factor structure of Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, confirmatory factor analysis was carried out. The findings pointed out that three factor structure of the model was valid with good fit statistics [ $\chi^2(50) = 172.644; p < .05$ ; RMSEA = .092 (.077, .107),  $p < .05$ ; CFI = .967; TLI = .956; SRMR = .038] (see Figure 3.5). The factor loadings of the family subscale were varied between .78 and .89. The Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient (.91) and McDonald's omega (.91) ( $n = 291$ ) were satisfactory. The factor loadings of friends subscale were between .81 and .88. Additionally, Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient and McDonald's omega values were .91 and .92, respectively ( $n = 291$ ). The factor loadings of significant one subscale was ranging between .90 and .97. Furthermore, Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient and McDonald's omega values of friend' sub-scale were .98, and .98, respectively ( $n = 291$ ). Lastly, the factor loadings of scale as a whole were all high and ranging between .76 and .99. The Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient and McDonald's omega values were calculated as .89 ( $n = 291$ ).

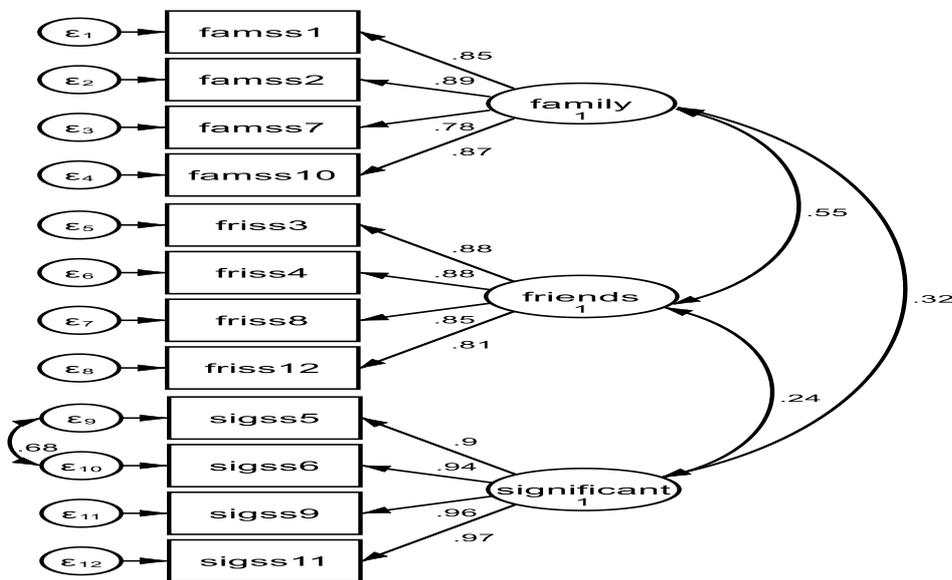


Figure 3.5

*Three Factor CFA Model of Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support with Standardized Estimates*

### **3.3.7. Work Involvement Scale**

In the present study, the work involvement of participants was evaluated by utilizing the Work Involvement Scale. Warr et al. (1979) conceptualized work involvement as to the extent an individual attaches importance to getting involved in work. At this point, researchers draw our attention to the difference between job and work involvement. They argued that job involvement generally refers to one's intrinsic motivation to be engaged in his/her current job, whereas work involvement points to one's global evaluation of work in general. In order to assess work involvement Warr et al. (1979) developed a seven-point scale consisting of six items for employed individuals (e.g., "Having a job is very important to me"). Test-retest reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values were found .56 and .64, respectively. Stafford et al. (1980) created two parallel forms of Work Involvement Scale to be used with both employed and unemployed samples with a slight rewording of items to be understood by individuals with low education attainment. Different from the form of Warr et al. (1979) they used a five-point scale to obtain responses rather than a seven-point scale. Warr and Jackson (1985) also added two items to the initial scale, and then eight items scale was obtained.

Yılmaz and Bilgiç (2009) translated the Work Involvement scale with six items into the Turkish and conducted a pilot study with 180 unemployed individuals to assess the reliability of the Turkish version of the work motivation scale. They found that Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was .80 and item total correlations varied between .46 and .65.

In the current study, participants were asked to indicate how strongly they agree with each given item on a 5-point scale ("1-Strongly disagree", "5-Strongly agree"). The sum score of all 6 items composed of the final composite score that ranged from 6 to 30, which higher scores point out higher self-efficacy beliefs.

### 3.3.7.1. Psychometric Properties of the Work Involvement Scale (WIS) in the Current Study

The model of Work Involvement Scale with one factor was investigated by a confirmatory factor analysis in the present study. Having done minor alterations, confirmatory factor analysis finding illustrated good fit indices for one factor structure [ $\chi^2(7) = 16.841; p < .05; RMSEA = .070 (.027, .113), p > .05; CFI = .971; TLI = .938; SRMR = .034$ ] (see Figure 3.6). The factor loadings were all high ( $> .30$ ) and ranging between .42 and .72. Additionally, Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient was found .73 and McDonald's omega was calculated as ( $\omega$ ) .75, ( $n = 291$ ).

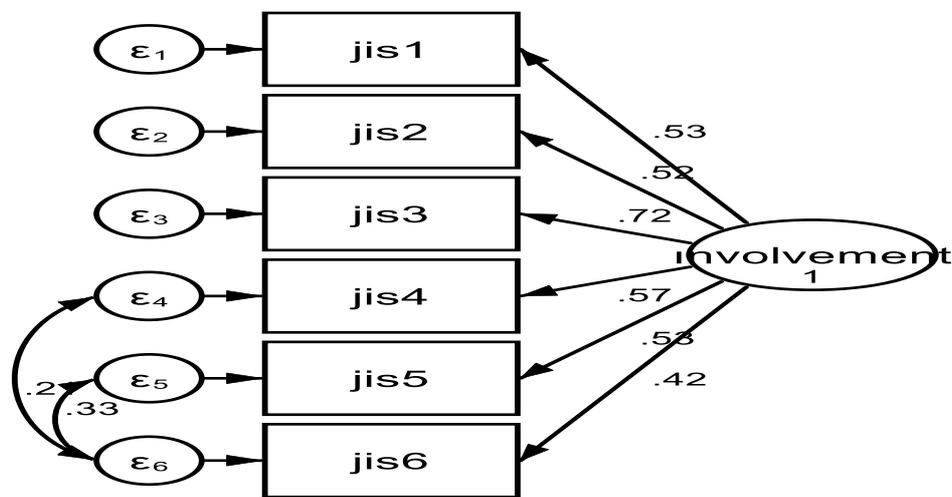


Figure 3.6

*One Factor CFA Model of Work Involvement Scale with Standardized Estimates*

### 3.3.8. Attribution of Unemployment Scale

Attribution of their unemployment reasons of unemployed Turkish youth in the present study was assessed by Attribution of Unemployment Scale. The attribution style of unemployment used by unemployed individuals is an important determinant on well-being. Twenty-eight attribution items listed by Feather and Davenport (1981) were found related to low well-being of unemployed individuals. The results of Principal Component Analysis showed that only four items were used for external difficulties and the other four items used for competency deficits. In a later study, Feather and

O'Brien (1986) presented 21 items for causal attributions of unemployment and found 5 factors for attribution of unemployment

Initial 28 items of attribution of unemployment were adapted to Turkish by Yılmaz and Bilgiç (2009) and 24 items from the original form were identified as appropriate for Turkish culture. This adapted form consisted of two subscales named Internal Attribution (18 items; sample item: “lack of specific skills”) and External Attribution (6 items; sample item: “failure of private industry to offer enough jobs”). They found that each subscale has proper internal consistency reliability coefficient (.86 for Internal Attribution and .73 for External Attribution). In a subsequent study, Yılmaz (2002) extracted one more item from the internal attribution subscale and measured internal attribution with 17 items. Similar to the previous study, Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient for internal attribution was .85 and for external attribution was .71.

In the current study, participants were asked to indicate how strongly they agree with each given item on a 5-point scale (“1-Strongly disagree”, “5-Strongly agree”). The sum score of 6 items for external attribution items yields the final composite score with a range from 6 to 30, which higher scores point out higher external attribution. Similarly, a sum score of 17 items for internal attribution items yields a final composite score with a range from 17 to 85, which higher scores point out higher internal attribution for the reasons of unemployment.

### **3.3.8.1. Psychometric Properties of the Attribution of Unemployment Scale (AUS) in the Current Study**

A confirmatory factor analysis was run so as to examine the two-factor structure of the Job Search Motivation Scale. After providing modest modifications, two factor structure of the model yielded good fit statistics [ $\chi^2(214) = 424.530; p < .001; RMSEA = .058 (.050, .066), p < .05; CFI = .911; TLI = .894; SRMR = .076$ ] (see Figure 3.7). The factor loadings of internal attribution of unemployment subscale were almost high and ranging between .10 and .74. Additionally, Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient was found .87 and McDonald's omega was found ( $\omega$ ) .87 for the present study ( $n = 291$ ). The factor loadings of external attribution of unemployment were

almost high, significant ( $p < .001$ ) and ranging between .28 and .72. In addition, Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient was .72 and McDonald's omega was ( $\omega$ ) .76 for the present study ( $n = 291$ ).

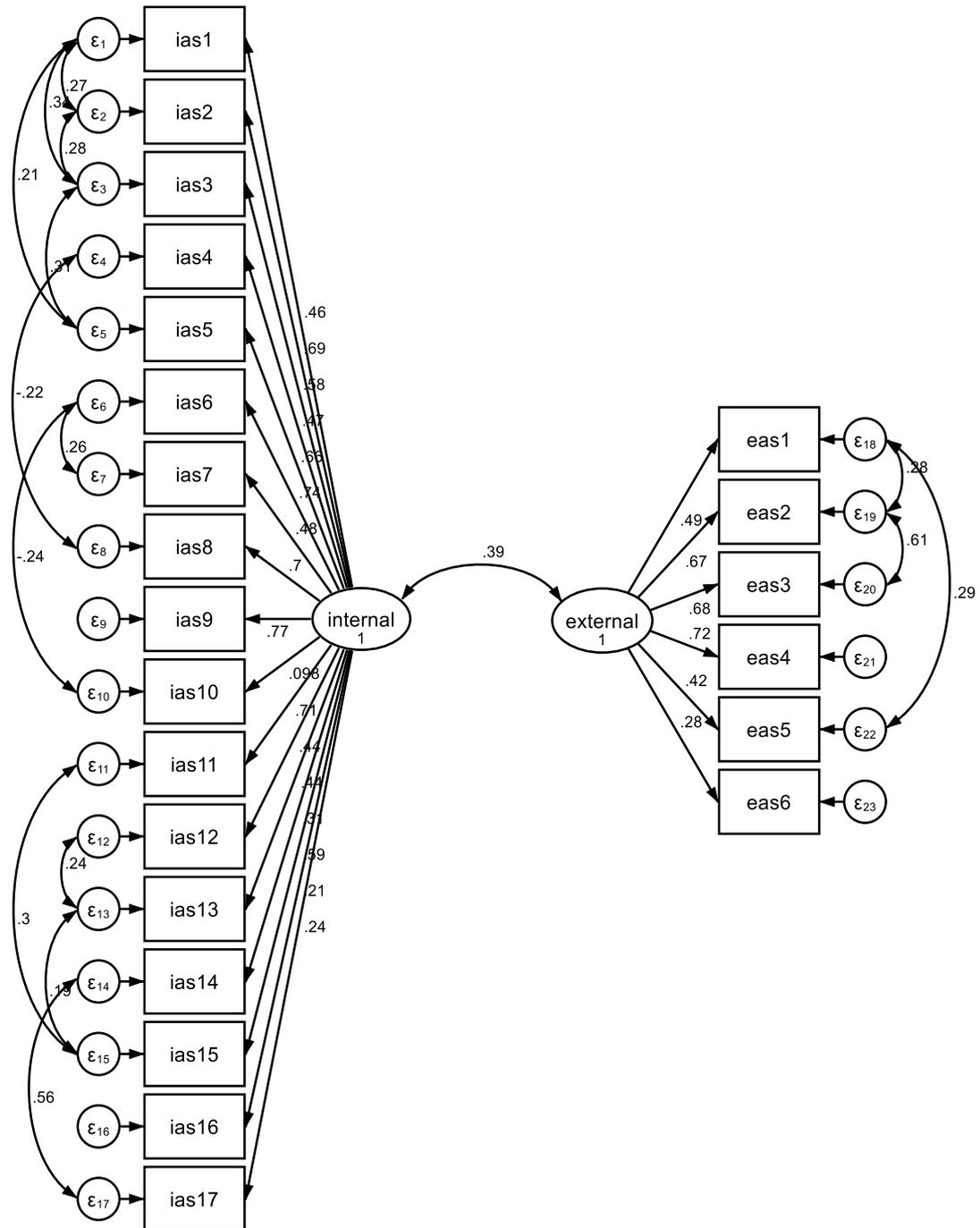


Figure 3.7

*Two Factor CFA Model of Attribution Unemployment Scale with Standardized Estimates*

### **3.3.9. Job Search Motivation**

Job Search Motivation Scale was employed to assess participants' motivation of seeking employment. There are four items, which are responded using 5-point Likert type scale. The scale was developed by Feather and Davenport (1981). The items classified into mainly two categories: effort for seeking employment and need for employment. A sample item from the scale is "How hard would you say you are trying now to get a job?" The authors regarded each item as a different construct rather than a unitary construct and found that inter-correlations between items ranged from .13 to .31.

Yılmaz and Bilgiç (2009) translated the job search motivation scale into the Turkish and made minor corrections to adjust with Turkish context. They corrected effort items like that: "How hard would you say you tried to get a job immediately after leaving school or accomplishing the military service?" and "How much did you want a job when you first left school or accomplishing the military service?". Then, they conducted a pilot study with 170 unemployed individuals to assess the reliability of the Turkish version of the work motivation scale. Rather than regarding items as separate constructs, Yılmaz and Bilgiç (2009) obtained a single job search motivation score by calculating the mean score of all items. The calculated mean score of job search motivation ranged between 1 and 5. The higher job search motivation score indicated that individuals had more motivated to seek employment. They found that Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was .67 and item total correlations varied between .42 and .53.

In the current study, participants were asked to indicate how strongly they agree with each given item on a 5-point scale ("1-Strongly disagree", "5-Strongly agree"). Sum score of all 4 items yields the final composite score with a range from 4 to 20, which higher scores indicate higher self-efficacy beliefs.

### 3.3.9.1. Psychometric Properties of the Job Search Motivation Scale (JSMS) in the Current Study

To examine the one factor structure of the Job Search Motivation Scale, a confirmatory factor analysis was carried out in the current study. The result of confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated that that goodness of fit statistics of job search motivation scale were good [ $\chi^2(2) = 4.074$ ;  $p > .05$ ; RMSEA = .060 (.000, .144),  $p > .05$ ; CFI = .990; TLI = .969; SRMR = .024] (see Figure 3.8). The factor loadings were ranging between .53 and .77. Furthermore, Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) reliability coefficient was found .69 and McDonald's omega was found ( $\omega$ ) .71 for the present study ( $n = 291$ ).

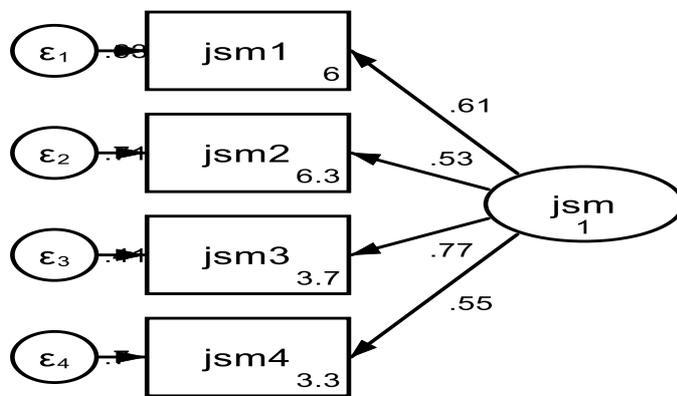


Figure 3.8

*One Factor CFA Model of Job Search Motivation Scale with Standardized Estimates*

### 3.4. Procedure

Upon obtaining the approval of Middle East Technical University, Human Subjects Ethical Committee, measures were employed by using a LimeSurvey between July 2020 and September 2020 to unemployed youth in Turkey. Snowball sampling was utilized in the study. Firstly, the researcher contacted a group of unemployed young individuals via email and sent an invitation to participate in the survey. Secondly, the researcher requested the first group of survey participants to invite their unemployed friends to participate in the study. Thirdly, when the first group participants received their friends' approval, they either sent a survey link to their unemployed friends via email or sent their friends' email addresses to the researcher. This procedure was repeated with the second and third groups of participants as well. University graduates

who were unemployed and not enrolled in a degree program and wanted to participate in the study received an email explaining the aim and the procedure of the study and the LimeSurvey link. Participants who opened the survey were introduced with the aim of the study, and informed consent was obtained by asking them to click a button (“Yes”) to signify their voluntary agreement to participate. After indicating their consent, in the following sections of the survey, the study instruments opened one by one in each page. On average, the survey took approximately 7-15 minutes to complete. Participants did not receive any reward.

### **3.5. Statistical Analysis**

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were carried out by IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 24) program and STATA 16. Initially, a series of descriptive statistics were performed in order to determine missing values, out of range values, means and standard deviations for study variables and demographic information. Secondly, after checking any violation of assumptions (e.g., homogeneity of variances, normal distribution of dependent variable data), an independent sample t-test was performed to test the gender differences in psychological wellbeing scores. Lastly, as a main analysis, upon checking the required assumptions (e.g., multicollinearity, homoscedasticity and linearity) for any violation, two path analyses were carried out to investigate the direct and indirect effects of personal, social and work-related resources on psychological wellbeing of NEET in Turkey.

### **3.6. Limitations of the Study**

Each study has its own limitations and weaknesses and this study is not an exception in that regard. The specific characteristic of NEETs, which is being out of education and employment, constitutes a hard to-reach-group at increased risk for deteriorating wellbeing. Coronavirus pandemic had added further limitations to reach out this group and prohibited researcher from data collection via face-to-face and in paper-pencil format. Consequently, the only way of surmounting of this obstacle was online data collection. However, some studies (e.g., Blau et al., 2013) have shown that online data collection process might be as reliable as face-to-face data collection. In addition,

including questions regarding age, employment status, graduation year and total unemployment duration, inclusion criteria were ensured.

Snowball sampling was utilized to collect data and therefore this method might be resulted in a biased sample that might not be the representative of population. For instance, the difference homogeneity of fathers and mothers of participants in terms of occupational status in the study might be a result of snowball sampling. Besides, as approximately half of the fathers of participants were retired and three-fourths of the mothers of participants were housewives, it is possible that the results of the study may not be generalizable to a broader range of university graduate NEETs from other SES levels in Turkey. However, it was aimed to reach as much various participants with different background as to eliminate this drawback of snowball sampling.

Although the data had been obtained during the normalization process after 4 months of lockdown, it cannot be asserted that the bleak picture of Covid-19 pandemic has no impact upon the psychological wellbeing of unemployed youths. The general depressing situation and economic situation in which possible job opportunities might decrease have influenced NEET's psychological wellbeing in terms of their employment prospect and their life in general. Thus, this might have influenced the results.

The last limitation of the research is that it is drawn on self-report instruments. Relying on self-report measurement might lead to bias due to the shortcoming of using self-report measures (Baumeister et al., 2003). However, it can be reasonably argued that how one perceives oneself and one's own situation prevail upon the objective realities.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

Chapter 4 outlined the results of the statistical analysis regarding the research question. Firstly, preliminary analyses, descriptive statistics and correlations were presented. Then, the results of the independent sample t-test were showed. Lastly, the assumption checks, and results of the path analyses were demonstrated.

#### 4.1. Preliminary Analyses

##### 4.1.1. Sample Size

Power analysis was conducted to determine the sample size required for obtaining power of .80 with an alpha of  $p = .05$  via G\*Power v.3.1.9.7. A sample size of 187 participants for the goodness of fit tests with 11 degrees of freedom required for .80 power with a moderate effect size (i.e.,  $f^2 = .15$  and  $w = .30$ ) (Faul et al., 2009). While Kline (2016) put forward that at least 200 cases are necessary for running SEM, Hair et al. proposed that sample sizes greater than 100 observations is preferable. According to a rule of thumb, the ratio of participant to the number of estimated parameters is 10:1 (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2016) and even 5:1 is accepted by some researchers (Schermeleh-Engel et al., 2003). As the number of parameters to be estimated is 27 for hypothesized model 2, a sample size of 270 is adequate for running a SEM analysis for this model. Thus, in the present study, the sample of 291 university graduate NEET was adequate to carry out path analysis.

#### **4.1.2. Assumption Check for Path Analysis**

Initially, data were screened for any missing values and out of range entry. There was not any missing data and out-of-range entry. Then, before conducting path analysis, univariate outliers, linearity, multivariate outliers, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, independence of errors and normality of errors which are the relevant assumptions of path analysis were checked (Cohen et al., 2003; Field, 2018; Hair et al., 2019; Ho, 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014).

##### **4.1.2.1. Normality, Univariate and Multivariate Outliers**

Firstly, z-scores for each variable were computed to detect univariate outliers. Three z-values for psychological wellbeing, 4 z-values for job search motivation, 6 z-values for work involvement, 6 z-values for external attribution, 1 z-values for employment hope, 2 z-values for social support from friends, 1 z-values for self-esteem were found out of the range of acceptable values (-3.29 to 3.29; see Ho, 2014; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014).

Before any data extraction, multivariate outliers were checked whether any undue influences existed (Hair et al., 2019; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014). Cook's Distance, Mahalanobis Distance and Centered Leverage Value were calculated in order to check multivariate outliers (Field, 2018). The range of Cook's Distance was between .00 and .05, which were fairly lower than 1. The Centered Leverage Values ranged between .01 and .16, which pointed out that some cases exceeded the threshold of two (.072) or three times (.108) the average. Lastly, Mahalanobis distance values changed between 1.90 and 47.22, indicating that there was a violation of multivariate assumption, since Mahalanobis distance greater than 29.59 was problematic with 10 predictors (Field, 2018). Accordingly, data extraction was conducted based on the results of multivariate outliers (Hair et al., 2018). At the first round of extraction, 8 cases were discarded since they were out of the critical value of 29.59 for Mahalanobis distance and their Centered Leverage Values were not within the boundary of two (.072) or three times (.108) the average. However, remaining data had still multivariate outliers. Therefore, 6 cases were out of the critical value of 29.59 for Mahalanobis Distance values and were not within the boundary of two (.074) or three times (.111)

for Centered Leverage Values at the second round. The final data exhibited that Mahalanobis distance values (ranged between 2.26 and 28.90), Centered Leverage Values (ranged between .01 and .10) and Cook's Distance (varied between .00 and .05) were within the boundary of acceptable values (Field, 2018).

#### **4.1.2.2. Linearity and Multicollinearity**

Bivariate correlations among variables were calculated to evaluate the linearity assumption. Correlation findings documented that most of the correlations were statistically significant and, thus linearity assumption was not violated (see Table 4.2). Besides, VIF values and tolerance statistics were conducted to evaluate the multicollinearity. Results revealed that VIF values ranged between 1.145 and 1.858; tolerance statistics ranged between .538 and .873. As VIF values were well under 10 and tolerance statistics were well above .20, multicollinearity among predictors was not a concern (Cohen et al., 2003; Field, 2018; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014). Furthermore, Pearson correlations were examined for any multicollinearity violations. It was evident that the highest correlation was between self-efficacy and employment hope ( $r = .56, p < .001$ ), which fell well below the threshold of .90 (Field, 2018). Thus, multicollinearity was not a concern of violations.

#### **4.1.2.3. Homoscedasticity and Independence of Errors**

Scatterplots of regression standardized predicted values were investigated to assess the assumption of homoscedasticity. Figure 4.1 illustrated that shape of the scatter plot was not systematic and individuals were not being clustered; therefore, it can be assumed that there was not a violation of homoscedasticity assumption. Sixthly, the Durbin-Watson was found between the critical values of  $1.5 < d < 2.5$  ( $d = 1.94$ ), which meant independence of errors assumptions was not violated (Ho, 2014).

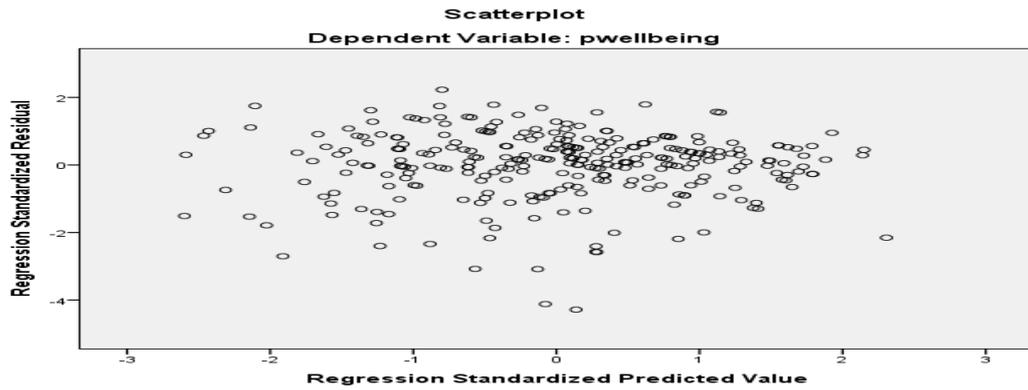


Figure 4.1

*Scatterplot of Regression Standardized Predicted Value*

#### 4.1.2.4. Normality of Errors

Lastly, frequency histogram and normal p-p plot for residuals were employed to evaluate the normality of residuals assumption. As can be seen in Figure 4.2, the normality assumption was satisfied.

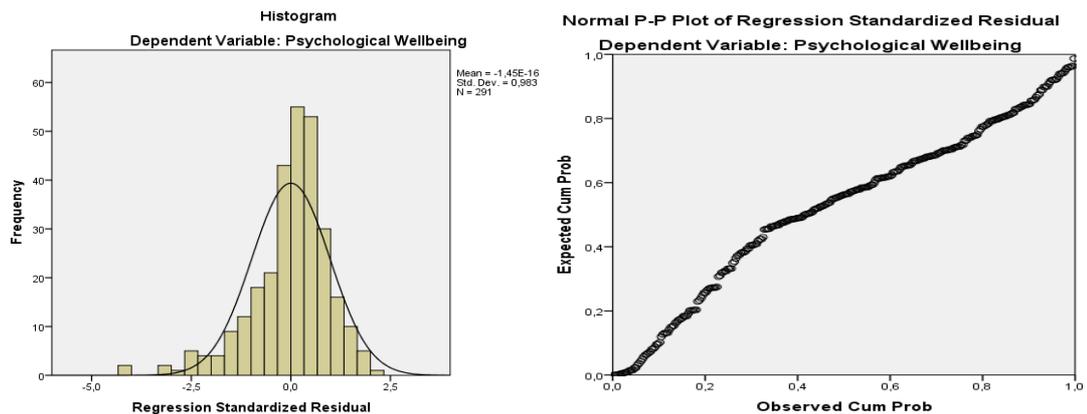


Figure 4.2

*Normality Histogram and Normal P-P Plot of Standardized Residuals*

#### 4.1.3. Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations

In order to investigate the means, standard deviations and Pearson correlations of exogenous predictor, endogenous mediator and endogenous outcome variables, descriptive statistics were calculated. In below, means and standard deviations of variables (Table 4.1) and correlations among variables (Table 4.2) were presented respectively.

#### 4.1.3.1. Means and Standard Deviations

Descriptive statistics for predictor and outcome variables were shown in Table 4.1. As table indicates, the sum scores of flourishing scale ranged between 16 and 56 with a mean value of 41.27 ( $SD = 7.56$ ). This mean score for flourishing scale were lower than the mean score ( $M = 45.4$ ,  $SD = 6.2$ ) was found in the original study of Diener et al. (2009) and the mean score ( $M = 44.97$ ,  $SD = 6.56$ ) was indicated in the study of Diener et al. (2010) with a group of college students. The total employment hope scores ranged between 38 and 140 with a mean value of 109.99 ( $SD = 21.35$ ). This mean score was slightly lower than the score ( $M = 112.56$ ,  $SD = 21.20$ ) obtained from undergraduate students in Turkey (Gerçek, 2020). The overall points of self-esteem scale varied from 16 to 40 with a mean score of 29.20 ( $SD = 5.57$ ). The self-esteem score of NEETs in the current study was lower than the mean score of unemployed adults in Turkey ( $M = 38.6$ ,  $SD = 6.10$ ) found in the study of Yılmaz and Bilgiç (2009). The sum scores for self-efficacy ranged between 13 and 40 with a mean value of 31.20 ( $SD = 6.06$ ). Compared to the mean score ( $M = 38.29$ ,  $SD = 5.69$ ) of unemployed Chinese individuals (Wang et al., 2014), the mean score of NEETs in the current sample was lower.

The minimum and maximum scores from overall social support of the participants changed between 16 and 84 with a mean of 62.88 ( $SD = 15.87$ ). The sum scores of social support from family, friends and significant ones were diverged from 4 to 28 with a mean score of 22.51 ( $SD = 6.01$ ), 22.52 ( $SD = 5.55$ ) and 17.86 ( $SD = 9.64$ ), respectively. These scores were similar to those found in previous studies in Turkey. For instance, the mean scores of university students for the sum scores of overall social support, social support from family, social support from friends, and social support from significant others were found as 64.3 ( $SD = 13.2$ ), 23.6 ( $SD = 4.7$ ), 22.5 ( $SD = 4.7$ ) and 18.1 ( $SD = 7.7$ ), respectively (Duru, 2007).

For internal attribution minimum score was 22, and maximum score was 84 with a mean value of 53.02 ( $SD = 13.49$ ). External attribution had a mean value of 26.91 ( $SD = 3.41$ ), and the sum scores ranked between 16 and 30. Indeed, Yılmaz (2002) indicated a similar mean scores in an unemployed adult sample in Turkey (for internal attribution,  $M = 54.74$ ,  $SD = 13.26$ ; for external attribution,  $M = 27$ ,  $SD = 4.26$ ). The

mean score for work involvement was 27.85 ( $SD = 2.70$ ) and the scores ranged from 15 to 30. A similar mean score ( $M = 26.58$ ,  $SD = 5.16$ ) was also found in the study of Yılmaz (2002). Lastly, participants took minimum 5 and maximum 20 points from job search motivation with a mean score of 17.32 ( $SD = 2.84$ ). This mean score was slightly lower than the mean score ( $M = 19.24$ ,  $SD = 1.72$ ) was found in the study of Yılmaz and Bilgiç (2009).

Table 4.1

*Means and Standard Deviations of the Variables (N=291)*

	M	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Psychological Wellbeing	41.27	7.56	16	56
Job Search Motivation	17.32	2.84	5	20
Work Involvement	27.85	2.70	15	30
Employment Hope	109.99	21.35	38	140
Overall Social Support	62.88	15.87	16	84
Social Support from Family	22.51	6.01	4	28
Social Support from Friends	22.52	5.55	4	28
Social Support from Significant Others	17.86	9.64	4	28
Self-Esteem	29.10	5.63	16	40
Self-Efficacy	31.20	6.06	13	40
Internal Attribution	53.02	13.49	22	84
External Attribution	26.91	3.41	16	30

#### **4.1.3.2. Bivariate Correlations among Exogenous Predictors, Endogenous Mediator, and Endogenous Dependent Variables**

The findings demonstrated that most of the exogenous predictors and endogenous mediators were significantly and positively associated with the endogenous outcome variable. In specific, the highest correlation with psychological wellbeing was of self-esteem ( $r = .55$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which means that higher the scores of self-esteem the higher the scores of psychological wellbeing. Employment hope ( $r = .47$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and self-efficacy ( $r = .42$ ,  $p < .001$ ) demonstrated moderate correlation with psychological wellbeing, indicating the higher the employment hope and self-efficacy levels, the

higher the psychological wellbeing scores. While overall social support ( $r = .21, p < .001$ ) social support from family ( $r = .19, p < .01$ ), social support from friends ( $r = .27, p < .001$ ) indicated moderate association with psychological wellbeing, significant ones ( $r = .08, p > .05$ ) did not show significant correlations with psychological wellbeing scores. Finally, job search motivation ( $r = .09, p > .05$ ), job involvement ( $r = .11, p > .05$ ), internal attribution ( $r = -.10, p > .05$ ) and external attribution ( $r = -.05, p > .05$ ) were not found significantly correlated with psychological wellbeing.

#### **4.1.4. Gender Differences in Psychological Wellbeing**

An independent samples t-test was performed to investigate whether there is a gender difference in participants' psychological wellbeing scores. The rationale behind conducting this analysis were twofold. First, in unemployment research tradition, men are considered as essential breadwinner of family and therefore it is socially more admissible for women to be unemployed (Kulik, 2000). In accordance with this proposition, for example, Stam et al. (2015) documented that men have low level of subjective wellbeing in comparison to women. Second, as mentioned above, the ratio of men and women in the study was not even. Although gender was not a variable in the current study, considering the traditional assumption and the imparity in the number of participants in terms of gender, it was examined whether there was a difference between men and women participants regarding their psychological wellbeing as a preliminary analysis. Equal sample sizes for comparison groups are expected for independent sample t-test statistic. However, if homogeneity of variances for comparison groups are ensured, an independent samples t-test can be carried out. Levene's test for equality of variances was found insignificant ( $F(289) = .786, p = .376$ ), which referred to the homogeneity of variances of comparison groups (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2017; Green & Salkind, 2014; Field, 2018). Therefore, an independent samples t-test was conducted.

The mean score of female NEET individuals ( $M = 41.73, SD = 7.33$ ) was slightly higher than the mean score of male NEET individuals ( $M = 39.95, SD = 8.08$ ). The result of independent samples t-test analysis illustrated that there was no significant difference between male and female NEET concerning psychological wellbeing scores,  $t(289) = 1.779, p = 0.76, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.19, 3.76]$ .

Table 4.2

*Inter-correlations among Psychological Wellbeing, Work Resources, Personal Resources, and Social Resources (N=291)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Psychological Wellbeing	1											
Job Search Motivation	.09	1										
Job Involvement	.11	.40***	1									
Employment Hope	.47***	.31***	.28***	1								
Social Support from Family	.19**	-.03	.06	.24***	1							
101 Social Support from Friends	.27***	-.01	.03	.23***	.50***	1						
Social Support from Significant Others	.08	-.01	.11	.19**	.30***	.22***	1					
Self-Esteem	.55***	.12*	.09	.50***	.22***	.17**	.11	1				
Self-Efficacy	.42***	.20**	.15*	.56***	.15*	.19**	.16**	.51***	1			
Internal Attribution	-.10	-.04	-.05	-.12*	-.01	-.00	-.00	-.14*	-.02	1		
External Attribution	-.05	.06	.07	.04	.08	.05	.09	-.10	.10	.39**	1	
Overall Social Support	.21***	-.02	.10	.29***	.74***	.67***	.80***	.20***	.22	-.01	.10	1

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

## **4.2. Main Analysis: Hypothesized Model Testing**

As an extension of regression analysis, path analysis permits researchers to simultaneously investigate the direct and indirect relationships between observed exogenous and endogenous variables. In general, two types of path analysis are in use: recursive model and non-recursive model. Recursive model refers to path analysis in which there is a one-way direction while there is at least one feedback in non-recursive model (Acock, 2013; Kline, 2016; McDonald & Ho, 2002)

In order to test the hypothesized relationships among exogenous predictor, endogenous mediator and endogenous outcome variables in Model 1 and Model 2, two path analyses were performed in STATA 16. In model 1, exogenous variables (i.e., self-esteem, self-efficacy, internal attribution of unemployment, external attribution of unemployment, work involvement and overall social support) served as indicators of endogenous outcome variable (i.e., psychological wellbeing) via endogenous mediator variables (i.e., job search motivation and employment hope). In Model-2, exogenous variables (i.e., self-esteem, self-efficacy, internal attribution of unemployment, external attribution of unemployment, work involvement, social support from family, social support from friends and social support from significant one) served as indicators of endogenous outcome variable (i.e., psychological wellbeing) via endogenous mediator variables (i.e., job search motivation and employment hope). As it was evident, the only difference between these models was whether social support was incorporated as a whole (Hypothesized Model 1) or from different sources (Hypothesized Model 2).

### **4.2.1. Results of Fit Statistics**

Before moving onto the results of path analyses, it was necessary to scrutinize the goodness-of-fit statistics of the models as the results of path analyses with poor fit is not taken into consideration (Acock, 2013). A number of parameters are suggested to evaluate how well the goodness-of-fit statistics of hypothesized models in SEM analysis: Chi-squared ( $\chi^2$ ), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker Lewis Index (TLI),

Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Standardized Root-Mean-Square Residual (SRMR). Additionally, there are various cut-off values for fit criteria of these parameters. In below, the cut-off values generally mentioned in SEM literature were presented (Acock, 2013; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Keith, 2019; Kline, 2016; Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003).

Table 4.3

*The Table of Criteria for Goodness-of-fit Indices*

Fit Statistics	Acceptable fit	Good Fit
$p$ value for $\chi^2$	$.01 \leq p \leq .05^{c,e}$	$.05 < p \leq 1.00^e$
$\chi^2/df$	$2 < \chi^2/df \leq 3^e$	$0 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 2^e$
RMSEA	$.05 < RMSEA \leq .10^{c,d}$	$0 \leq RMSEA \leq .05^{c,d,e}$
$p$ value for RMSEA	$.05 \leq p \leq .10^e$	$.10 < p \leq 1.00^e$
CFI	$.90 \leq CFI < .95^{a,b,c}$	$.95 \leq CFI \leq 1.00^{b,c,d}$
SRMR	$.05 < SRMR \leq .10^{d,e}$	$0 \leq SRMR \leq .05^e$

*Note.*  $\chi^2$  = chi-square, *CFI* = Comparative Fit Index, *RMSEA* = Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation, *SRMR* = Standardized Root-Mean-Square Residual. <sup>a</sup> = Acock, 2013; <sup>b</sup> = Hu & Bentler, 2013; <sup>c</sup> = Keith, 2019; <sup>d</sup> = Kline, 2016; <sup>e</sup> = Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003

Two path analyses for Model-1 and Model-2 were conducted. Both the results of Model-1 [ $\chi^2(9) = 13.962$ ;  $p > .05$ ; RMSEA = .044 (.000, .086),  $p > .05$ ; CFI = .986; SRMR = .025] and Model-2 [ $\chi^2(11) = 14.263$ ;  $p > .05$ ; RMSEA = .032 (.000, .073),  $p > .05$ ; CFI = .991; SRMR = .023] revealed that the hypothesized models (see Table 4.4) resulted in a reasonably good fit to the data on the basis of the aforementioned cut-off values.

Table 4.4

*The Table of Goodness-of-fit Indices of Models*

Model	$\chi^2$	df	p	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR
Model-1	13.962	9	.124	1.55	.044	.986	.025
Model-2	14.263	11	.219	1.30	.032	.991	.023

*Note.*  $\chi^2$  = chi-square, *CFI* = Comparative Fit Index, *RMSEA* = Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation, *SRMR* = Standardized Root-Mean-Square Residual

#### **4.2.2. Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of Path Analyses**

As bootstrapping permits to examine indirect effects more thoroughly (Keith, 2019) and allows to analyze non-normal data (West et al., 1995), two path analyses were performed using bootstrapping method with 1000 replications and 95% Confidence Interval to investigate the direct and indirect effects among exogenous predictor, endogenous mediator, and exogenous outcome variables. The results were provided separately in the following sections.

##### **4.2.2.1. Hypothesized Model-1**

As it was evident in Figure 4.3, job search motivation was predicted by work involvement and self-efficacy, but not by internal and external attribution of unemployment. Eighteen percent of the total variance in job search motivation was explained by self-efficacy, internal and external attribution unemployment and work involvement. Secondly, employment hope was predicted by self-esteem, self-efficacy, overall social support, work involvement and job search motivation but not by attributional styles of unemployment. This model explained 45% of total variance in employment hope. Lastly, psychological wellbeing was predicted by employment hope, self-esteem, self-efficacy, overall social support, work-involvement and job search motivation but not by attributional styles of unemployment. According to the results, 36% of the total variance in psychological wellbeing was explained by this model. Standardized coefficients of path analysis of Model-1 were exhibited in the

following figure (Figure 4.3). Red arrows represented the significant paths and black arrows illustrated nonsignificant paths (see also Table 4.5).

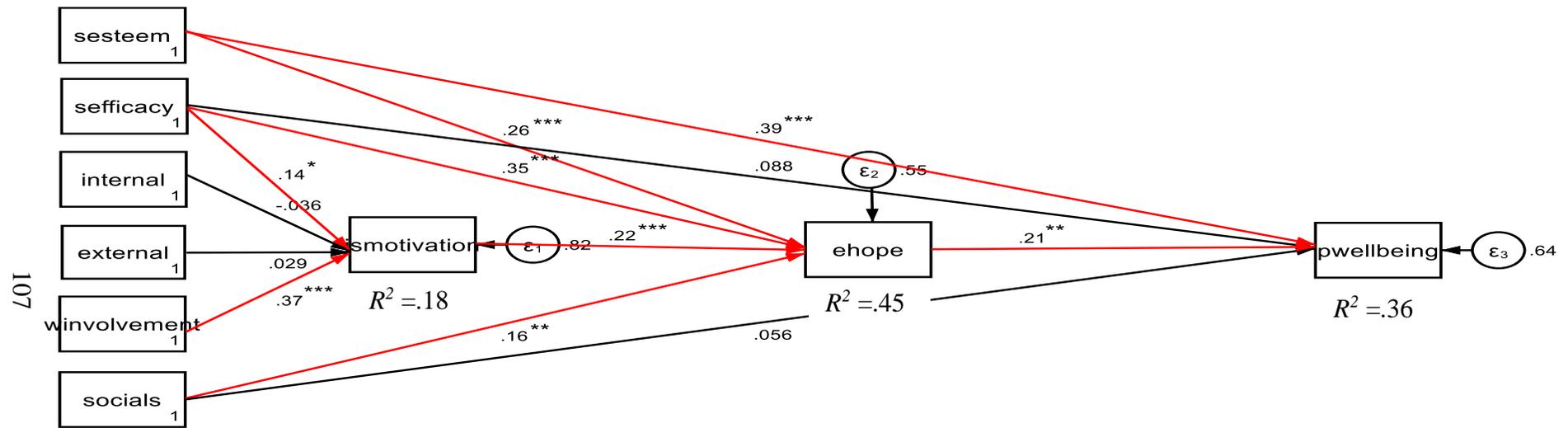
The results of the path analysis revealed both significant and nonsignificant direct and indirect paths (Table 4.5). Firstly, employment hope illustrated a significant link with psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = .21, p < .001$ ), which states that the increase in employment hope is followed by the rise on psychological wellbeing. Secondly, self-esteem yielded a significant direct association with both employment hope ( $\beta = .26, p < .001$ ) and psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = .39, p < .001$ ), which means that when self-esteem increases, employment hope and psychological wellbeing raise as well. Thirdly, self-efficacy indicated a significant direct relationship with both job search motivation ( $\beta = .14, p < .05$ ) and employment hope ( $\beta = .35, p < .001$ ) but a nonsignificant relationship with psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = .09, p > .05$ ). In other words, when self-efficacy rises, both job search motivation and employment hope increase but this rise is not directly related with psychological wellbeing. Fourthly, overall social support resulted in a significant association with employment hope ( $\beta = .16, p < .001$ ), but a nonsignificant one with psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = .06, p > .05$ ). These results point out that while the increase in overall social support is accompanied by the rise on employment hope, this increase is not found for psychological wellbeing. Fifthly, the path from work involvement to job search motivation was significant ( $\beta = .37, p < .001$ ), which implies that the rise on the work involvement associates with the increases in job search motivation. Sixthly, internal attribution ( $\beta = -.04, p > .05$ ) and external attribution of unemployment ( $\beta = .03, p > .05$ ) did not demonstrate significant direct links with job search motivation. It implies that neither internal attribution nor external attribution were related with job search motivation. Lastly, job search motivation reported a significant direct relationship with employment hope ( $\beta = .22, p < .001$ ), which denotes when job search motivation increases, employment hope raises as well.

Self-esteem yielded a significant indirect relationship with psychological wellbeing through employment hope ( $\beta = .05, p < .01$ ). Stated differently, an increase in self-esteem is associated with an increase in psychological well-being through employment hope. Similarly, self-efficacy indicated a significant indirect association with

employment hope via job search motivation ( $\beta = .03, p < .05$ ) and with psychological wellbeing through job search motivation and employment hope ( $\beta = .08, p < .01$ ). In other words, individuals who have higher scores in self-efficacy, job search motivation and employment hope are more likely to getting higher scores on psychological wellbeing. Likewise, overall social support displayed a significant indirect relationship with psychological wellbeing through employment hope ( $\beta = .03, p < .05$ ). Putting it another way, unemployed young individuals with higher overall social support are more likely to have higher psychological wellbeing. Work involvement demonstrated a significant indirect link both with employment hope ( $\beta = .08, p < .01$ ) and psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = .02, p < .05$ ), which points out that individuals with higher work involvement, job search motivation and employment hope have higher psychological wellbeing. However, internal attribution of unemployment did not show a significant indirect link neither with employment hope via job search motivation ( $\beta = -.01, p > .05$ ) nor with psychological wellbeing via job search motivation and employment hope ( $\beta = -.00, p > .05$ ). In a similar vein, external attribution of unemployment did not result in a significant indirect association neither with employment hope via job search motivation ( $\beta = .01, p > .05$ ) nor with psychological wellbeing via job search motivation and employment hope ( $\beta = .00, p > .05$ ). Thus, the results of internal and external attribution of unemployment imply that attribution of unemployment is not indirectly related with psychological wellbeing. Lastly, job search motivation pointed out a significant indirect association with psychological wellbeing through employment hope ( $\beta = .05, p < .05$ ). This finding connotes that higher job search motivation and employment hope are followed by higher psychological wellbeing.

Figure 4.3

*Path Analysis of Hypothesized Model-1 with Direct Effects*



*Note.* sesteem = Self-esteem, sefficacy = Self-efficacy, internal = Internal Attribution, external = External Attribution, winvolvement = Work Involvement, socials = Overall Social Support, jsmotivation = Job Search Motivation, ehope = Employment Hope, pwellbeing = Psychological Wellbeing. Values reflect the direct standardized coefficients. Red arrow indicates the significant path and black arrow demonstrates nonsignificant paths. Correlations among exogenous variables are not depicted for the clarity of presentation.

Table 4.5

*Direct, Indirect and Total Effects of Model 1*

Outcome/predictor	Direct effect (SE)	Indirect effect (SE)	Total effect (SE)	R <sup>2</sup>
Job Search Motivation				.18
External attribution	.03	-	.03	
Internal attribution	-.04	-	-.04	
Work involvement	.37***	-	.37***	
Self-efficacy	.14*	-	.14*	
Employment Hope				.45
Job Search Motivation	.22***	-	.22**	
External attribution	-	.01	.01	
Internal attribution	-	-.01	-.01	
Work involvement	-	.08**	.08***	
Self-esteem	.26***	-	.26***	
Self-efficacy	.35***	.03*	.38***	
Social support	.16***	-	.16***	
Psychological Wellbeing				.36
Work involvement	-	.02*	.02*	
External attribution	-	.00	.00	
Internal attribution	-	-.00	-.00	
Job search motivation	-	.05**	.05**	
Employment hope	.21**	-	.21**	
Self-esteem	.39***	.05**	.44***	
Self-efficacy	.09	.08**	.17**	
Social support	.06	.03*	.09	

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

**4.2.2.2. Hypothesized Model-2**

As Figure 4.4 indicates, job search motivation was predicted by work involvement and self-efficacy, but not by internal and external attribution of unemployment. The 18% of total variance in job search motivation was explained by self-efficacy, internal and external attribution unemployment and work involvement. Secondly, employment hope was predicted by self-esteem, self-efficacy, work involvement, job search motivation but not by social support from family, social support from friends, social support from significant one's and attributional styles of unemployment. This model

explained 45% of total variance in employment hope. Lastly, psychological wellbeing was predicted by employment hope, self-esteem, self-efficacy, social support from friends work-involvement and job search motivation but not by the social support from family, social support from significant others and attributional styles of unemployment. Thirty eight percent of total variance in psychological wellbeing was explained by this model. Standardized coefficients of path analyses of Model-2 were exhibited in the following figure (Figure 4.4). Red arrows represented the significant paths and black arrows illustrated nonsignificant paths (see also Table 4.6).

The results of the path analysis revealed both significant and nonsignificant direct and indirect paths (Table 4.6). Firstly, employment hope yielded a significant link with psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = .20, p < .001$ ), which states the increase in employment hope is followed by the rise on psychological wellbeing. Secondly, self-esteem indicated a significant direct relationship with both employment hope ( $\beta = .25, p < .001$ ) and psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = .39, p < .001$ ), which means that when self-esteem increases, employment hope and psychological wellbeing raise as well. Thirdly, self-efficacy resulted in a significant direct association with both job search motivation ( $\beta = .14, p < .05$ ) and employment hope ( $\beta = .35, p < .001$ ) but a nonsignificant direct association with psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = .08, p > .05$ ). In other words, when self-efficacy rises, both job search motivation and employment hope increase but this rise is not directly related with psychological wellbeing. Fourthly, social support from friends did not show any significant relationship with employment hope ( $\beta = .07, p > .05$ ), but demonstrated a significant direct relationship with psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = .16, p < .05$ ). However, social support from family did not demonstrate any significant direct relationship with neither employment hope ( $\beta = .09, p > .05$ ), nor with psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = -.03, p > .05$ ). Similarly, social support from significant one did not yield any significant direct link with neither employment hope ( $\beta = .07, p > .05$ ), nor with psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = -.04, p > .05$ ). These results point out that while the increase in social support from friends is accompanied by the rise on psychological wellbeing, this increase is not applicable to employment hope. Additionally, the increase or decrease in social support from family and significant others is not directly related to neither increase nor decrease in employment hope nor psychological well-being. Work involvement displayed a

significant direct link with job search motivation ( $\beta = .37, p < .001$ ), which implies that the rise in work involvement is associated with job search motivation increases. Internal attribution ( $\beta = -.04, p > .05$ ) and external attribution of unemployment ( $\beta = .03, p > .05$ ) did not illustrate any significant direct relationship with job search motivation. It implies that neither internal attribution nor external attribution were related with job search motivation. Lastly, job search motivation evidenced a significant direct association with employment hope ( $\beta = .22, p < .001$ ), which denotes when job search motivation increases, employment hope raises as well.

In addition, self-esteem yielded a significant indirect relationship with psychological wellbeing through employment hope ( $\beta = .05, p < .01$ ). Stated differently, individuals who have higher self-esteem and employment hope have higher psychological wellbeing as well. Similarly, self-efficacy indicated a significant indirect association with employment hope via job search motivation ( $\beta = .03, p < .05$ ) and with psychological wellbeing through job search motivation and employment hope ( $\beta = .08, p < .01$ ). In other words, individuals who have higher scores in self-efficacy, job search motivation and employment hope are more likely to get higher scores on psychological wellbeing. Nevertheless, social support from friends ( $\beta = .02, p > .05$ ), social support from family ( $\beta = .01, p > .05$ ) and social support from significant one ( $\beta = .02, p > .05$ ) had a nonsignificant indirect link with psychological wellbeing through employment hope. In other words, the different sources of social support are not related with higher or lower psychological wellbeing. Work involvement had a significant indirect association with employment hope via job search motivation ( $\beta = .08, p < .01$ ) and psychological wellbeing via job search motivation and employment hope ( $\beta = .02, p < .05$ ), which points out that individuals with higher work involvement, job search motivation and employment hope have higher psychological wellbeing. Internal attribution of unemployment did not show a significant indirect link neither with employment hope via job search motivation ( $\beta = -.01, p > .05$ ) nor with psychological wellbeing via job search motivation and employment hope ( $\beta = -.00, p > .05$ ). Likewise, external attribution of unemployment did not indicate any significant indirect association neither with employment hope via job search motivation ( $\beta = .01, p > .05$ ) nor with psychological wellbeing via job search motivation and employment hope ( $\beta = .00, p > .05$ ). Thus, the results of internal and external attribution of

unemployment imply that attribution of unemployment is not indirectly related with psychological wellbeing. Lastly, job search motivation produced a significant indirect link with psychological wellbeing through employment hope ( $\beta = .04, p < .05$ ). This finding connotes that higher job search motivation and employment hope are followed by higher psychological wellbeing.

Table 4.6

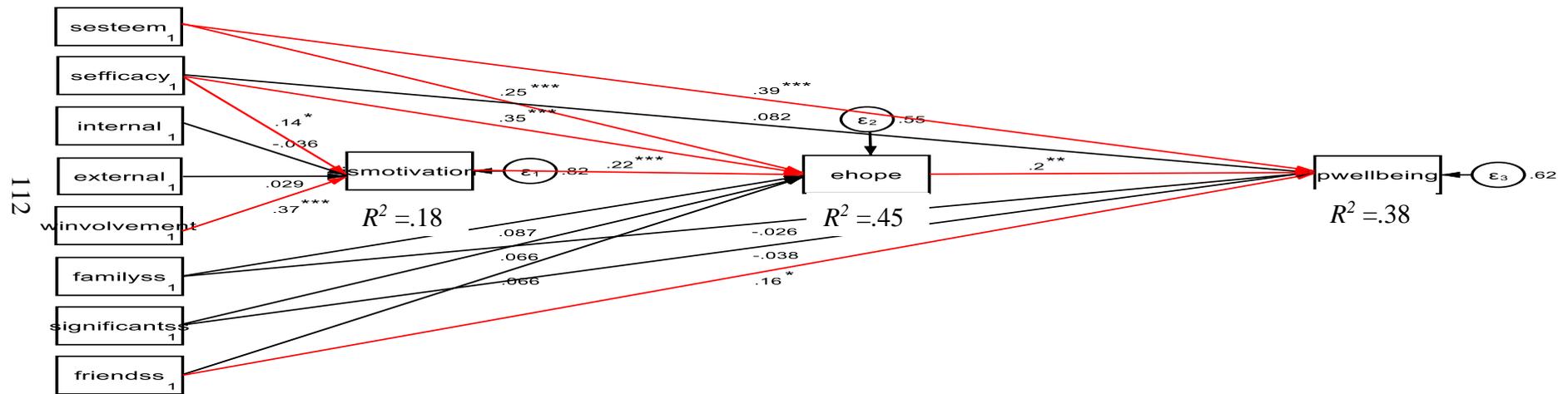
*Direct, Indirect and Total Effects of Model 2*

Outcome	Direct effect (SE)	Indirect effect (SE)	Total effect (SE)	R <sup>2</sup>
Job Search Motivation				.18
External attribution	.03	-	.03	
Internal attribution	-.04	-	-.04	
Work involvement	.37***	-	.37***	
Self-efficacy	.14*	-	.14*	
Employment Hope				.45
Job Search Motivation	.22***	-	.22**	
External attribution	-	.01	.01	
Internal attribution	-	-.01	-.01	
Work involvement	-	.08**	.08***	
Self-esteem	.25***	-	.25***	
Self-efficacy	.35***	.03*	.38***	
Family support	.09	-	.09	
Friends support	.07	-	.07	
Significant others support	.07	-	.07	
Psychological Wellbeing				.38
Work involvement	-	.02*	.02*	
External attribution	-	.00	.00	
Internal attribution	-	-.00	-.00	
Job search motivation	-	.04**	.04**	
Employment hope	.20**	-	.20**	
Self-esteem	.39***	.05**	.44***	
Self-efficacy	.08	.08**	.17**	
Family support	-.03	.02	-.00	
Friends support	.16*	.01	.16**	
Significant others support	-.04	.01	-.02	

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

Figure 4.4

*Path Analysis of Hypothesized Model-2 with Direct Effects*



*Note.* *sesteem* = Self-esteem, *sefficacy* = Self-efficacy, *internal* = Internal Attribution, *external* = External Attribution, *winvolvement* = Work Involvement, *familyss* = Social Support from Family, *friendss* = Social Support from Friends, *significantss* = Social Support from Significant One, *jsmotivation* = Job Search Motivation, *ehope* = Employment Hope, *pwellbeing* = Psychological Wellbeing. Values reflect the direct standardized coefficients. Red arrow indicates the significant path and black arrow demonstrates nonsignificant paths. Correlations among exogenous variables are not depicted for the clarity of presentation.

### 4.2.3. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: It was hypothesized that self-esteem would have a direct relationship with employment hope and psychological wellbeing of NEETs. Consistent with this hypothesis, it was shown that self-esteem had a significant moderate direct association with employment hope ( $\beta = .25, p < .001$ ) and large direct association with psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = .39, p < .001$ ).

Hypothesis 2: It was expected that self-esteem would have an indirect link with psychological wellbeing of NEET's through employment hope. In accordance with this expectation, it was demonstrated that self-esteem had a significant small indirect association with psychological wellbeing through employment hope ( $\beta = .05, p < .01$ ).

Hypothesis 3: It was assumed that self-efficacy would have a direct relationship with job search motivation, employment hope and psychological wellbeing of NEETs. These assumptions were partially supported. In line with these assumptions, it was found that self-efficacy had a significant medium direct association with job search motivation ( $\beta = .14, p < .05$ ) and large direct relationship with employment hope ( $\beta = .35, p < .001$ ). However, contrary to these assumptions, it was demonstrated that self-efficacy did not have a significant direct link with psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = .08, p > .05$ ).

Hypothesis 4: It was hypothesized that self-efficacy would have an indirect association with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through job search motivation and employment hope. In agreement with these hypotheses, it was revealed that self-efficacy had a significant small indirect relationship with psychological wellbeing through job search motivation and employment hope ( $\beta = .08, p < .01$ ).

Hypothesis 5: It was proposed that work involvement would have a direct relationship with job search motivation of NEETs. Consistent with this proposition, it was shown that work involvement had a significant large direct association with job search motivation ( $\beta = .37, p < .001$ ).

Hypothesis 6: It was predicted that work involvement would have an indirect link with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through job search motivation and employment hope. In accordance with this prediction, work involvement had a small indirect relationship with psychological wellbeing via job search motivation and employment hope ( $\beta = .02, p < .05$ ).

Hypothesis 7: It was hypothesized that external attribution of unemployment would have a direct association with job search motivation of NEETs. Against this prediction, it was found that external attribution of unemployment did not have a direct link with job search motivation ( $\beta = .03, p > .05$ ).

Hypothesis 8: It was expected that external attribution of unemployment would have an indirect relationship with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through job search motivation and employment hope. Contrary to this expectation, it was indicated that external attribution of unemployment did not have a significant indirect association with psychological wellbeing via job search motivation and employment hope ( $\beta = .00, p > .05$ ).

Hypothesis 9: It was hypothesized that internal attribution of unemployment would have a direct link with job search motivation of NEETs. Opposed to this prediction, it was found that internal attribution of unemployment did not have a direct association with job search motivation ( $\beta = -.04, p > .05$ ).

Hypothesis 10: It was expected that internal attribution of unemployment would have an indirect link with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through job search motivation and employment hope. Contrary to this expectation, it was indicated that internal attribution of unemployment did not have a significant indirect relationship with psychological wellbeing via job search motivation and employment hope ( $\beta = -.00, p > .05$ ).

Hypothesis 11: It was assumed that job search motivation would be directly associated with employment hope of NEETs. In line with this assumption, it was found that job search motivation had a medium direct link with employment hope ( $\beta = .22, p < .001$ ).

Hypothesis 12: It was suggested that job search motivation would be indirectly related with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through employment hope. In accordance with this suggestion, it was reported that job search motivation had a small indirect association with psychological wellbeing through employment hope ( $\beta = .04, p < .01$ ).

Hypothesis 13: It was assumed overall social support would have a direct relationship with employment hope and psychological wellbeing of NEETs. The findings provided a partial support to this assumption. In line with the assumption, it was documented that overall social support had a significant medium direct link with employment hope ( $\beta = .16, p < .001$ ). Opposed to this assumption, however, it was revealed that overall social support did not have any direct association with psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = .06, p > .05$ ).

Hypothesis 14: It was hypothesized overall social support would have an indirect link with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through employment hope. Consistent with this hypothesis, it was found that overall social support had a significant small indirect relationship with psychological wellbeing via employment hope ( $\beta = .03, p < .05$ ).

Hypothesis 15: It was hypothesized that social support from family would have a direct relationship with employment hope and psychological wellbeing of NEETs. Contrary to this hypothesis, it was shown that social support from family did not have a direct link neither with employment hope ( $\beta = .09, p > .05$ ) nor with psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = -.03, p > .05$ ).

Hypothesis 16: It was expected that social support from family would have an indirect association with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through employment hope. Incompatible with this hypothesis, it was indicated that social support from family did not have an indirect relationship with psychological wellbeing via employment hope ( $\beta = .02, p > .05$ ).

Hypothesis 17: It was proposed that social support from friends would have a direct relationship with employment hope and psychological wellbeing of NEETs. These assumptions were partially supported. In line with these propositions, it was demonstrated that social support from friends had a significant medium direct

association with psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = .16, p < .05$ ). Contrary to propositions, nevertheless, it was indicated that social support from friends did not have a significant direct association with employment hope ( $\beta = .07, p > .05$ ).

Hypothesis 18: It was predicted that social support from friends would have an indirect link with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through employment hope. Contrary to this prediction, it was demonstrated that social support from friends did not have an indirect association with psychological wellbeing through employment hope ( $\beta = .01, p > .05$ ).

Hypothesis 19: It was assumed that social support from significant others would have a direct link with employment hope and psychological wellbeing of NEETs. Opposed to this hypothesis, it was shown that social support from family did not have a direct relationship neither with employment hope ( $\beta = .07, p > .05$ ) nor with psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = -.04, p > .05$ ).

Hypothesis 20: It was suggested that social support from significant others would have an indirect association with psychological wellbeing of NEETs through employment hope. In contrast to this hypothesis, it was indicated that social support from family did not have an indirect link with psychological wellbeing via employment hope ( $\beta = .01, p > .05$ ).

### **4.3. Summary of the Research Results**

In sum, path analyses resulted in a more complete picture of the psychological wellbeing of university graduate NEETs in Turkey. Two path analyses were performed to investigate the hypotheses of the current study. Path analysis for Model 1 demonstrated that, employment hope had a direct relationship with psychological wellbeing. Self-esteem had a both direct and indirect associations via employment hope. Self-efficacy did not directly link with psychological well-being but had an indirect relationship with psychological well-being via job search motivation and employment hope. Similarly, overall social support did not directly associate with psychological well-being but had an indirect link through employment hope. While work motivation had an indirect link through job search motivation and employment

hope to psychological wellbeing, job search motivation had an indirect relation via employment hope to psychological wellbeing. Yet, neither external attribution nor internal attribution were reported as linked with psychological wellbeing.

Similar results were emerged in the path analysis for Model 2, except for sources of social support. Unlike the effects of overall social support, social support from friends was indicated directly related with psychological well-being but did not have an indirect association with psychological well-being via employment hope. Moreover, neither social support from family nor social support from significant others were found to have a direct and indirect link with psychological wellbeing via employment hope. Consequently, in general, the Model 1 and Model 2 partially supported the hypotheses of the present study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

Throughout the last chapter of the thesis, discussion of the findings, the implications of the research for practice and recommendations for future research were covered. Initially, the results of the study were discussed in the light of extant unemployment literature on psychological wellbeing. Then, implications for practice and research were presented.

#### **5.1. Discussion of the Findings**

This study sought to better understand the pathways to psychological wellbeing of university graduate NEETs in Turkey. Specifically, to what extent personal resources (i.e., self-esteem, self-efficacy, and employment hope), social resources (i.e., overall social support, social support from friends, social support from family and social support from significant others) were associated with psychological wellbeing was investigated. The findings of the study demonstrated that NEETs were more likely to have higher psychological wellbeing when self-esteem, employment hope and social support from friends were high. Also, the employment hope was higher when self-esteem, self-efficacy, job search intention, overall social support was high; and individuals who attribute much importance to work had higher job search intention.

In general, the findings of the current study provide preliminary but illuminative evidence to the hypotheses. From the perspective of Stress and Coping Approach (Lazarus & Folkman) and Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002), it should come as no surprise that the results indicated that NEETs who have more personal, social, and work resources are more likely to be better in terms of

psychological wellbeing. These results are in accord with those of previous studies (cf., Axelsson & Ejlertsson, 2002; Blau et al., 2013; Gabriel, 2015; Hoare, 2007; McKee et al., 2013; Sümer et al., 2013; Wang & Wanberg, 2017; Yılmaz, 2002). However, some findings were inconsistent with the hypotheses, previous empirical findings, and theoretical frameworks. In below, all of the findings were discussed in light of the extant literature.

### **5.1.1 Personal Resources**

In the comprehensive critique of unemployment and mental health literature, Ezzy (1993) questioned the strength of the existing frameworks in explaining the mental health variations with unemployed groups. Ezzy maintained that as a “breaching experiment”, unemployment can be thoroughly understood by taking into account self-concept. In agreement with this position, the most obvious finding to emerge from this study was that personal resources which are self-related concepts were identified as critical variables in examining psychological wellbeing of NEETs.

Aligning well with the current scholarly knowledge, self-esteem was found the strongest predictor of psychological wellbeing of Turkish university graduate NEETs in the present study. Furthermore, the only variable which both directly and indirectly associated with psychological wellbeing was self-esteem. These results are in keeping with an extensive range of studies (Alvaro et al., 2019; Axelsson & Ejlertsson, 2002; Feather, 1990; Herig et al., 2013; Peláez-Fernández et al., 2019; Rey et al., 2016; Solove et al., 2015; Sverko et al., 2008; Virkes et al., 2017; Yılmaz, 2002) in which the role of self-esteem on psychological wellbeing was established. For example, in the study of Synard and Gazzola (2017, 2019), self-esteem emerged as a cardinal asset of psychological wellbeing of individuals who lost their jobs and permeated through a wide range aspect of their everyday life.

A possible explanation for the role of self-esteem on psychological wellbeing of NEET might be the stress-buffering model of high self-esteem and the vulnerability model of low self-esteem. According to these models, individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to cope successfully with adversities while individuals who evaluate themselves in a more negative manner are more likely to fall back in the face of

stressful life events (Park & Crocker, 2013; Pyszczynski & Kesebir, 2013; Zeigler-Hill, 2011, 2013). Considering that employment furnishes individuals with an occupational identity which determines the status of individuals in the society and this identity is closely linked with self-esteem, maintaining self-esteem as much as possible might act as barricade against the negative outcomes of unemployment on psychological wellbeing. Furthermore, being unemployed is deeply interrelated with stigma and shame which might have deleterious impact upon self-esteem and psychological wellbeing (Rantakeisu, 1997). Accordingly, as unemployed individuals are devoid of such a status which help them to evaluate self-worth, NEETs who evaluate themselves in a more positive manner in terms of self-worth maintain a flourishing life.

Contrary to the expectation self-efficacy was not found directly related with psychological wellbeing, yet this study reported that self-efficacy indirectly associated with psychological wellbeing through job search motivation and employment hope. In addition, the strongest predictor of employment hope was self-efficacy. These findings are in consistent with a great deal body of research and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1997, 1999; Lent & Brown, 2013; Lent et al., 1994). In the literature, self-efficacy was predominantly studied within the context of motivation and expectation pertain to career outcomes. For instance, Noordzij (2013) indicated that self-efficacy had a direct and positive effect on job search intentions. Additionally, the well-known and successful interventions programs, such as JOBS, address to improve job search motivation via self-efficacy for unemployed individuals (see Price & Vinokur, 2018; Vinokur et al., 1991, 1995, 2000). Besides, social cognitive career management theory posits that self-efficacy has an influence on career expectations (Thompson et al., 2017). Similarly, social cognitive model of vocational hope strives to establish a link between self-esteem and career outcome via vocational hope. Consequently, it was not surprising that NEET with higher self-efficacy are more likely to have higher job search motivation and employment hope which in turn are associated with higher psychological wellbeing.

The findings of the study clearly documented the mediator role of employment hope. The result showed that employment hope had modestly associated with psychological

wellbeing. Furthermore, self-esteem, self-efficacy, work involvement job-search motivation and overall social support were associated with psychological wellbeing through employment hope. These results support the work of other studies and theoretical frameworks. The systematic review of McKee-Ryan et al.'s (2005) gave emphasis to the possible mediator role of employment expectations between coping resources and psychological wellbeing. Similarly, Social Cognitive Model of Vocational Hope draw attention to the mediator role of vocational hope in the relationship between self-efficacy and career outcomes (Brown et al., 2012). Preliminary evidences lend empirical support to the mediator role of perceived employability on the relationship between core self-evaluations and job resources and mental health (e.g., Lo Presti et al., 2020; Virga et al., 2017). Additionally, the link between perceived employability and psychological wellbeing was established (e.g., Blau et al., 2013; Feather & Davenport, 1981; Hoare, 2007; Sümer et al., 2013; Vansteenkiste et al., 2004, 2005; Vinokur & Kaplan, 1987).

Considering unemployment is a stressful life event, it is quite natural to have expectations about finding a job is critical for psychological wellbeing. Indeed, from the study of Marienthal Study (Jahoda et al., 1933/2002), the most common theme emerged in the psychological wellbeing and unemployed studies is hopelessness and despair. Similarly, Blustein (2019) eloquently described how unemployed individuals struggled with the bleak picture of their career prospects. Likewise, a cross-country study clearly demonstrated that psychological wellbeing of unemployed young individuals was negatively affected by constant worries over whether they can find a job (Binder, 2016; Lahusen & Giugni, 2016). Particularly, perceived employability or employment hope might be a grave concern for NEET in Turkey for two reasons. First, NEETs had a four year diploma which is traditionally assumed to open the gate of labor market. As they invest massive resources (e.g., time, money, physical and mental energy) to get a university diploma, not finding a job would be disappointing. Second, owing to the fact that Turkey has the highest rate of NEETs in OECD countries and has been severely economically hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, the career prospects of young individuals have gradually become darker. Thus, having an expectation to find a job provide a cushion against detrimental impacts of unemployment on psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals.

As noted above, core self-evaluations were mainly considered under the heading of personal resources (see McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). A great deal body of research was carried out by drawing on core self-evaluations (e.g., Hoare, 2007; Merino et al., 2019; Peláez-Fernández et al., 2019; Rey et al., 2016; Virga & Rusu, 2018; Virkes et al., 2017; Wanberg et al., 2005). According to Judge et al. (1997) self-esteem, self-efficacy, optimism, and locus of control comprise a higher order construct called as core self-evaluations. Chen et al. (2004), however, put forward that while self-efficacy and self-esteem are highly correlated variables, self-efficacy mainly operates on motivational domain and self-esteem functions in affective domain. This point of view was also echoed in the conceptualization of self-efficacy (see Bandura, 1997).

The findings of the thesis provide a humble contribution to this theoretical discussion. The results indicated that self-esteem was both directly and indirectly associated with psychological wellbeing; self-efficacy was indirectly associated with psychological wellbeing through job search motivation and employment hope; employment hope played a mediator role on the relationship between personal, social, and work resources and psychological wellbeing; and lastly any relationship between attribution of unemployment (i.e., internal vs. external) could not be established. Therefore, it might be reasonable to claim that as done in the current study, examining various personal resource factors (i.e., self-esteem, self-efficacy and hope) separately rather than as a unitary construct (i.e., core self-evaluation) might provide a more thorough understanding of psychological wellbeing of NEETs.

### **5.1.2 Social Resources**

The extant literature of unemployment provides a wealth of information on the role of social support (see Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Thoits, 1995, 2011). It is generally acknowledged that social support has been examined and considered one of the critical resources for alleviating the negative consequences of unemployment on psychological wellbeing (Axelsson & Ejlertsson, 2002; Blustein, 2019; Huegaerts et al., 2017; Kieselbach, 2003; Lim et al., 2018; Milner et al., 2016; Ratcliff & Bogdan, 1988; Sabroe & Iversen, 1992; Vinokur & Kaplan, 1987; Winefield et al., 1993). Broadly speaking, this study provide empirical support to the role of social support on psychological wellbeing of NEETs. Yet, it was appeared that a close look at the

sources of social support was warranted to grasp a solid understanding of social support.

It was indicated that overall social support was not directly associated with psychological wellbeing but was indirectly related with psychological wellbeing through employment hope. At first, given the importance of social support this finding seems contradictory to earlier findings. However, this finding is in accord with the proposition of social cognitive career theory perspective which posits that social support act as a buffer against unemployment and vocational hope might mediate this relationship (see Brown et al., 2012; Thompson et al., 2017). Furthermore, the findings concerning different sources of social support presented a more complete picture of the relationship between social support and psychological wellbeing of NEETs.

Perhaps the most unexpected and compelling finding of this study is that social support from family was not associated with neither employment hope nor psychological wellbeing. It is a well-known fact that family support plays a significant role in supporting unemployed individuals in the face of adversities of unemployment (Axelsson & Ejlertsson, 2002; Bjarnason & Sigurdardottir, 2003; Huffman et al., 2015). Families provided unemployed individuals with a sense of unity in the face of unemployment, financial aids, and housing. Therefore, at first glance, it appeared that this result was inconsistent and contradictory to previously published studies. Particularly, it is quite striking to document such a finding considering the emphasis given on tight family relationships in Turkey (Sümer et al., 2013). Consequently, this finding raises an issue of serious concern to be discussed.

There are several possible explanations for this rather contradictory result. Hammer (1996) found that a great deal of proportions of unemployed young individuals lived with their families. A recent report on NEET in Turkey (ILO, 2021b) and the current research also reported that a great majority of NEET live with their parents. In other words, contrary to empty nest model, what is seen in current context crowded nest. As unemployed individuals do not have their own source of income and could not establish an independent life, they might be depended upon their families. Therefore, this economic dependence might give rise to conflict between NEET and their families. Furthermore, if the family of NEET in dire conditions in terms of economic

welfare, giving financial assistance to their child might impose an additional burden on the family, which would in turn influence the whole family (see Monticelli et al., 2016). Feather (1990) drew attention to this point from a different angle. Feather supposed that although family support acts as a buffer against the difficulties arisen out of unemployment, it is also possible that the situation of unemployed children might adversely affects the atmosphere of the family. Consequently, living with parents might create tensions between parents and young unemployed individuals (Rantekeisu et al., 1997).

A further consideration for this conflicting result would be the zeitgeist of current labor market conditions. As referred in previous chapters, it was generally assumed that holding a bachelor's degree would guarantee getting a decent job in previous decades. However, youth unemployment become a structural problem due to economic crises (e.g., Great Recession and COVID-19 pandemic) across the world. More dramatically, current economic crisis in Turkey sets the stage for rising youth unemployment rates. In comparison with OECD countries, Turkey appears to become much worse in terms of youth unemployment. Furthermore, graduating from a 4-year university could not solve this issue. Even, some researchers (Apaydın, 2019; Görmüş, 2019) claimed that getting a university diploma entails a risk for being unemployed for young individuals. Thus, it might be possible that families may not recognize the modern labor market context and they endorse the stigmatic views in public arena pertain to youth unemployment (e. g., there is abundant of job, but young persons are reluctant to work). As a result of this unawareness, they might put pressure on their unemployed children to find a job and even they might blame NEETs for being unemployed. Yet, the findings of current study demonstrated that NEETs attached strong importance to employment and were highly motivated to search for a job. Therefore, the broad gap between what families consider and what NEETs experience might bring about never-ending disagreements and disputes.

From the standpoint of the importance of family, this rather contradictory result may also be due to the expectations from family. As family is a sacred institution and much more value attached to family in Turkey and being unemployment implies a loss of status and money and it is filled with uncertainty, NEETs might expect more social

support than their families would provide. Sümer et al. (2013) put forward a similar interpretation in explaining their findings which demonstrated a difference between family and friends social supports. The mean scores of different sources of social support in this study might bolster this line of thinking. The mean score of social support from friends ( $M = 22.52$ ,  $SD = 5.55$ ) was similar to the mean score of social support from family ( $M = 22.51$ ,  $SD = 6.01$ ). Since perceived social support was measured rather than actual social support in this study, it might be a possible justification that NEETs did not regard family social support as adequate (see Sümer et al., 2013).

Unlike the social support from family, it was evidenced that social support from friends was directly associated with psychological wellbeing yet not indirectly. Additionally, given that social support from friends was among the three variables directly related to psychological wellbeing along with self-esteem and employment, the prominence of social support from friends should be emphasized. A reasonable explanation for this result might be the emotional support provided by friends which otherwise could not be delivered by family. As elaborated on previously, youth unemployment is a structural problem and older generations might not be mindful of the roots of unemployment predicaments for young individuals.

Furthermore, young individuals, in general, are familiar with this turmoil. Additionally, in a recent study, it was found that NEET individuals were more likely to have unemployed friends (Vancea & Utzet, 2018). Therefore, it might be reasonable to claim that friends are conscious of unemployment problem might listen in a nonjudgmental manner and provide emotional support. Furthermore, this finding is in line with the research on social resources of young unemployed individuals. For example, in the study of Lorenzini and Giugni (2016), it was maintained that unemployed young individuals share their concerns and problems with friends who undergo a similar stressful period without being judged. Furthermore, they contended that having supportive friends delivers unemployed young individuals with the opportunity of going beyond family environment, which furnish them with a sense of relief from the uncertainty regarding employment.

Another striking finding of this study is that social support from significant others was not associated neither directly nor indirectly with psychological wellbeing of NEETs. The research to date has tended to focus on the impact of unemployment on couple families in terms of family relationships from the point of spouse (e.g., Maitoza, 2019; Nitzarim & Thompson, 2019; Sümer et al., 2013). However, it would be worthwhile to examine social support of significant others (e.g., romantic partners, neighborhood), considering that what characterizes emerging adulthood is being away from traditional adulthood markers (e.g., marriage and employment). In the youth unemployment studies, it is appeared that either young individuals do not mention about that aspect of their lives, or they bemoan the lack of money to maintain such a special relationship (Lorenzini & Giugni, 2016; Monticelli et al., 2016). In agreement with these findings, the lowest mean score of the sources of social support was social support from significant others ( $M = 17.86$ ,  $SD = 9.64$ ). Although it is difficult to explain this result due to lack of empirical evidence, yet it can be speculated that either NEET would not maintain a romantic relationship owing to insufficient financial situation or they encountered challenges to receive adequate amount of social support from significant others they would like to.

### **5.1.3 Work Resources**

On the question of work involvement, this study found that work involvement was directly associated with job search motivation and indirectly associated with psychological wellbeing through job search motivation and employment hope. Furthermore, the mean score of work involvement was fairly high ( $M = 27.85$ ,  $SD = 2.70$ ). To a considerable degree, these results were in line with previous studies. Goldman-Mellor et al. (2016) documented that NEET young individuals were more committed to work. The high score of NEETs in work involvement may be explained by the Conservation of Resources Theory. As they invested a massive number of resources to get a university degree to find a job and they could not get a job, it would be plausible them to attach strong importance to employment. Several investigations of employment commitment have established that work involvement is related with job seeking, job acquisition, and job search motivation (Sverko et al., 2008; Wanberg et al., 2010). For instance, Yılmaz (2002) reported that employment commitment of

individuals significantly and positively predicted job search motivation scores of participants. Likewise, in the meta-analysis study of Kanfer et al. (2001), employment commitment ( $r_c = .29$ ) and self-efficacy ( $r_c = .27$ ) were the strongest correlates of job search behavior. From the point of this literature, it would be conceivable to find that NEETs with higher work involvement were more likely to be motivated to seek a job.

Although, in a traditional sense, it is assumed that individuals who strongly attached to being employed and motivated to seek job is more likely to suffer in psychological wellbeing when they are out of labor market in comparison with individuals who have less work involvement (Feather, 1990; Feather & Davenport, 1981; Jackson & Warr, 1984; Hoare, 2007; Hoare & Machin, 2006; Winefield et al., 1993), Yılmaz (2002) found that work involvement was not related with psychological distress. Based on these findings, it might be reasonable to assert that work involvement was indirectly associated with psychological wellbeing. In line with this claim, it was found that work involvement was not correlated with psychological wellbeing but was indirectly associated with psychological wellbeing.

Another unanticipated and striking finding of this study is that neither internal attribution nor external attribution of unemployment were found related with job search motivation and psychological wellbeing. Although the literature on whether internal attributions or external attributions were associated with low psychological wellbeing was inconsistent and contradictory, it is evident that how unemployed individuals attribute to the reasons of their unemployment carried certain weights for themselves (see Brouwer et al., 2015; Feather & Davenport, 1981; Feather & O'Brien, 1986). For instance, Furnham (1984) assumed that how unemployed young individuals attribute unemployment might be related to their psychological wellbeing and employment prospects. In line with proposition, Brouwer et al. (2015) reported that more external attribution had a negative impact upon reemployment. However, the research to date has not yet been able to convincingly show whether and how attribution of unemployment is related with job search motivation and psychological wellbeing.

This rather intriguing result might be explained by the inconsistency in the literature. First of all, the construct of attribution of unemployment has been differently used in

various research. While some studies (Hesketh, 1984; Schaufeli, 1988; Winefield et al., 1993) examined the locus of control of individuals in general (e.g., whether one attribute to reason of a bad event to internal or external factors), other studies (Feather & Davenport, 1981; Feather & O'Brien, 1986; Yılmaz, 2002) paid special focus on the reasons of not finding a job. Additionally, some studies considered locus of control under the construct of core self-evaluations (Virga et al., 2017). This distinction is further exemplified in the taxonomy of McKee et al. (2005). In this taxonomy, while locus of control was listed as a predictor variable of psychological wellbeing, internal attribution of unemployment was presented as a mediator variable on the relationship between personal, social and work related resources. Eventually, this discrepancy in conceptualization resulted in utilizing different measurement tools, which might have a serious effect on the results. Secondly, nevertheless, related theories (i.e., Weiner's Attribution Theory and Learned Helplessness Theory) were mentioned in the studies as a road map, any rigorous attempt to test those theories within the context of youth unemployment does exist.

Thirdly, changing context and factors might have changed the reasons of being unemployed and therefore, the items in the scale used in this study might not be appropriate in describing the complete picture of the causes of unemployment. It might be plausible to assert that changing reasons might be coupled with the abovementioned discrepancy in conceptualization. Then, these intertwined problems gave rise to inconsistent results. The scale used in this study is a good illustration of this point. In different from the items in the scale, in a recent study, NEETs provided a range of distinct reasons for not getting a job in Turkey (see ILO, 2021b). Furthermore, Feather and Davenport (1981) listed 28 reasons, which yielded in 11 factor structures rather than 2 factors. Then, Feather and O'Brien (1986) presented 21 reasons out of previous 28 reasons, which resulted in four factors rather than 2 factors. In the adaptation study of the scale of Feather and Davenport (1981), Yılmaz (2002) utilized 23 items. Likewise, Winefield et al. (1993) and Schaufeli (1988) used different items to evaluate how young unemployed individuals attribute to reasons of success and failure. In a recent attempt, Pultz et al. (2019) employed 12 items to examine the attributions of NEETs by using the classification of internal and external attribution. Therefore, it might be reasonable to not to reach a significant result in the current research.

Lastly, the relationship between attribution of unemployment and psychological wellbeing is not straightforward. In general, it is proposed that internal attribution is much likely to be related to low psychological wellbeing than external attribution within the unemployment complex (see Eisenberg & Lazarsfeld, 1938; Feather, 1990; Feather & Davenport, 1981; Feather & O'Brien, 1986). Similarly, Schaufeli (1988) found that unemployed graduates drew on external attributions of unemployment as a self-serving bias. In contrast to these findings, Winefield et al. (1993) found that the scores of internal attributions of unemployed young women were positively correlated with psychological wellbeing and Virga et al. (2017) evaluated external attributions as a sign of low core-self-evaluations. However, a much more complex picture might be pertinent to attribution of unemployment for NEETs rather than endorsing either internal attributions or external attributions. This intricate relationship is exemplified in the work of Pultz et al. (2019). Pultz et al. found that NEETs were more likely to attribute the cause of their unemployment to systemic reasons than internal reasons in their quantitative study. Yet, a much-complicated results were found in their qualitative analysis. They eloquently put forward that university graduate NEETs drew on internal and external attributions, dependent upon the context, in explaining reasons of being unemployed to protect and maintain their psychological wellbeing. In accordance with these findings, in this thesis, Pearson correlation analysis indicated that internal attribution of unemployment and external attribution of unemployment were positively correlated ( $r = .39, p < .01$ ).

Lastly, the findings of this study yielded evidence that job search motivation of NEET was related with psychological wellbeing through the mediation of employment hope. At first glance, it seems this result, to some extent, contradicted with the assumptions of expectancy value theory. According to expectancy-value theory, individuals with higher expectations, higher motivation to find a job and higher work involvement is much likely to depressed (Furnham, 1984). Feather and Davenport (1981) lent an initial support to this argument. However, Yılmaz (2002) have failed to demonstrate any direct association between job search motivation and psychological distress in Turkish context. Apart from these studies, Brouwer et al. (2015) documented that higher job search intention and positive reemployment expectations were associated with the chance of being reemployed. Based on these results, therefore, the significant

result of the current study might be explained by the indirect relationship between job search motivation and psychological wellbeing through mediator role of employment hope rather than investigating a direct relationship. A further possible explanation might be the concept of psychological wellbeing. Vansteenkiste et al. (2004) found that while autonomous job search motivation was associated with decreased life satisfaction and somatic problems, autonomous job search motivation was also associated with improved eudaimonic wellbeing. Given the fact that psychological wellbeing was conceptualized as eudaimonic wellbeing in this study, it would be plausible to find a positive association between psychological wellbeing and job search motivation of university graduate NEETs.

In conclusion, the overall findings provide initial evidence that university graduate NEETs who evaluated themselves in a more positive manner, believed themselves to carry out given tasks, had much social support in general and social support from friends, attached much importance to work, had much intention to seek job and perceived themselves to be able to find a job were more likely to have higher psychological wellbeing.

## **5.2. The Implication for Practice**

In the current context, in which the whole world has undergone substantial changes in all aspects of life due to COVID-19 pandemic, labor markets and economies all around the globe have been heavily struck. This economic turmoil has wreaked havoc on working life of individuals and it is predicted that unemployment rates will worsen even more (Drosos et al., 2021). In particular, it appears that young individuals will likely to be severely touched by emerging economic difficulties (ILO, 2021a). A recent report on youth employment revealed how Turkish youth had difficulties in accessing decent job in amidst of COVID-19 pandemic (ILO, 2021b). Unfortunately, the scourge of COVID-19 coupled with the threat of loss of life and work might have detrimental impacts upon mental health of individuals. Therefore, both individual and systemic level interventions will be increasingly called upon to solve this humanitarian crisis (Blustein & Guarino, 2020; Drosos et al., 2021).

In unemployment context, the most critical question every researcher should bear in mind is that whether the research help scientific community, organizations, governments and practitioners to devise well-designed intervention programs to help unemployed individuals (Feather, 1990). Indeed, this research might be a humble attempt to help to design sound interventions for NEETs. Counseling interventions and social policy interventions might be pertained to NEETs were presented in below.

### **5.2.1 The Implication for Counseling Interventions**

Giving assistance to long-term unemployed individuals both for their psychological and physical conditions may yield beneficial outcomes for their health and increase their further chances for integration into labor market (Drosos et al., 2021; Herig et al., 2013). In addition, early prevention and intervention program is likely to reduce detrimental outcomes of unemployment (Fryer, 2002; Bijlsma et al., 2017). Similarly, Bynner and Parsons (2002) concluded that their study emphasizing the need for efficient counseling interventions for protection of young individuals from the negative outcomes of NEET status and pave the way for successful transition to adulthood. Against this background, the findings of this study have a few practical implications within the counseling setting and social policy context.

First and foremost, it was evidently clear from the findings that personal resources had a paramount importance in sustaining and improving psychological wellbeing of NEETs. In specific, the overall evaluation of self-worth, beliefs about one's agency and perceived employability significantly and positively contributed to psychological wellbeing. Thus, it would be appropriate to incorporate self-esteem, self-efficacy and employment hopes of NEET in counseling sessions rather simply relying on job search efforts.

Secondly, the results of this study support the view that social support is critical, but a cautious interpretation of social support appears warranted. When overall social support taking into account, an indirect association would emerge. However, a closer inspection to different sources of social support reveals that social support from friends provide a buffer against the negative impact of unemployment. Therefore, when counseling NEET, it would seem suitable to address how various sources of social

support interact with psychological wellbeing and how potential tensions between NEET and their social circles might hinder their psychological wellbeing.

Lastly, how much importance NEETs attach value to employment and the extent to which they intent to seek job were indirectly associated with psychological wellbeing. Considering their relationship with employment hope, it would be reasonable to seek to work involvement and job search motivation of NEETs during counseling sessions.

Although focusing on personal, social and work resources and bolstering them is indispensable in counseling with young unemployed persons, it seems obvious that these attempts would not generate new employments in a given country. Inevitably, young unemployed individuals try to seek a job in accordance with the employment context of their countries in which they live. Even put a much emphasis on individual resources might hamper the psychological wellbeing of individuals and their job-seeking attempts. Consequently, counselors should draw their clients' attention to the realities of labor market structure of their countries in addition to their clients' resources. Since the current unemployment crisis has been emerging out of structural problems in economies, it would be appropriate to make clients realize the roots of unemployment (Blustein, 2006; Blustein et al., 2012; Feather, 1990).

As a result of these efforts, "adjust-challenge dilemma" may emerge in counseling interventions (Prilleltensky & Stead, 2012). Both helping individuals to adjust the consequences of unemployment and to assist them to challenge the status quo which give rise to unemployment and perpetuate being unemployed might appears as contradictory. Yet, counselors have the responsibility to act in accordance with social justice approach (McWhirter & McWha-Hermann, 2021; Sümer et al., 2013). For this reason, counselors should play a leading role in helping unemployed individuals to cope with the deleterious effects of unemployment and transforming the current social, political, and economic structure in which NEETs strive to find a decent job.

### **5.2.2 The Implication for Social Policy Interventions**

Given that unemployment, specifically youth unemployment, is intimately interconnected with structural obstacles (e.g., economic and political reasons), several policy interventions from the findings of the present study could be drawn.

First of all, counseling services to NEETs should be accessible and offered free or in low-cost, given that they have lack of material resources (Ali et al., 2013). However, as the term of NEET implies, NEETs are out of main social institutions such as educational organizations and labor market. As a result of this exclusion from major social institutions, they cannot reach counseling services which are provided within these institutions. Therefore, counseling services might be delivered by governmental institutions. In specific, Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR) whose principal aim is to smooth the way for accessing labor market is the most appropriate office for helping NEETs in Turkey. Yet, a comprehensive recent report revealed that NEETs in Turkey did not regard ISKUR as efficient institution for getting a good job and therefore registration to ISKUR is extremely low among NEETs (ILO, 2021b). Thus, initiatives should be done to appeal NEETs to register and receive services from ISKUR. Besides, services provided by ISKUR should incorporate counseling intervention to improve psychological wellbeing of NEETs in helping them to find a decent job.

Secondly, in addition to ISKUR, Ministry of Labor and Social Security, Ministry of Youth and Sports and municipalities might play a supportive role for NEETs by including counseling interventions to NEETs to their public policy-making agendas. In specific, youth centers affiliated with Ministry of Youth and Sports and municipalities might constitute counseling centers within their organizational structures and by means of these counseling centers provide counseling services to NEETs.

### **5.3. Recommendations for Future Research**

It is a well-known fact that without through and solid empirical basis, making policy recommendations is not possible. While our research shed some light on the

psychological wellbeing of unemployed youth, there is much progress to be made for designing effective social policies and therapeutic interventions to unemployed youth in Turkey. Therefore, in below, a handful of future research directions were laid out.

Firstly, a more structural perspective might shed light on the intricate relationship among individual, society and psychological wellbeing within the context of working lives of individuals. For instance, Mills (1950/2000) classified two distinct but interrelated concepts: private troubles and public issues. Through the lens of this classification, unemployment is an issue which carries weight for both individuals and public (Rantakeisu et al., 1997). As a private troubles and public concerns, unemployment cannot be resolved resorting to individual level solution. As mentioned above, youth unemployment is closely linked with structural problems. However, most of the studies carried out so far mainly paid attention to individual aspects and the current study is not an exception to this trend. Consequently, an approach which takes into account these two dimensions is required to have a thorough understanding of unemployment and its solution.

Secondly, several studies (e.g., Blustein, 1999, 2019; Blustein et al., 2012; Ezzy, 1993) drew attention to the need for the qualitative studies to capture the full array of living experiences of unemployed individuals. A discovery-oriented methods should be implemented in studies of SWT to grasp what young individuals experience. This position was also echoed in recent studies of Blustein. The recent qualitative study of Blustein (2019) and Lorenzini and Giugni (2016) exemplified the importance and potential advantages to shed light on the (non)working lives of individuals. Indeed, considering that youth unemployment is a chronic problem and being graduated from a university cannot be a cure to this scourge due to political and economic reasons and there is a dearth knowledge on the impact of this turmoil on the psychological wellbeing of youth, conducting a discovery-oriented research come into prominence in Turkey.

Thirdly, the only variable which directly and indirectly associated with psychological wellbeing was self-esteem. Therefore, further research might focus on how and in which ways self-esteem interacts with psychological wellbeing of university graduate NEETs. Identity, guilt, shame, and financial strain might provide a potential research

area in this context. Identity (i.e., who we are) lies at the very heart of psychosocial development and accompanies individuals throughout their lifespan. There are several sources of identity development and work forms the backbone of adult identity as one of those sources (Marcia, 2010). At that point, an appealing and emerging question emerges: What would happen if person were out of labor market? To adjust this question to current context “what would happen if young individuals could not find a decent job after graduating from university?” In specific, the role of vocational identity would be a further research avenue at that point. Considering that young individuals deal with identity issues, vocational identity might furnish them with a sense of self-worth and who they are (Furnham, 1994). Unemployed young individuals had difficulties in establishing such an identity, therefore this identity crisis might be resulted in vulnerability against psychological consequences of unemployment (Hammer, 1993).

Similarly, further research on the potential relationship between guilt and shame surrounding unemployment and psychological wellbeing might be carried out. As early as 30’s, the devastating effect of unemployment concerning shame and guilt on the psychological wellbeing of unemployed young individuals was mentioned. For instance, a formidable body of research (Chabanet et al., 2016; Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, 1938; Monticelli, 2016; Rantakeisu et al., 1997) put a specific emphasis on youth unemployment and the loss of status and feeling of shame. They claimed that specifically for young individuals who must make their earning by themselves, being distant from job market may be a source of shame.

Besides, financial strain, which is manifest benefit of employment, might be of paramount importance to understand the psychological wellbeing of unemployed individuals. A wealth of studies (e.g., Hoare, 2007; Hoare & Machin, 2006, 2009) documented that lack of money is closely linked with diminished psychological wellbeing and job search self-efficacy (e.g., Dahling et al., 2013). Considering that the current global cultural context is conceptualized as the age of consumerism (see Bauman, 2007a), having financial difficulties might be a further burden on psychological wellbeing of young unemployed individuals as it limits the socialization. Indeed, this claim was mirrored in the living experiences of young

unemployed individuals across Europe (see Lahusen & Giugni, 2016). For instance, Bergqvist (2016) and Chabanet et al. (2016) documented that unemployed young individuals how having difficulties in money put restrictions on their expenses, which in turn influenced the way of living, friendships, and their identity. Even worse, young unemployed persons also mentioned that they have difficulties in maintaining romantic relationships due to the lack of money (Lorenzini & Giugni, 2016; Monticelli et al., 2016).

Fourthly, as emphasized in the discussion of the findings neither social support from family nor social support from significant others were found associated with psychological wellbeing of university graduate NEETs. Indeed, the literature on social support revealed that sources of social support might be a both source of backing and conflict (see Hendry & Raymond, 1986). Therefore, further investigations might take into consideration how different social support sources interact with the psychological wellbeing of university graduate NEETs. For example, the reason of why social support from family and significant others might be inquired. At that point, social undermining might also be examined to reveal the conflict between social support sources of university graduate NEETs (see, Lorenzini & Giugni, 2011).

Fifthly, in this study, self-efficacy was measured by General Self-Efficacy Scale (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). However, given the fact that domain specific self-efficacy might provide a more precise information (see Bandura, 1997), further research initiatives might assess domain specific self-efficacy in unemployment context, which is job search self-efficacy (see Caplan et al., 1989; Vîrگا & Rusu, 2018).

Sixthly, in unemployment studies, it is apparent that there is a lack of theoretical orientation which guide the research attempts. Therefore, further studies might utilize a recent theoretical framework (i.e., Psychology of Working Theory; Duffy et al., 2016) for ensuring theoretical unity.

Last but not least, attribution of unemployment might be addressed in further research initiatives. Attribution of unemployment may play a vital role in addressing the issue of how people construe their work lives and the development of social policies

(Blustein et al., 2019). However, in the current scientific work neither external attribution nor internal attribution were documented as related with psychological wellbeing. Interestingly, external and internal attribution were found positively correlated with each other. Therefore, further investigations are required to provide greater insight into the effects of attribution of unemployment. A beginning step might be developing an attribution of unemployment scale sensitive to the current economic and political climate in Turkey regarding youth unemployment. In developing this scale and carrying out a study to examine the role of attribution of unemployment, the theory of Weiner (1985, 1986) might be used as a road map since it provides a comprehensive theoretical framework to attribution studies. Additionally, Blustein et al. (2019) proposed that the study of meritocracy (see Laurin et al., 2011) in investigating the attribution of unemployment would merit further research consideration within the decent work agenda context.

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## APPENDICES

### A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ  
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

DÜMLÜPİNAR BULVARI 06800  
ÇANKAYA ANKARA/TURKEY  
T: +90 312 210 22 91  
F: +90 312 210 79 59  
ueam@metu.edu.tr  
www.ueam.metu.edu.tr

Sayı: 28620816 / 162

16 HAZİRAN 2020

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Oya Yerin GÜNERİ

Danışmanlığını yaptığımız **Büyüamin ATAY**'ın "**Başetme Kaynakları, Bilişsel Değerlendirme, Başetme Yöntemi, İşin Merkeziliği ve Demografik Değişkenlerin İşsiz Gençlerin İyi Oluşları Üzerindeki Etkisinin İncelenmesi**" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve **162 ODTU 2020** protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.

  
Prof. Dr. Mine MISIRLISOY

Başkan

  
Prof. Dr. Tolga CAN

Üye

  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ali Emre TURGUT

Üye

  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ

Üye

Doç. Dr. Pınar KAYGAN

Üye

  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şerife SEVİNÇ

Üye

  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Süreyya Özcan KABASAKAL

Üye

## B. INFORMED CONSENT

Bu araştırma, ODTÜ Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık Bölümü yüksek lisans öğrencisi Bünyamin Atay tarafından Prof. Dr. Oya Yerin Güneri danışmanlığındaki yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Bu form, sizi araştırma koşulları hakkında bilgilendirmek için hazırlanmıştır.

### **Çalışmanın amacı nedir?**

Araştırmanın amacı, hâlihazırda bir işte çalışmayan beliren yetişkinlerin iyilik halini yordayan bazı değişkenlerin incelenmesidir.

### **Bize nasıl yardımcı olmanızı isteyeceğiz?**

Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ederseniz, sizden beklenen, ekte yer alan bir dizi soruyu yanıtlamanızdır. Bu çalışmaya katılım ortalama olarak 10-15 dakikanızı alacaktır.

### **Sizden topladığım bilgileri nasıl kullanacağım?**

Araştırmaya katılımınız tamamen gönüllülük temelinde olmalıdır. Ankette, sizden kimliğinizi ortaya çıkaracak herhangi bir bilgi talep edilmemektedir. Cevaplarınız tamamıyla gizli tutulacak, sadece araştırmacı tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Katılımcılardan elde edilecek bilgiler toplu halde değerlendirilecek ve bilimsel yayınlarda kullanılacaktır. Sağladığımız veriler gönüllü katılım formlarında toplanan kimlik bilgileri ile eşleştirilmeyecektir.

### **Katılımla ilgili bilmeniz gerekenler:**

Anket, genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular içermemektedir. Ancak, katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz cevaplama işini yarıda bırakıp çıkmakta özgürsünüz. Böyle bir durumda anketi uygulayan kişiye anketi tamamlamadığınızı söylemek yeterli olacaktır.

### **Araştırmayla ilgili daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz:**

Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız ve sağladığınız değerli katkılar için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Anket sonunda, bu çalışmayla ilgili sorularınız, isteğinize bağlı olarak

cevaplanacaktır. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için Arş. Gör. Bünyamin Atay (e-posta: [bunyamin.atay@tedu.edu.tr](mailto:bunyamin.atay@tedu.edu.tr)) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve bu çalışmaya **gönüllü olarak** katıldığımı onaylıyorum.

## C. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

Değerli katılımcı,

Aşağıda bazı demografik değişkenlere ilişkin sorular yer almaktadır. Bu soruları lütfen dikkatle okuyunuz ve sizin için en uygun olan seçeneği işaretleyiniz.

**(1) Yaşınız: ....**

**(2) Cinsiyetiniz:**

Kadın

Erkek

Diğer

**(3) Annenizin istihdam durumu:**

İşsiz/Ev hanımı

Devlet memuru

Özel sektör çalışanı

Serbest meslek

Emekli

**(4) Babanızın istihdam durumu:**

İşsiz

Devlet memuru

Özel sektör çalışanı

Serbest meslek

Emekli

**(5) Toplam aylık geliriniz (ailenizden aldığımız harçlık tutarınız ile varsa başka gelirlerinizin toplamı):**

.....

**(6) Ailenizin toplam aylık geliri:**

.....

**(7) Kaldığımız yer:**

Ailemle birlikte yaşıyorum

Arkadaşlarımla kalıyorum.

Yurtta kalıyorum.

Diğer.....

**(8) Kendiniz dahil kaç kardeşiniz?**

Tek çocuğum

2 kardeşiz

3 kardeşiz

4 kardeşiz

5 ya da daha fazla kardeşiz

**(9) Üniversite mezuniyeti genel akademik not ortalamanız (100'lük bir sistemden mezun olduysanız 4'lük not sisteminde denk düşen karşılığını yazınız.): .... /4**

**(10) Üniversiteye giriş yılınız: ....**

**(11) Üniversiteden mezun olduğunuz yıl:**

**(12) Mevcut durumunuzu aşağıdaki ifadelerden hangisi en iyi şekilde tanımlamaktadır?**

Tam zamanlı bir işte çalışıyorum ve bir eğitim programına (Yüksek lisans, doktora, meslek eğitimi, dersane vb.) devam ediyorum.

Yarı zamanlı bir işte çalışıyorum ve bir eğitim programına (Yüksek lisans, doktora, meslek eğitimi, dersane vb.) devam ediyorum.

Herhangi bir işte çalışmıyorum fakat bir eğitim programına (Yüksek lisans, doktora, meslek eğitimi, dersane vb.) devam ediyorum.

Herhangi bir işte çalışmıyorum ve bir eğitim programına (Yüksek lisans, doktora, meslek eğitimi, dersane vb.) devam etmiyorum.

**(13) Mezun olduktan sonra tam zamanlı bir işte çalıştınız mı?**

Evet

Hayır

**(14) 13. soruya cevabınız “Evet” ise ne kadar süre çalıştınız:**

.... yıl, .... ay

**(15) Şu an bir işte çalışıyor musunuz?**

Evet

Hayır

**(16) 15. Soruya cevabınız “Hayır” ise, üniversiteden mezun olduktan sonra bugüne kadar geçen süre içerisinde tam zamanlı ya da yarı zamanlı bir işte çalışmadan işsiz olarak geçirdiğiniz toplam süreyi ay ve yıl olarak belirtiniz?**

..... yıl, .....ay

#### D. SAMPLE ITEMS FROM FLOURISHING SCALE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

1. Amaçlı ve anlamlı bir yaşam sürdürüyorum							
2. Sosyal ilişkilerim destekleyici ve tatmin edicidir.							
8. İnsanlar bana saygı duyar.							

### E. SAMPLE ITEMS FROM SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

	1	2	3	4
1. Bazen kesinlikle kendimin bir işe yaramadığını düşünüyorum.				
7. Kendime karşı olumlu bir tutum içindeyim				
9. Bazı olumlu özelliklerim olduğunu düşünüyorum				

## F. SAMPLE ITEMS FROM GENERAL SELF-EFFICACY SCALE

	1	2	3	4
2. Bana karşı çıkıldığında, istediğimi elde etmemi sağlayacak bir yol ve yöntem bulabilirim.				
5. Yeteneklerim sayesinde beklenmedik durumlarla nasıl baş edebileceğimi biliyorum.				
10. Önüme çıkan zorluk ne olursa olsun, üstesinden gelebilirim.				

### G. SAMPLE ITEMS FROM EMPLOYMENT HOPE SCALE

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. İyi bir işte çalışmaya layığım.										
3. İyi bir işte çalışma yeterliliğine sahibim.										
5. Kariyerli bir işte çalışacağım.										
7. İyi bir işe alınmamı sağlayacak yeteneklerimin farkındayım.										
8. İyi bir işe alınmamı sağlayacak kaynaklarımın farkındayım.										

**H. SAMPLE ITEMS FROM MULTIDIMENSIONAL PERCEIVED SOCIAL  
SUPPORT SCALE**

**1. Ailem (örneğin, annem, babam, eşim, çocuklarım, kardeşlerim) bana yardımcı olmaya çalışır.**

Kesinlikle hayır 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Kesinlikle evet

**3. Arkadaşlarım bana gerçekten yardımcı olmaya çalışırlar.**

Kesinlikle hayır 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Kesinlikle evet

**5. Ailem ve arkadaşlarım dışında olan ve ihtiyacım olduğunda yanımda olan bir insan (örneğin, flört, nişanlı, sözlü, akraba, komşu, doktor) var.**

Kesinlikle hayır 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Kesinlikle evet

## I. SAMPLE ITEMS FROM WORK INVOLVEMENT SCALE

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Bir işte çalışmak bana yaşamımla ilgili bir şeyler yaptığımı hissettirir.					
2. Bir işe sahip olmak benim için çok önemlidir.					
3. İşsiz olmaktan hoşlanmıyorum.					
4. Çalışmadığım zaman kendimi iyi hissetmiyorum.					

## J. SAMPLE ITEMS FROM ATTRIBUTION OF UNEMPLOYMENT SCALE

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Geçici hastalıklar					
2. Özel becerilerin eksikliği					
3. Fiziksel kusurlar					
19. Devletin yeterli iş imkanı yaratamaması					
20. Özel sektörün yeterli iş imkanı sunamaması					
21. Özel sektördeki iş sayısında azalma					
22. İşverenlerin eğitim ve tecrübe konusunda gerçekçi olmayan beklentileri					

## K. SAMPLE ITEMS FROM JOB SEARCH MOTIVATION SCALE

1. Okulu veya askerliđi bitirdikten sonra bir işte çalışmayı ne derecede istediniz?

---

1	2	3	4	5
Hiç istedim	Pek istemedim	Ne istedim ne istemedim	Biraz istedim	Çok istedim

---

2. Şu anda bir işte çalışmaya ne derecede ihtiyacınız olduğunu hissediyorsunuz?

---

1	2	3	4	5
Hiç yok	Pek yok	Ne var ne yok	Biraz var	Çok var

---

## L. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

### 1. GİRİŞ

Dünya Sağlık Örgütü'nün (DSÖ) tanımına göre sağlık “*yalnızca hastalık ve sakatlığın olmaması değil, tam bir fiziksel, ruhsal ve sosyal iyi oluşun mevcut olmasıdır*” (WHO, 2020, s.1). Bu tanımdan hareketle, pozitif psikoloji yaklaşımının ortaya çıkmasından beri psikolojik iyi oluş yalnızca psikolojik rahatsızlıkların olmadığı fakat aynı zamanda esenliğin, tam işlerliğin ve yaşamın gerekliliklerini yerine getirebilmenin mevcut olması olarak kavramsallaştırılmıştır (Diener ve ark., 2009; Diener ve ark., 2010; Jahoda, 1958; Keyes, 2013; Ryff ve Singer, 2003; Seligman, 2002). Son 30 yıla uzanan bir süreçte hem akademik çevrelerden hem de halk nezdinde psikolojik iyi oluş önem verilen bir konudur. Bireysel açıdan incelendiğinde zarar görmüş psikolojik iyi oluşun sağlık üzerine olumsuz etkileri ve benzer şekilde yüksek psikolojik iyi oluşun sağlığa yönelik koruyucu rolü ortaya konmuştur (Diener ve Chan, 2011; Howell ve ark., 2007; Steptoe ve ark., 2015). Toplumsal düzeyde ele alındığında ise, gayri safi milli hasıla yerine ülkelerin gelişmişlikleri vatandaşlarının psikolojik iyi oluşuyla da ölçülmektedir (Diener, 2010; Diener ve ark., 2015).

Psikolojik iyi oluşla iç içe geçmiş en önemli alanlardan birisi iş hayatıdır (Duffy ve ark., 2016; Richardson, 1993). Bireye ve topluma sunduğu faydalar göze önüne alındığında iş yaşamı insanların hayatında merkezi bir unsurdur (Blustein, 2019; Blustein ve ark., 2019). Çalışma aracılığıyla bireyler geçimlerini sürdürmek için para kazanmanın yanında en temel psikolojik ihtiyaçlarını (ör., amaç ve anlam) karşılarlar ve yaşamın ekonomik, siyasi ve sosyal üst katmanlarıyla da temas halinde olurlar (Blustein, 2006, 2019; Blustein ve ark., 2019; Duffy ve ark., 2016; Jahoda, 1981).

Erikson'un (1993) ifade ettiği gibi, yaşam belli gelişim dönemlerinden oluşmaktadır ve her yaşam döneminin kendine özgü bir güçlüğü, üstesinden gelinmesi gereken bir gelişim görevi vardır. İş yaşamının merkeziliği göz önünde bulundurulduğunda okuldan iş hayatına geçiş süreci, bu önemli gelişim görevlerinden biri olarak

düşünülebilir (Blustein, 2008; Fouad ve Bynner, 2008). Okuldan iş hayatına geçiş, genç bireyin resmi eğitimini tamamladıktan sonra iş piyasasına dahil olması sürecini kapsar ve mevcut işsizlik rakamları ve iş piyasasındaki belirsizlik bir arada düşünüldüğünde bu sürecin birey ve toplum için ne gibi zorlukları beraberinde getirdiği anlaşılabilir (Byun, 2018; Lowe ve ark., 1988; Van der Horst ve ark., 2021). Başarısız olmuş bir okuldan iş yaşamına geçiş süreci işsizlikle sonuçlanmaktadır (Lowe ve ark., 1988).

İş hayatının bireylerin ve toplumların gündelik yaşam dokusunun asli unsurlarından biri olması nedeniyle, işsiz yaşam bireylerin psikolojik iyi oluşlarına ciddi bir tehdit oluşturmaktadır (Blustein, 2008, 2019; Blustein et al., 2019). 30'lu yıllardan günümüze uzanan ve psikolojik iyi oluş ile işsiz yaşam arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen çalışmalar işsiz yaşamın bireylerin iyi oluşları üzerindeki olumsuz ve yıkıcı etkisini ortaya koymuştur. Bu çalışmalara (örn., Bartelink ve ark., 2020; Björklund ve Eriksson, 1998; Blustein, 2019; Eisenberg ve Lazarsfeld, 1938; McKee-Ryan ve ark., 2005; Thern ve ark., 2019; Wanberg, 2012; Warr ve ark., 1988; Winefield, 1993) bakıldığında en önemli eksikliklerden birisi genç grubun yeteri kadar araştırılmamasıdır. Oysaki işsiz yaşam karşısında en kırılgan ve incinebilir gruplardan birisi genç nüfustur (Arnett, 2015; Arnett ve ark., 2014; Backeberg ve Busse, 2018; Fend, 1994; Furnham, 1994; Konstam ve ark., 2015; Liu ve ark., 2021).

Öncelikli olarak, gelişimsel bir bakış açısından bakıldığında, bireylerin ailelerinden ayrılarak kendi bağımsız yaşamlarını kurdukları gençlikten yetişkinliğe geçiş süreci çok önemli bir yere sahiptir (Lorenzini ve Giugni, 2016; Monticelli ve ark., 2016). Toplumların geleceği de bu geçişin sağlıklı bir şekilde gerçekleşmesine bağlıdır. İş hayatına yerleşme, aile evinden ayrılma, kendi ailesini kurma yetişkin yaşamın göstergeleri arasında yer almaktadır ve bu göstergelerden iş hayatına geçiş, sonuçları itibariyle önemlidir. Çünkü diğer göstergeler bir ölçüde iş hayatına başarılı bir geçiş süreciyle ilişkilidir. Birey kendi hayatını kendisi kazanmadığı müddetçe diğer rollere ulaşması kolay olmayacaktır.

İkinci olarak, erken dönemde tecrübe edilen işsiz yaşamın uzun vadeli yıpratıcı etkileri bulunmaktadır. Erken dönemdeki işsizliğin gençlerin ilerleyen yaşlarına olan olumsuz etkisi “yara etkisi” olarak tanımlanmaktadır ve çeşitli biçimler alabilmektedir

(Blustein ve ark., 2012; Daly ve Delaney, 2013; Lahusen ve Giugni, 2016; Strandh ve ark., 2014). Uzun dönemli işsizlik (Hammer, 1993, 1997; Hammer & Hyggen, 2010; Kahn, 2010; Winkelmann ve Winkelmann, 1998), işverenlerin geçmişinde işsizlik dönemleri bulunan gençleri tercih etmeme eğilimi (Tholen, 2014), gelecekte kazanılacak maaşın düşük olması (Mroz ve Savage, 2006), düşük iş tatmini (Tholen, 2014), mutsuzluk (Clark ve Lepinteur, 2019; Tholen, 2014), zayıf beden (Tholen, 2014) ve ruh sağlığı (Axelsson ve Ejlertsson, 2002) sorunları bu yara etkileri arasında düşünülebilir.

Genç işsizliğine dair yapılan çalışmaların önemli eksikliklerinden birisi ise kimin genç olduğu ve kimin işsiz genç olduğuna yöneliktir. 16-18 (Fergusson ve ark., 2014; Heinz ve ark., 1994; Warr ve ark., 1988), 15-24 (Çelik ve Lüküslü, 2018; Heinz ve ark., 1994), 18-25 (McGee ve Thompson, 2015), 18-29 (Blustein ve ark., 1997) gibi farklı yaş grupları araştırmalara genç örneklemleri olarak dahil edilmiştir. Benzer şekilde, bazı araştırmalar (Goldman-Mellor ve ark., 2016; Zuelke ve ark., 2018) “Şu an işsiz misiniz?” şeklinde bireyin kendini anlattığı sorulara dayanırken, diğerleri (Axelsson ve Ejlertsson, 2002; Bjarnason ve Sigurdardottir, 2003; Thern ve ark., 2017) belirli bir süre (ör. en az üç ay) kayıtlı işsiz olmayı çalışmaya dahil olma ölçütü olarak belirlemiştir. Bu sorunların üstesinden gelmek için İngiliz Hükümeti’nin bir kolu olan Sosyal Dışlanma Birimi (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999) yeni bir kavram ortaya atmıştır: “Ne Eğitimde Ne İstihdamda Ne de Yetiştirmede (NEİY, Not in Education, Employment or Training-NEET) yer alan gençler”. İlk olarak 16-18 yaş arasındaki bireyleri kapsayan bu tanım zamanla genişlemiş ve 19-26 (Gutiérrez-García ve ark., 2018), 18-30 (Juberg and Skjefstad, 2019) ve 25-29 (Salvà-Mut ve ark., 2018) gibi yaş gruplarını da içermiştir.

Bu noktada, mevcut çalışma için belirli bir yaş ölçütü seçmenin zorunluluğu ortaya çıkmaktadır. Çelik ve Lüküslü’nün (2018) gençliğin biyolojik bir sınıflandırma değil de, temelde sosyal bir bölümlenme olduğu iddiası göz önüne alındığında, yakın zamanda değişen gençlik yapısına dair ileri sürülen beliren yetişkinlik kavramı bir kıstas olarak alınabilir (Arnett, 2000). İlk başlarda, 18-25 yaş arasındaki bireyleri içine alan bu kavram daha sonra 18-29 yaş aralığına genişlemiştir (bkz., Arnett, 2000; Arnett

ve ark., 2014). OECD ve ILO gibi kurumların raporlarını da göz önüne aldığımızda, 18-29 yaş arasındaki beliren yetişkinleri genç olarak düşünmek uygun olacaktır.

Genel olarak tüm dünyadaki ve özel olarak Türkiye'deki çalkantılı siyasi ve ekonomik durum toplum ve bireyler için ciddi zorluklar meydana getirmektedir. Özellikle, genç nüfus ekonomik belirsizlik sebebiyle çeşitli güçlüklerle karşılaşmaktadır. Bu sorunlar arasında, iş piyasasına dahil olmadaki güçlük en belirginidir (Çelik ve Lüküslü, 2018; Sümer ve ark., 2013). Türkiye'deki NEİY gençlerin oranı genç nüfusun 3'te 1'lik kısmını aşmaktadır (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2020b). OECD ülkelerindeki ortalamalarla kıyaslandığında genç işsizliğinin ne ölçüde ciddi bir sorun olduğu ortaya çıkmaktadır. NEİY grubu daha yakından incelendiğinde ise daha karanlık bir tablo ortaya çıkmaktadır: artan üniversite mezunu genç işsizler.

Mevcut genç işsizliği çalışmaları ve okuldan iş yaşamına geçiş yaklaşımları üniversite mezunu gençlerden ziyade lise mezunu gençlere odaklanmaktadır (ör., Blustein ve ark., 1997; Ryan, 2001; Winefield, 1993; Winefield ve Tiggemann, 1985; Worthington ve Juntunen, 1997). Bu odağın temel nedeni üniversite eğitiminin işsizliği büyük ölçüde ortadan kaldıracığı düşüncesidir. Bu sebeple 60'lardan itibaren Avrupa'da üniversiteler yaygınlaşmıştır (bkz., Bertram, 1994). Benzer bir eğilim 2000'li yıllardan itibaren Türkiye'de de görülmüştür. Fakat artan üniversite sayıları var olan genç işsizliğine yeni bir sorun noktası eklemiştir. Türkiye'de yapılan çalışmalar üniversite mezunu olmanın işsiz olmak için bir risk unsuru oluşturabileceğini ortaya koymuştur.

Türkiye'nin müzmin işsizlik sorunu düşünüldüğünde, işsiz yaşamla bireylerin ruhsal sağlığını araştırarak araştırmaların yok denecek kadar az oluşu bir tezat teşkil etmektedir. Özellikle, iş bulma umuduyla alınan üniversite eğitiminin arzu edileni sağlamaması ve beliren yetişkinlerin yetişkinliğe geçişlerini sağlayacak işe kavuşamamaları da düşünüldüğünde üniversite mezunu NEİY bireylere yönelik araştırmalara acilen ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Stres ve Başetme Yaklaşımı (Lazarus ve Folkman, 1984) ve Kaynakların Korunumu Kuramı (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002), stresli durumlarla baş eden bireylerden daha çok kaynağa sahip olanların, ruhsal sağlıkları açısından daha iyi durumda olacaklarını ileri sürmektedir. Bu bakış açısından hareketle, üniversite mezunu işsiz gençlerden daha çok kaynağa sahip olanların daha

az kaynağa sahip olanlara göre psikolojik iyi oluş açısından daha iyi durumda olduğunu iddia etmek mümkündür. Özellikle, kişisel kaynaklar (benlik saygısı, öz-yetkinlik ve iş umudu), sosyal kaynaklar (genel sosyal destek, aileden gelen sosyal destek, arkadaştan gelen sosyal destek ve özel birinden gelen sosyal destek) ve iş kaynakları (işin merkeziliği, işsizliğin atfedilmesi ve iş arama motivasyonu) işsiz üniversite mezunu genç bireylerin psikolojik iyi oluşları için oldukça önemlidir. Bu sebeple, bu değişkenler temel alınarak Türkiye'deki üniversite mezunu NEİY bireylerin psikolojik iyi oluşlarına dair yalın fakat açıklayıcı bir model oluşturmak için incelenmiştir.

### **1.1 Çalışmanın Amacı**

Bu araştırmada, Türkiye'deki üniversite mezunu NEİY bireylerin psikolojik iyi oluşlarıyla ilişkili değişkenlerin belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Mevcut alanyazında kişisel kaynakların (benlik saygısı, öz-yetkinlik ve iş umudu), sosyal kaynakların (genel sosyal destek, aileden gelen sosyal destek, arkadaştan gelen sosyal destek ve özel birinden gelen sosyal destek) ve iş kaynaklarının (işin merkeziliği, işsizliğin atfedilmesi ve iş arama motivasyonu) işsiz bireylerin iyi oluşlarıyla ilişkili olduğu bulunmuştur. Bu çalışmada özellikle bu değişkenlerin yalnız doğrudan ilişkileri değil aynı zamanda dolaylı ilişkileri de incelenmiştir. Dahası, genel sosyal destek ve sosyal destek kaynaklarının (aile, arkadaş ve özel biri) arasındaki ayrım dikkate alınarak iki model oluşturulmuş ve test edilmiştir.

Bu araştırmaya yön veren ana araştırma sorusu:

Kişisel kaynaklar (benlik saygısı, öz-yetkinlik ve iş umudu), sosyal kaynaklar (genel sosyal destek, aileden gelen sosyal destek, arkadaştan gelen sosyal destek ve özel birinden gelen sosyal destek) ve iş kaynakları (işin merkeziliği, işsizliğin atfedilmesi ve iş arama motivasyonu) Türkiye'deki üniversite mezunu NEİY bireylerin psikolojik iyi oluşlarını açıklamaya ne ölçüde katkı sunmaktadır?

## 1.2 Çalışmanın Önemi

Bu araştırma, kişisel, sosyal ve iş kaynaklarının Türkiye’deki üniversite mezunu NEİY bireylerin psikolojik iyi oluşlarındaki rolünü inceleyen ilk çalışmadır. Dolayısıyla, birçok açıdan önemlidir.

Öncelikli olarak bu çalışmada bireysel psikolojik danışma ve mesleki psikolojik danışma arasında bir köprü kurulmaya çalışılmıştır. Her ne kadar tarihsel olarak psikolojik danışmada bireylerin ruh sağlığı ve kariyer gelişimleri bir arada irdelense de zaman içinde bu bağ zayıflamıştır. Halbuki okuldan işe geçiş sürecinde psikolojik danışma hayati bir rol oynayabilir (bkz., Blustein, 2006, 2011; Blustein ve ark., 2012; Richardson, 1996; Tang ve ark., 2021; Worthington ve Juntunen, 1997). İşsizlik ve ruh sağlığı araştırmaları bu sürecin daha sağlıklı bir şekilde yürütülebilmesi için oluşturulacak olan müdahalelere ışık tutabilir. İkinci olarak, psikolojik iyi oluş psikolojik rahatsızlıkların yokluğu olarak değil, aksine psikososyal işleyiş olarak kavramsallaştırılmıştır (Lent., 2004). İşsizlik ve ruh sağlığı çalışmalarına göz atıldığında ağırlıklı olarak psikolojik stresin incelendiği görülebilir. Fakat psikolojik danışmanın tarihi gelişimi de göz önüne alındığında büyüme ve olumlu gelişime odaklanmak yerinde olacaktır.

Üçüncü olarak, doğrudan ve dolaylı ilişkilere odaklanılarak, işsiz bireylerin iyi oluşlarına dair derinlemesine bir bilgi sunulmaya çalışılmıştır. İşsizlik ve ruh sağlığı çalışmalarının ağırlıklı bir kısmı, çalışan ve işsiz bireylerin iyi oluşlarının araştırılması üzerinde şekillenmektedir. Halbuki, Wanberg’in (2012) de işaret ettiği gibi, müteakip araştırmaların işsiz bireylerin iyi oluşlarına giden yolu incelemesi daha uygun olacaktır. Ayrıca, McKee-Ryan ve ark.’larının (2005) sınıflamasını temel alarak gerçekleştirilen en kapsamlı çalışmalardan birinde Hoare (2007), yapısal eşitlik modelleri kullanılarak daha yalın bir model elde etmeye yönelik ihtiyaca dikkat çekmiştir. Böylelikle işsizliğin bireylerin iyi oluşlarına yönelik olumsuz etkilerine yönelik koruyucu etkenler detaylı bir şekilde irdelenebilecektir.

Dördüncü olarak, çalışmanın örneklem grubunu üniversite mezunu bireyler oluşturmaktadır. Alanyazına bakıldığında genç ve yetişkin bireylerin arasında ayrımın çok fazla dikkate alınmadığı görülmektedir (örn., Blustein et al. 1997; Ryan, 2001;

Worthington & Juntunen, 1997). Gençlere yönelik yapılan çalışmalara bakıldığında ise ağırlığın lise mezunu işsiz gençler üzerinde toplandığı görülmektedir. Halbuki tüm dünyada süregiden belirsizlik gençleri iş dünyası karşısında kırılğan bir hale getirmiştir ve neticesinde gençler daha parçalı bir kariyer örüntüsü izlemektedirler. İş dünyasına girişin zorlaşmasının bir sonucu genç grubun üst yaş sınırının 25'ten 30'lara uzamasıdır (Arnett, 2015). Üniversite mezunu bireyler açısından değerlendirildiğinde ise işsizliğe yönelik araştırmaların diğer bir önemi ortaya çıkmaktadır. Kaynakların Korunumu Kuramı (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002; Merino ve ark., 2019) temel alınarak, genç mezunların yaptıkları eğitim yatırımının karşılığını alamamış olmalarının daha büyük bir stresle sonuçlanabileceği iddia edilebilir. Bu sebeple, üniversite mezunu NEİY'lere yönelik araştırmalara ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

Son olarak, bu araştırma, üniversite mezunu NEİY bireylerin iyi oluşlarıyla ilişkili etmenlere yönelik gerçekleştirilen ilk çalışmadır. İşsizlik, özellikle genç işsizliği, Türkiye'de müzmin bir sorundur ve COVID-19 pandemisi bu sorunu daha da içinden çıkılmaz bir hale getirmiştir. Kahn (2010), sendeleyeni ekonomi zamanlarında üniversite mezunlarının iş dünyasında yollarının bulabilmelerinin zorlaştığını ve bu olumsuz sonuçların uzun vadede de devam ettiğini ortaya koymuştur. Bu iddiayı destekler nitelikte, pandemi zamanında gençlerin iş piyasasına erişimini konu alan bir raporda Türkiye'de gençlerin iş dünyasına ulaşım konusunda yaşadığı sıkıntılar ortaya konulmuştur (ILO, 2021b). Durumun ciddiyetine rağmen bilimsel çalışmaların sınırlı olduğu göz önüne alındığında, Türkiye'deki NEİY bireylerin iyi oluşlarında kişisel, sosyal ve iş kaynaklarının rolünü inceleyen mevcut çalışmanın önemi ortaya çıkmaktadır.

## **2. YÖNTEM**

### **2.1 Araştırmanın Deseni**

Bu araştırmada, üniversite mezunu NEİY bireylerin kişisel, sosyal ve iş kaynaklarıyla iyi oluşları arasındaki doğrudan ve dolaylı ilişkiler incelenmiştir. Ana amacın bağımlı ve bağımsız değişkenler arasındaki ilişkinin gücünü tek bir zaman diliminde toplanan veri esas alınarak ortaya koyulması ve değişkenler arasında herhangi bir neden sonuç ilişkisi kurulmaya çalışılmaması sebebiyle ilişkisel araştırma deseni

benimsenmiştir (Fraenkel ve ark., 2012; Shaughnessy ve ark., 2012). Betimleyici ve çıkarımsal istatistikler IBM Statistical Packages of Social Sciences (SPSS) 24 and STATA 16 paket programlarından faydalanılarak yürütülmüştür.

## 2.2 Örneklem ve İşlem

Çalışmanın ulaşılabilir evrenini şu an herhangi bir işte çalışmayan ve herhangi bir eğitim programına kayıtlı olmayan, üniversite mezunu beliren yetişkinler oluşturmaktadır. Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu'ndan araştırma izni alındıktan sonra LimeSurvey kullanılarak katılımcılara kartopu örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak ulaşılmış ve veriler 1 Temmuz 2020 – 1 Eylül 2020 tarihleri arasında toplanmıştır. İlk olarak araştırmacı işsiz bir grup gence e-posta aracılığıyla ulaşmıştır. Devamında araştırmacı, ilk gruptaki katılımcılardan örnekleme uyan diğer arkadaşlarını da araştırmaya davet etmesini rica etmiştir. İlk gruptaki katılımcılar arkadaşlarının onayını aldıktan sonra ya araştırmanın çevrimiçi bağlantısını arkadaşlarıyla paylaşmışlar ya da arkadaşlarının iletişim bilgisini araştırmacıya vermişlerdir. Bu işlem ikinci ve üçüncü gruptaki katılımcılarla da devam etmiştir. Anket formunu açan katılımcılar, ilk olarak çalışmanın amacını belirten ve araştırmaya gönüllü katılımlarına dair bir bilgi formunun yer aldığı bir formla karşılaşmışlardır ve gönüllü katılımlarına onay veren “evet” tuşuna tıklayarak araştırmanın ölçme araçlarının olduğu kısma geçmişlerdir. Ölçme setinin toplanması ortalama 7-15 dakika arasında sürmektedir. Katılımcılar çalışmaya katılımları karşılığında herhangi bir ödül almamışlardır.

Toplamda 305 üniversite mezunu NEİY çalışmanın anketini tamamlamıştır. Çok değişkenli uç değerler sebebiyle 14 katılımcının verisi çalışmadan çıkarılmıştır. Geri kalan katılımcı sayısı yapısal eşitlik modeli kullanılarak gerçekleştirilen yol analizi için yeterli büyüklüktedir. 291 üniversite mezunu NEİY katılımcının (215 kadın ve 76 erkek) yaşları 21-29 ( $Ort = 24.12$ ,  $SS = 1.53$ ) arasındadır. Katılımcıların mezun olduklarından itibaren işsiz geçirdikleri toplam ay sayısı bir aydan daha az ve 60 ay ( $Ort = 12$ ,  $SS = 11.33$ ) arasında değişmektedir. Katılımcıların mezuniyet not ortalamaları ise 2.05 ve 3.94 ( $Ort = 2.97$ ,  $SD = .39$ ) aralığındadır.

Katılımcıların çok büyük bir bölümü ailesiyle (% 88.3), 8'i arkadaşlarıyla, 3'ü yurttan yaşamaktadır ve geri kalan 23 katılımcı ise yaşadığı yer olarak diğer seçeneğini işaretlemiştir. Katılımcıların çoğu iki kardeş (%44), 89'u üç kardeş (%30.6), 40'ı dört kardeş (%13.7), 21'i 5 veya daha fazla kardeş ve 14'ü ise (%4.8) tek kardeştir. Katılımcıların büyük bir kısmının annesi ev hanımıdır (%72.5), 23'ü devlet memuru (%7.9), 23'ü özel sektör çalışanı, 26'sı emekli (%8.9) ve 8'i serbest meslek mensubudur(%2.7). Katılımcıların babalarının büyük bir çoğunluğu emekli, 52'si (17.9%) devlet memuru, 50'si (17.2%) serbest meslek mensubu, 48'i (16.5%) özel sektör çalışanı ve 16'sı (5.5%) ise işsizdir.

### **2.3 Ölçme Araçları**

Bu çalışmada araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen bir demografik bilgi formu, Psikolojik İyi Oluş Ölçeği (Diener et al., 2009), İş Umudu Ölçeği (Hong ve ark., 2012), Rosenberg Benlik Saygısı Ölçeği (Rosenberg, 1965), Genel Öz-Yetkinlik Ölçeği (Schwarzer ve Jerusalem, 1995), Çok Boyutlu Algılanan Sosyal Destek Ölçeği (Zimet ve ark., 1988), İşe Bağlılık Ölçeği (Warr ve ark., 1979), İşsizliği Atfetme Stili (Feather ve Davenport, 1981) ve İş Arama Motivasyonu Ölçeği (Feather ve Davenport, 1981) katılımcılara çevrimiçi bir form aracılığıyla uygulanmıştır.

### **2.4 Çalışmanın Sınırlılıkları**

Her çalışmanın kendine ait sınırlılıkları vardır ve bu çalışma da bu duruma bir istisna teşkil etmez. NEİY grubunun ayırıcı yanları olan eğitim kurumlarından ve iş piyasasından uzak olmak bu gruba ulaşmayı güçleştirmektedir. COVID-19 pandemisi ise var olan bu güçlüğü yeni bir güçlük daha eklemiş ve araştırmacının yüz yüze ve kağıt-kalem aracılığıyla veri toplamasını engellemiştir. Dolayısıyla veriler çevrimiçi ortamda toplanmıştır. Bu durum bir sınırlılık olarak ele alınabilir. Yine de çevrimiçi toplanan verilerin de kullanılabileceğine yönelik çalışmalar bulunmaktadır (ör. Blau ve ark., 2013). Ayrıca demografik bilgi formunda yer alan eğitim, iş durumu, işsizlik süresi ve mezuniyet yılı gibi sorularla bu sınırlılık ortadan kaldırılmaya çalışılmıştır. İkinci olarak katılımcılara ulaşmak için kartopu yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bu durum yanlı bir örneklem grubunun ortaya çıkmasına neden olmuş olabilir. Örneğin çalışmada kadın ve erkek katılımcıların sayısı arasındaki dengesizlik buradan

kaynaklanmış olabilir. Fakat, bu durumun engellenmesi için çeşitli demografik özelliklere sahip katılımcılara ulaşılmaya çalışılmıştır. Ek olarak, katılımcıların babalarının yarısına yakını emeklidir ve dörtte üçünün annesi evkadınıdır. Bu sebeple, Türkiye'deki üniversite mezunu NEİY bireylerin yer aldığı büyük topluluğa bu sonuçları genellemek doğru olmayacaktır. Benzer şekilde çalışmada kendi kendini değerlendirme ölçme araçları kullanılmıştır. Bu durum da yanlılığa neden olmuş olabilir. Fakat, bireyin kendini nasıl algıladığı bu çalışmanın ana amacı olduğu için bu sınırlılık da göz ardı edilebilir.

Diğer bir sınırlılık ise kadın ve erkek katılımcı sayılarının arasındaki eşitsizliktir. İlk bakışta, çalışmanın sonuçlarının bu sebeple genellenemeyeceği düşünülebilir. Fakat, karşı bir sav olarak bu durumun Türkiye'deki NEİY evreninin bir yansıması olabileceği de ortaya atılabilir. Uluslararası İş Örgütü'nün son raporlarından birinde de açıkça görüleceği üzere NEİY erkek (17.3%) ve NEİY kadın (44.7%) gençlerin dağılımında devasa bir farklılık bulunmaktadır (bkz., ILO, 2021b).

Çalışmanın verileri her ne kadar 4 aylık bir kapanma sürecinin ardından gelen normalleşme döneminde toplansa da, COVID-19 pandemisinin işsiz gençlerin psikolojik iyi oluşları üzerinde bir etkisi olmadığı iddia edilemez. Var olan genel belirsizlik hali ve kötüye giden ekonomi bu dönemde NEİY bireylerin üzerinde olumsuz etki yaratmış olabilir. Dolayısıyla sonuçların bu gözle de değerlendirilmesi gerekir.

#### **2.4 Veri Analizi**

Betimleyici ve çıkarımsal istatistikler SPSS 24 ve STATA 16 paket programları aracılığıyla yürütülmüştür. İlk olarak, kayıp verileri, aralık dışında yer alan verileri ve demografik bilgilerin ve çalışmanın değişkenlerinin ortalama ve standart sapma puanlarını belirlemek için bir dizi betimleyici istatistik yürütülmüştür. Devamında ise varsayımların (ör. varsayımların homojenliği) ihlal edilip edilmediği incelendikten sonra katılımcıların psikolojik iyi oluş puanlarında anlamlı bir fark olup olmadığını anlamak için bağımsız örneklem t testi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Son olarak ise, ana analiz olarak, ilgili varsayımlar (ör. çoklu doğrusallık) kontrol edildikten sonra kişisel, sosyal

ve iş kaynaklarının Türkiye'deki NEİY bireylerin psikolojik iyi oluşlarıyla doğrudan ve dolaylı ilişkilerini incelemek için iki adet yol analizi yürütülmüştür.

### 3. BULGULAR

#### 3.1 Ön Analiz

İşsizlik araştırmaları geleneğinde erkeğin ailenin geçimini sağlayan kişi rolü sebebiyle kadınlara göre işsizlikten daha fazla etkilendikleri düşünülmektedir (Kulik, 2000). Ayrıca mevcut çalışmada da kadınlar ve erkeklerin dağılımı eşit değildir. Bu sebeplerle, her ne kadar cinsiyet çalışmanın bir değişkeni değilse de, herhangi bir yanlı sonucu engellemek için, ana analize geçilmeden önce katılımcıların cinsiyetlerine göre psikolojik iyi oluşlarının değişip değişmediği incelenmiştir.

Genel olarak bağımsız örneklem t testinin yürütülmesi için karşılaştırılacak grupların eşit sayıda olması beklenmektedir. Yine de, karşılaştırma gruplarının varyanslarının türdeşliği sağlandığı takdirde bağımsız örneklem t testi kullanılabilir (Gravetter ve Wallnau, 2017; Green ve Salkind, 2014; Field, 2018). Levene varyansların eşliği testi istatistiksel olarak anlamsız bulunmuştur,  $F(289) = .786, p = .376$ . Diğer bir deyişle, karşılaştırma gruplarının varyansları türdeşdir. Bu noktadan hareketle bağımsız örneklem t testi yürütülmüştür. NEİY kadınların ortalama puanları ( $Ort. = 41.73, SS = 7.33$ ) erkeklerin ortalama puanlarından ( $Ort. = 39.95, SS = 8.08$ ) yüksektir. Fakat, bu fark istatistiksel olarak anlamlı değildir,  $t(289) = 1.779, p = 0.76, 95 \% CI [-.19, 3.76]$ .

#### 3.2 Model Testi

Zayıf uyum istatistiklerine sahip yol analizi sonuçları dikkate alınmayacağından, yol analizi sonuçlarına geçmeden önce ilk olarak modellerin uyum istatistikleri kontrol edilmiştir (Acock, 2013). Hem birinci modelin [ $\chi^2(9) = 13.962; p > .05; RMSEA = .044 (.000, .086), p > .05; CFI = .986; SRMR = .025$ ] hem de ikinci modelin [ $\chi^2(11) = 14.263; p > .05; RMSEA = .032 (.000, .073), p > .05; CFI = .991; SRMR = .023$ ] uyum değerleri iyi düzeydedir (bkz., Acock, 2013; Hu ve Bentler, 1999; Keith, 2019; Kline, 2016; Schermelleh-Engel ve ark., 2003).

Normal olmayan verilerin analiz edilmesine ve dolaylı ilişkileri detaylı bir şekilde incelemeye olanak sağladığı için iki yol analizi de 1000 tekrarlı ve %95 güven aralıklı bootstrapping ile yürütülmüştür. Yol analizi sonuçları hem istatistiksel olarak anlamlı hem de anlamsız doğrudan ve dolaylı yolların varlığını ortaya koymuştur. Birinci model incelendiğinde işe bağlılığın ( $\beta = .37, p < .001$ ) ve öz yetkinliğin ( $\beta = .14, p < .05$ ) iş arama motivasyonu ile doğrudan ilişkili olduğu görülürken, işsizliğin içsel ( $\beta = -.04, p > .05$ ) ve dışsal atfının ( $\beta = .03, p > .05$ ) istatistiksel olarak bir doğrudan ilişkisi saptanamamıştır. İş arama motivasyonundaki toplam varyansın %18'i öz yetkinlik, işe bağlılık, işsizliğin içsel ve dışsal atfıyla açıklanmaktadır. Benlik saygısının ( $\beta = .26, p < .001$ ), öz yetkinliğin ( $\beta = .35, p < .001$ ), genel sosyal desteğin ( $\beta = .16, p < .001$ ) ve iş arama motivasyonunun ( $\beta = .22, p < .001$ ) doğrudan, işe bağlılığın ( $\beta = .08, p < .01$ ) ve öz yetkinliğin ( $\beta = .03, p < .05$ ) ise iş arama motivasyonu aracılığıyla iş umuduyla ilişkili olduğu bulunmuştur. İşsizliğin içe ( $\beta = -.01, p > .05$ ) ve dışa atfıyla ( $\beta = .01, p > .05$ ) iş umudunun istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişkisi tespit edilememiştir. Bu model iş umudundaki toplam varyansın %45'ini açıklamaktadır. Son olarak, benlik saygısı ( $\beta = .39, p < .001$ ) ve iş umudu ( $\beta = .21, p < .001$ ) doğrudan, öz yetkinlik ( $\beta = .08, p < .01$ ) ve işe bağlılığın ( $\beta = .02, p < .05$ ) iş arama motivasyonu ve iş umudu aracılığıyla dolaylı olarak ve benlik saygısı ( $\beta = .05, p < .01$ ), genel sosyal destek ( $\beta = .03, p < .05$ ) ve iş arama motivasyonunun ( $\beta = .05, p < .05$ ) iş umudu aracılığıyla dolaylı olarak psikolojik iyi oluşla ilişkili olduğu bulunmuştur. Fakat işsizliğin içe ( $\beta = -.00, p > .05$ ) ve dışa atfıyla ( $\beta = .00, p > .05$ ) psikolojik iyi oluş arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişkiye rastlanmamıştır. Bu sonuçlara göre, psikolojik iyi oluşun toplam varyansındaki %36'lık değişim bu modelle açıklanmıştır.

İkinci modele göz atıldığında ise işe bağlılığın ( $\beta = .37, p < .001$ ) ve öz yetkinliğin ( $\beta = .14, p < .05$ ) iş arama motivasyonu ile doğrudan ilişkili olduğu görülürken, işsizliğin içsel ( $\beta = -.04, p > .05$ ) ve dışsal atfının ( $\beta = .03, p > .05$ ) istatistiksel olarak doğrudan bir ilişkisi saptanamamıştır. İş arama motivasyonundaki toplam varyansın %18'i öz yetkinlik, işe bağlılık, işsizliğin içsel ( $\beta = -.01, p > .05$ ) ve dışsal atfıyla açıklanmaktadır. Benlik saygısının ( $\beta = .25, p < .001$ ), öz yetkinliğin ( $\beta = .35, p < .001$ ) ve iş arama motivasyonunun ( $\beta = .22, p < .001$ ) doğrudan, işe bağlılığın ( $\beta = .08, p < .01$ ) ve öz yetkinliğin ( $\beta = .03, p < .05$ ) ise iş arama motivasyonu aracılığıyla iş umuduyla ilişkili olduğu bulunmuştur. İşsizliğin içe ( $\beta = -.01, p > .05$ ) ve dışa atfıyla

( $\beta = .01, p > .05$ ), arkadaştan gelen sosyal destek ( $\beta = .07, p > .05$ ), aileden gelen sosyal destek ( $\beta = .09, p > .05$ ) ve özel birinden gelen sosyal destekle ( $\beta = .07, p > .05$ ) iş umudunun istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişkisi tespit edilememiştir. Bu model iş umudundaki toplam varyansın %45'ini açıklamaktadır. Son olarak, benlik saygısı ( $\beta = .39, p < .001$ ) iş umudu ( $\beta = .20, p < .001$ ) ve arkadaştan gelen sosyal desteğin doğrudan ( $\beta = .16, p < .05$ ), öz yetkinlik ( $\beta = .08, p < .01$ ) ve işe bağlılığın ( $\beta = .02, p < .05$ ) iş arama motivasyonu ve iş umudu aracılığıyla dolaylı olarak ve benlik saygısı ( $\beta = .05, p < .01$ ) ve iş arama motivasyonunun ( $\beta = .05, p < .05$ ) iş umudu aracılığıyla dolaylı olarak psikolojik iyi oluşla ilişkili olduğu bulunmuştur. Fakat aileden gelen sosyal desteğin ( $\beta = -.03, p > .05$ ), özel birinden gelen sosyal desteğin ( $\beta = -.04, p > .05$ ), işsizliğin içe ( $\beta = -.00, p > .05$ ) ve dışa atılımının ( $\beta = .00, p > .05$ ) psikolojik iyi oluşla istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişkisi gözlenmemiştir. Bu sonuçlara göre, psikolojik iyi oluşun toplam varyansındaki %38'lik değişim bu modelle açıklanmıştır.

## 4. TARTIŞMA

### 4.1 Bulguların Tartışılması

#### 4.1.1 Kişisel Kaynaklar

Ezzy'nin (1993) işsizliğin, en iyi şekilde, benlik kavramları dikkate alınarak açıklanabileceği iddiasıyla tutarlı olarak üniversite mezunu NEİY bireylerin psikolojik iyi oluşlarını incelerken benlik kavramları değişkenlerinin kritik değişkenler olduğu ortaya konmuştur. Benlik saygısı doğrudan ve dolaylı olarak psikolojik iyi oluşla ilişkili bulunan tek değişkendir ve psikolojik iyi oluşu en güçlü şekilde yordayan değişkendir. Bu sonuçlar mevcut alanyazınla da uyumludur (Alvaro ve ark., 2019; Axelsson ve Ejlerstsson, 2002; Feather, 1990; Herig ve ark., 2013; Peláez-Fernández ve ark., 2019; Rey ve ark., 2016; Solove ve ark., 2015; Sverko ve ark., 2008; Virkes ve ark., 2017; Yılmaz, 2002). Benlik saygısının bu rolünü açıklamaya yönelik olarak muhtemel bir yaklaşım, yüksek benlik saygısının strese karşı koruyuculuğu modeli ya da düşük benlik saygısının incinebilirliği modeli olabilir. Bu modellere göre yüksek benlik saygısına sahip bireyler, zorluklar karşısında daha dayanıklı olabilmektedir (Park ve Crocker, 2013; Pyszczynski ve Kesebir, 2013; Zeigler-Hill, 2011; Zeigler-

Hill, 2013). İşin bireye sağladığı kimlik düşünüldüğünde, benlik saygısının işsizliğin olumsuz etkilerine karşı bir bariyer olabileceği savunulabilir.

Öz yetkinlik psikolojik iyi oluşla doğrudan ilişkili bulunmazken, iş arama motivasyonu ve iş umudu aracılığıyla dolaylı olarak ilişkili bulunmuştur. Ayrıca öz yetkinlik, iş umudunun en güçlü yordayıcısıdır. Bir bütün olarak ele alındığında bu sonuçlar var olan alanyazınla uyumludur. Kuramsal yaklaşımlar (ör., Bandura, 1997, 1999; Lent ve Brown, 2013; Lent ve ark., 1994) ağırlıklı olarak öz yetkinliği motivasyon ve kariyer çıktılarına yönelik beklentilerle ilişkilendirmiştir. Son olarak, bu çalışmanın bulguları kuşkuya yer bırakmayacak denli iş umudunun aracı rolünü ortaya koymuştur. Bu sonuç, Mesleki Umudun Sosyal Bilişsel Modeli'nin (Brown ve ark., 2012) umudun kariyer bağlamındaki rolüne yönelik iddiasına destekleyici yönde kanıt sunmuştur.

Kişisel kaynaklarla ilgili sonuçların önemli bir noktası da işsizlik çalışmasında kişisel kaynakların nasıl araştırılabileceğine yönelik yeni bir delil sunmasıdır. İşsizlik çalışmalarında ağırlıklı olarak kişisel kaynaklar temel benlik değerlendirmesi değişkeniyle tek bir çatı altında değerlendirilmiştir (bkz. McKee-Ryan ve ark., 2005). Fakat Chen ve ark.'larının (2004) da ortaya koyduğu gibi benlik saygısı ve öz yetkinlik farklı mekanizmalar çerçevesinde hareket etmektedir. Bu çalışmanın sonuçları benlik saygısı, öz yetkinlik ve iş umudunun birbiri arasındaki ilişkiye farklı bir kanıt sunmuştur. Bu sebeple bu değişkenlerin ayrı ayrı olarak değerlendirilmesinin uygun olacağı düşünülmektedir.

#### **4.1.2 Sosyal Kaynaklar**

İlgili alanyazındaki genel kanı, sosyal desteğin işsiz bireylerin psikolojik iyi oluşları üzerindeki olumsuz etkilerini azaltabileceği yönündedir (Axelsson ve Ejlertsson, 2002; Blustein, 2019; Huegaerts ve ark., 2017; Kieselbach, 2003; Lim ve ark., 2018; Milner ve ark., 2016; Ratcliff ve Bogdan, 1988; Sabroe ve Iversen, 1992; Vinokur ve Kaplan, 1987; Winefield ve ark., 1993). Genel olarak bu çalışma, sosyal desteğin önemine kanıtlar sunmakla birlikte, daha dikkatli bir yaklaşımın benimsenmesi gerekliliğini ortaya koymuştur. Genel sosyal destek, psikolojik iyi oluşla doğrudan değil fakat iş umudu aracılığıyla dolaylı olarak ilişkili bulunmuştur. Arkadaştan gelen

sosyal destek ise, iş umudu aracılığıyla psikolojik iyi oluşla dolaylı olarak ilişkili bulunmazken, doğrudan bir şekilde ilişkili bulunmuştur. Aileden gelen sosyal destek ve özel birinden gelen sosyal destek, psikolojik iyi oluşla ne doğrudan ne de dolaylı olarak ilişkili bulunmuştur. İlk bakışta uyumsuz gibi duran bu sonuçlar detaylı bir bakış açısı sunan güncel çalışmalarla uyumludur (bkz., Lorenzini ve Giugni, 2016; Monticelli ve ark., 2016).

#### **4.1.3 İş Kaynakları**

İşe bağlılık, doğrudan iş arama motivasyonu ve dolaylı olarak iş umudu ve psikolojik iyi oluşla ilişkili bulunmuştur. İş arama motivasyonunun ise iş umuduyla doğrudan ve psikolojik iyi oluşla dolaylı olarak ilişkisi tespit edilmiştir. Fakat işsizliğin içe ve dışa atfı ne iş arama motivasyonu ve iş umuduyla ne de psikolojik iyi oluşla istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir şekilde ilişkili bulunmuştur. İlgili alanyazın incelendiğinde bu sonuçların belli bir ölçüde şaşırtıcı olduğu iddia edilebilir. Mevcut çalışmalar (örn., Feather, 1990; Feather ve Davenport, 1981; Jackson ve Warr, 1984; Hoare, 2007; Hoare ve Machin, 2006; Winefield ve ark., 1993) yüksek işe bağlılığa ve iş arama motivasyonuna sahip bireylerin psikolojik iyi oluşlarının, işsizlik sebebiyle daha da olumsuz etkileneceğine işaret etmiştir. Fakat Türkiye örneğinde gerçekleştirilen bir çalışmada, bu değişkenlerin psikolojik iyi oluşla doğrudan bir ilişkisi bulunmamıştır (bkz., Yılmaz, 2002). Dolayısıyla mevcut çalışmada işe bağlılığın ve iş arama motivasyonunun psikolojik iyi oluşla dolaylı olarak ilişkili bulunması ilgili alanyazınla tutarlıdır.

Bu çalışmanın en çarpıcı ve beklenmedik sonucu ise işsizliğin içe ve dışa atfının iş arama motivasyonu, iş umudu ve psikolojik iyi oluşla ilişkili bulunmamasıdır. Mevcut araştırmalar (ör., Feather ve Davenport, 1981; Feather ve O'Brien, 1986; Brouwer ve ark., 2015) işsizliğin atfının işsiz bireyin hayatına etkileri olduğunu ifade ederken, içe atfı ve dışa atfın psikolojik iyi oluşla nasıl bir ilişkisi olduğu henüz üzerinde uzlaşılmamış bir noktadır. Var olan bu karmaşa ve çalışmadaki sonuçlar atfın kavramsallaştırılma şekli, değişen ekonomik şartlar ve psikolojik iyi oluşla atfı arasındaki ilişkinin doğrusal olmamasıyla açıklanabilir. Öncelikli olarak, işsizlik çalışmalarına bakıldığında, bazı araştırmalarda (Hesketh, 1984; Schaufeli, 1988; Winefield ve ark., 1993) bireyin genel atfetme biçimi incelenmişken diğer

çalıřmalarda (Feather ve Davenport, 1981; Feather ve O'Brien, 1986; Yılmaz, 2002) iř bulamamanın sebepleri incelenmiřtir. İkinci olarak, deęiřen ekonomik řartlar nedeniyle bireyin iřsiz kalma sebepleri deęiřmiř olabilir ve mevcut ölçme araçlarının yeni baęlam kapsamında güncellenmesi gerekebilir. Son olarak, genç iřsiz bireyler atfı psikolojik iyi oluřlarını koruma adına doęrusal olmayan bir řekilde de kullanabilmektedir. Yani gerekli durumda içsel atfı gerektięi durumda ise kullanabilmektedir (bkz., Pultz et al., 2019). Bu çalıřmada da içsel atf ve dıřsal atf arasında aynı yönlü korelasyonun bulunması bu duruma bir örnektir ( $r = .39, p < .01$ ).

Sonuç olarak, kendini olumlu olarak deęerlendiren, önündeki görevleri yapabileceęine inanan, genel ve arkadařtan gelen sosyal desteęe sahip, iře baęlılıęı olan, iř aramaya motive ve iř bulabileceklerine inanan üniversite mezunu NEİY bireylerin psikolojik iyi oluřları daha yüksek bulunmuřtur.

#### **4.2 Uygulamaya Yönelik Öneriler**

Devam etmekte olan COVID-19 pandemisi iř piyasasını ağır řekilde vurmuř ve bu durum gençlerin iř piyasasına ulařımını daha da zorlařtırmıřtır. Türkiye örnekleminde düşünöldüğünde, ise var olan genç iřsizlik sorunu daha da içinden ıkılmaz bir hal almıřtır. Bu kapsamda deęerlendirildięinde, üniversite mezunu iřsiz gençlere yönelik saęlanacak yardım çalıřmalarında kullanılmak üzere birtakım önerilerde bulunulacaktır.

İlk olarak, arařtırma sonuçları kiřisel kaynakların NEİY bireylerin psikolojik iyi oluřlarıyla arasındaki iliřkiyi ortaya koymuřtur. Bu sebeple NEİY bireylerle yürütölen psikolojik danıřma sürecinde benlik saygısının, öz-yetkinlięin ve iř bulma umudunun sürece dahil edilmesinin uygun olacaęı düşünölmektedir. İkinci olarak, bireyin sahip olduęu sosyal desteęin özellikle hangi kaynaklardan geldięi ve ne gibi etkileri olduęu psikolojik danıřma sürecinde dikkate alınması gereken dięer bir etken olarak düşünölebilir. Son olarak, bireylerin iře baęlılıęı ve iř arama motivasyonları da psikolojik danıřma baęlamında ele alınabilir. Ancak, bu noktada kiřisel, sosyal ve iř kaynaklarına odaklanmanın yeni iř imkanı yaratmayacaęı göz önünde tutularak danıřana zarar vermeyi engellemek için, iřsizlięin ana nedenlerine yönelik farkındalık

yaratılmasının uygun olacağı da dikkate alınmalıdır (bkz., Blustein ve ark., 2012; McWhirter ve McWha-Hermann, 2021; Prilleltensky ve Stead, 2012).

### **4.3 Araştırmaya Yönelik Öneriler**

Mevcut araştırmanın bulguları ışığında gelecekteki araştırmalara yol göstermesi açısından 5 temel öneride bulunulabilir. İlk olarak, bu çalışmada bireysel etkenlere odaklanılmıştır. Fakat bireysel ve sistemsal etkenlerin etkileşime girerek bireylerin psikolojik iyi oluşlarıyla ne şekilde ilişkili olabileceği araştırılabilir. İkinci olarak, mevcut çalışma nicel yönelimlidir. Değişen ülke ve dünya şartları da göz önünde bulundurularak NEİY bireylerin yaşantısal deneyimlerini daha derinlemesine ortaya koyacak, keşfetme yönelimli çalışmaların yürütülmesi de gerekmektedir. Üçüncü olarak, benlik saygısı bireylerin psikolojik iyi oluşlarıyla ilişkili en önemli değişken olarak karşımıza çıkmıştır. Bu kapsamda alanyazındaki mevcut çalışmalar da dikkate alınarak, NEİY bireylerin benlik saygısı ile ilişkili olabilecek kimlik, suçluluk, utanç ve mali zorluk gibi değişkenler sonraki araştırmalarda incelenebilir. Dördüncü olarak, aileden ve özel birinden gelen sosyal destek, psikolojik iyi oluşla ilişkili bulunmamıştır. Bu durumun nedenlerinin araştırılmasına ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Son olarak ise, NEİY bireylerin işsizliği atfetme biçimlerinin ve bunun psikolojik iyi oluşlarıyla ilişkisini detaylı bir şekilde ortaya koyacak araştırmalara ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

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### YAZARIN / AUTHOR

**Soyadı / Surname** : ATAY  
**Adı / Name** : BÜNYAMİN  
**Bölümü / Department** : Eğitim Bilimleri, Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık / Educational Sciences, Guidance and Psychological Counselling

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