

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN QUEENSLAND

*THE UNEMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE: PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS
INFLUENCING MENTAL HEALTH, COPING BEHAVIOURS, AND
EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES*

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ABSTRACT

A stress and coping framework was used to explore psychological factors influencing coping behaviours, mental health, and employment outcomes among the unemployed. Jahoda's (1982) deprivation theory was also incorporated in the exploration. Jahoda proposed that unemployment not only deprives individuals of the manifest, or financial benefits, of employment, but it also deprives them of five latent, or psychosocial benefits, including collective purpose, social contact, status, time structure, and activity. Two studies were carried out, the first being a cross-sectional paper-based survey of 371 unemployed participants (214 males and 157 females, aged between 16 and 65 years) from South East Queensland. A follow-up survey was then carried out 6 months later on 115 of those same participants (59 males and 56 females, aged between 17 and 64). At Time 2, 58 participants had found jobs and 57 had remained unemployed. The variables measured in Study One included coping resources, cognitive appraisals, coping behaviours, and mental health. The coping resources included the personal resources of self-esteem, job seeking efficacy, positive affect, negative affect, and employment commitment, along with financial resources, measured by net fortnightly income, and social resources, measured by social contact during leisure. Job seeking efficacy was measured by self-promotion efficacy and task-focused efficacy. The former involves interpersonal tasks, such as promoting oneself to others as a job seeker, whilst the latter is more impersonal and involves tasks such as writing a resume. The cognitive appraisal variables included employment expectation, satisfaction with employment status, leisure meaningfulness, economic deprivation, and perceived access to the five latent benefits of employment, outlined by Jahoda. The coping behaviours included leisure activity and job search behaviours, including job applications, job search intensity, and job search methods. Mental health was measured by the GHQ-12 (Goldberg, 1972). The same variables were measured in Study Two, with the exception of the leisure variables. Other variables measured in Study Two included job satisfaction and job quality. Study One found that the most consistent predictors of job search behaviours were geographic region, employment commitment, and self-promotion efficacy, with participants living in the metropolitan area, those with a higher commitment to work, and those with greater efficacy being more actively engaged in job seeking. Leisure activity was significantly correlated with mental

health and was predicted by availability of financial resources, positive affect, time structure, leisure meaningfulness, and level of education. That is, more frequent leisure activity was associated with being less financially restricted, higher positive affect, greater time structure, more meaningful leisure, and higher levels of education. Mental health was predicted by self-esteem, positive affect, negative affect, employment commitment, satisfaction with employment status, and financial hardship. Participants with better personal coping resources, greater satisfaction with their employment status, and less financial hardship were less likely to have clinical symptoms. The aforementioned variables accounted for 56% of the variance in mental health, and the logistic regression model correctly classified over 84% of cases as having clinical or non-clinical symptoms. The same model, with the exception of employment commitment, was tested in Study Two for the 57 continuously unemployed participants. It accounted for 62% of the variance in mental health, with similar classification accuracy to that at Time 1. The mental health of the 58 employed participants at Time 2 was predicted by occupation, collective purpose, activity, positive affect, and negative affect. Participants in higher skilled occupations, with higher collective purpose, greater activity, higher positive affect, and lower negative affect were less likely to have clinical symptoms. Those variables accounted for 62% of the variance in mental health and correctly classified 84.5% of cases as being clinical or non-clinical. One of the consistent predictors of job search behaviours at Time 2 was job search training. Participants who had completed a training program some time during the 6 months of the research project were more actively looking for work. Training did not, however, enhance participants' job seeking efficacy or employment expectations. Study Two demonstrated that self-promotion efficacy, employment expectations, and job search behaviours had deteriorated over the 6 month research period, whilst task-focused efficacy increased. Employment status (i.e., gaining employment or remaining unemployed) was predicted by age, job applications, satisfaction with employment status, self-promotion efficacy, employment commitment, and time structure. Job acquisition was predicted by being younger, having submitted more job applications, being dissatisfied with employment status, having higher self-promotion efficacy, having higher employment commitment, and having less structured time. The logistic regression model including those variables accounted for 28% of the variance in employment status (employed or unemployed). Results of a mixed

design analysis of variance in Study Two demonstrated that self-esteem, negative affect, satisfaction with employment status, financial hardship, financial strain, social contact time structure, and mental health were all positively influenced by gaining employment, but showed either very little change or deteriorated for participants who remained unemployed. This research identified important predictors of coping behaviours, mental health, and job acquisition that can be used as a guide for developing suitable intervention strategies for the unemployed.

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS

I certify that the work contained in this thesis is original and that it contains no material written by another person, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the material has not been previously published, except where otherwise acknowledged, or submitted for any other award at any other higher education institution.

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Date

ENDORSEMENT

M. Anthony Machin (Supervisor)

Date

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Hoare, P. N. & Machin, M. A. (2006). Maintaining well-being during unemployment. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, 15 (1), 19-27.
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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Prevalence of Unemployment in Australia

Australia's official unemployment rate is currently at the lowest it has been for over a quarter of century and, according to the Australian Government (2005a), the prospect for continued low unemployment appears to be good. Based on figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2007), the current unemployment rate is 4.5%, which equates to approximately 493,000 out-of-work Australians. However, this figure is based on the ABS definition of *employed*, which applies to people who are 15 years or older and working at least 1 hour per week. Thus, the official figures do not take into account the growing population of *underemployed* people, or those who are only marginally attached to the labour force. The *underemployed* are those people who are doing casual, part-time, or temporary work, but who could be, or want to be, working full-time.

There is a growing trend for organisations to employ staff on a more casual or temporary basis (Campbell & Burgess, 2001), which means that many of today's jobs are insecure, and many people are not working the hours that they would like to work, or that they are capable of working. The Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS, 2003) estimated that the official unemployment figure would most likely double if the underemployed were also taken into account. This estimate was supported by a survey conducted by the ABS (2006) that identified over 566,000 people who were classified as underemployed. Therefore, given the assertion by the ACOSS, the number of people who are either unemployed or marginally attached to the workforce is closer to one million. The insecure employment conditions in today's workforce mean that there is a greater likelihood for people to experience unemployment or underemployment at some stage in their working life. Consequently, psychologists, along with researchers from other disciplines (e.g., economics, medicine, sociology, politics, and epidemiology), continue to seek a greater understanding of the effects of unemployment and underemployment.

Unemployment places a burden on society in the form of government expenditure on unemployment benefits and social programs. According to the Reference Group on Welfare Reform (RGWR, 2000, p. 65), at least one in seven Australian adults of workforce age relies on income support payments, with sole

parents, people over 55 years of age, and single people without children being the most likely groups to rely on benefits. In the latest Budget (2005-06), the Federal Government announced a commitment of \$3.6 billion over 5 years to improve Australia's welfare system, with a focus on initiatives designed to assist and encourage workforce participation (Commonwealth of Australia, 2005b).

The Psychological Impact of Unemployment

Unemployment not only places demands on a nation's economy, but it can also exact a significant toll on the financial and psychological well-being of those directly affected – unemployed individuals (Goldsmith, Veum, & Darity, 1996). Long periods of unemployment can lead to a loss of skills and self-confidence, a reduction in lifetime earnings, the risk of longer-term poverty, and less chance of a successful return to the workforce (RGWR, 2000). Unemployment has also been shown to have a detrimental effect on a person's mental health and general well-being. This thesis focuses on those effects and examines the psychological factors that influence well-being, job seeking, and employment outcomes among the unemployed. The following section outlines some of the psychological effects of unemployment and some of the theories put forward to explain those effects.

The detrimental effects of unemployment have been well documented in the literature and there is now ample evidence that unemployment is associated with decreases in psychological well-being (see Feather, 1990; Fryer & Payne, 1986; McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005; Murphy & Athanasou, 1999; Winefield, 1995 for reviews). For example, compared to their employed counterparts, unemployed individuals report higher levels of depression (Feather & O'Brien, 1986a), lower levels of self-esteem and confidence (Goldsmith & Veum, 1996; Goldsmith, Veum, & Darity, 1996, 1997; Winefield, Tiggemann, & Winefield, 1992b), and poorer psychological and physical well-being (McKee-Ryan et al.). A review of the literature on unemployment by Fryer and Payne clearly shows that unemployment has a negative influence on affective well-being. These authors cited several studies that have measured various affective reactions to unemployment, such as positive and negative affect, happiness, present life satisfaction, and the experience of pleasure and strain. In all of the cited studies, the unemployed fared more poorly than their employed counterparts. The Australian National Survey of

Mental Health and Well-Being (NSMHWB) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998), conducted in 1997, showed that unemployment was one of the strongest correlates of major depression in the Australian population. According to the ABS, after adjusting for age, rates of mental disorder were highest for the unemployed. Furthermore, people who were employed part-time were more likely to have mental disorders than those working full-time. Thus, underemployment can be just as detrimental to mental health as unemployment.

International Comparisons of Unemployment and Well-Being

Studies conducted in other countries have also reported the negative impact of unemployment. For example, research from Denmark and Finland demonstrated that the unemployed from both countries suffered from lower levels of well-being, including lower self-esteem, decreased life satisfaction, less perceived control over their lives, and more depressive symptoms, compared to their employed counterparts (Ervasti, 2002). A population-based study in southern Sweden of people aged between 20 and 25 found that unemployed people had more mental health problems than their counterparts who were working or studying (Axelsson & Ejlertsson, 2002). A study of Swedish women (Hall & Johnson, 1988) found that even after controlling for social support, stressful life events, and marital status, unemployed women had higher levels of depression than their employed counterparts.

Studies in the United States have also confirmed the detrimental effects of unemployment on mental health. For example, Kessler, Turner, and House (1987) found that unemployment was significantly related to alcohol consumption, physical illness, somatisation, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, use of tranquillizers, and days restricted to bed. The study by Kessler et al. study revealed that unemployed people were between 54% and 68% more likely to report levels of distress in the top 20th percentile than the stably employed. In a more recent study in New Zealand, Blakely, Collings, and Atkinson (2003) found that unemployment was strongly associated with suicide death among 18 to 24-year-old males, with the relative risk of death by suicide being two-to-three times more for the unemployed than for the employed.

Given the ubiquitous relationship between unemployment and mental health, demonstrated in Australia and other Western economies, researchers have proposed theories to explain this relationship. The following section introduces a relatively

recent debate pertaining to whether unemployment causes poor mental health or whether poor mental health causes unemployment—the *social causation* versus *selection* hypotheses. Subsequent sections describe some of the predominant theoretical approaches that have been taken to explain the negative impact of unemployment on well-being.

Social Causation versus Selection

There has been considerable debate in the research about whether unemployment causes poor mental health, or whether poor mental health predisposes people to becoming, or remaining, unemployed. The *social causation* or *exposure* hypothesis contends that becoming unemployed causes a decline in mental health, and becoming reemployed leads to an improvement in mental health (e.g., Dooley, Catalano, & Hough, 1992; Winefield, 1995). The *selection* or *drift* hypothesis contends that people with pre-existing mental health problems are likely to lose their job, fail to get one in the first place, or are less likely to become re-employed after job loss (Dooley et al.).

There is considerable support in the literature for the *exposure* hypothesis (e.g., Bjarnason & Sigurdardottir, 2003; Ginexi, Howe, & Caplan, 2000; Kessler, Turner, & House, 1989; Wanberg, 1995; Winefield, 1995). For example, several Australian researchers have provided evidence for a causal relationship between unemployment and ill health (Creed, 1998; Mathers & Schofield, 1998; Morrell, Taylor, & Kerr, 1998). The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ, Goldberg, 1972) has been one of the most widely used measures of mental health in studies of the unemployed because of its ability to identify the presence of minor psychiatric disorder (Hammarstrom & Janlert, 1997). The GHQ consists of items relating to cognitive processing, anxiety, and depression, and assesses recent changes (e.g., changes in the last few weeks) in relation to those components of mental health. Using this instrument, many researchers (e.g., Hepworth, 1980; P. Jackson, Stafford, Banks, & Warr, 1983; Kilpatrick & Trew, 1985; Rowley & Feather, 1987) have demonstrated the negative impact of joblessness on the general mental health of the unemployed.

Research has also demonstrated that gaining employment increases psychological well-being (e.g., Claussen, 1999; Ginexi, Howe, & Caplan, 2000; Mean Patterson, 1997; Wanberg, Griffiths, & Gavin, 1997). For example, Claussen

reported on a 5-year longitudinal study of unemployed people aged 16 to 63 years, which provided evidence for a significant improvement in the mental health of participants after they became reemployed. Ginexi et al. found that levels of depressive symptoms declined for people who had become reemployed within 6 months of losing their jobs, however, this pattern did not hold for reemployment periods long than 6 months. Ginexi et al. explored whether this result was due to depression delaying reemployment and found that this was not the case. In a review of 16 longitudinal studies of the effect of unemployment on mental health, Murphy and Athanasou (1999) reported a weighted effect size of .54 for the relationship between gaining employment and mental health, and a weighted effect size of .36 for the relationship between job loss and mental health. Thus, the literature provides ample support for the exposure hypothesis.

Other researchers have highlighted the importance of considering job security and job quality when looking at changes in mental health upon reemployment. For example, Halvorsen (1998) found that job security in the reemployed was a significant factor in accounting for the improvement in mental health. In a similar vein, Wanberg (1995) found that people who moved from unemployment to satisfactory employment showed improved mental health, but those who had found a dissatisfying job had no changes in their mental health and were similar to those who had remained unemployed.

The *selection* hypothesis proposes that healthier individuals are more likely to acquire and retain jobs than their less healthy counterparts (Winefield, 1995). When researchers have examined psychological distress as a predictor of job-search activities and employment outcomes, the results have been somewhat mixed, although generally supportive. Hamilton, Hoffman, Broman, and Rauma (1993) provided support for the notion that psychological distress is a barrier to reemployment. In a study of unemployment in the automotive industry, these researchers found that elevated depressive symptoms predicted continued unemployment 6 and 18 months after a job loss. Hammarstrom and Janlert (1997) followed 1060 young people (aged 16 at the beginning of the study) for 5 years and found that those who had higher baseline measures of nervous complaints and depressive affect were significantly more at risk of becoming unemployed during the 5-year period. Their study also provided support for the *exposure* hypothesis, with

evidence of an increased risk of depressive symptoms and nervous complaints following extended periods of unemployment (Hammarstrom & Janlert). The odds for experiencing depressive symptoms were higher after an unemployment period of 1 year or more, with young women showing the highest increase. Using data from a national survey of youth in the United States, Prause (2001) identified a selection effect, with people who had gained employment during the 2-year follow-up period having significantly lower baseline levels of depression than those who were unemployed or out of the labour force.

In a longitudinal study of technical college graduates, Schaufeli and Van Yperen (1992) found evidence for a selection effect, with reemployed participants having much lower initial levels of distress compared to those who had remained unemployed. Their study highlighted the importance of considering stable attributes of the person that may render them more vulnerable to distress during unemployment. For example, elevated distress levels may represent a lack of, or depletion of, personal coping resources that are important to job-search activity and subsequent job acquisition. Individuals with elevated distress levels and poorer coping resources, such as low self-esteem and poor social support, may find it difficult to effectively engage in job-search activities, which may hinder their ability to successfully acquire a job. Whilst the exposure hypothesis would suggest that such coping resources diminish as a result of unemployment, the selection hypothesis suggests that these characteristics represent more stable components of personality that make an individual more vulnerable to unemployment.

Interestingly, some researchers have also found what Winefield (1995 p. 184) has termed the *reverse drift* phenomenon, where unemployed individuals with elevated distress levels at baseline were actually more likely to find a new job within the following year. For example, Kessler, Turner, and House (1988) found that higher psychological distress was associated with an increased probability of reemployment at a 1-year follow up, after controlling for age, sex, education, race, and marital status. Kessler et al. noted that individuals who were highly distressed by their job loss may have been inclined to sacrifice job quality for the sake of speedy reemployment. In support of this contention, Leana and Feldman (1995) found that displaced workers who had greater responsibilities (e.g., more financial dependents) felt greater pressure to gain employment no matter the quality of the job, and these workers were more likely to end up with jobs they did not like.

In general, the evidence in the literature points to the contribution of both exposure and selection (e.g., Fryer, 1997; Hammarstrom & Janlert, 1997; Prause, 2001; Ross & Mirowsky, 1995). Indeed, Fryer cautioned against viewing those two explanations as mutually exclusive and, in his review of the debate, emphasised the importance of considering both factors.

The current research project focuses mainly on the selection hypothesis, as one of the aims is to explore how a variety of coping resources (i.e., personal, financial, and social), influence well-being and employment outcomes in the unemployed. However, it also partially examines the exposure hypothesis by looking at how reemployment impacts upon psychological well-being. The following section provides a brief overview of some of the dominant psychological theories put forward to explain the impact of unemployment and the factors that contribute to poorer well-being in the unemployed.

Psychological Theories of Well-Being among the Unemployed

Whilst there is no all-encompassing theory that accounts for the psychological impact of unemployment, several different theoretical approaches have been proposed to explain the effects of unemployment on psychological well-being and behaviour. Attempts to explain the negative impact of unemployment on psychological well-being have tended to oscillate between two major perspectives: the deprivation perspective (Jahoda, 1982; Warr, 1987) and the personal agency perspective (Fryer, 1986). However, some researchers have utilised the stress and coping framework (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) to provide a broader picture of the unemployment experience. These theoretical perspectives will be briefly outlined in the following sections.

The Deprivation Perspective

Jahoda's Functional Model

One of the approaches taken to explain the decline in well-being experienced by the unemployed is the *latent deprivation* perspective (Jahoda, 1982). The central notion in Jahoda's model is that unemployed people experience psychological distress because they are deprived of certain consequences of employment that sustain well-being. Jahoda argued that whilst employment provides *manifest benefits*

or deliberately planned consequences, such as a regular income, there are five more important consequences. She referred to these as the *latent benefits*, which are not deliberately planned, but fulfill certain psychosocial needs that are important to well-being. The latent benefits include *social contact*, *time structure*, *status/identity*, *collective purpose*, and *enforced activity*. Employment provides opportunities for individuals to have contact with people outside of their families. It also imposes some structure to the day and week, with jobs typically requiring the employee to work a certain number of hours per week and to start and finish work at certain times. The work people do also tends to form part of their identity or sense of status within the community. It also provides opportunities to work with others towards collective goals that would not be achieved by an individual alone. Employment also typically enforces some sort of regular activity. Jahoda maintained that it was the loss of these five important psychological benefits of employment that accounted for the distress experienced by the unemployed.

There is evidence that Jahoda's (1982) theory has merit in explaining well-being during unemployment. Studies that have isolated one or the other of the five benefits have demonstrated links between each of them and psychological well-being (e.g., Donovan & Oddy, 1982; Evans & Haworth, 1991; Feather & Bond, 1983; Haworth & Paterson, 1995; Hepworth, 1980; Kilpatrick & Trew, 1985; Mean Patterson, 1997; Winefield, Tiggemann, & Winefield, 1992a). For example, Hepworth and Kilpatrick and Trew found that unemployed people who were more active were less psychologically distressed than their less active counterparts. Further, a recent meta-analysis by McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) found that time structure ($r = .31$) and social support ($r = .26$) were associated with better mental health in the unemployed.

Other studies that have used scales developed specifically to measure all five latent benefits of employment have also provided support for Jahoda's theory. The most widely used scale in this area is the Access to Categories of Experience scale (ACE), which was originally developed by Miles (1983, cited in Creed & Macintyre, 2001). Results from research using versions of this scale have typically demonstrated that higher well-being is associated with greater access to the latent benefits and that the unemployed are more deprived than the employed of the latent benefits (e.g.,

Creed & Machin, 2002; Creed & Macintyre, 2001; Creed, Muller, & Machin, 2001; Waters & Moore, 2002b).

It has been argued, however, that the latent functions may not contribute equally to appraisals of deprivation (Waters & Moore, 2002a) or to psychological well-being (Creed & Evans, 2002). Jahoda (1982) suggested that time structure was the most important of the latent benefits, but results from more recent studies have not found support for this contention. In fact, the few studies carried out to date on the relative importance of each latent function to psychological well-being have provided somewhat inconsistent results. For example, using the ACE scale, Creed and Macintyre (2001) found status to be the most important predictor of well-being, followed by time structure and collective purpose. Similarly, Waters and Moore found loss of status/identity to be a major determinant of latent deprivation in unemployed individuals. Creed and Machin (1999) compared unemployed individuals (those with no or some paid work in the past 3 months) to underemployed individuals (those with some or considerable paid work in the past 3 months) and found that unemployed individuals who had no paid work in the past 3 months fared poorest on ACE categories of activity, time structure, and collective purpose. No differences were found on social contact or perceived status.

One explanation for the inconsistency in terms of the relative importance of the latent functions could be the tool used to measure these variables. Although the ACE scale has been the most widely used measure of latent deprivation, it appears to have questionable psychometric properties. Concerned about the typically low internal reliability coefficients and the untested factor structure of the ACE, Creed and Machin (2003) examined the psychometric properties of the ACE and found that it does not tap all of the five latent benefits theorised by Jahoda. Whilst five factors emerged from the data, they were not interpretable as intended. There were factors that represented activity, status, social contact, collective purpose, and a self-esteem element. Time structure was not represented by any of the factors, and both the status and self-esteem factors contained only two items. Prompted by this finding, Muller, Creed, Waters, and Machin (2005) developed a new scale, called the Latent and Manifest Benefits scale (LAMB) to address the limitations of the ACE scale. Using the LAMB scale, Muller, Creed, and Francis (2004) reported significant correlations between the latent benefits and psychological distress, with social contact ($r = -.35$)

and collective purpose ($r = -.31$) having stronger relationships with distress than the other latent benefits.

Jahoda (1982) acknowledged that employment was not the only social institution that provides access to the latent functions. Indeed, research such as that by Waters and Moore (2002a), has shown that other social settings, such as the leisure environment, can also provide access to the latent benefits. In a survey of 201 unemployed Australians, with a mean age of 32.41 years, those researchers found that engaging in meaningful leisure reduced perceived deprivation of the latent benefits. Waters and Moore used a structural equation model (SEM) to test the interrelationships between leisure, latent deprivation, and psychological well-being. Leisure was measured in terms of both solitary activities (performed alone) and social activities (with friends), whilst meaningfulness was measured along four dimensions: satisfaction, perceived importance, goal achievement, and interest (Waters & Moore). Waters and Moore used a comparative employed sample ($N = 128$) with a mean age of 25 years and found support for Jahoda's theory, that the unemployed were significantly more deprived of the latent benefits of employment and had higher depressive affect and lower self-esteem than their employed counterparts. Leisure meaningfulness did not differ between the employed and unemployed groups; however it contributed substantially more (30%) to the prediction of perceived latent deprivation in the unemployed sample than the employed sample (5%). Thus, leisure, if appraised as meaningful, can provide access to the latent benefits.

Jahoda argued that, whilst other social settings can provide access to the latent benefits, employment is the most important avenue to gain access to such benefits, because it is associated with the important task of earning one's living. According to Jahoda (1982), even the poorest forms of employment are better than the alternative of being unemployed. There are some jobs in which people are required to engage in boring, mundane, or excessively demanding activities, where there is an overly rigid time structure, or where there are unpleasant social contacts. Jahoda believed that employment was preferable even under such poor work conditions. However, this contention has recently been called into question, with contemporary researchers arguing that individuals in unsatisfactory employment are just as psychologically distressed as the unemployed (e.g., Graetz, 1993). Over the past couple of decades, there have been increases in both overemployment (e.g.,

heavier workloads) and underemployment, with both having a significant impact on well-being (Dockery, 2004). Dockery argued that overwork can lead to depression, burnout, and mental distress, whilst underemployment has been linked to increased risks of heart attacks. Graetz found that psychological well-being was contingent upon the quality of employment, with dissatisfied workers having the highest risk of poor mental health, satisfied workers faring the best, and the unemployed falling somewhere in between these two extremes. Graetz concluded that the workplace itself has a more powerful influence on well-being than whether or not one is successful in finding and keeping a job. This is in line with Warr's (1987) Vitamin Model, which extends Jahoda's approach by including environmental features that can impact on mental health, regardless of one's employment status.

Warr's Vitamin Model

Warr (1987) also took a deprivation perspective, but he provided a more extensive framework to explain the experience of employment and unemployment. Warr proposed that there were nine key environmental features that influenced the mental health of both employed and unemployed people. These nine features include: (1) physical security, (2) valued social position, (3) availability of money, (4) externally generated goals that provide a sense of purpose and motivation, (5) variety and the opportunity to access new experiences, (6) environmental predictability, including having clear roles and access to feedback, (7) opportunities to exercise personal control over activities and events, (8) interpersonal contact, and (9) opportunity for skill use (i.e., to develop and exercise competencies and skills).

Warr (1987) viewed these environmental features as having a similar effect on mental health to the influence of vitamins on physical health, with insufficient access to any of the nine features leading to reduced well-being. Some vitamins, such as A and D, can be toxic if taken in excess, as can excessive exposure to some features of the environment, such as social contact, externally generated goals, and variety (Warr). Other vitamins, such as C and E, have a positive effect up to a certain level and then reach a plateau, where they no longer have an effect (Warr). Similarly, some features of the environment, such as availability of money, physical security, and valued social position, increase well-being up to a point, after which there is no further benefit to mental health (Warr). Consequently, Warr proposed that the relationship between environmental features and mental health was curvilinear.

Some of the nine features outlined by Warr (1987), such as valued social position, externally generated goals, and interpersonal contact, are similar to those outlined by Jahoda (1982) (i.e., status, social contact, and collective purpose). However, unlike Jahoda, Warr highlighted the importance of the manifest function (i.e., availability of money). Further, his approach is not confined to explaining mental health differences in the unemployed, but is equally useful in explaining mental health differences in people with jobs.

One of the key criticisms of the deprivation approaches of Warr (1987) and Jahoda (1982) is that they place a heavy influence on how environmental factors impact upon individuals and disregard the ability of individuals to influence their environment. Fryer (1986) challenged the deprivation approach and proposed that people were more active agents in influencing their environment. He argued that the restrictions placed on unemployed people by their limited income makes it difficult for them to be proactive, to make plans and to set goals, which contributes to their poorer mental health.

Fryer's Agency Restriction Approach

Jahoda's (1982) conclusion that employment provides access to the five psychological benefits was reached by observing the experiences of those without employment and finding that they felt psychologically deprived. In his criticism of Jahoda's theory, Fryer (1986) argued that evidence of felt deprivation of the latent functions during unemployment does not necessarily mean that employment provides access to those functions or that deprivation of those functions is the cause of distress. Fryer cautioned that,

We ought not to fall into the trap of assuming that because unemployed people are both in a state of psychological deprivation, were this to be established satisfactorily, and are psychologically distressed that the deprivation is the cause of the distress. It could be, for example, that employment and unemployment are two relatively distinct and discrete states, each with its own demands, supports and constraints, advantages and disadvantages, problems and solutions. The disadvantages of the latter are not necessarily merely the lack of advantages of the former. (p. 9)

Fryer (1986) argued that the latent deprivation theory erroneously represents individuals as passive agents at the mercy of social institutions and external forces, and he suggested that the difficulties faced by the unemployed may actually be due to their attempts to understand and cope with their current situation. His focus was on what people bring with them to a problematic situation and the destructive aspects of unemployment, rather than on what is taken away from them and the constructive aspects of employment.

Fryer's (1986) agency theory assumes that people are proactive, able to influence their environment, and strive to exercise control over their lives. The uncertainty of unemployment makes planning difficult. Agency theory highlights the importance of the manifest function of employment (i.e., the financial benefits) and proposes that economic deprivation places restrictions on the unemployed individual's ability to exercise personal agency, making it impossible to plan and organise a meaningful future, with subsequent negative effects on a person's well-being. Whilst Fryer acknowledged the role that the latent benefits played in mental health, he argued that they could not fully account for the reduced well-being experienced by the unemployed individual (Fryer, 1986; Fryer & Payne, 1986).

There is ample evidence to support Fryer's (1986) emphasis on the loss of the manifest benefit of employment, but there are very few studies that have directly explored how that loss restricts personal agency. Researchers such as Jackson (1999) and Strandh (2001) have shown that unemployed individuals report significantly more financial strain than their employed counterparts, and a significant association has been demonstrated between financial strain and psychological distress (e.g., Andersen, 2002; Creed & Evans, 2002; P. Jackson & Warr, 1987; Kessler, Turner, & House, 1987; Vinokur, Price, & Caplan, 1996; Whelan, 1992; Winefield, 1995). In a study of long-term unemployment in Denmark, Andersen found that economic insecurity and feelings of not being master of one's own life were strongly correlated with general well-being and satisfaction with life. Jackson (1999) compared 44 employed and 41 unemployed individuals on a variety of measures, including financial stress, and found that the unemployed reported significantly more financial stress than their employed counterparts. Financial stress was also a significant predictor of psychological distress.

Studies have also examined the relative importance of the latent and manifest benefits, with clear evidence that the manifest benefit is the most important contributor to psychological distress. For example, using the Latent and Manifest Benefits Scale, Muller, Creed, and Francis (2004) reported significant correlations between the latent and manifest benefits and psychological distress, with financial strain having the strongest relationship ($r = .37$). Results of their regression analysis showed that financial strain, social contact, and time structure made significant contributions to the prediction of psychological distress, with financial strain having a higher beta weight ($\beta = .25$) than the two latent benefits ($\beta = -.21$, and $\beta = -.16$, respectively) (Muller et al., 2004).

Creed and Watson (2003) examined interaction effects between the latent and manifest employment benefits to determine whether financial strain also played an indirect role in influencing mental health by restricting access to the latent benefits. These researchers carried out regression analyses based on their full sample of 386 unemployed participants as well as sub-samples based on age groups: young = 18 to 24.9 years, middle-aged = 25 to 34.9 years, and mature-aged = 35 to 55 years. The variables in their model included the personality variable neuroticism, as well as gender, length of unemployment, the latent and manifest benefits (i.e., time structure, activity, social contact, collective purpose, status, and financial strain), and the interactions between financial strain and each of the five latent benefits. Creed and Watson used the 12-item subscale from the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire – Revised (EPQ-R; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1996, cited in Creed & Watson) to measure neuroticism, with higher scores indicating lower levels of neuroticism. For the full sample, all of the variables together accounted for 44.8% of the variance in distress, with neuroticism ($\beta = -.46$), financial strain ($\beta = .26$), mature age ($\beta = .12$), and the interaction between financial strain and social contact ($\beta = .10$) all making unique contributions. The interaction between financial strain and social contact for the mature-aged group (35 to 55 years) indicated that high financial strain was associated with increased distress when social support was low. For the young group (18 to 24.9 years), high financial strain was associated with increased distress when social support was high and low, but not when it was at a medium level.

Whilst one would expect a neurotic disposition to predict the neurotic manifestations present in mental health disorders, such as depression and anxiety, an

interesting finding by Creed and Watson (2003) was that financial strain, age, and the interaction between financial strain and social contact also accounted for a significant portion of the variance in mental health. The latent benefits, however, were not unique predictors. Creed and Watson's study clearly identified the manifest benefit of financial strain as a more important predictor of well-being in the unemployed than the latent benefits. Their study also highlighted the importance of considering interaction effects and other potential predictors of mental health, such as personality-related variables.

A study by Patton and Donohue (1998) provided some support for Fryer's (1986) contention that limited financial resources can restrict an individual's agency. Those researchers interviewed 38 long-term unemployed people in Australia to gain a better understanding of the processes of coping during unemployment. They found that engaging in meaningful leisure activities or volunteer work effectively reduced the negative impact of unemployment. A common trend for people reporting better mental health was lower perceived financial strain and greater perceived social support. For those individuals, their coping strategies comprised of keeping busy, having a positive outlook, religious faith, and re-evaluating their expectations. In contrast to the group with poorer well-being, this group had less financial strain and strived to use their time purposefully by actively engaging in leisure pursuits or volunteer work. Thus, they coped well by finding alternatives to employment. Participants with poorer mental health tended to report significant financial strain and a lack of social contact. They coped by using emotional strategies, such as venting their feelings or going on eating binges, or withdrawing (i.e., avoiding contact with the working world). The theme that emerged from this group was that they perceived their coping processes as short-term and ineffective. As Patton and Donohue noted, this finding does not support Jahoda's (1982) contention that paid work is the best avenue to gain access to the latent benefits. However, it supports Fryer's (1986) theory, whereby people with less financial strain were able to express agency through their involvement in leisure, volunteer work, and other coping activities.

Studies prompted by Fryer's (1986) approach have typically focused on deprivation of the manifest benefit of employment and its impact on well-being. As mentioned earlier, very few of the studies reviewed for this research project focused

directly on how such deprivation impacts on an individual's agency. Fryer described individuals as being intrinsically motivated, interpreting events in their lives in accordance with their goals and values, and thinking ahead in terms of possible scenarios and outcomes. Thus, Fryer alluded to the fact that there is more to the experience of unemployment than feeling deprived of the benefits of employment. Characteristics of the person and their interpretations of their experience are important considerations. For example, if an individual has life goals and aspirations that require money to see them to fruition, and their access to financial resources is restricted because of their unemployment, then they are likely to negatively react to their situation.

There are a multitude of variables associated with well-being during unemployment that the deprivation theories do not take into account. Apart from financial strain and the latent benefits, other correlates include personality-related variables, such as neuroticism, optimism, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and locus of control, measures of work-role centrality (e.g., employment commitment), appraisal variables (e.g., reemployment expectation), and coping-related variables (e.g., job seeking and leisure activity) (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Patton & Donohue, 1998)

The stress and coping framework allows for a broader examination of the unemployment experience by incorporating coping resources and cognitive and behavioural factors known to influence well-being in the unemployed. It also allows for the inclusion of the deprivation and agency theories by way of cognitive appraisals of the amount of access one has to the latent and manifest benefits of employment and how that impacts on coping behaviours. The following section provides a brief outline of how stress and coping theory has been used to explain the unemployment experience.

Stress and Coping Theory

The clearly documented relationship between unemployment and mental health suggests that many people view the loss of a job or inability to acquire a job as stressful. Thus, several researchers (e.g., Gowan, Riordan, & Gatewood, 1999; Lai & Chan, 2002; Latack, Kinicki, & Prussia, 1995; Waters, 2000) have drawn on the stress and coping framework, specifically the transactional model of stress proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), to explain the process of coping with unemployment. The transactional model emphasises coping resources, cognitive

appraisal, and the use of cognitive and behavioural coping efforts to explain the stress-strain process. Stress occurs when an individual evaluates an event or situation as taxing or exceeding available resources and jeopardising their well-being (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986). This appraisal, along with the available coping resources, determines how the individual will cope (Lazarus & Folkman).

Coping resources refer to both internal (e.g., self-esteem and self-efficacy) and external (e.g., financial and social) resources that help a person to cope with unemployment. That is, they are the personal characteristics or environmental resources that a person can draw on to help them to manage stressful situations. McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) highlighted the importance of personal resources to the mental health of the unemployed. Self-esteem, locus of control self-efficacy, and affectivity have been identified as components of core self-evaluations (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2002), which are fundamental to a person's evaluations of themselves and their capabilities of coping with a stressful situation (McKee-Ryan et al.). Thus, they represent an important set of personal resources upon which people can draw to cope with their unemployment. Indeed, the results of the meta-analytic study by McKee-Ryan et al. found that core self-evaluation was the strongest correlate of mental health in the unemployed, with a mean corrected weighted correlation of $r_c = .55$. Other coping resources identified by McKee-Ryan et al. as important to the unemployment experience include social resources, such as social support and social networks, and financial resources, such as income and savings.

Coping resources can influence how individuals appraise their unemployment, which then determines how they cope with the situation. People also evaluate their circumstances according to their own unique values, expectations, and previous experiences. Such evaluations can influence subjective well-being (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) highlighted the importance of cognitive mediators (i.e., primary and secondary appraisals) of stressful experiences. According to Folkman et al. (1986), there are two types of appraisal: *primary appraisal*, which is an evaluation of whether there is a potential for harm, loss, or benefit with respect to commitments, values, or goals; and *secondary appraisal*, whereby the person evaluates what can be done to deal with the potential harm or benefit. Feather (1990) stated that an event or situation can be appraised as irrelevant, benign-positive, or stressful. An event or situation that has no

implication for the individual's well-being is appraised as irrelevant; one that is positive and likely to enhance well-being is appraised as benign-positive; and one that represents harm/loss, threat, or challenge is appraised as stressful (Feather).

The deprivation theory views unemployment as being associated with the loss of the latent and manifest benefits of employment and thus, it is typically evaluated as a stressful experience. However, as Latack, Kinicki, and Prussia (1995) pointed out, the intensity of an appraisal of harm or loss depends on the amount of relative discrepancy between a person's life goals or standards and their current situation. Their explanation fits well with cognitive dissonance theory, which was articulated by Leon Festinger (cf 1919 – 1989, as cited in Lefton, 1984). Cognitive dissonance refers to the feelings of discomfort created when there are conflicts between thoughts, behaviours, or attitudes. For example, if a person's goal is to provide financial security for his/her family and he/she has a significantly reduced income because of unemployment, there is likely to be an economic discrepancy between his/her life goals and current situation. Consequently, the person is likely to appraise the situation as one of significant loss and experience a state of cognitive dissonance and henceforth, engage in some type of coping behaviour to reduce the discrepancy (Latack et al.). Similarly, if a person values having a structure to his/her day, having regular social contacts, working collectively with others, and engaging in purposeful activity, and perceives work as contributing to his/her sense of status or identity, then being unemployed may be discrepant with those values. In this situation, the individual may evaluate unemployment as an unpleasant state of affairs that threatens those values, and he or she may initiate a coping response aimed at reducing the discrepancy.

However, not everyone is unhappy with their unemployment situation, and some researchers have criticised research that treats the unemployed as a homogeneous group in terms of their labour market satisfaction (Creed & Machin, 2002). For example, there may be some individuals who positively appraise their unemployment situation, perhaps viewing it as an opportunity to evaluate their career goals, to escape from an unpleasant job, or to care for a loved one. The research suggests that there are indeed some people who are satisfied being unemployed and whose well-being reflects this satisfaction. This is in line with stress and coping theory, which emphasises that it is not the situations or events themselves that cause stress, but the individual's appraisals of those situations.

Using qualitative research, Hesketh, Shouksmith, and Kang (1987) found that psychological well-being was a function of satisfaction with occupational situation rather than whether or not the person was employed. In their study, Hesketh et al. identified people who were happy being unemployed. These people tended to have high self-esteem and good social contacts, and were also engaged in purposeful activities. In contrast, people in the Hesketh et al. study who were unhappily unemployed reported low self-esteem, few social contacts, high employment commitment, and high financial strain. From the coping perspective, people in the Hesketh et al. study who had positive well-being also had good coping resources (i.e., high esteem and social support) and appraised their situation as satisfying, whilst those who had fewer coping resources viewed their situation as dissatisfying.

In a similar vein, Creed, Muller, and Machin (1999) examined the influence of satisfaction with employment situation on mental health. They also included age, gender, neuroticism, access to the latent benefits of employment, and financial strain in their hierarchical multiple regression model. Creed et al.'s sample consisted of 81 unemployed Australians, with a mean age of 32.05 years. After controlling for age and gender (which did not significantly predict distress), these researchers found that satisfaction with employment situation was a significant predictor of mental health, accounting for 29% of the variance in GHQ-12 scores. Participants who reported higher levels of satisfaction had better mental health. The other variables in their study were also significant predictors of mental health, with neuroticism adding a further 14% of the variance, the latent benefits adding a further 5%, and financial strain explaining a further 8% of the variance. Creed et al.'s study provides evidence that having a more emotionally stable personality and appraising one's situation as positive (i.e., being satisfied with one's unemployed situation and perceiving greater access to the latent and manifest benefits) is associated with better mental health outcomes. Their study also demonstrated that satisfaction with one's unemployment situation was more strongly correlated with financial strain ($r = -.46, p < .01$) than with access to the latent benefits ($r = -.24, p < .05$). This suggests that discrepancies between a person's financial goals and their current unemployment situation exert a stronger influence on appraisals of their current situation than discrepancies in relation to the psychosocial benefits of employment.

Appraisals, along with the available coping resources, determine the coping strategies an individual will use to manage their unemployment experience. Latack,

Kinicki, and Prussia (1995) described coping strategies as the cognitive and behavioural efforts that people use to cope with a stressful situation. Although there are several categories of coping strategies (Latack, 1986), many studies utilise the problem-focused and emotion-focused dichotomy proposed by Folkman and Lazarus (1991). Problem-focused coping refers to direct attempts to manage the situation, whilst emotion-focused coping is directed at reducing or managing the emotional distress. However, some researchers have extended these broad coping categories and have identified more situation-specific coping strategies. For example, from the job stress literature, Latack identified three measures of coping behaviour related to job stress variables, such as role overload. These measures include control, escape, and symptom management. Within the job stress context, control strategies consist of proactive actions, such as discussing the problem with one's supervisor; escape strategies consist of actions relating to avoiding the situation; and symptom management consists of strategies that manage the symptoms related to job stress, such as reminding oneself that work is not everything (Latack).

Within the context of job loss and unemployment, Leana and Feldman (1992) (1992) distinguished between problem-focused and symptom-focused coping. Problem-focused coping refers to efforts to eliminate the source of the stress itself, with examples such as seeking a new job, retraining, or relocating (Leana & Feldman). Leana and Feldman (p. 16) described symptom-focused coping as "...efforts to decrease the depression or loneliness often associated with job loss", and used examples such as applying for financial assistance, seeking out social support or counselling, and becoming involved in community programs.

Using a stress and coping framework, Gowan et al. (1999) tested a model of variables predicting distress and reemployment. In their model, coping resources were operationalised by education, financial resources, and social support. Appraisal was measured by perceived reversibility of unemployment, or the person's perception of the extent to which he or she could become reemployed. Coping strategies included job search activities (i.e., a problem-focused strategy), distancing from job loss (i.e., an emotion-focused strategy), and engaging in non-work activities, such as leisure, community, and church activities (i.e., a solution-focused strategy). The outcome variables measured in their study were psychological distress and reemployment.

Gowan et al. (1999) used structural equation modelling and a sample of 202 unemployed individuals, and found that education was the only coping resource that predicted an appraisal of the reversibility of unemployment. That is, people with higher education levels believed that it would be less difficult for them to get a job. Education and social support were positively related to job search activities, whilst financial resources was negatively related to job search activities. Higher education, more financial resources, and greater social support were all positively related to engagement in non-work activities. Both distancing and involvement in non-work activities reduced distress, but job search activity was not related to distress. Greater use of distancing led to higher levels of satisfactory reemployment, but interestingly, job search activities and non-work activities were not related to reemployment.

The non-significant relationship between job search activity and reemployment found by Gowan et al. (1999) is contrary to other studies (e.g., Eden & Aviram, 1993; Wanberg, Hough, & Song, 2002), but Gowan et al. noted that this result may be due to individuals starting their job search too soon after losing their jobs, thereby, making poor decisions about job search activities. Gowan et al. referred to Leana and Feldman's (1994) suggestion that individuals who do not address the negative emotions related to involuntary job loss, may have low self-esteem and appear to be insecure and nervous in interviews, thus risking a positive outcome.

Extending the coping literature from conceptual models that describe the determinants and effects of coping, Latack et al. (1995) formulated an integrative model of the process of coping. These researchers drew from Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) stress and coping theory, Carver and Scheier's (1982) control theory framework, and Bandura's (1988) concept of self-efficacy, to model the process of coping with job loss. Latack et al. included coping efficacy (a variable akin to perceived control) in their model. These researchers explained that high coping efficacy within the job loss context refers to an individual's perception that their situation is under their control and that they can change it. They proposed that coping strategies differ depending on the intensity of the discrepancy appraisals and the extent to which individuals perceive that they have the ability to change the situation. Latack et al. suggested that, as discrepancy appraisals become more intense, there is a tendency for people to believe that they are incapable of resolving the situation. When this occurs, a typical response is to cope by using escape

strategies (e.g., avoid thinking about their need for a job, focus on leisure activities, or self-medicate with alcohol). However, those who believe they are capable of resolving the situation (i.e., those with high coping efficacy) tend to use problem-focused coping behaviours (e.g., job search activities) (Latack et al.).

The stress and coping framework provides opportunities for researchers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the unemployment experience and also allows for the inclusion of variables identified by Jahoda (1982) and Fryer (1986) as key influences of well-being in the unemployed. It also allows for the inclusion of personality variables, such as self-esteem and self-efficacy, and other characteristics, such as employment commitment, which have been identified as important to the unemployment experience. Therefore, this research project draws from the stress and coping theory, but incorporates measures associated with the deprivation and agency restriction theories, to extend our understanding of the unemployment experience. The following chapter provides an outline of the variables used in the current research project.

CHAPTER 2 - VARIABLES IN THE CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECT

This research project uses the stress and coping framework to examine relationships between coping resources, appraisal, coping behaviours, and psychological well-being. It also examines how these coping variables influence employment outcomes. This chapter provides an outline of the variables used in the current research project. The aim of the project was to identify the key predictors of coping behaviours, mental health, and future employment status of a sample of unemployed Australians. It was heavily guided by a recent meta-analytic study by McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) which sought to determine the key correlates of subjective and physical well-being in the unemployed. McKee-Ryan et al. discovered over 100 different correlates, which they categorised using a theoretical taxonomy derived from a stress and coping framework. They defined subjective well-being according to Diener, Suh, Lucas, and Smith's (1999) conceptualisation of this construct, which included the components of positive and negative affect, life satisfaction, and domain satisfaction.

The outcomes in the McKee-Ryan et al. study included mental health (i.e., positive and negative well-being), life satisfaction, domain satisfaction (including satisfaction with one's marital life, partner/spouse, or family), and subjective and objective assessments of one's physical health. They carried out a cross-sectional comparison of the unemployed and employed on psychological and physical wellbeing and also examined the longitudinal effects of reemployment on mental health, life satisfaction, and subjective physical health. The mean weighted effect size of $d_c = -.57$ ($p < .01$) reported by McKee-Ryan et al. confirms that the unemployed have poorer mental health than the employed. This result was based on 60 independent samples and a sample size of 21,735 individuals. Based on 19 samples and a total of 1,911 participants, McKee-Ryan et al. reported an effect size of $d_c = -.89$ ($p < .01$) for the effect of reemployment on mental health, which confirms that gaining employment has a positive affect on mental health. These results support the social causation or exposure hypothesis. McKee-Ryan et al. also examined the longitudinal effect of wellbeing on reemployment. Based on 9 independent samples and a total of 5,135 individuals, the effect size of $d_c = .10$ was

non-significant, and therefore did not provide adequate support for the selection hypothesis.

The correlate categories from the McKee-Ryan et al. study included *coping resources* (personal, social, financial, and time structure), *work-role centrality* (employment commitment), *cognitive appraisal* (e.g., reemployment expectation), *coping strategies* (e.g., job search behaviour), and *human capital and demographics* (e.g., education, ability, occupational status, gender, age, and marital status). The current research project draws heavily from McKee-Ryan et al.'s meta-analysis by incorporating variables from each of the correlate categories. The effect sizes reported by McKee-Ryan et al. that relate to variables in the current research project will be presented in the relevant sections to follow. This research project extends the research by McKee-Ryan et al. by identifying which correlates are the most important predictors of coping behaviours, mental health, and employment outcomes.

The main outcome variables in the project are mental health and future employment status. Variables are included from the coping resource categories identified by McKee-Ryan et al. as personal, social, and financial resources. They include measures of self-esteem, self-efficacy, positive and negative affect, employment commitment, social contact, and income. Cognitive appraisal measures include perceived deprivation of the latent benefits of employment identified by Jahoda (1982), perceived financial strain as highlighted by Fryer's (1986) agency restriction model, satisfaction with current employment status, leisure meaningfulness, and reemployment expectation. The coping strategies measured in this study tap into both problem-focused and solution-focused coping, and include job search behaviour, leisure activity, and engagement in training and volunteer work. Demographic variables, such as age, gender, and education, which have been identified in the research as potential risk factors for poorer wellbeing during unemployment or for continued unemployment, are also included in the current research project. The following sections provide a brief outline of the variables included in this project and a rationale for their inclusion.

Demographic Factors

Stress occurs when the demands of the environment are perceived as taxing or exceeding a person's coping resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Therefore,

people with limited personal, financial, and social resources are likely to be at higher risk of experiencing the negative consequences of unemployment than those with more available resources. Latack et al. (1995) suggested that lack of coping resources represents a risk factor that predisposes people to longer periods of unemployment. Some of the demographic risk factors associated with extended periods of unemployment are factors, such as age, education, gender, and previous occupation. Latack et al. cited studies from Brenner and Bartell (1983), Ferman and Aiken (1964), Podgursky and Swaim (1987), and Addison and Portugal (1987), that identified females, older people, the less educated, and professional workers as being at risk of longer periods of unemployment.

The following sections present information on some of the demographic variables and coping resources that are associated with unemployment.

Age

Research suggests that age is associated with expectations for employment, job search behaviour, and the likelihood of reemployment. In general, however, the literature provides conflicting results in relation to the association between age and mental health of unemployed people. As highlighted by McKee-Ryan et al. (2005), many researchers have found nonsignificant relationships (e.g., Creed, Muller, & Machin, 2001; Vuori, Silvonen, Vinokur, & Price, 2002; Wanberg, 1997; Wiener, Oei, & Creed, 1999), some have found negative relationships (Reynolds & Gilbert, 1991; Wanberg, Carmichael, & Downey, 1999), and others have found positive relationships (e.g., P. Jackson & Warr, 1984). In line with these inconsistencies, McKee-Ryan et al. found no clear pattern of relationships between age and mental health. From 20 studies and a total of 7,091 unemployed individuals, McKee-Ryan et al. found a non-significant effect size of $r_c = .03$.

In her review of the unemployment from 1994 to 1998, Hanisch (1999) summarised the impact of age on unemployment, citing studies that indicate that older people tend to remain unemployed for longer and face more barriers to employment, such as age discrimination, stereotypes about productivity and usefulness, and relatively lower education than younger individuals. Kerr, Carson, and Goddard (2002) highlighted the prevalence of unemployment and insecure employment among people over 45 years of age, and attributed this to a mismatch between their skills and labour market demands and also a mismatch between the

specific needs of older jobseekers and the priorities of current labour market programs. These authors identified age discrimination, loss of confidence and self-esteem, and the high cost of retraining as barriers for mature-aged job seekers. Wiener, Oei, and Creed (1999) found a significant negative correlation ($r = -.43$) between age and confidence in obtaining work. That is, older unemployed participants were significantly less confident than younger participants that they would gain employment. In a similar vein, Wanberg (1997) reported a significant negative correlation between age and perceived control (i.e., “What are the chances that you will obtain another job if you look?”). Again, this suggests that older unemployed people are generally not very confident about finding work. This lack of confidence is no doubt based on the fact that people over 45 years of age recognise that their age is a significant barrier to employment (Kerr, Carson, & Goddard).

According to the Queensland Department of Employment and Training (2001), the average duration of unemployment for those over 45 years of age is 85 weeks. A study by Wanberg, Hough, and Song (2002) demonstrated that older people spent more time unemployed than younger people ($r = .27$). A meta-analytic study by Kanfer, Wanberg, and Kantrowitz (2001) found that age was significantly negatively correlated with job search behaviour ($r_c = -.06$, $k = 18$, $N = 7,816$) and reemployment ($r_c = -.07$, $k = 8$, $N = 3,425$). Taken together, the research suggests that age may be a factor that influences a person’s appraisal of their unemployment situation, with older people more likely to make appraisals that they have less control over changing their unemployment situation than younger people.

Given the findings outlined above, age is expected to be related to employment expectation, self-esteem, employment commitment, job search behaviour, and job acquisition. The relationship between age and mental health has been relatively inconsistent and the McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) meta-analysis reported a very small effect size. Consequently, age is not expected to have a significant influence on mental health.

Gender

Meta-analytic studies indicate that unemployed females have poorer mental health than unemployed males and that gender influences how individuals cope with their unemployment. However, individual studies have provided some conflicting evidence in relation to gender and mental health. For example, some studies have

found that females suffer more distress than males (e.g., Warr & Payne, 1983), others have found that males suffer more than females (e.g., Muller, Hicks, & Winocur, 1993), and the majority of studies have found no difference (e.g., Leana & Feldman, 1991). In their recent meta-analytic study, McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) found that males had significantly better mental health than females ($r_c = .09$). Their findings were based on 14 samples and a total of 6,763 unemployed individuals.

Leana and Feldman (1991) found differences in how males and females cope with unemployment, with females relying more on symptom-focused strategies (e.g., seeking social support) and males using more problem-focused activities (e.g., job seeking). Furthermore, in their meta-analysis, Kanfer, Wanberg, and Kantrowitz (2001) found that males were significantly more active job seekers than females, although the effect size was quite small ($r_c = .05$, $k = 23$, $N = 8,860$). Kanfer et al. reported a non-significant effect size ($r_c = .01$, $k = 10$, $N = 4,120$) for gender and employment status, suggesting that gender does not influence reemployment.

Gender differences will be examined in this study and based on the meta-analytic studies cited above, males are expected to have better mental health than females and to use more problem-focused coping, such as job search behaviour. Females are expected to use more socially-oriented strategies, which could include interpersonal job search methods, engaging in social leisure, or doing volunteer work.

Education

Education has been identified as another key variable in the unemployment experience because it is related to mental health, reemployment expectation, job search intensity, and job acquisition. For example, in their meta-analysis, McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) found a significant correlation between education and mental health ($r_c = .08$, $k = 10$, $N = 4,688$). McKee-Ryan et al. suggested that people with higher levels of education may have more positive expectations about finding a job and that this may ease their anxiety during unemployment. This was supported in a study by Gowan, Riordan, and Gatewood (1999), who found that education was a significant predictor of perceived reversibility of employment, such that higher education predicted greater confidence in finding work. However, the path from education to employment expectation was only marginally significant ($p < .10$). In

their study, education was also significantly correlated with leisure activities and making contacts to assist with job search efforts.

Wanberg, Hough, and Song (2002) reported a positive correlation of .27 between education level and job search intensity, although their study did not find a significant relationship between education and reemployment. In a meta-analytic study of job search and employment, Kanfer et al. (2001) found that people with higher levels of education were more actively looking for work than those with less education ($r_c = .12$, $k = 17$, $N = 7,867$). Unlike Wanberg et al., Kanfer et al. found a significant relationship between education and future employment status ($r_c = .07$, $k = 9$, $N = 3,721$). Although a relatively small effect size, it suggests that unemployed people with more education are more likely to gain employment than their less educated counterparts.

Based on the research outlined above, education is expected to be related to mental health, employment expectation, job search behaviour, and job acquisition.

Coping Resources

Self-Esteem

Many researchers have looked at self-esteem as an outcome variable in the unemployment experience (e.g., Dooley & Prause, 1995; Lackovic-Grgin, Dekovic, Milosavljevic, Cvek-Soric, & Opacic, 1996; Winefield, Tiggemann, & Winefield, 1992b) and have identified a link between unemployment and self-esteem.

Self-esteem, along with self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability, has been identified as a component of core self-evaluations, which influence an individual's experience of stress and strain (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2002). Consequently, some researchers have taken the view that self-esteem may be an important personal resource that provides a buffer against the detrimental effects of unemployment (e.g., Kokko & Pulkkinen, 1998; Waters & Moore, 2002b).

Self-esteem has been linked with appraisals of deprivation of the latent and manifest benefits of employment. For example, Waters and Moore (2002b) reported significant correlations between self-esteem and the latent benefits ranging from .34 for time structure to .54 for status. In an earlier study, focusing on economic deprivation, Waters and Moore (2001) reported a significant correlation between self-esteem and appraisals of economic deprivation for leisure activities ($r = -.42$, $p <$

.01). That is participants with lower self-esteem felt they had less money for their leisure activities than those with higher self-esteem.

In a comparative study of young and older unemployed Australians, Rowley and Feather (1987) reported significant correlations (with alphas $< .05$) between self-esteem and psychological distress for young unemployed participants aged 15 to 24 years ($r = -.53$) and also for participants aged 30 to 49 years ($r = -.44$). Rowley and Feather also reported significant correlations between self-esteem and time structure for both younger ($r = .26$) and older participants ($r = .42$), suggesting that people with higher self-esteem also appraised their time as more structured and purposeful than those with lower self-esteem.

Studies have clearly demonstrated that low self-esteem is related to poorer mental health. Kessler, Turner, and House (1987; 1988) found that unemployment was significantly damaging to mental health and that coping, social support, and a positive self-concept mediated the relationship between unemployment and mental health, with self-concept and social support having the strongest effects. This provides some evidence that self-esteem is a buffer against the detrimental effects of unemployment. Using a path model to examine mediators and moderators of the relationship between unemployment and psychological distress, Kokko and Pulkkinen (1998) identified self-esteem as a key variable that mediated the relationship between length of unemployment and psychological distress. Longer periods of unemployment predicted low self-esteem, and low self-esteem predicted increased depressive symptoms, anxiety, and poorer psychological health.

In a total of 5,186 unemployed individuals from 26 samples, McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) found a significant effect size of $r_c = .55$ ($k = 26$, $N = 5,186$) for the correlation between core self-evaluations, of which self-esteem is a component, and mental health. The core self-evaluation variables in the McKee-Ryan et al. meta-analysis included self-esteem, optimism, neuroticism, and internal locus of control. These variables had the strongest relationship with mental health in their study, leading McKee-Ryan et al. to conclude that "Having a generally positive self-view is a protective resource when faced with job loss and unemployment" (p. 33).

Whilst there is some evidence that self-esteem levels decrease as a consequence of unemployment and that there is a significant improvement in self-esteem associated with acquiring a job, other evidence suggests that self-esteem is relatively stable and unaffected by the unemployment experience (e.g., Mean

Patterson, 1997). In a longitudinal study of adolescents, Mean Patterson found that self-esteem levels were not affected by employment status. However, healthier baseline levels of self-esteem were related to later employment. Young people who acquired jobs at Time 2 (10-12 months after the initial study) tended to have higher self-esteem at Time 1 than those who had not obtained work at Time 2. Similarly, Creed (1999a) found no changes in self-esteem levels over a 4-month period for a sample of long-term unemployed youth. Whilst females had significantly lower levels of self-esteem than males, there were no significant changes in their self-esteem over time, nor were self-esteem levels affected by employment status at Time 2 (i.e., continuously unemployed, employed, or some paid employment).

Research has also linked self-esteem to the job search process (e.g., Ellis & Taylor, 1983; Wanberg, Glomb, Song, & Sorenson, 2005). Wanberg et al. (2005) found higher core self-evaluations, of which self-esteem is a component, to be a significant predictor of job search intensity over time. They concluded that a positive self-concept helped individuals persist with their job seeking despite possible rejections along the way (Wanberg et al.). In a study of university graduates, Saks and Ashforth (1999) found significant correlations between self-esteem, job search behaviours, and job acquisition. However, when self-esteem was included in a regression model with job search self-efficacy and perceived control, it failed to make a unique contribution to the prediction of job search behaviours or to employment status 4 months later.

Furthermore, Ellis and Taylor (1983) found that self-esteem directly predicted the sources of job information used to find work, interview evaluations received from organisational recruiters, and satisfaction with the way the job search was conducted. For example, Ellis and Taylor found that job seekers with low self-esteem were more likely to use formal sources of job information, such as newspapers or job boards, which tend to be less effective in terms of successful outcomes.

The research has also demonstrated a link between self-esteem and employment outcomes. Dooley and Prause (1995) examined the transition from school to work and the effect of unemployment on self-esteem in a sample of young people. These researchers found that unemployment adversely affected self-esteem. They also found that self-esteem measured in high school can predict employment

status up to 7 years later. Participants with higher self-esteem in high school were more likely to have found satisfactory employment. Waters and Moore (2002b) explored the influence of self-esteem, appraisals of latent deprivation and control, and coping efforts on reemployment. They found that these variables, together with demographic characteristics, were able to predict 12% of the variance in reemployment status. In their meta-analytic study, Kanfer et al. (2001) found a significant effect size of $r_c = .25$ ($k = 22$, $N = 3,887$) between self-esteem and job search behaviour, suggesting that people with a more positive view of themselves engage more actively in job seeking than those with lower self-esteem. Kanfer et al. also found that self-esteem was also significantly related to gaining employment ($r_c = .15$, $k = 7$, $N = 1,376$).

Given the findings outlined above, self-esteem is expected to be related to mental health, length of unemployment, time structure, employment outcomes, and job search behaviour.

Job-seeking efficacy

Like self-esteem, self-efficacy has also been identified as a component of one's core self-evaluations, and has been shown to influence well-being (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2002). The concept of self-efficacy is an important component of Bandura's (1988) social cognitive theory. In broad terms, Bandura suggested that self-efficacy is a person's belief in their ability to execute a desired behaviour, along with his or her belief that the behaviour will produce the desired outcome. Self-efficacy beliefs can affect the behaviours a person will choose, the amount of effort they will expend on the endeavour, and how long they will persevere in the face of difficulties (Bandura). According to Feather (1990), self-efficacy also affects a person's vulnerability to stress and response to failure. People with high self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to persist with behaviours, such as job seeking, because they believe that they have the necessary skills and abilities to get a job and they also believe that getting a job will be a rewarding experience (Feather). However, those with low self-efficacy beliefs have little confidence in their job seeking skills and abilities, are likely to believe that their efforts are futile, and are more likely to become resigned and apathetic (Feather).

Wiener et al. (1999) found a significant correlations between self-efficacy and employment commitment, employment expectation (i.e., job confidence), need

for work, and intentions to look for work. People with higher self-efficacy expressed greater employment commitment, more confidence that they would gain work, a higher need for work, and a greater intention to seek work. Wiener et al. also reported a significant correlation between self-efficacy and mental health, with lower efficacy being related to poorer mental health.

Similarly, Eden and Aviram (1993) found self-efficacy to be crucial to job-search motivation. These authors found that individuals with high general self-efficacy were more likely to become reemployed, and that individuals whose self-efficacy was raised by a training workshop were also more likely to find jobs (Eden & Aviram). Whilst general self-efficacy refers to a general confidence in one's ability, job-search self-efficacy is specific and refers to the confidence one has in one's ability to successfully perform a variety of job-seeking activities (Wanberg, Watt, & Rumsey, 1996).

Some researchers have found higher job-seeking self-efficacy to be associated with increased job-search behaviour and reemployment (e.g., Blau, 1994; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985). For example, Kanfer and Hulin found a significant correlation of .51 between job search efficacy and job search activity, and a strong association between reemployment, job search efficacy, and number of job search behaviours. In a study of 123 graduating university students, Cote, Saks, and Zikic (2005) found significant correlations between job seeking efficacy, job search activity, and job acquisition. Students with higher job seeking efficacy were more intensive with their job search activities ($r = .25$) and were also more likely to become employed ($r = .20$) than those with lower efficacy. Furthermore, Saks and Ashforth (1999) found significant correlations between job search self-efficacy, job search behaviours, and job acquisition.

In a longitudinal study of university graduates, Saks and Ashforth (1998) found job search self-efficacy to be a significant unique predictor of job search behaviours and job acquisition at a 4-month follow-up. Kanfer et al. (2001) reported a mean corrected weighted correlation of $r_c = .27$ ($k = 28$, $N = 10,020$) between self-efficacy and job search behaviour, and a significant relationship between job search self-efficacy and job acquisition ($r_c = .09$, $k = 11$, $N = 5,251$), in their meta-analytic study.

Van Ryn and Vinokur (1992) reported on an intervention program involving job search training, promoting participants' self-efficacy, sense of self-worth, involvement in the job search, inoculation against setbacks, social support, and social influence. The program was designed to prevent the detrimental effects of unemployment on mental health and to promote quality reemployment (van Ryn & Vinokur). Results from van Ryn and Vinokur's study revealed that job search efficacy was a significant predictor of intention to search for work and a direct determinant of job search behaviour. These researchers highlighted the importance of self-efficacy, because the relationship between the intervention and job search behaviour was entirely mediated by job search efficacy. That is, the training intervention improved self-efficacy levels, which led to an increase in job search behaviour. From the afore-mentioned studies, job seeking efficacy is expected to be related to employment expectation, job search behaviour, and employment success.

Positive and Negative Affect

The inclusion of dispositional influences on the unemployment experience has gained momentum in the more recent unemployment literature, with several studies highlighting the important roles played by positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA) (e.g., Creed, Muller, & Machin, 2001; Machin & Creed, 2003). Along with self-esteem, self-efficacy, and locus of control, emotional stability (represented by low negative affectivity) is an indicator of the core self-evaluations construct and influences stress and strain (Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998).

According to Watson and Clark (1984), NA primarily reflects individual differences in negative emotionality (negative mood and self-concept) that are maintained under all conditions, even in the absence of external stress. Individuals high in NA tend to focus on the negative aspects of themselves and the world and are predisposed to experience high levels of stress (Mak & Meuller, 2000; Parkes, 1990; Watson & Clark, 1984). Low-NA individuals are relatively content, secure, and satisfied with themselves (Watson & Clark). PA reflects levels of enthusiasm, activity, and alertness (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Hence, high energy, full concentration, and pleasurable engagement characterise high-PA individuals, whilst sadness and lethargy characterise low-PA individuals (Watson et al.). In the job stress literature, some researchers (e.g., McCrae, 1990) consider NA a nuisance or confounding variable that should be controlled for when examining the stress-strain

relationship, while others (e.g., Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995; Brief, Burke, Robinson, & George, 1988; Cassar & Tattersall, 1998; Spector, Zapf, Chen, & Frese, 2000) emphasise the substantive role played by NA and encourage its inclusion as an influential, rather than confounding, variable. Moyle (1995) examined several hypothesised roles that NA could play in the stress process and found that NA had a direct, partially confounding, and moderating effect on well-being (as measured by the GHQ-12), and it also played a mediating role in the prediction of job satisfaction. Based on those results, Moyle concluded that all of the potential roles of NA should be considered in stress research.

Whilst fewer studies have been carried out with PA, it has also been shown to predict psychological strain (Mak & Meuller, 2000). In the unemployment literature, PA and NA have been shown to account for a significant amount of variance in the levels of self-efficacy and psychological distress demonstrated by the unemployed (Machin & Creed, 2003). Machin and Creed concluded that "...components of dispositional affect are the main influence on how individuals perceive stimuli in the environment and subsequently regulate their emotional response" (p. 2).

According to Folkman and Moskowitz (2000), the role of PA has been notably underrepresented in the research on stress and coping. Whilst there is ample evidence that NA is associated with the stress process and influences clinical depression, PA plays an important role in offsetting the adverse consequences of stress by supporting coping efforts and replenishing resources that have been depleted by the stress (Folkman & Moskowitz). Folkman and Moskowitz suggested that "...without the protective effects of sufficient levels of positive affect, people who are experiencing high levels of negative affect are more likely to become clinically depressed" (p. 649). Given the adaptational functions of PA in the coping process, Folkman and Moskowitz identified some ways that it can be generated and sustained in the context of chronic stress.

Positive affect can be generated through positive reappraisals (i.e., cognitive reframing that focuses on the positive), or engaging in activities that are meaningful, that help individuals to feel effective and to experience situational mastery and control. Feelings of mastery and control are important for an individual's mental health (Feather, 1990). People who feel they have no control over their situation can develop a sense of helplessness (Seligman, 1975). For example, if an unemployed

individual's efforts to find work consistently fail, he or she is likely to develop a sense of helplessness, which may extend over time and generalise across a range of situations (Feather, 1990). Folkman and Moskowitz emphasised the importance of individuals creating situational meaning, turning their attention to their resources, and looking for positive aspects of their lives. For the unemployed, this may translate into meaningful leisure activities.

There is evidence that people high in PA tend to have more positive perceptions of the sociability aspects of themselves and are more interested in other people (Kuiper, McKee, Shahe, & Olinger, 2000). This suggests that people with high PA may feel more comfortable engaging in networking activities to enhance their job prospects. Burger and Caldwell (2000) provided some evidence for this. These researchers set out to determine whether PA and the personality construct of *extroversion* significantly overlapped, and to examine the relative predictive ability of the two scales for social behaviour. In a longitudinal study of 99 graduating university students, Burger and Caldwell (2000) found that PA and extroversion had a similar pattern of relationships to the outcome variables used (social activities, job search activity, and interview success), but that PA was able to account for a significant amount of the variance beyond that explained by extroversion. PA was significantly positively correlated with extracurricular (e.g., volunteering in community programs) and cocurricular (e.g., involvement in campus clubs) social activities ($r = .40$). It was also positively correlated with social job search activities (e.g., talked to friend or relatives) ($r = .40$) and interview success ($r = .35$). It was not significantly correlated with the use of non-social (e.g., read newspaper ads) job search strategies. Supplemental analysis by Burger and Caldwell found that NA was significantly negatively associated with career optimism (i.e., how optimistic the student was about finding a meaningful job) ($r = -.21$). Thus, these researchers have demonstrated that PA is associated with outcomes important to the experience of unemployment, namely social contact, job search activity, and job search success. They have also demonstrated the importance of NA to cognitive appraisals of employment expectancy.

Other studies have shown that PA is related to job-seeking efficacy and job search activity (Cote, Saks, & Zikic, 2005). Cote et al. found significant positive correlations between PA and job seeking efficacy and job search activity ($r = .49$ and

$r = .22$, respectively). NA was also significantly correlated with job-seeking efficacy ($r = -.35$), such that people with higher NA had less confidence in their ability to carry out specific job search activities. Whilst NA was also positively correlated with job search activity ($r = .10$), the relationship did not reach significance.

A meta-analytic study by Kanfer et al. (2001) found that extroversion (also referred to as positive affect) was significantly correlated with job search behaviour ($r_c = .46$, $k = 7$, $N = 1,733$) and a shorter duration of unemployment ($r_c = -.10$, $k = 2$, $N = 830$). That is, people with higher positive affect were more active job seekers and spent less time unemployed than those with lower PA. Neuroticism (also referred to as negative affect) was significantly correlated with job search behaviour ($r_c = -.07$, $k = 14$, $N = 2,603$), job acquisition ($r_c = -.09$, $k = 9$, $N = 2,681$) and number of job offers ($r_c = -.22$, $k = 2$, $N = 260$). That is, high-NA individuals were less actively seeking work, were less likely to acquire a job, and had fewer job offers than those with low NA.

The studies outlined above suggest that PA will be related to mental health, social contact, social leisure, job seeking efficacy, job search activity, engagement in volunteer work, and employment outcomes. NA is expected to be a significant predictor of mental health. It is also expected to be related to employment expectation, job seeking efficacy, job search behaviour, and job acquisition.

Employment Commitment

Employment commitment is a value measure that provides an indication of the importance of work to an individual (Feather, 1990; Wanberg, Watt, & Rumsey, 1996) and this variable has been shown to influence job-seeking efforts, reemployment, and psychological well-being. For example, researchers have found that unemployed individuals with higher levels of employment commitment engage in more frequent job-search efforts (e.g., Rowley & Feather, 1987; Wiener, Oei, & Creed, 1999). Rowley and Feather found that high employment commitment was significantly related to higher levels of job-search frequency in both 15- to 25-year-olds and also 30- to 49-year-olds, with correlations of .27 and .26, respectively. In a study of Hong Kong Chinese unemployed individuals, Lai and Chan (2002) found that participants with higher employment commitment scores were more likely to be re-employed at an 8-month follow-up. In that study, however, employment

commitment had no significant effect on well-being. This suggests that employment commitment may be influenced by culture and therefore, caution should be exercised when making generalisations about its relationship with mental health.

In a study of young unemployed people in the UK, Mean Patterson (1997) found that lower employment commitment was associated with healthy levels of self-esteem and less psychological distress, and that people who had become employed at Time 2 had significantly lower levels of employment commitment at Time 1 than those who remained unemployed. Stafford, Jackson, and Banks (1980) surveyed a sample of 647 school-leavers approximately 7 months after leaving school to examine predictors of employment status and mental health. These researchers tested a path model and found that father's employment status, own qualifications, and work involvement (a measure similar to the employment commitment scale) were significant predictors of employment status. Young people were at higher risk of unemployment if their father was unemployed, if they had few or no qualifications, and if their employment commitment was low. Stafford et al. also found that employment status moderated the relationship between employment commitment and mental health.

There is strong evidence for an association between employment commitment and mental health. Wiener et al. (1999) found that employment commitment, along with self-efficacy and intentions to seek work were significant predictors of psychological health. Employment commitment has been found to moderate the relationship between unemployment and psychological health, with evidence from both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies (e.g., P. Jackson, Stafford, Banks, & Warr, 1983). Cross-sectional data from Jackson et al. demonstrated that employed groups with higher employment commitment had lower levels of distress, whilst unemployed groups with higher commitment had higher levels of distress. Results from their longitudinal analyses revealed that greater levels of distress are experienced by people with high employment commitment who lose their jobs, whilst distress is greatly reduced for high-commitment people who become employed.

Further evidence of the important role of employment commitment comes from a Swedish study of unemployed people aged 19 to 65, in which the odds of having depression were more than three times higher for people with strong employment commitment than for those who placed less value on employment

(Rantakeisu & Jönsson, 2003). In their meta-analysis, McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) reported a mean corrected weighted correlation of $r_c = -.34$ ($k = 19$, $N = 4,398$) between work-role centrality (e.g., employment commitment) and mental health. This indicates that unemployed people with higher employment commitment have poorer mental health than those who are more ambivalent about working. The meta-analytic study by Kanfer et al. (2001) reported a significant effect size of $r_c = .29$ ($k = 16$, $N = 3,319$) for the correlation between employment commitment and job search behaviour, and a significant effect size of $r_c = .19$ ($k = 2$, $N = 418$) for the correlation between employment commitment and job acquisition.

From the studies cited above, employment commitment is expected to be related to mental health, self-esteem, employment expectation, job search behaviour, and job acquisition.

Financial Resources

There is ample evidence that the unemployed experience financial hardship and that the lack of financial resources can restrict their coping options and impact on their mental health. According to Fielden and Davidson (1999), most unemployed people experience a significantly reduced income, to the extent that many are living in relative poverty. Whilst the majority of unemployed people in Australia are eligible for financial support from the government, their payments are typically just enough to allow them to buy the basic necessities of life. However, there are some unemployed people who have difficulty even affording the basics, such as food and clothing.

For example, a study in Ireland conducted by Whelan (1992) examined deprivation of primary and secondary life-style items, and housing and household capital items. Primary life-style items included things such as heating, food, clothing, and shoes. Secondary life-style items included things such as an annual holiday, regular savings, leisure activities, a car, and entertainment. Housing and household capital items were things such as indoor toilets, baths/showers, televisions, and refrigerators. Whelan reported a significant correlation ($r = -.21$) between income and mental health (as measured by the GHQ). Significant correlations were also found between mental health and primary deprivation ($r = .29$), secondary deprivation ($r = .23$), and financial strain ($r = .24$). That is, greater deprivation and more felt strain were related to poorer mental health. A stepwise regression analysis

revealed that unemployment and primary deprivation had the most significant influence on GHQ scores. After controlling for unemployment and the objective measures of deprivation, the subjective measure of financial strain still made a significant, although modest, unique contribution to the variance in mental health. Whelan concluded that poverty was a crucial mediator between unemployment and mental health.

Similarly, using data from samples taken from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Scotland, and Sweden, Bjarnason and Sigurdardottir (2003) found that individuals who were continuously unemployed reported higher levels of material deprivation (e.g., going without meals, clothing, entertainment, recreational activities, or socialising) than those who were permanently employed. Perceived material deprivation was the strongest predictor of psychological distress among the continuously unemployed.

Dockery (2004) examined data from the Household, Income, and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey to explore the unemployment experience. On page 181 of his report, Dockery tabled the proportion of people reporting financial stress by labour force status (i.e., employed, unemployed, discouraged job seekers, and others not in the labour force). The indicators of financial stress included not being able to pay bills on time, not being able to pay the mortgage/rent on time, pawning or selling something, going without meals, being unable to heat the home, asking for financial help from friends or family, and asking for help from welfare/community organisations. Across all seven indicators, the reporting incidences were higher for the unemployed, with inability to pay the bills on time having the highest proportion for the unemployed (37.3%) compared to 18.3% for employed persons, 19.3% for discouraged job seekers, and 18.5% for other people not in the labour force.

Even in countries with the lowest frequencies of poverty, such as Denmark, the experience of financial hardship is quite prevalent among the unemployed (Andersen, 2002). Andersen's study of the long-term unemployed in Denmark found economic problems to be a significant determinant of general well-being, life satisfaction, difficulty filling in time, loneliness, alcohol consumption, and self-confidence. Almost two-thirds (64%) of unemployed people in Andersen's sample reported that they would not be able to pay an unexpected bill, 39% reported having

difficulties paying their current expenses, and 54% reported being uncertain about their economic future.

The studies cited above exemplify some of the financial difficulties experienced by the unemployed. If they are unable to afford even the basic necessities in life, they have limited, if any, abilities to engage in coping activities that require a financial outlay. For example, limited financial resources can significantly impact on the frequency and type of activities the unemployed engage in to occupy their time (Bjarnason & Sigurdardottir, 2003; Waters & Moore, 2001). Fielden and Davidson (1999) suggested that social contact is restricted when unemployed individuals cannot afford non-essential items, such as entertainment, and that this leads to social isolation.

As the studies by Whelan (1992) and Bjarnason and Sigurdardottir (2003) demonstrate, the unemployed have limited financial resources to socialise or engage in leisure activities. This can be detrimental to their well-being, as research has shown that engaging in meaningful leisure is a positive coping strategy that can alleviate some of the negative effects of unemployment (Waters & Moore, 2002a). In a study of employed and unemployed people in Australia, Waters and Moore (2001) found that the employed and unemployed differed in their appraisals of economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activities. That is, the unemployed felt they had less money to engage in meaningful leisure activities. There were, however, no differences between the two groups in their appraisals of deprivation of money to buy material necessities. This suggests that the income support payments provided to the unemployed in Australia assist them to buy the necessities for daily living, but that the money does not extend to expenditure for leisure activities. Regardless of employment status, deprivation of money for both material necessities and meaningful leisure was related to higher depressive affect. Self-esteem was also affected by felt deprivation of money for meaningful leisure activities, such that people who felt they had little money for meaningful leisure activities also reported poorer self-esteem.

A further link between personal and financial coping resources is evidenced in a study from Finland by Kokko and Pulkkinen (1998). Kokko and Pulkkinen examined possible mediators and moderators between length of unemployment and psychological distress. One of the variables was a subjective measure of economic

situation, which asked participants to indicate how they would describe their current economic situation on a scale from 1 = *very tight* to 4 = *very good*. A comparison of the employed and unemployed showed that the unemployed reported a significantly worse economic situation and poorer self-esteem than the employed. For the unemployed group, economic situation and self-esteem functioned as mediators between length of unemployment and psychological distress. Greater durations of unemployment predicted poorer financial resources and lower self-esteem, which influenced psychological ill-health and depressive symptoms.

The McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) meta-analytic study reported a significant effect size of $r = .11$ ($k = 9$, $N = 4,393$) for the correlation between financial resources and mental health. McKee-Ryan et al. measured financial resources by average weekly income, and net and gross financial resources, such as savings, investments, and income from other sources or from family members.

An objective measure of financial resources is included in the current research project and is defined as net fortnightly income. Given the studies cited above, it is expected that financial resources will be related to appraisals of financial strain and hardship, length of unemployment, mental health, self-esteem, time structure, social contact, leisure activity, and variables tapping into confidence, including job seeking efficacy and employment expectation.

Social Resources

According to Jahoda (1982), unemployment is associated with decreased social contact, which contributes to psychological distress in the unemployed. There is some evidence to support this contention, however, some studies have found that being unemployed is associated with an increase in social contact. Using data from the Household, Income, and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey, Dockery (2004) presented evidence that the unemployed have a lower level of social support available to them. Compared to the employed, discouraged job seekers, and people not in the labour force, the unemployed reported the lowest levels of support on 9 of the 10 social support indicators, particularly those relating to feelings of loneliness and lack of people to turn to for help. Dockery also found that being married was an important factor in social support, with married persons having significantly more social support than unmarried persons. Being married has also been linked to successful employment outcomes. For example, a study in Finland by

Vuori and Vesalainen (1999) found that being married or cohabiting was a significant unique predictor of future reemployment in a sample of unemployed individuals.

Further, in the HILDA sample, social support had the largest impact on mental health, followed by financial strain, and employment commitment. Studies have also demonstrated a link between social contact and later employment. For example, Mean Patterson (1997) found that unemployed adolescents who spent more time with their friends were more likely to gain later employment than their counterparts who spent less time with friends. In this study, mental health, self-esteem, employment commitment, and time spent with friends were all significant predictors of job acquisition among adolescents.

Conversely, some researchers have found that unemployment is associated with an increase in social contact. Using data from a longitudinal study in Denmark from 1994 to 1999, Andersen (2002) found that, on average, unemployment was associated with a slight increase in social contact. Compared to their contact with friends and acquaintances before unemployment, individuals reported an increase in contact after becoming unemployed (i.e., a 14% increase in 1994 and a 10% increase in 1999). Andersen also examined whether the long-term unemployed segregated themselves from mainstream society and formed a collective group with an “unemployment culture”. No evidence of such a culture was found. Most of the long-term unemployed had a mix of unemployed and employed friends. Despite an increase in contact with friends and acquaintances, the long-term unemployed reported more problems with filling in their time and with loneliness than the employed (Andersen).

While social contacts may provide a buffer against the stress associated with unemployment (Fielden & Davidson, 1999), they may also provide opportunities for networking, which is a valuable part of the job search process (Wanberg, Kanfer, & Banas, 2000). A study in Spain by Villar, Juan, Corominas, and Capell (2000) of university graduates demonstrated that networking provided an effective avenue for finding employment. Approximately 52% of the graduates in the Villar et al. study acquired their jobs through informal networking channels. Further evidence of the relationship between social contacts and reemployment comes from a Swedish study by Korpi (2001). Korpi examined social networks among the unemployed and found

that the size of a person's social network was positively related to the probability of employment. The evidence from Korpi's study suggests that social contacts are an effective way of obtaining job information.

Wanberg et al. (2000) also described networking as an effective job search method, because it provides opportunities for unemployed individuals to get information, leads, or advice about jobs, and to inform others that they are looking for work. Wanberg et al. carried out a survey of 478 unemployed participants to explore predictors and outcomes of networking intensity. These researchers measured personality using the five personality domains of neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, as well as networking intensity, degree of comfort with networking, and general job search intensity at Time 1. Nine months later, they gathered data on reemployment speed and status, and exhaustion of unemployment benefits. Extraversion, conscientiousness, and networking comfort were significant predictors of networking intensity. People who were more comfortable engaging in networking activities, such as asking their friends for advice regarding their job search, used networking more frequently than those who felt less comfortable. Networking intensity was a significant predictor of reemployment, with the odds of gaining work increased by 3% for each one-unit increase in networking intensity. However, networking intensity was not significantly related to speed of reemployment.

The McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) meta-analytic study reported a significant effect size of $r = .26$ ($k = 20$, $N = 4,858$) for the correlation between social support and mental health. These researchers described social support as "instrumental and emotional aid exchanged through social interactions" (Latack, Kinicki, & Prussia, 1995, cited in McKee-Ryan et al., p. 56). However, social undermining, which involves negative behaviours (e.g., anger or criticism) directed towards an individual or obstructing the attainment of their goals, had a relatively higher correlation ($r = -.36$, $k = 2$, $N = 1,700$) with mental health (McKee-Ryan et al.). McKee-Ryan et al. did not find a significant correlation between marital status and mental health ($r = .04$, $k = 4$, $N = 925$).

The aforementioned studies suggest that social contact may provide some protection against the stress of unemployment and may provide opportunities for people to engage in more effective job seeking activities through the use of their social networks. The leisure environment can provide opportunities for social

contact. According to Passmore (2003), meaningful leisure activity is beneficial to health because it can influence social inclusiveness. Social leisure has a positive influence on mental health. For example, Waters and Moore (2002a) found that social leisure activities (i.e., those performed with friends) were appraised as more meaningful than solitary leisure activities, they reduced perceptions of latent deprivation, and they enhanced the psychological well-being of their unemployed participants. Winefield, Tiggemann, and Winefield (1992a) also found that unemployed young people who spent their spare time with other people had better mental health than those who were engaged in solitary activities. Thus, leisure activity that involves others seems to provide some protection against the distress associated with unemployment.

Relationship status and social leisure are used in this study as an indication of social resources available to participants. Based on the findings by Vuori and Vesalainen (1999), relationship status is expected to be related to job acquisition. Other research outlined above suggests that social leisure may be related to mental health, employment outcomes, length of unemployment, leisure meaningfulness, and perceived deprivation of the latent benefits of employment.

Cognitive Appraisal

As explained earlier, the degree of stress experienced by a person is shaped by their appraisals of the situation. Unemployment may be appraised as stressful if it is associated with perceived loss or the potential for loss in the future. For example, a decrease in income due to unemployment may be construed as threatening because there is the potential for savings to be steadily eroded or for social activities to be restricted (Feather, 1990). Alternatively, situations may be appraised as benign-positive or irrelevant; that is, they are either positive and enhance well-being or they have no implication for well-being (Feather). For some people, unemployment may be considered a potential for gain or growth and therefore have a positive impact on mental health (Feather). Unemployment may be appraised as an opportunity to take time out to evaluate career goals, to undertake further education, or to relocate to a more desired area. The following sections present information about appraisals relating to unemployment, including appraisals of deprivation of the latent and manifest benefits of employment, satisfaction with employment status, expectations for employment, and leisure meaningfulness.

Appraisals of Deprivation

There is ample evidence to suggest that unemployment is a stressful experience associated with perceived deprivation of certain benefits of employment. Studies using self-report measures typically show a difference between employed and unemployed people in relation to their perceived access to, or deprivation of, the financial and psychosocial benefits of employment. Research has demonstrated that access to the five latent benefits (time structure, activity, social contact, collective purpose, and status) is related to exposure to paid employment and that deprivation of the latent benefits of employment has a significantly negative impact on one's mental health. Creed and Machin (2002) investigated well-being and perceived access to the latent benefits of employment in a sample of 161 job seekers registered with the national unemployment service in Australia. They identified a linear relationship between exposure to paid work and perceived access to the latent benefits, with perceived access to the latent benefits increasing as exposure to paid work increased. These researchers also found a significant association ($r = -.46$) between access to the latent benefits and well-being. A longitudinal study by Wanberg, Griffiths, and Gavin (1997) found that access to time structure increased as individuals moved from unemployment into employment, but did not change for people who remained unemployed or for the continuously employed. Wanberg et al. also found that reduced time structure led to decreased mental health.

In a longitudinal study of school-leavers, Winefield et al. (1992a) found that, whilst there were no differences in reported use of spare time when these young people were at school, 7 years later, those who were unemployed reported spending more time "doing nothing in particular" (p. 309) than those who were employed. Their study also showed that psychological well-being was related to spare time use, with engaging in aimless pursuits being associated with lower self-esteem and poorer mental health, whilst the reverse was true for those who engaged in purposeful activities (Winefield et al.). In a comparison of employed, unemployed, and students, Jackson (1999) found that the unemployed group reported less structured and purposeful use of time, less social support, increased financial stress, and greater emotional distress than the employed group. Creed and Machin (1999) found that having some paid work increased perceptions of access to activity, time structure, and collective purpose; however, it did not improve perceived access to social

contacts or status. Furthermore, unemployed individuals who reported being satisfied with their employment status reported greater access to activity, time structure, and collective purpose than those who were dissatisfied with their employment status. However, for this sample, having some paid work or being satisfied with their employment situation did not translate into mental health gains (Creed & Machin). Levels of distress did not differ between the satisfied and dissatisfied groups, nor were there differences in relation to exposure to paid work. The most significant predictor of poorer mental health was lower perceived status.

The only latent benefit included in the McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) meta-analysis was time structure. It was significantly correlated with mental health ($r_c = .31$, $k = 12$, $N = 2,426$), such that more structured and purposeful use of time was associated with better mental health. Perceived loss of the manifest benefits—measured as perceived financial strain—was also significantly correlated with mental health ($r_c = -.45$, $k = 17$, $N = 5,257$) and it was the second strongest predictor of mental health (core self-evaluations was the strongest) (McKee-Ryan et al.).

Payne and Hartley (1987) highlighted the importance of taking financial variables into account when looking at affective reactions to unemployment. Their study found that financial worries had a negative influence on well-being (as measured by the GHQ) and current affect (i.e., strain and pleasure on the previous day). Further, Creed and Macintyre (2001) sampled 248 unemployed people and found that perceived access to the latent and manifest benefits of employment accounted for 52% of the variance in mental health scores. Greater perceived financial strain was the most significant predictor, followed by lower perceptions of status and time structure. Lai and Chan (2002) also reported a significant relationship between perceived financial hardship and mental health. Their study revealed that greater financial hardship was associated with poorer mental health in a sample of 104 unemployed Hong Kong Chinese.

The evidence suggests that the unemployed experience both objective and subjective financial strain, but that it is the subjective experience that has the stronger connection with well-being (Creed, Muller, & Machin, 2001; Fryer & Fagan, 2003; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Price, Choi, & Vinokur, 2002). Brief, Konovsky, Goodwin, and Link (1995) reported a significant correlation between perceived economic deprivation and subjective well-being ($r = -.26$). Their study highlights the importance of a person's subjective appraisal of their economic

situation. Whilst an objective measure of financial resources (i.e., income) was correlated with subjective well-being ($r = .20$), the subjective measure of perceived economic deprivation (e.g., “I am barely surviving financially”) was more strongly related to well-being.

A study in Sweden by Rantakeisu and Jonsson (2003) found that perceived economic hardship was significantly related to anxiety and depression in a sample of 868 unemployed people. For this sample, the odds of regularly experiencing anxiety or depression were 34 times higher for those reporting a higher degree of worries about their economic situation than those with less concern about finances. Rantakeisu and Jonsson also measured degree of economic security in terms of ready access to cash and found that this too was associated with mental health. The odds for experiencing anxiety or depression were between six and seven times greater for people with low economic security than for those with more ready access to cash. Rantakeisu and Jonsson concluded that subjective reports of financial strain had a much greater influence on mental health than more objective measures, such as availability of cash. Similarly, in their meta-analysis, McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) found that subjective reports of financial strain were more strongly related to mental health than objective measures of financial resources, such as income or savings. The mean corrected weighted correlation between financial resources and mental health was $r_c = .11$, whereas the correlation between perceived financial strain and mental health was significantly stronger ($r_c = -.45$).

Appraisals of deprivation and control play a role in determining what coping strategies people will engage in to minimise their distressing experience. Whilst many studies have tested Jahoda’s and Fryer’s theories by looking at how economic and latent deprivation relate to well-being, few studies have examined how appraisals of deprivation of these economic and psychosocial needs translate into coping behaviours. Based on Feather’s (1990) interpretation of expectancy-valence theory (Edwards, 1954; Vroom, 1964), it is reasonable to assume that perceived deprivation of the latent and manifest benefits of employment would influence job search activity and perhaps other coping activities, such as leisure, training, and volunteer work.

Feather (1990) used expectancy-value theory to highlight the importance of job search efficacy in the job search process and the value a person places on being in paid work. In broad terms, the expectancy-value theory posits that a person’s

tendency to perform a certain behaviour depends upon "...that person's expectation about whether he or she can perform that action to the required standard, thereby achieving a successful outcome, and on the valence (or subjective value) associated with the action outcome" (Feather, 1990, p. 63). Feather proposed that the attractiveness or positive valence of having employment is influenced in part by a person's needs and values. Jahoda (1982) believed that the latent benefits of employment were related to our basic psychological needs. It makes sense then, that jobs would be perceived as attractive because they satisfy some of these needs, and that a person would be motivated to look for work because it provides access to the latent and manifest benefits. That is, having a job may be perceived as an avenue to acquire a secure and regular income, access to a wider social network, time structure, enforced activity, social status, and the opportunity to pursue collective goals. However, if there are other positive alternatives to having a job (e.g., high unemployment benefits, engaging in meaningful leisure activities) that fulfil latent and manifest needs, a person may be less motivated to carry out job-seeking behaviours.

There is some evidence, although it is somewhat inconclusive, that perceived economic deprivation is a motivational factor that influences job search behaviour. For example, Vinokur and Caplan (1987) found that economic hardship was positively related to the effort individuals put into finding a job. Rowley and Feather (1987), however, did not find a significant relationship between financial strain and job-search frequency. Wanberg, Watt, and Rumsey (1996) found significant positive correlations between economic hardship and both job-seeking frequency and job-seeking intention, but when economic hardship was included with demographic (e.g., age, gender), person (e.g., employment commitment, job-seeking efficacy), and situational variables (e.g., job-seeking support), in multiple regression analyses, it did not contribute any unique variance to the prediction of job-seeking frequency or job-seeking intention.

In a more recent meta-analysis of factors influencing job search behaviour, Kanfer, Wanberg, and Kantrowitz (2001) found a significant positive relationship between financial need and job search behaviour, with a mean corrected sample-weighted correlation of $r_c = .21$ ($k = 14$, $N = 3,622$). Financial need was also significantly negatively correlated with job acquisition ($r_c = -.11$, $k = 7$, $N = 3,146$). These findings suggest that people who were experiencing greater financial hardship

were more actively seeking work, but they were less likely to find employment than those with less financial hardship.

From the studies cited above, perceived deprivation of the latent and manifest benefits of employment is expected to be related to current employment status, mental health, employment commitment, and coping behaviours, including job search behaviour, leisure activity, and engagement in unpaid work or training. Based on the meta-analysis by Kanfer et al. (2001), perceived access to the manifest benefit is expected to be related to job acquisition, such that greater financial strain and hardship will be related to a reduced likelihood of being in paid work at the time of the follow-up study.

Satisfaction with Employment Status

In general, the literature suggests that many unemployed individuals perceive themselves as being more deprived of the latent and manifest benefits of employment than the employed, and that this felt deprivation contributes to feelings of distress and poor mental health. Consequently, they are generally making negative appraisals of their unemployment situation and suffering as a consequence. However, as mentioned previously, not all unemployed people make negative appraisals about their situation. A study by Andersen (2002) of the long-term unemployed in Denmark highlights some of the perceived advantages of unemployment, such as spending more time with family, being able to decide one's own time, being less busy, having more time for friends and recreational interests, and the freedom from having to go to work. In Andersen's study, approximately 65% of long-term unemployed individuals reported that one of the advantages of unemployment was being able to spend more time with their families. This was mentioned more frequently by females (73%) than males (52%).

Over half of Andersen's (2002) sample (58%) mentioned that being able to structure their day themselves was an advantage. This result suggests that not all unemployed people experience deprivation of time structure, which is in contrast to Jahoda's (1982) theory. Being able to spend more time with friends was reported by 48% of Andersen's sample, however, 35% also reported that loss of daily contact with colleagues at the workplace was one of the disadvantages of being unemployed. The most frequently reported disadvantage of unemployment was economic

insecurity (50% of people). Andersen's study provides a good example of the positive and negative aspects of unemployment.

Similarly, a study by Hesketh, Shouksmith, and Kang (1987) explored the positive and negative aspects of employment and unemployment. These researchers demonstrated that the unemployed are not a homogeneous group, and that there are people who are very unhappy being unemployed and others who are very happy being unemployed. People who were unhappy being unemployed tended to rate work as important in their lives and to perceive more advantages to being employed than unemployed (Hesketh et al.). Hesketh et al. found that people who were happy being unemployed had high self-esteem and good social contacts, and were also engaged in purposeful activities. Therefore, coping resources play a key role in one's perception of their unemployment experience.

There are very few studies that have looked at labour market satisfaction in unemployed samples, although Creed, Muller, and Machin (1999) included this variable when analysing predictors of mental health in the unemployed. Creed et al. found that labour market satisfaction was a significant predictor of mental health, and that it was significantly correlated with financial strain ($r = .46$), access to the latent benefits ($r = -.24$) and the personality variable, neuroticism ($r = .33$) (in their study, higher scores indicated greater dissatisfaction). People who reported being more satisfied with their unemployment situation reported less financial strain, greater perceived access to the latent benefits, and more emotional stability than the dissatisfied unemployed.

Under the Australian government's Mutual Obligation scheme, entitlement to income support has become increasingly dependent on compliance with individual agreements to engage in activities such as looking for work, attending job search training courses, or participating in Work for the Dole (Carson, Winefield, Waters, & Kerr, 2003). Failure to meet these contracted activities results in withdrawal of unemployment benefits. According to Carson et al., many young people regard Mutual Obligation as punitive and resent the coercion to undertake activities that do not match their career goals. Whilst the measures taken to reduce unemployment are designed to encourage the unemployed to exert greater effort in trying to find a job, an artifact (either purposeful or not) is that they make unemployment less attractive.

It follows then, that many unemployed people are likely to make a negative evaluation of their unemployment situation and engage in activities to alter their

situation. This has been demonstrated in a study by Taris, Heesink, and Feij (1995), who found that more negative appraisals of current state of unemployment predicted greater intentions to look for a job. However, appraisals were strongly affected by the expected advantages of employment, such that the more advantageous employment was perceived to be, the more likely the current state of unemployment was appraised as negative. The more unemployment had to offer (e.g., in terms of financial resources), the less negative unemployment was perceived. Taris et al. also found that perceived chances of finding a job influenced job search intentions. The intention to look for work increased if the current unemployment situation was viewed more negatively and if the individual believed that they would find a job. Thus, a person's perceptions of whether or not he or she will gain employment is also an important cognitive appraisal variable and will be addressed in the following section.

A longitudinal study by Taris (2002) found satisfaction with employment status was influenced by length of unemployment, perceived advantages of being unemployed, gender, and age. Females, older participants, participants who had spent less time out of work, and those who reported their state of unemployment as having more positive features, were more satisfied with being unemployed. Some of the nine measures Taris used to define positive features of the state of unemployment were similar to the latent and manifest benefits of employment. For example, Taris included the availability of money, feeling valued by others, having a sense and purpose in life, contacts with friends and acquaintances, and having order and regularity in life. This suggests that people who make more positive appraisals of their unemployment situation feel less deprived of the latent and manifest benefits of employment. Taris also found that satisfaction with being unemployed negatively predicted job search intention and number of job search strategies.

From the studies cited above, it is expected that positive appraisals (i.e., satisfaction with employment status) are likely to be related to appraisals of deprivation, employment commitment, self-esteem, leisure activity, mental health, NA, job search behaviour, and mutual obligation activities (e.g., involuntary training or unpaid work participation).

Employment Expectation

Leana and Feldman (1992) discussed perceptual changes that occur in relation to job loss and referred to the attributions that people make about the loss. Drawing from attribution theory, Leana and Feldman explained that one of the ways that people evaluate job loss is in terms of its reversibility. Reversibility relates to the probability of becoming employed (Leana & Feldman), and hence, it is concerned with secondary appraisals—those that relate to evaluating one's ability to control or change their unemployment situation. People are likely to appraise their situation as controllable and malleable to change if they perceive that they have the ability to successfully carry out tasks associated with making that change. That is, if they have high self-efficacy.

Feather (1990) noted that expectancy-value theory highlights the importance of expectancies in the job search process. Feather proposed that job-seeking depends on "...the strength of a persons' expectation that he or she will find employment following attempts to do so and on the perceive attractiveness of having a job" (p. 66). He pointed out that Bandura's (1988) concepts of self-efficacy and outcome expectations relate to expectancy of success. Self-efficacy refers to the perception that one has the ability to successfully carry out a given task or action, whilst outcome expectations refer to the person's expectation that a given behaviour will lead to certain outcomes (Feather). Thus, self-efficacy beliefs influence a person's expectancy of success (Feather). People who are highly confident that they are able to find a job and believe that having a job is a desirable outcome, are likely to persist with their job seeking, but repeated failures may lower their level of self-efficacy and reemployment confidence (Dockery, 2004).

Studies have found a link between perceived situational control and self-efficacy. There is also evidence of associations between perceived situational control and coping behaviours (e.g., job search activity) and well-being. For example, in a study of job seeking frequency and well-being in the unemployed, Wiener, Oei, and Creed (1999) reported significant correlations between reemployment confidence (i.e., confidence in obtaining paid work in the next 6 months), general self-efficacy ($r = .44$), and job search frequency ($r = .29$). They also reported a negative correlation ($r = -.11$) between reemployment confidence and mental health, but this failed to reach significance.

Wanberg (1997) examined predictors and outcomes coping behaviours of 363 unemployed participants in the US. She reported a significant positive correlation between situational control (i.e., the probability of obtaining a job if the person looked) and the coping behaviours of proactive search (i.e., coping by devoting time to look for work) and positive self-assessment (coping by thinking about one's positive attributes) ($r = .16$ and $.22$, respectively). Situational control was also significantly correlated with resilience ($r = .21$), a composite of self-esteem, global perceived control, and optimism. Further, Wanberg found that the interaction between situational control and proactive coping was a significant predictor of mental health, with proactive coping being associated with poorer mental health for those with low situational control. McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) found that reemployment expectation was significantly positively correlated with mental health ($r_c = .29$, $k = 11$, $N = 4,778$). Unemployed people who thought that it was highly likely that they would find a new job had better mental health than those who did not anticipate finding work.

Gowan, Riordan, and Gatewood (1999) tested a model of coping with job loss based on the stress and coping framework on 202 displaced airline workers. These researchers surveyed the workers approximately 4 months after they were displaced and then 6 months after the initial survey. The measures in the Gowan et al. study included education, financial resources, social support, perceived reversibility of employment, coping strategies (i.e., job search, distancing, and participation in non-work activities), distress, and reemployment. Their model showed that education was a significant predictor of perceived reversibility of employment, such that higher education predicted greater confidence in finding work. Perceived reversibility was also a significant predictor of coping by distancing (e.g., trying not to think about what happened), but it did not significantly predict the other coping strategies, nor did it predict reemployment or distress. However, the zero-order correlations presented by Gowan et al. show that perceived reversibility was significantly positively correlated with making contacts to assist with job search and negatively correlated with anxiety. Together, these findings suggest that people who evaluate their unemployment situation as within their control tend to experience less negative reactions to unemployment than those with low perceptions of control.

There is also some evidence that perceived control is associated with job search behaviours and employment outcomes in university graduates. In a study of

graduates with a mean age of 24.5 years, Saks and Ashforth (1998) found positive correlations between perceived control over job search outcomes, preparatory job search behaviours (e.g., conducting information interviews to find out about careers and jobs), and employment status. An unexpected finding from their study was that perceived control was also a significant predictor of active job search behaviour and job search intensity, with lower perceived control predicting more active job search behaviours. These researchers posited that individuals with higher perceived control may be more selective and restrictive in their job search behaviours, whilst those with lower perceived control may search more widely and actively to secure any type of employment. Perceived control was a significant unique predictor of job search success—with higher perceived control predicting job acquisition.

However, whilst positive appraisals about obtaining employment have been associated with coping and well-being, and they are also related to job acquisition for young university graduates, there is no guarantee that they will translate into positive employment outcomes, particularly for older or long-term unemployed individuals. There is evidence that the longer a person is unemployed, the less confident they are about finding work and the less likely they are to be offered a job. Using data from the Household, Income, and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey carried out from 2001 to 2002, Dockery (2004) demonstrated that, on average, the unemployed give themselves about a 60% chance of finding suitable work in the following year. However, the estimates drop significantly with duration of unemployment.

From the HILDA sample, people who had been out of work for less than 3 months rated their chances of finding work much higher (66% to 70%) than those who had been unemployed for between 1 to 2 years (approx. 46% chance) and for longer than 2 years (approx. 39% chance). Discouraged job seekers gave themselves only a 20% chance of finding work. These estimates appear to be realistic given that the job offer rate declines significantly with duration of unemployment. Almost 75% of unemployed people reported they had not received any job offers in their current spell of unemployment. The average job offer rate for people unemployed for less than 4 weeks was 14.3. Offers dropped to an average of 3.9 for people who were unemployed between 4 and 13 weeks and they continued to drop significantly with length of unemployment. For people who had been out of work between 13 and 52 weeks, their average job offer rate was 1.1, whilst for those unemployed between 1

and 2 years, it was .5, and for those unemployed for 2 years or longer, it was .2. As mentioned in a previous section on age, unemployed people over 45 years of age tend to have the greatest difficulty finding work (Wanberg, Hough, & Song, 2002). Thus, they are also more likely to be discouraged and perceive their chances of getting a job as lower than their younger unemployed counterparts.

This study uses a measure of employment expectation and explores its relationship with coping resources, coping behaviours, mental health, and employment outcomes. From the literature cited above, employment expectation is likely to be related to job seeking efficacy, job search behaviour, mental health, self-esteem, education level, length of unemployment, and age.

Appraisals of Leisure meaningfulness

One of the ways in which unemployed people cope is to engage in leisure pursuits. Leisure has been identified as therapeutic and related to positive health outcomes, because it is an avenue through which to cope with stress and negative life events (Caldwell, 2005). However, frequent activity does not always translate into meaningful activity or have mental health benefits. Appraisals are important in determining whether leisure will have a positive influence on mental health. A later section examines leisure activity as a way to cope with unemployment. The emphasis in this section is on how individuals *evaluate* their leisure activities and how that influences their well-being.

A qualitative study by Ball and Orford (2002) looked at how unemployed individuals appraised their leisure activity. These authors explored the leisure activity of a group of 24 unemployed people from the UK and characterised activities as domestic, educational, work-like, socialising, or none. The participants in Ball and Orford's study appraised their leisure as meaningful if it was challenging, involved sustained effort and commitment, and was valued by others. They reported that the main benefits of engaging in meaningful activity were opportunities for self-determination, self-development, achievement, competence, and confidence. One of the activities included in Ball and Orford's study was engaging in a government sponsored training scheme and this was clearly not valuable to the participants. Many interviewees expressed a sense of anger and resentment about such schemes, with some describing them as having a humiliating and stigmatising effect. Three of the younger interviewees engaged exclusively in social activities

(e.g., visiting friends, wandering around shopping centres with friends, or watching TV with friends), describing them as enjoyable, but explaining that they did them because there was nothing else to do. These younger participants also reported drinking alcohol frequently and two reported using illicit drugs. Ball and Orford observed that participants in their study who were unable to meaningfully occupy their time were clearly distressed.

Whilst it may not be a substitute for paid work, leisure that is appraised as meaningful provides an alternative avenue for accessing the latent benefits of employment. Waters and Moore (2002) found that engaging in leisure reduced perceived latent deprivation and psychological distress in the unemployed, and that it was related to future reemployment. However, this occurred for intrinsically meaningful leisure activities as opposed to activities in which people engaged frequently, but held no intrinsic value (e.g., watching television). Thus, the leisure environment can serve as healthy way of coping with unemployment, providing it is appraised as a meaningful and positive experience.

Based on the research outlined above, appraisals of leisure meaningfulness are expected to be related to appraisals of deprivation, leisure frequency, mental health, and employment outcomes.

Coping Strategies

Researchers have examined the different activities that unemployed people engage in during their unemployment and how they are related to psychological well-being and reemployment. From a stress and coping perspective, researchers, such as Leana and Feldman (1990) have conceptualised these activities as coping efforts and have distinguished between problem-focused and symptom-focused coping activities. The goal of problem-focused coping efforts is the elimination of the problem of unemployment, and includes job-search activities, retraining, and willingness to relocate for a new job (Waters, 2000). Symptom-focused coping activities do not directly solve the problem of unemployment, but attempt to alleviate the negative consequences of unemployment (Leana & Feldman, 1995). These coping activities include seeking out social support, easing economic problems by seeking out financial assistance, and community activism (Leana & Feldman, 1990).

Leana and Feldman (1990, 1995) found that people who became reemployed engaged in significantly more of both types of coping strategies.

In a comparison of active and passive unemployed people, Muller (1994) found that those who engaged in part-time work, voluntary work, or training (i.e., the active group) had better psychological well-being than those who did not (i.e., the passive group). Qualitative interviews revealed that the active participants engaged in activities that they considered personally meaningful (Muller). Muller also suggested that unemployed individuals who were coping successfully were most likely participating in meaningful activities and would need to make major adjustments and focus their activities towards work to re-enter the workforce. An explanation of several coping strategies in which the unemployed engage and an evaluation of their effectiveness will follow.

Job Search Behaviour

Unless they have been exempted from doing so, unemployed Australian people receiving unemployment benefits from Centrelink must satisfy an Activity Test to remain eligible for their payment (Wallis Consulting Group, 2001). Typical requirements for the Activity Test include actively looking for work, undertaking activities to improve employment prospects (e.g., training and engaging in Work for the Dole), and willingness to accept offers of suitable employment, including part-time and casual work. Whilst all of the requirements can be modified to suit individual circumstances and the local labour market, job seekers are typically expected to look for between 4 and 10 jobs per fortnight (Wallis Consulting Group).

Job-seeking is seen as a problem-focused coping behaviour (Leana & Feldman, 1990) that appears to influence both employment outcomes and psychological well-being. For the most part, job-seeking behaviour has been linked to successful employment outcomes, although some studies have failed to demonstrate this relationship. For example, Taris et al. (1995) found no evidence that job search activity results in finding a job. They noted that this could be due to the fact that there are many other influences on whether people gain employment, one of the major ones being the labour market. If a person is living in an area where jobs are plentiful or where their skills are not in demand, then their job search is likely to be fruitless.

Similarly, Wanberg, Watt, and Rumsey (1996) found that job-seeking frequency was not significantly correlated with reemployment status. These authors posited that frequent behaviour might not always translate into quality outcomes. This may be the case for unemployed individuals in Australia who are required to provide evidence of their job-seeking activities to continue to receive their income support payments (e.g., Newstart allowance). Some individuals may restrict the methods they use, or use ineffective methods, in order to fulfil those obligations.

Conversely, other studies have found significant relationships between job search behaviours and job acquisition. For example, in two separate samples, one including 176 undergraduate business students and the other including 168 respondents from the general population, Quint and Kopelman (1995) found significant positive correlations of $r = .36$ ($p < .01$) and $r = .37$ ($p < .01$) between job search behaviour and job acquisition. Similarly, results of a study of 377 unemployed individuals in Finland, Vuori and Vesalainen (1999) found that active job seeking, along with being married or cohabiting, were significant unique predictors of future reemployment.

Wanberg, Hough, and Song (2002) found a negative correlation ($r = -.13$) between job search activity and time spent unemployed. That is, people who were more actively seeking work spent less time unemployed than their less active counterparts. In a meta-analytic study, Kanfer, Wanberg, and Kantrowitz (2001) found job search intensity to be an important predictor of job acquisition ($r_c = .18$, $k = 13$, $N = 4,302$), number of job offers ($r_c = .27$, $k = 9$, $N = 1,234$), and shorter unemployment duration ($r_c = -.10$, $k = 7$, $N = 2,828$). Job search effort was also significantly related to job acquisition ($r_c = .30$, $k = 8$, $N = 1,516$), number of job offers ($r_c = .08$, $k = 2$, $N = 251$), and duration of unemployment ($r_c = -.40$, $k = 2$, $N = 415$).

In a longitudinal study of 292 unemployed people in the USA, Wanberg, Kanfer, and Rotundo (1999) found higher job search intensity to be associated with increased reemployment at a 3-month follow-up. These researchers also found that higher levels of employment commitment, financial hardship, job seeking efficacy, and motivational control (i.e., cognitions, behaviour, and affect directed at sustaining search effort) were associated with greater job search activity. Length of unemployment also influences job search activity. For example, in a longitudinal

study of 1775 Dutch adults, Taris (2002) found a negative association between length of unemployment and number of job applications. Participants who were unemployed for longer periods were less actively searching for work.

In a study of university graduates, Saks and Ashforth (1998) reported positive correlations between job search behaviours and job acquisition, and their regression analysis demonstrated that job search behaviour was a significant predictor of job acquisition. Students who actively sought work during their final term of study were more likely to have acquired jobs upon graduation. Students who engaged more in preparatory job search behaviours during their final term of study were less likely to have a job at graduation, but were more likely to have acquired a job by the time of the 4-month follow-up. Saks and Ashforth also reported significant positive correlations between job search behaviours, self-esteem, and job search self-efficacy, suggesting that those coping resources have a positive influence on the job search process.

Given that a fairly recent meta-analysis (Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001) demonstrated a strong connection between job search activity and job acquisition, and the predominance of studies linking the two variables, it is expected that job search behaviour will be a positive predictor of job acquisition in this research project. Further, in view of findings by Wanberg et al. (1999), Taris (2002), and Saks and Ashforth (1998), this research will explore the influence of employment commitment, financial strain, duration of unemployment, self-esteem, and job search self-efficacy on job search behaviour.

Leisure Activity

The importance of leisure activity was introduced in an earlier section, which focused on appraisals of leisure meaningfulness. This section examines how leisure activity can be an effective coping strategy during unemployment. Leana and Feldman (1990) viewed leisure activity as a symptom-focused coping strategy aimed at eliminating the negative effects of unemployment. There is ample evidence to show that engaging in purposeful activity enhances well-being during unemployment (Donovan & Oddy, 1982; Haworth & Evans, 1987; Muller, Winocur, Hicks, & Delahye, 1996; Waters & Moore, 2002a).

Muller et al. (1996) revealed that participating in meaningful and self-initiated activities was a major influence on psychological well-being of unemployed people. Furthermore, a recent literature review by Caldwell (2005) reported on the health benefits of leisure. Caldwell outlined the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive benefits of leisure, and highlighted studies that have associated achievement-oriented and social leisure with mental health benefits. In general, the social contact associated with leisure activity contributes to stress reduction and promotes positive mental health (Caldwell). However, Caldwell also noted that uninvolved leisure, such as watching television, is related to negative mental health outcomes. Some of the therapeutic benefits of leisure outlined by Caldwell include engagement in personally meaningful and/or intrinsically interesting activity, access to social support, friendships, and social acceptance, promotion of competence and self-efficacy, expressions of self-determination and control, and providing a distraction from negative life events.

Leisure activity may also provide an alternative avenue for accessing the latent benefits. For example, Waters and Moore (2002) found a significant negative relationship between meaningful leisure activity and perceived latent deprivation, and an indirect relationship between meaningful leisure and psychological well-being through latent deprivation. These researchers concluded that engaging in meaningful leisure activity appears to be a positive coping response that provides some access to the latent benefits of employment and, consequently, alleviates psychological distress. Waters and Moore also suggested that by promoting positive affect and maintaining self-esteem, engaging in meaningful leisure may also enhance job-search activities and positive employment outcomes.

Alternatively, some individuals may be content to remain unemployed if their psychological needs are satisfied by their leisure activities and if their income support payments are sufficient to meet their financial needs. According to the Reference Group on Welfare Reform (July, 2000), many of the income support recipients they consulted believed that they were financially better off on income support payments than in paid work. However, as Winefield et al. (1992a) noted, the relative poverty typically experienced by the unemployed could restrict their ability to engage in purposeful activities or limit the type of activities in which they engage.

There is evidence that financial difficulties are a barrier to individuals engaging more frequently in meaningful leisure activities. For example, Gowan et al. (1999) found that financial resources, education, and social support were significant predictors of involvement in leisure activities. Higher education, more financial resources, and greater amounts of social support predicted more involvement in leisure. Gowan et al. also found that leisure was a significant predictor of psychological distress, such that greater participation in non-work activities predicted better mental health. Furthermore, Winefield et al. (1992a) found that unemployed individuals who spent their spare time engaged in purposeful activities (either solitary or involving others) had better psychological well-being. Those who spent their time on aimless pursuits (e.g., doing nothing or watching television) had poorer well-being.

Based on the literature cited above, leisure activity is expected to be related to mental health and appraisals of deprivation. This research project will also explore how other variables, such as employment commitment, job seeking efficacy, PA, NA, and appraisals of financial strain, satisfaction and leisure meaningfulness, relate to leisure activity.

Training

Unemployed Australians who are classified as “job-ready” and who have been unemployed for at least 3 months are required to participate in a job-search training course offered by their Job Network provider. This type of training was designed to provide people with skills, such as resume writing, interview skills, and networking, to assist them with their job seeking. There are typically some personal development components to these training courses targeting, for example, self-esteem and confidence, but the main focus is on providing job-search skills. Research has shown that participating in training programs improves the well-being of unemployed participants (e.g., Creed, Bloxsome, & Johnston, 2001; Drury, Creed, & Winefield, 1997) and also improves participants’ attitude to work (Creed, Hicks, & Machin, 1996). Training interventions aimed at raising job-search self-efficacy have been found to increase job-search behaviour and subsequent reemployment (Eden & Aviram, 1993).

Whilst the content of the training program may influence well-being, the training environment itself may also have a positive impact. Creed, Bloxsome, and Johnston (2001) suggested that environments other than work, such as the training environment, also provide access to the latent functions of work (in the short-term), which may influence well-being outcomes for the unemployed. Participating in training is often part of the mutual obligation requirement of unemployed people and thus, many unemployed are not participating in it of their own volition. However, the training environment typically exposes the unemployed to more social contact. It also imposes some structure to their day, provides purposeful activities, and encourages a sense of collective purpose through working with others to achieve a common goal (e.g., gaining job search skills, gaining employment). Thus, it may provide short term psychological benefits.

Based on the findings cited above, it is expected that engagement in training activities will be related to perceived access to the latent benefits of employment, job seeking efficacy, job search behaviour, and employment outcomes.

Volunteer/Unpaid Work Participation

Unpaid work participation may also be a positive coping strategy that serves to fulfill the latent functions and promote positive well-being. One of the recommendations of the Australian Reference Group on Welfare Reform (July, 2000) was that social participation (e.g., volunteer/unpaid work) be encouraged and supported to reduce the prospect of entrenched social and economic disadvantages for the unemployed and to provide opportunities for unemployed individuals to develop transferable skills. Consequently, the Work for the Dole (WFD) program was introduced to help prevent young people becoming dependent on income support (Wallis Consulting Group, 2001). The WFD program is targeted at job seekers aged 18 to 34, who are assessed as job-ready, whose main activity is job search, and who have been receiving unemployment benefits for 6 months or longer. It is also generally a requirement for Year 12 school leavers who have been receiving payments for 3 months or longer (Wallis Consulting Group). It is one of the 15 activities included as part of the Government's mutual obligation (MO) initiative. The basic principle of MO is that young people are required to participate in activities, such as job seeking, training, and community involvement in return for receiving their income support payments. Carson, Winefield, Waters, and Kerr

(2003) stated that, “According to government policy statements, the rationale of WFD is that young people should ‘give back to the community that supports them’ and engage in ‘useful’ activities in their communities to avoid the risk of social and economic marginalisation” (p. 21). The consequence of not participating is that they are “breached”—their income support is withdrawn (Carson et al.). The notion of WFD was to improve self-esteem, foster work habits and attitudes, and contribute to local community projects (Carson et al.). Depending on their age, participants are required to work between 24 and 30 hours per fortnight and make four employer contacts (job enquiries or applications) per fortnight. In return, they receive a supplement to their Centrelink payment of around \$30 a fortnight. Jobseekers aged 18 or older can also volunteer to participate in WFD.

An evaluation of the WFD pilot program, carried out by the Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business (DEWRSB, 1999), suggested that it had a positive impact on employment outcomes and the well-being of participants. Three months after leaving their WFD placements, 34% of participants were working and, of those who remained unemployed, 23% had engaged in some paid work during that time. According to DEWRSB, participants perceived the program to be beneficial in terms of improving employment prospects, increasing confidence, motivation, and self-respect, gaining knowledge, skills, and access to employment opportunities, and providing the opportunity to work hard and to prove themselves. However, the authors of this report advised caution in generalising the findings as they were based on limited quantitative and qualitative data.

In the year 2000, 27% of unemployed Australians were engaged in volunteer work. This figure does not include unemployed people involved in the WFD scheme or academic placements. Some of the reasons people gave for volunteering included to help others/community, for personal satisfaction, to do something worthwhile, for social contact, and to be active (ABS, 2000). Thus, volunteering may fulfill some of the latent psychological needs identified by Jahoda (1982), such as collective purpose, activity, time structure, and social contact, and may also promote positive well-being. People who perceive that they are deprived of the benefits of employment may therefore engage in volunteer or unpaid work activities in an attempt to gain access to those benefits whilst they are unemployed.

Whilst volunteer or unpaid work will not provide access to the manifest benefits of employment, it may provide opportunities to access the latent benefits. There is a dearth of studies that have investigated this relationship. Further, there is also very little research that has looked at the influence of volunteer activities and unpaid work participation on employment outcomes. Whilst volunteer/unpaid work may not be in the occupation a person eventually wants to be employed in, it typically provides valuable generic skills that are transferable across jobs. Such skills are likely to enhance a person's ability to compete in the job market. Therefore, one of the aims of this study is to investigate how appraisals of deprivation affect engagement in volunteer/unpaid work and how engaging in such activities relate to employment outcomes.

Based on the literature cited above, engagement in unpaid work is expected to be associated with mental health, employment expectation, and employment outcomes. An examination of the differences between participants doing unpaid work of their own accord and those who are doing it involuntarily as part of their MO activity will be carried out.

Employment Outcomes

Some of the variables identified in the previous sections as influencing job acquisition or reemployment include age, relationship status, length of unemployment, job search behaviour, self-esteem, job search self-efficacy, PA, employment commitment, leisure meaningfulness, and participation in training and unpaid work. The current research project aims to explore the importance of each of those variables to the prediction of job acquisition. Another aim is to identify any changes in coping resources, appraisal, and coping behaviours in relation to acquiring a job. Based on the exposure hypothesis, gaining employment has been shown to have a positive influence on mental health and psychological wellbeing (e.g., Ginexi, Howe, & Caplan, 2000; Murphy & Athanasou, 1999). Thus, positive gains in mental health are expected for participants in this study who acquire jobs. Further, based on Jahoda's theory, gaining paid employment is likely to improve appraisals of access to the latent and manifest benefits of employment. Therefore, participants in the current study who acquire jobs are expected to report greater access to the latent and manifest employment benefits. An exploration of any

changes over time in the coping resources, appraisal, and coping strategies for participants who remain unemployed will also be carried out.

Job Satisfaction and Job Quality

Whilst one of the main aims of the current research project is to examine the predictors of job acquisition, another aim is to explore how individuals who find jobs perceive their employment situation and how that perception influences their wellbeing. Jahoda (1982) argued that any job is better than the alternative of being unemployed, however some researchers have demonstrated that being in unsatisfactory employment is just as detrimental to one's mental health as being unemployed.

Winefield, Tiggemann, and Goldney (1991) reported on a longitudinal study of young Australians, who were followed from high school in 1980 (N = 3031) through to 1988. The number of participants who took part in the study through to 1988 was 442. Of these, 353 reported being satisfactorily employed, 31 were dissatisfied with their jobs, 22 were unemployed, and 36 were in tertiary studies. Compared to baseline measures, the mental health (i.e., depressive symptoms and negative mood) of those who were in satisfactory employment had improved, whilst there was an increase, although not significant, in symptoms for the dissatisfied employed and the unemployed. Cross-sectional analyses of the final sample in 1988 showed that those in satisfactory employment had better mental health than both the dissatisfied employed and the unemployed.

Some researchers have suggested that individuals tend to sacrifice job quality for the sake of reemployment after a bout of unemployment. For example, Burke (1986) found that 62% of people who had become reemployed had taken on a lower-paying job than they had held previously, whilst Mallinckrodt (1990) found that, on average, reemployed participants were less satisfied with their pay and benefits after reemployment. In an effort to shed more light on the relationship between reemployment and job quality, Wanberg (1995) conducted longitudinal research comparing previous job satisfaction (measured retrospectively) with current job satisfaction, tapping into a variety of aspects of satisfaction, such as global satisfaction and satisfaction with work, pay, supervision, and co-workers, along with job characteristics (e.g., task variety, autonomy, and feedback). The sample at Time 1 consisted of 265 people who had recently become unemployed. Of the original 265

sample, 129 participants had remained in the study at the 9-month follow-up, with 99 of those being reemployed and 30 remaining unemployed. Contrary to expectations, Wanberg found that, in general, participants did not rate satisfaction with their current job lower than that of their previous job. In line with Winefield et al.'s (1995) findings, Wanberg (1995) also found that mental health, as measured by the GHQ, improved for those who had found satisfactory employment at Time 2, whilst there were no significant changes in mental health at Time 2 for those who were dissatisfied with their current job or for those who had remained unemployed.

The quality and security of employment has a significant influence on psychological health. According to Halvorsen (1998), insecure employment can be just as detrimental to psychological health as being unemployed. Halvorsen examined the impact of re-employment on the mental health of 1000 Norwegian unemployed people aged 20 to 59 years. He found that job insecurity (i.e., the fear of losing one's job) had a significant impact on the mental health of participants who had gained employment. Furthermore, Graetz (1993) reported that quality of work, as measured by job satisfaction, was a significant determinant of mental health. Using data from a large survey of the Australian population, Graetz carried out a longitudinal analysis on the impact of job satisfaction on employment and unemployment. He found that the mental health benefits of gaining employment were contingent upon the quality of the job, whereby satisfying jobs resulted in significant improvements in mental health, but no significant mental health changes were evident for people who were in dissatisfying jobs. Furthermore, individuals who lost a satisfying job reported adverse affects on their mental health but those who lost an unsatisfying job reported minor improvements in their mental health.

Based on the findings outlined above, it is expected that job satisfaction and job quality will be related to mental health, such that individuals who are in satisfying and good quality jobs will report better mental health than those in less satisfying and poorer quality jobs.

Summary of Relevant Results from Two Meta-Analytic Studies

The meta-analytic studies by McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) and Kanfer et al. (2001) provided a useful summary of the variables important to the unemployment experience. Many of the variables identified by those researchers were included in the current study. The following table (Table 1) presents the variables used in the

current research project and the effect sizes reported by McKee-Ryan et al. and Kanfer et al. for those variables.

Table 1

Effect Sizes Reported in Meta-Analytic Studies by McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) and Kanfer et al. (2001)

Correlate	Predictors of Mental Health (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005)	Predictors of Job Search Behaviour and Employment Status (Kanfer et al., 2001)	
		<u>Job Search Behaviour</u>	<u>Employment Status</u>
<u>Coping resources</u>			
Core self-evaluations	.55	-	-
Neuroticism/NA	-	-.07	-.09
Extroversion/PA	-	.46	-
Self-esteem	-	.25	.15
Job seeking efficacy	-	.26	.09
Employment commitment	-.34	.26	.19
Financial resources	.11	-	-
<u>Cognitive appraisals</u>			
Employment expectation	.29	-	-
Financial strain/financial need	-.45	.18	-.11
Time structure	.31	-	-
<u>Coping behaviours</u>			
Job search effort/job search behaviour	-.11	-	.21
<u>Human capital and demographics</u>			
Age	.03	-.06	-.07
Gender	.09	.05	.01
Relationship status	.04	-	-
Education	.08	.12	.07
Dependents	-.12	-	-
Length of unemployment	-.09	-	-
Previous occupation	-.10	-	-
Job tenure	-	-.15	-

Note, however, that those researchers identified more correlates than the ones presented in the following table, and some of those variables may have had stronger

relationships with the outcome variables than some of the variables used in the current study. For example, social support, social undermining, and stress appraisals were included in the meta-analysis by McKee-Ryan et al., but were not included in the current project. Those variables had effect sizes of .26 or more. Kanfer et al. included several personality variables, along with social support, in their meta-analysis. Some of those variables had relatively strong effect sizes with the outcomes variables (i.e., job search behaviour and employment status), but due to constraints relating to the length of the survey, they were not included in the current research.

As Table 1 shows, out of the variables used in the current study, the highest correlate of mental health from the study by McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) was core self-evaluations, followed in order of effect size by financial strain, employment commitment, time structure, and employment expectation. From the effect sizes reported by Kanfer et al. (2001), the correlation between extroversion and job search behaviour was the strongest of the variables used in the current project. Extroversion and positive affect were the same measure in their study, as was neuroticism and negative affect. Job seeking efficacy, self-esteem, and employment commitment all had relatively similar effect sizes in relation to job search behaviour. The strongest correlates of employment status were job search behaviour and employment commitment. Social support, with an effect size of .30, was the strongest correlate reported by Kanfer et al. As Table 1 shows, the associations between the demographic variables and mental health, job search behaviour, and employment status were relatively weak.

Research Questions and Objectives

The aim of this research project was to determine the psychological variables that impact on the unemployment experience. Four main research questions were posed: (1) What are the key predictors of coping behaviours in the unemployed? (2) What are the key predictors of mental health in the unemployed? (3) What factors influence job acquisition? (4) How do employment outcomes affect psychological wellbeing?

The research project used a cross-sectional design to investigate the first two research questions and a longitudinal design to explore the last two questions. Paper-based surveys were used to gather data for the research project. Cross-sectional data were gathered from 371 unemployed participants in

metropolitan and rural areas in South East Queensland and then, 6 months later, from 115 of those participants.

The main objectives of the cross-sectional studies at Time 1 and Time 2 were:

- (a) To examine the relationships among coping resources, cognitive appraisal, coping strategies, and mental health. The coping resources included financial, social, and personal (i.e., self-esteem, job search self-efficacy, positive affect, negative affect, and employment commitment). The cognitive appraisal variables include perceived access to the latent and manifest benefits of employment, satisfaction with employment status, employment expectation, and leisure meaningfulness. The coping behaviours included leisure activity at Time 1 and job search behaviours at Times 1 and 2.
- (b) To identify predictors of leisure activity at Time 1 and predictors of job search behaviours at Time 1 and Time 2.
- (c) To determine the most important predictors of mental health at Time 1 and Time 2 amongst coping resources, cognitive appraisal, and coping behaviours.
- (d) To explore the unemployment experience of individual participants via their written comments.

Whilst most of the analyses in the research project are exploratory, some hypotheses will be made in terms of relationships among the study variables. A conceptual model of the hypothesised relationships is presented in Chapter 5. Based on the findings from the literature, the coping resources are expected to be related to one another and to the cognitive appraisal variables, coping behaviours, and mental health. The personal resources and appraisal variables are expected to predict the coping behaviours, and all of the coping variables are expected to predict mental health. Regression analyses will be used to identify which of the resources and appraisal variables exert the most influence on leisure activity and job seeking behaviours, and which of all of the coping variables have the most influence on mental health. Based on the literature, core self-evaluations, financial resources, and leisure meaningfulness are likely to be important predictors of leisure activity. Similarly, core self-evaluations, particularly job seeking efficacy, along with employment commitment, perceived access to the latent and manifest benefits of employment, and employment expectation are expected to have the strongest

influence on job search behaviours. Based on the recent meta-analytic study by McKee-Ryan et al., core self-evaluations, employment commitment, and appraisals of financial deprivation are expected to be the most important predictors of mental health. Group differences based on demographic variables will be explored to identify risk factors associated with the coping variables and mental health. However, the main focus of the research project is on identifying relationships rather than group differences.

The main objectives of the longitudinal study were:

- (a) To determine the most important predictors of job acquisition amongst coping resources, cognitive appraisal, and coping behaviours.
- (b) To identify any changes over time in coping resources, cognitive appraisal, coping strategies and mental health for people who remain unemployed over the 6-month period (the continuously unemployed).
- (c) To identify any changes in coping resources, cognitive appraisal, coping strategies, and mental health associated with gaining employment.
- (d) To gather more information about individual participant's unemployment experiences via their written comments.

Again, most of the analyses will be exploratory for the longitudinal study; however, hypotheses are made in relation to the expected moderating effects of employment status. A conceptual model of the proposed moderating effects is presented in Chapter 6. Whilst no formal hypotheses are made in relation to variables that predict job search behaviour or job acquisition, based on the research findings presented in the literature review, job search behaviour is expected to be the strongest predictor of job acquisition. Personal resources and job search behaviour are expected to show a decline over the 6-month study period for those who remain unemployed. Appraisals are also expected to reflect a greater sense of deprivation of the latent and manifest benefits and a general negative evaluation of their unemployment situation. However, a positive change in personal resources, appraisals, and mental health is expected for those who gain employment. The hypothesised moderating effect of employment status on personal resources, appraisals, and mental health is conceptualised in a model in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology used for the research project. The project incorporates quantitative methods, utilising cross-sectional and longitudinal designs, as well as a qualitative method, utilising thematic analysis. The cross-sectional analyses provided opportunities to investigate group differences and relationships among the variables at one point in time, whilst the longitudinal analyses allowed for an investigation of changes in the variables of interest across time. The qualitative method was included to gain a richer understanding of the unemployment experience and to tap into any unmeasured variables that may provide alternative explanations for the findings from the quantitative methods. A paper-based survey was used to gather data at two points in time. The first survey gathered data from a sample of participants who were registered with job network agencies in South East Queensland. The same participants were surveyed again 6 months later using a similar survey instrument. The following sections provide information about the participants, the contents of the survey instruments used to collect the data, and the procedure used to recruit participants for the study.

Quantitative Method

Participants

Time 1

Participants at Time 1 of this study were 371 ($M = 214$; $F = 157$) unemployed clients of various employment agencies in South East Queensland. One hundred and six (106) participants were from the Brisbane metropolitan area and 265 were from rural areas (e.g., Toowoomba, Lockyer Valley). Participants were aged between 16 and 65 years ($M = 33.84$, $SD = 13.22$). Most (286) of the respondents were single (i.e., never married, separated, divorced, or widowed) and 85 were married or in a defacto relationship. Approximately 64% (235) were supporting only themselves, whilst the remaining 134 were financially responsible for at least one other person. One hundred and fifty-two participants had completed Year 10 or less, 98 had completed Years 11 or 12, and 121 had some form of tertiary education (e.g., trade certificate or university degree).

Two hundred and sixty participants were not currently doing any paid work, 38 were doing volunteer/unpaid work, 65 were working casually or part-time, and 8 people selected the “other” category (5 were students and 3 were starting their own business). The majority of participants (356 or approx. 96%) had previously done some paid work in the past, with 295 of those having been employed on a full-time basis at some stage in the past. Two hundred and forty-three participants who had previously held a full-time job reported some level of satisfaction with that job (i.e., *Satisfied* = 127, *Very Satisfied* = 70, *Extremely Satisfied* = 46), whilst 49 were either *Very Unsatisfied* or *Extremely Unsatisfied* in their last full-time job. Fifty participants said it had been less than 4 months since their last full-time job, for 86 participants, it was between 4 and 11 months since their last full-time job, and for 157 participants, over 12 months had passed since their last full-time job. Two participants did not respond to this question. The length of time participants had worked in their last full-time job ranged from 1 week to 30 years, with a mean of 4.21 years ($SD = 6.08$ years). Previous full-time occupations included managers and administrators (8), professionals (10), associate professionals (25), tradespersons (28) advanced and intermediate clerical, sales and service workers (59), intermediate production and transport workers (37), elementary clerical, sales and service workers (32), labourers and related workers (93).

At the time of the first study, 274 participants were receiving a Newstart¹ Allowance from Centrelink, 54 were receiving Youth Allowance, 23 were receiving other types of income support (e.g., Disability Support Pension = 4, Parenting Payment = 14, Partner Allowance = 3, other = 2), and 20 were not receiving any income support payments from Centrelink.

The mean net fortnightly income reported by the 361 participants who answered this question was \$382.02 ($SD = \176.19), with income ranging from \$0 to \$1100 a fortnight. There were 174 participants currently involved in training and 61 doing unpaid work. For 129 of those undertaking training courses, the training was a compulsory requirement for receipt of their Centrelink benefits (i.e., a mutual obligation activity). The unpaid work participation was compulsory for 11 of the

¹ There are several types of social security benefits paid by the Australian Government to the unemployed. Payments made to people while they are looking for work include Newstart Allowance (for people over 21 years of age) and Youth Allowance (for people under 21 years of age). People who are unable to work for 2 years due to illness, injury, or disability may receive a Disability Support Pension. Parenting Payment provides income support for sole parents or couples with a child or children whose income falls below a certain level, and Partner Allowance helps people who have barriers to employment and whose partner is receiving income support.

participants who were undertaking such work as part of their mutual obligation activity. Two hundred and fifty-two participants had previously attended at least one job search training course, whilst 69 had previously been on at least one Work for the Dole program in the past. Depending on their length of unemployment and the number of identified barriers to employment, people receiving income support payments from Centrelink may be referred to support programs. For example, people who have not be able to find work within 3 months of being unemployed may be referred to an Intensive Assistance program. The Personal Support Program is designed for people with severe or multiple barriers to employment, and the Transition to Work program assists parents, carers and people over 50 back into training or (Australian Government, 2006). For the current sample, approximately 43% ($N = 151$) of the participants indicated that they were in an Intensive Assistance program, 19 were in a Personal Support Program, and 15 were in the Transition to Work Program.

Time 2

For the 6-month follow-up survey at Time 2, there were 115 participants, including 59 males and 56 females, with a mean age of 38.81 years ($SD = 14.49$, range 17 – 64). Thus approximately 31% of the original sample took part in the follow-up study (missing data are examined in the following chapter). Fifty-eight participants were employed and 57 were unemployed at Time 2. Approximately 28% of participants had not worked at all in the past. The remainder had some previous work experience on one or a combination of levels, including full-time (22.60%), casual (53.04%), part-time (13.91%), and temporary (21.74%). Of the 58 participants who reported being employed at T2, 29 were working casually, 6 were working part-time, 10 were in temporary/contract positions, and 13 were working full-time. Thus, more than three-quarters of the participants (45 or 77.6%) who were working at Time 2 were only marginally attached to the work force. A total of 75 participants indicated that they were looking for work at Time 2. These included all 57 participants who were unemployed, plus 18 who were employed. Forty-six of the employed group were working one job, 11 were working two jobs, and 1 participant had a total of four jobs. The occupations of those working at Time 2 fell under the following categories: Professionals = 2; Associate professionals = 3; Tradespersons and related workers = 5; Intermediate clerical, sales, and service workers = 22;

Intermediate production and transport workers = 4; Elementary clerical, sales, and service workers = 6; and Labourers and related workers = 11.

Of the 57 people who were unemployed at the 6-month follow-up, 3 had been employed at Time 1 (i.e., part-time or casually), 7 had been doing volunteer/unpaid work at Time 1, 46 had not been working at Time 1, and 1 person had been studying at Time 1. All of the 57 unemployed participants and 18 of the employed participants indicated that they were looking for work. Sixteen of the latter were working part-time, casually, or on a temporary basis and 2 were working full-time.

A total of 73 participants were in receipt of some form of income support payment. For those who were working at Time 2, 13 were receiving a Newstart allowance, 1 was receiving a Widow's Allowance, 4 were receiving a Youth Allowance, 2 were receiving a Parenting Payment, and 38 people were not receiving any income support payment. For those who were not working at Time 2, 42 were receiving a Newstart allowance, 2 were receiving a Disability Support payment, 3 were receiving a Youth Allowance, 4 were was receiving a Parenting Payment, 4 were not in receipt of any Centrelink benefits, and 2 people endorsed the Other option. The mean fortnightly income for unemployed participants was \$406.77 ($SD = \211.11, range \$0 to \$1300) and for employed participants it was \$686.26 ($SD = \317.71, range \$180 to \$1400). Eighteen respondents were participating in training at Time 2, while 32 were doing volunteer/unpaid work. Participation was compulsory for 6 of the trainees and 14 of the volunteer workers. Fifteen of the continually unemployed respondents were on an Intensive Assistance program, 4 were in a Personal Support program, and 2 were in a Transition to Work program.

Materials – Time 1 and Time 2

Two cross-sectional surveys, the Unemployment Experience Questionnaire (used at Time 1) and the Unemployment Experience Follow-Up Questionnaire (used at Time 2), were developed for this study. They were paper-based surveys containing questions seeking demographic and biographic information, and instruments measuring constructs such as self-esteem, affectivity, psychological well-being, job-seeking efficacy, job-search behaviour, access to the latent and manifest benefits of employment, and employment commitment. A copy of the Time 1 and Time 2 surveys is included in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively. The surveys were constructed using computer software called *TeleForm*, which is an optical mark

recognition program used to create surveys in scannable format. The following sections outline the contents of the surveys. Chapter 3 provides information about the psychometric properties of the scales used in the surveys.

Demographics and Employment Experience

Time 1 Demographics

The first section of the Time 1 survey (Pages 2 to 3) contained a series of demographic and biographic questions. Questions 1 to 6 asked participants to indicate their *age*, *postcode* (which was then recoded into *Geographic Locality* with 0 = *Rural* and 1 = *Metropolitan*), *gender*, *relationship status*, *number of financial dependents*, and *education level*. The coding for geographic locality was based on the Rural, Remote and Metropolitan Areas (RRMA) classification (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2004). Areas with postcodes 4000 to 4340 (Brisbane and Ipswich areas) were recoded as *Metropolitan*, while postcodes from 4341 to 4401 (Gatton, Lockyer Valley, and Toowoomba areas) were recoded as *Rural*. The categories for relationship status included: *Never married*, *married/defacto*, *divorced*, *separated*, and *widowed*. There were nine categories for number of financial dependents, including: *none*, *one*, *two*, *three*, *four*, *five*, *six*, *seven*, and *eight or more*. The levels of education included: 1 = *Year 10 or less*, 2 = *Year 11 or 12*, 3 = *Trade or Technical and Further Education (TAFE) certificate* and 4 = *Diploma/Degree/Postgraduate Degree or other*.

For the marital status variable, the widowed ($n = 5$) and separated ($n = 33$) categories were relatively smaller than the other three categories, so those cases were grouped with the divorced category. This resulted in three categories for marital status: *never married* ($n = 196$); *married/defacto* ($n = 85$); *divorced/separated/widowed* ($n = 88$).

Time 2 Demographics

The T2 survey asked participants to indicate their age and gender as a precautionary measure should their codes not match correctly. No other demographics, such as marital status, education, or dependents were included at T2.

Time 1 Employment experiences

At T1, participants were asked to provide information about their employment experiences, that is, any current or previous paid employment. Question 8 asked participants to indicate their current employment status (i.e., *not working, doing volunteer/unpaid work, working casually or part-time, or other*). They were also asked if they had previously done any paid work (1 = *Yes*, 0 = *No*) and if they had ever worked in a full-time job (1 = *Yes*, 0 = *No*) (Questions 7 and 10). Those who had previously worked full-time were asked how long it had been since their last full-time job (with options ranging from 1 = *less than 2 months* to 6 = *more than 2 years*), what type of work they did in that job (i.e., occupation), how long they had worked at that job (in years), and how satisfied they were in that job (Questions 11 to 14). Response options for *Satisfaction with Previous Full-Time Job* ranged from 1 (*extremely unsatisfied*) to 5 (*extremely satisfied*), thus, higher scores reflected higher satisfaction.

Previous occupation was coded according to the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1997). The codes are as follows: 1 = *Managers and Administrators*; 2 = *Professionals*; 3 = *Associate Professionals*; 4 = *Tradespersons and Related Workers*; 5 = *Advanced Clerical, Sales and Service Workers*; 6 = *Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers*; 7 = *Intermediate production and Transport Workers*; 8 = *Elementary Clerical Sales and Service Workers*; 9 = *Labourers and Related Workers*.

At the time of the study, Intensive Assistance, Personal Support, and Transition to Work programs were provided by employment agencies contracted by the Australian Government (Job Network agencies) to assist the long-term unemployed or those at risk of becoming long-term unemployed. Participants were asked at T1 and T2 if they were currently on any of those three programs (T1 Q. 23 and T2 Q. 31), with response options of 1 = *Yes*, 2 = *No*, 3 = *Not sure*.

Variables Measuring Personal Coping Resources

Self-Esteem (T1 and T2)

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) was used to assess participants' levels of self-esteem. Participants were asked to rate each of the 10 items on the scale (e.g., "I feel I have a number of good qualities") on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem. The Self-Esteem Scale can be found on page 4 of the T1 survey and page 6 of the T2 survey.

Positive and Negative Affect (T1 and T2)

The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) was used at Time 1 and Time 2 (T1, p. 10 and T2, p. 12). The PANAS consists of 20 items, 10 of which measure Negative Affect (e.g., *Distressed, Upset, Nervous*) and 10 which measure Positive Affect (e.g., *Interested, Excited, Proud*). Participants are asked to indicate the extent to which they have experienced each emotion over the past few weeks on a scale from 1 (*very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). Separate scores are calculated for PA and NA, with high scores indicating higher PA or NA.

Job-Seeking Efficacy (T1 and T2)

To assess participants' confidence in their ability to perform various job-search activities, the Job-Seeking Efficacy scale was constructed (T1, p. 7 and T2 p. 8). This scale was a modified version of the Job-Seeking Efficacy scale developed by the Michigan Prevention Research Center (1995). Following the advice of two job search trainers from different Job Network sites in Toowoomba, several items were added to the original Job-Seeking Efficacy scale to assess participant's confidence in their ability to carry out the various skills taught to job seekers during their job-search training courses. The modified scale consists of 15 items (Items 1 – 15, p. 7), which assess an individual's confidence in her or her ability to successfully perform specific job-search activities (e.g., *Completing a letter of application to a prospective employer, Completing a CV or resume*). Higher scores indicate higher job search self-efficacy.

Employment Commitment (T1 and T2)

Employment commitment (p. 6 of T1 and T2 surveys) was measured using the 8-item scale presented in Feather (1990). This scale was originally developed as a 6-item measure of work involvement by Warr, Cook and Wall (1979), but it has subsequently been modified (e.g., Rowley & Feather, 1987; Warr & Jackson, 1984). The employment commitment scale was used to assess the degree to which participants want to be engaged in paid employment (e.g., *Even if I won a great deal of money in the lottery, I would want to continue working somewhere*). Respondents rated each item on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*disagree a lot*) to 5 (*agree a lot*). Higher scores indicate higher employment commitment.

Financial Coping Resources*Net fortnightly Income*

Participants were asked to approximate their net fortnightly income in whole dollars (T1 Q.17 and T2 Q.25) to provide a measure of their financial resources.

Income Support Payments

Both the T1 and T2 surveys questioned participants about whether they were in receipt of any income support payments from Centrelink, such as Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance, and Parenting Payment (T1 Q.16 and T2 Q.24).

Social Coping Resources

A measure of the contact participants have through their leisure activity was included as an indication of their social coping resources. As part of the assessment of leisure activities, Question 1 on Page 5 of the survey asked participants to indicate how *social* (i.e., involves other people) their most meaningful leisure activity was on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

Variables Measuring Cognitive Appraisal*Satisfaction with Employment Status (T1 and T2)*

Participants were asked to rate how satisfied they were with their current employment status on a 5-point scale from 1 (*extremely unsatisfied*) to 5 (*extremely*

satisfied). A high score reflects high satisfaction. This question can be found at Q.9, page 2 of the T1 survey and Q.18, page 4 of the T2 survey.

Perceived Deprivation of the Latent and Manifest Benefits of Employment (T1 and T2)

Financial Hardship

One item measured the level of perceived financial hardship experienced by participants by asking how easy it was for them to live on their net fortnightly income, with response options ranging from 1 (*extremely easy*) to 6 (*extremely difficult*). Higher scores indicate higher economic hardship. This question can be found at Q.18, page 3 of the T1 survey and Q.26, page 5 of the T2 survey.

Financial Strain

The Latent and Manifest Benefits scale (LAMB; Muller, Creed, Waters, & Machin, 2005) includes 6 items that measure access to the manifest benefit of employment—an indication of a person's level of perceived Financial Strain. The items are part of the LAMB scale which can be found on pages 8 to 9 of the T1 survey and pages 10 to 11 on the T2 survey. The six bipolar items are measured on a 7-point scale, with high scores indicating greater felt strain (e.g., *My income usually/rarely allows me to socialise as often as I like.*).

Access to the Latent Benefits of Employment (T1 and T2)

Perceived access to each of the five latent benefits of employment was assessed using the Latent and Manifest Benefits scale (LAMB, Muller, Creed, Waters, & Machin, 2005), which can be found on pages 8 to 9 of the T1 survey and pages 10 to 11 of the T2 survey. The previous section described the measure of financial strain. Each of the remaining five LAMB subscales consists of 6 bipolar items measured on a 7-point scale: Time Structure (e.g., *I often/rarely have nothing to do*), Social Contact (e.g., *I often/rarely go out and meet with others*), Collective Purpose (e.g., *I contribute greatly/minimally to my community*), Status (e.g., *I am often/rarely valued by the people around me*) and Activity (e.g., *I usually/rarely do all the things I have to do*). The scales were scored such that a high score on each of the five latent benefits indicates greater perceived access to that benefit.

Reemployment Expectation

A one-item measure of reemployment expectation was included with the job seeking efficacy scale (Item 16, p. 7). It asked participants to indicate how confident there were that they would successfully gain work in the following 3 months. Confidence was rated from 1 (*not at all confident*) to 4 (*very confident*). Therefore, higher scores on this variable indicate higher expectations of gaining employment.

Leisure Meaningfulness (T1 only)

Leisure meaningfulness and other leisure variables, such as leisure activity and social leisure, were assessed only at Time 1, because the goal of the follow-up study was to focus more on employment outcomes. Including the leisure variables at Time 2 would have increased the size of survey and added to the time required for participants to complete the survey. On the Time 1 survey, leisure meaningfulness was included as one of the cognitive appraisal measures. A scale consisting of 17 items (Questions 2 – 18, p. 5) was developed. These items were loosely based on the Meaningful Leisure Activities Questionnaire (Waters & Moore, 1994), which consisted of four dimensions (satisfaction, perceived importance, goal achievement, and interest), and the leisure instrument developed by Esteve, San Martin, and Lopez (1999), which tapped into how people feel when involved in their leisure activities, along the higher-order dimensions of effort level, social interaction, and purpose. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which each of the 17 adjectives or phrases (e.g., *important to you, enjoyable, relaxing*) reflected their leisure activity on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

Variables Measuring Coping Behaviours*Job-Search Behaviour (T1 and T2)***Job Applications**

At T1 and T2, participants were asked to indicate how many jobs they had applied for in the past month (T1 Q.15 and T2 Q.20). At T2, they were also asked to indicate the number of jobs they had applied for over the past 6 months (Q. 21)

and the number of job interviews they had attended over the past 6 months (Q. 22).

Job Search Intensity and Job Search Methods

The frequency and methods of job-search activity over the past fortnight were assessed using the Job-Search Activity questionnaire (T1, p. 6 and T2, p. 7). This scale was adapted from Van Ryn and Vinokur (1992) and consists of 12 behaviours that individuals may engage in when looking for a job (e.g., *Used the internet to search for job vacancies, Attended a job interview*). Participants were asked to indicate how often they had carried out each of the activities over the last 2 weeks on a scale from 0 (*never*) to 4 (*very frequently - 10 times or more*). This provided a measure of *Job-Search Intensity*. The number of methods used was calculated by recoding all of the *never* responses as 0 and all of the other responses (i.e., *rarely, occasionally, frequently, and very frequently*) as 1 and then calculating a total score. This variable was named *Job Search Methods* and scores could range from 0 to 12.

Job Search Effort (T2 only)

Question 23 of the follow-up survey was included to measure participants' job seeking effort over the past 6 months along the dimensions of *intensity, persistence, determination, and effort*, on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). Two of these items (effort and intensity) were guided by those from the JOBS program manual (Michigan Prevention Research Center, 1995). Higher scores indicate greater job seeking effort.

Job Search Strategies (T2 only)

Section 4 of the follow-up survey (p. 9) was included for participants who were employed and not looking for another job. It was used as a measure of the number of job search strategies participants used to acquire their current job and the perceived helpfulness of those strategies. Participants were asked to indicate whether or not they used each of the 13 strategies (e.g., *Searched for job vacancies listed in newspapers*; scored 0 = *No* or 1 = *Yes*), and to rate its helpfulness on a scale from 0 (*Not at all helpful*) to 3 (*Extremely helpful*).

Leisure Activity (T1 only)

For reasons outlined previously, the leisure variables were only included at Time 1. The items assessing leisure activity can be found on pages 4 and 5 of the T1 survey. Participants were asked to indicate the types of leisure activities they regularly engage in (Q. 1) and to identify the most meaningful leisure activity they had engaged in over the past month (Q. 2). As in the Waters and Moore (1999) study, individuals were asked to identify their own leisure activities rather than select an activity from a pre-determined list. Question 3 asked participants to indicate the frequency with which they engaged in their most meaningful leisure activity and also how often they would *like* to do the activity (Q. 4). Those who reported that they were not able to do the activity as often as they would like were asked to indicate reasons why that was so (e.g., *financial, family/home commitments, health reasons*), at Question 5 on Page 4.

Training and Unpaid Work Participation

Questions 19 and 20 asked how many times participants had completed a Job Search Training course or a Work for the Dole program (T1 Qs 21-22; T2 Qs 27-28), with response options ranging from 0 = *None* to 3 = *Three or more times*. Participants were also asked whether they were currently doing any training courses or volunteer/unpaid work and if those activities were a compulsory part of their Centrelink obligations (T1 Qs 21-22. T2 Qs 29-30), with response options of 0 = *No* and 1 = *Yes*. Those who were engaged in such activities were asked to describe the type of training/volunteer work and how many hours per week they engage in the activity.

Outcome Variables*Mental Health (T1 and T2)*

The 12-item version of the General Health Questionnaire (Goldberg, 1972) was used to measure mental health at Time 1 and Time 2 (T1, p.11 and T2 p.13). Responses to the 12 items (e.g., *Have you recently been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?*) are scored on a 4-point scale ranging from 0 (*not at all/much less than usual*) to 3 (*much more than usual*), with higher scores indicating greater psychological distress.

Employment Outcomes (T2 Only)

Some sections of the T2 survey were exclusively for participants who had remained unemployed over the 6-month period, some were directed at participants who were working, and other sections were for the full sample. Question 3 (p. 3) asked participants to indicate their current work status (0 = *not working*; 1 = *working*). Those who were working were then directed to Question 7 (page 3), whilst those who were not working were asked to proceed to the following question (Q. 4).

Questions 4 and 5 were directed at unemployed participants and asked about their length of time out of work. Question 6 enquired about the number of hours they had worked in their last paid job. Non-working participants were then directed to proceed to Question 18 (p. 4). Questions 7 to 17 were for participants who were currently working. Question 7 asked about the status of their job (i.e., *full-time*, *part-time*, *casual*, *contract/temporary*, *not sure*, or *other*). Questions 8 to 14 consisted of items relating to the length of unemployment before acquiring the job, number of jobs currently working, time in current job(s), actual and ideal working hours per week, and type of occupation. All respondents were asked to indicate how many times they had worked in casual, part-time, temporary, or full-time jobs over the past year (Q. 19).

Job Permanence

Question 15 of the T2 survey was directed at employed participants and asked them to rate the perceived permanence of their job on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*completely permanent*), with higher scores indicated higher perceived permanence.

Job Satisfaction

Question 16 of the follow-up survey asked employed participants to rate their job satisfaction on a scale from 1 (*extremely unsatisfied*) to 5 (*extremely satisfied*). Higher scores indicate greater job satisfaction.

Job Quality

Question 17 of the follow-up survey consisted of nine items, based on those from the JOBS Program manual (Michigan Prevention Research Center, 1995),

which were designed to measure job quality. Participants were asked to rate how happy they were with each aspect of their job on a scale from 1 (*extremely unhappy*) to 6 (*extremely happy*). The nine dimensions included in the job quality index included: co-workers; the organisation; the work itself; the immediate supervisor; the pay; promotion prospects; job security; opportunity for skill use; and task variety. Higher scores for each item indicate greater perceived job quality.

Procedure – Time 1

The Toowoomba Centrelink office and several employment agencies, who were members of the Australian Government's Job Network system, were contacted by the researcher and asked if they would be willing to assist with the project by distributing surveys to their clients. Research proposals, which provided an outline of the study, its aims and objectives, and the level of involvement by participating organisations, were provided to interested organisations. All of the 15 Job Network sites that were approached, including 5 from Toowoomba and 10 from the Ipswich and Brisbane areas, agreed to assist with the project.

Bundles of surveys were delivered to the participating Job Network sites and the surveys were then distributed by staff members (i.e., either trainers or employment consultants) to individual clients during consultations or to groups of clients attending a training program. Data collection commenced in February 2003, when surveys were distributed to participating Job Network sites. During the time of this study, the participating Job Network sites were re-applying for government contracts to continue their Job Network membership. Subsequent to the outcome of those applications, some sites underwent some major organisational changes and their involvement in the research project was considerably hindered until the changes were implemented. Consequently, data collection for the first stage of the project was extended through to November 2003.

Staff members at the participating Job Network sites (mostly employment consultants or trainers) briefly explained the study to individual clients or to groups of clients attending a training program. Clients who were willing to take part in the study were provided with a survey package to complete either on site or to take home with them to complete. The researcher was also granted permission by the Toowoomba Centrelink office to recruit participants from seminars held for newly registered clients. The seminar presenters briefly mentioned the study to each new

group of clients and asked those who were interested in finding out more about the study to remain after the seminar so that the researcher could provide them with more information. After being informed about the study, individuals who were willing to participate either completed a survey on site or took it home with them to complete.

Survey packages consisted of a covering letter, which provided brief details about the study, a consent form, an Unemployment Experience Questionnaire, a reply-paid envelope, and a small “thank you” gift of either a bag of lollies or a sachet of coffee and some biscuits. As an incentive, participants were given the opportunity to enter the Psychology Department raffle for cash prizes ranging from \$20 to \$200. Sponsorship for the research project, in the form of donations of gift vouchers or goods, was also sought from grocery and retail outlets to serve as further incentives for participants. Several local grocery and retail stores were contacted by phone, face-to-face by the researcher, or by letter. Whilst many of the organisations expressed interest in the study, none could offer any assistance at that time.

The covering letter provided to participants explained that the study was the first stage of a research project, which involved an initial survey and a 6-month follow-up survey. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and informed that no personally identifying information would be revealed in any literature emerging from the research project. The consent form provided the opportunity for participants to indicate whether or not they were willing to take part in the follow-up study. Participants were asked to provide a code (up to 5 characters) for their Time 1 and Time 2 surveys so that their responses could be matched while protecting their identity. The code was the initials of their name and the last two digits of their year of birth.

Individuals who were willing to take part in the study were asked to sign a written consent form (those under 18 years of age were required to obtain consent from a parent or guardian) indicating that they understood the purpose of the study and were willing to take part. Participants were asked to provide contact details on the consent form if they wanted to be entered into the raffle, if they wanted a summary of the results mailed out to them upon completion of the project, or if they were willing to take part in the follow-up study. Consent forms were stored separately from the surveys to ensure anonymity of survey responses. The covering letter asked participants to complete the survey, seal it in the reply-paid envelope,

and return it to the researcher. Participants were also able to leave their sealed completed survey with their employment consultant or trainer at their Job Network site, if they chose to do so. The surveys were then collected by the researcher or posted back to the university by the Job Network agency staff.

During the nine months of data collection, 711 surveys were distributed to the various Job Network sites and to Centrelink clients. Of those, 372 were completed and returned. This translates into an acceptable response rate of approximately 52%. The completed surveys were scanned using Teleform, which automatically places the data into a Microsoft Excel file. Whilst this program allows the operator to verify ambiguous data (e.g., where the responses were difficult to read or the pen was not dark enough) prior to its acceptance, some items may be misread by the scanner and not highlighted for verification. Those items were identified in the data screening process.

Procedure – Time 2

Of the 372 participants who returned the first survey, 265 indicated that they would be willing to take part in the 6-month follow-up study, 83 declined the invitation, and 24 did not respond to the question. Prior to posting the survey packages, participants were telephoned to confirm that they were still willing to take part in the follow-up study and also to confirm their postal addresses. Of the 265 participants, 81 were not contactable (e.g., phones disconnected or not answering after at least three attempts at contact), 4 chose to withdraw from the study, and 1 person was deceased. The remaining 179 participants agreed to take part in the study and were sent follow-up survey packages, containing the follow-up questionnaire, a covering letter, and a reply-paid envelope. The reply-paid envelopes allowed participants to return their completed surveys directly to the researcher at the University of Southern Queensland. In an attempt to increase the response rate, participants who had not returned their surveys within 2 weeks were sent reminder letters. A total of 115 people returned completed surveys. This figure represents approximately 31% of the original 371 survey participants. Whilst this response rate is low, it is quite typical for mail-out surveys (Roth & BeVier, 1998).

Participants were asked to use the same code (their initials and year of birth) that they had used on the first survey so that their two sets of responses could be matched, whilst protecting their identity. As an incentive, participants were again

offered the opportunity to enter the Psychology Department raffle for cash prizes. Upon receipt of the completed surveys, they were scanned and the data were verified and transferred to Microsoft Excel using the Teleform program. The codes from Time 1 were matched to the codes from Time 2 and the two data sets were combined in an SPSS file for analyses.

Quantitative Data Analytic Methods

The main quantitative methods used were tests for group differences, such as *t*-tests and analyses of variance (ANOVAs), and regression analyses to generate predictive models and identify key predictor variables. The following sections provide a brief overview of the strategies used to investigate the data and to test whether it met the relevant assumptions.

Group Difference Tests

Group differences were assessed using *t*-tests, when there were two levels of an independent variable (IV), Analyses of Variance (ANOVAs), when there were more than two levels of an IV, or a mixed between-subjects and within-subjects design when examining changes over time and between employment status groups. Data screening was carried out prior to the analyses to check on the distributions within each group, to identify outliers within each group, and to assess homogeneity of variance. Homogeneity of variance was deemed to be problematic where sample cell sizes exceeded a ratio of 4:1 (largest to smallest) and variance ratios were 10 or more (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

Homogeneity of variances was also assessed using Levene's test and an alpha of .05 as the criterion (Tabachnick & Fidell). A significant result for Levene's test suggests that the variances are heterogeneous. When the assumption of homogeneity of variances is violated, the *Welch* statistic can be used to test for the equality of group means, whilst *Tamhane's T2* statistic can be used for pairwise comparisons, because neither of these tests are based on the assumption of equality of variances (SPSS Inc., 2002). Unless otherwise stated, post-hoc comparisons were carried out using Scheffe's test, because it uses the *F* distribution and sets the family-wise error rate at alpha against all possible contrasts (Howell, 1992). It is, however, a more conservative test than others such as Tukey's or Newman-Keuls and has less power than other tests.

For the mixed repeated measures and between-subjects design, the assumption of homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices was assessed using Box's M, but as Tabachnick and Fidell (p. 330) pointed out, Box's M is "notoriously sensitive" and there are generally no problems with heterogeneity if the sample sizes are equal. Box's M and Levene's test of equality of error variance was carried out as part of the mixed method analyses using SPSS GLM (general linear model). Any violations of the assumptions are acknowledged and attempts to rectify those violations are reported in the relevant results sections.

Regression Analyses

In order to evaluate the adequacy of the regression models in terms of meeting the assumptions, several diagnostic tools available in SPSS REGRESSION were selected as part of the analyses. An overview of how the assumptions were evaluated is presented in this section and the results of those evaluations are presented with the results of the regression analyses in the following chapters.

Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) outlined several practical issues, such as sample size and distributional properties of the data, which should be considered when carrying out multiple regression analyses. According to Tabachnick and Fidell, a rule of thumb for sample size in multiple regression is $N \geq 50 + 8m$ (m = number of IVs) for testing multiple correlation, and $N \geq 104 + m$, for testing individual predictors, and the larger of the two if testing both. Coakes and Steed (2001) advised having at least five times more cases than IVs. The ratio of cases-to-IVs was assessed prior to each regression analysis to ensure that it at least met the criterion suggested by Coakes and Steed.

Linearity, normality, and homoscedasticity were assessed by examining residuals plots. A scatterplot of standardised residuals against the predicted values, partial scatterplots of standardised residuals against each predictor variable, a histogram of standardised residuals, and a normal probability (P-P) plot, were all requested as part of the SPSS regression output. For the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity to be met, the residual scatterplots should exhibit a random scatter of points about zero and have a similar spread across all predicted values. The assumption of normality is assessed by examining the histogram and normal P-P plot of standardised residuals. An examination of the histogram will confirm whether the frequency distribution of standardised residuals follows the shape of a normal curve.

The normal P-P plot plots the cumulative proportions of standardised residuals against the cumulative proportions of the normal distribution. If the normality assumption is met, points will cluster around a straight line. An examination of the correlation matrix can provide an initial check for collinearity among the predictor variables. The presence of high correlations (i.e., .90 and above) is an indication of collinearity. Tolerance and the variance inflation factor (VIF) are measures for assessing both pairwise and multiple-variable collinearity. Tolerance values approaching zero indicate that the variable is highly collinear with the other predictor variables. The VIF is inversely related to the tolerance value. According to SPSS, VIF values greater than 2 are usually considered problematic. SPSS also has an option to generate collinearity diagnostics, including condition indices. If condition indices exceed the threshold value of .30, there may be serious problems with collinearity. If this happens, the next step is to examine the regression coefficient variance-decomposition matrix (SPSS Inc., 2003). When a condition index above .30 accounts for a substantial proportion of variance (.90 or above) for two or more coefficients, collinearity is likely to be a problem (SPSS Inc.).

Mahalanobis Distance, Cook's Distance, and Leverage scores were generated to detect the presence of multivariate outliers and to identify any cases exerting an extreme influence. The cut-off criterion was a chi-square critical value at the .001 alpha level, with the degrees of freedom equal to the number of predictors in the model. Any cases with scores exceeding the chi-square cut-off value were deemed to be multivariate outliers. If, during the following regression analyses, any of the assumptions were deemed to be violated, strategies were used to try to remedy the problem (e.g., transformation of variables, deleting cases with outliers, or deleting redundant variables). When transformed variables were used or cases were removed, the regressions were run with the original variables and with transformed variables, and with the offending cases included and again with them removed. If the results differed between the initial and subsequent runs, this will be acknowledged, and the results using transformed variables and/or a data set with the offending cases removed will be reported.

Logistic regression is a non-parametric technique and, as such, does not require the continuous variables to be normally distributed. However, Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) outlined several practical issues that need to be considered when running a logistic regression. The ratio of cases to variables should be sufficient so

as not to produce extremely large parameter estimates and standard errors, which can occur when combinations of discrete variables result in too many cells with no cases (Tabachnick & Fidell). Further, when observed and expected frequencies are compared using a goodness-of-fit test, power is significantly reduced if expected frequencies are too small (Tabachnick & Fidell). Tabachnick and Fidell suggest that all expected frequencies should be greater than one, and that there should be no more than 20% of expected frequencies less than five. Further assumptions are that continuous predictors have a linear relationship with the logit transform of the DV, predictor variables are not multicollinear, and responses of different cases are independent of each other (i.e., independence of errors). Finally, an examination of residuals should be carried out to determine whether there are any outlying cases that are poorly predicted by the solution. Multicollinearity was checked using the same approach as explained above for multiple regression (i.e., checking correlations, tolerance, and VIFs).

SPSS logistic regression provides an option to obtain a classification table which contains the percentage of cases correctly predicted for each group based on the set of predictors in the model. For example, mental health was categorised according to clinical “caseness”, with participants coded as either *Clinical* or *Non-Clinical* cases. The criterion upon which the cut-off scores were based is discussed in Chapter 4. Classification tables provide an indication of how reliable the regression model is at classifying cases for whom the outcome is known (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). It also allows for an examination of the sensitivity and specificity of the model. Sensitivity in the model is the proportion of cases in the response category (clinical cases) correctly predicted by the model. An incorrect classification of a non-clinical case as clinical represents a Type I error. Specificity is the proportion of cases in the reference category (non-clinical cases) correctly predicted. Incorrectly classifying a clinical case as non-clinical represents a Type II error. Tait, Hulse, and Robertson (2002) suggested that a level of sensitivity and specificity of at least .80 is considered acceptable for screening tests, so this was used as a guide to assess the reliability of the logistic regression models.

The studies carried out in this thesis assessed the data in relation to the aforementioned assumptions and practical issues for each statistical method used. Any violations of assumptions are acknowledged in the results sections, along with a description of how those violations were addressed.

Qualitative Method

This section reports on the methodology used to gather and analyse qualitative information from research participants about their unemployment experience. The Time 1 and Time 2 survey instruments included a section on the final page for participants to comment about their unemployment experience. An open-ended question was used to allow participants to structure their responses from their own perspective. The purpose of gathering qualitative data was to gain a richer understanding and appreciation of the unemployment experience. Combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies can provide a more comprehensive view of the research phenomena and enhance the study design (Gray & Densten, 1998).

Triangulation is a term often used to define the use of multiple data collection methods in an attempt to strengthen the validity of the conclusions drawn from each separate method, by demonstrating mutual confirmation of the results (Bryman, 1988). It is a way of enriching the research by providing a number of different perspectives (Willig, 2003). Patton (1990) suggested that qualitative methods can help to fill out the meaning of patterns that emerge from using quantitative methods to provide more substance to the research. Rather than imposing their own meanings by using preconceived and predefined variables, qualitative researchers are interested in how people construct their own meaning (Willig). Qualitative research provides an opportunity to discover how individuals make sense of their world and how they uniquely experience, interpret, and manage certain events or situations (Willig).

There are many different approaches and methodologies within the qualitative research paradigm, (e.g., grounded theory, interpretative phenomenology, case studies, discursive psychology, Foucauldian discourse analyses, focus groups, and ethnography), however, Kidder and Fine (1987) distinguished between what they call *big Q* and *little q* methodologies. They differentiated between inductive, theory-generating methodologies, focusing on exploring meaning (*big Q*) and methodologies that incorporate non-numerical data, such as open-ended questions, into hypothetico-deductive research designs (*little q*) (Willig, 2003). According to Kidder and Fine:

Qualitative work with the *big Q* is field work, participant observation, or ethnography; it consists of a continually changing set of questions without a structured design. The *big Q* refers to unstructured research, inductive work,

hypothesis generation and the development of 'grounded theory' (cf. Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Qualitative work with the small *q* consists of open-ended questions embedded in a survey or experiment that has a structure or design. The hypothesis and questions do not change as research progresses. The same questions are asked of everyone. (p. 59)

The methodology used for this study fits best within the *little q* category, because the purpose of incorporating open-ended questions was to obtain a richer description of the unemployment experience and to gather support for the quantitative data. The questions were the same for everyone and there were no opportunities to seek clarification or explore the deeper meaning of participants' comments. The methods used in this study drew heavily from the grounded theory method outlined by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003). Willig (2003, pp. 37-38) differentiated between the full version and the abbreviated version of the grounded theory method. She advocated using the full version unless time or resource constraints prevent its use. The full implementation of grounded theory method involves the researcher moving back and forth between data collection and analysis, whereas the abbreviated version of the method involves the coding of data only (Willig). Due to the time constraints associated with this research project, the abbreviated version, which works with the original data only and does not broaden and refine the analysis, was used.

According to Auerbach and Silverstein (2003), grounded theory uses questioning rather than measuring, it uses theoretical coding to develop hypotheses, and the hypotheses are grounded in what the research participants say. Grounded theory involves identifying and integrating categories of meaning from the data to provide an explanatory framework or theory with which to understand the phenomenon under investigation (Willig, 2003). Willig clearly distinguished between category identification in grounded theory and in content analysis. She stated that in grounded theory, the categories emerge from the data, they can evolve throughout the research process, and they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. This contrasts with content analysis, which uses pre-defined and mutually-exclusive categories (Willig).

The method of coding used typically depends on the particular qualitative methodology used, but it can also vary within that methodology (Willig, 2003). For example, as Willig explains, coding can be carried out for each line, sentence,

paragraph, page, or section, depending on the theory and the version of the theory being used. The coding technique and generation of themes or categories for this study were guided by the strategies outlined in Auerbach and Silverstein (2003). Auerbach and Silverstein viewed coding as analogous to a staircase, with steps progressing towards a higher level of understanding to the final level that relates directly to the researcher's concerns. The progression of coding steps referred to by Auerbach and Silverstein are: Raw Text → Relevant Text → Repeating Ideas → Themes → Theoretical Constructs → Theoretical Narrative → Research Concerns. The following is a brief summary of the steps outlined by Auerbach and Silverstein.

From the raw text provided by participants, the researcher reduces the text down to manageable proportions by extracting the text that is related to his or her specific research concerns (relevant text). The relevant text is then examined for repeating ideas, which are similar ideas expressed by different participants using the same or similar words or phrases. The repeating ideas are then organised into themes, or implicit topics that link a group of repeating ideas. The themes are then organised into larger, more abstract ideas, referred to as theoretical constructs, which are then summarised into a theoretical narrative. A theoretical narrative weaves together the participants' subjective experiences and the researchers' concerns. It retells the participants' stories, using their own words as much as possible, in terms of theoretical constructs and the theoretical framework of the researcher. Therefore, rather than paraphrasing the text obtained from the research participants, direct quotes, long enough for the context of the theme to be evident, are used.

As mentioned earlier, the main goal of gathering qualitative data for this study was to learn more about the unemployment experience. Therefore, the research concern was quite general, which fits well with the distinction made by Auerbach and Silverstein that research concerns are more inclusive and general than research questions or hypotheses. Given the time constraints associated with this research project, the method of collecting qualitative data was restricted to using open-ended questions on the survey instruments, to which participants provided written responses. Consequently, there was no opportunity for participants to clarify or elaborate on any of their comments and an in-depth interpretation of the data was not possible. The following method section includes details about the participants, materials, and procedure for both Time 1 and Time 2 studies.

Participants

Time 1

At Time 1, 200 (53.9%) of the 371 participants took the opportunity to comment about their unemployment experience. Of those, 104 were males and 96 were females. Sixty-six (66) people were in the 16 to 24 years age bracket, 41 were aged 25 to 34 years, 32 were aged 35 to 44 years, and 61 were 45 years or older. One hundred and forty-one participants (70.5%) were from a rural area and 59 (29.5%) were from the Brisbane metropolitan area. Education level was relatively evenly split, with 72 participants having completed Year 10 or less, 51 completed Years 11 or 12, and 77 had some tertiary qualifications. One hundred and thirty-six participants (68%) reported that they were not currently doing any work at Time 1, 26 (13%) were doing volunteer/unpaid work, 33 (16.5%) were working part-time or casually, and 5 (2.5%) were in the *Other* category (e.g., studying).

Time 2

At Time 2, 91 (79.1%) of the 115 (46 males and 45 females) participants provided comments. Forty (40) were in the 45 years and over age bracket, 20 were in the 16 to 24 years age group, 14 were aged 25 to 34 years, and 17 were aged 35 to 44 years. Thirty participants (30 or approx. 33%) were from the Brisbane metropolitan area and 61 (approx. 67%) were from a rural area. There was a relatively even split of employed ($n = 47$ or approx. 52%) and unemployed ($n = 44$ or approx. 48%) who chose to make comments.

Materials – Time 1 and Time 2

The final pages of the Time 1 and Time 2 Unemployment Experience Survey invited participants to make comments about their unemployment experience. The invitation was presented in the Time 1 survey (p. 12) as follows:

We welcome any comments you would like to make about your unemployment experience, so please feel free to use the space provided to do so.

Prompts were provided for participants as follows:

For example, you might like to tell us more about the things you do to fill in your day, how you feel about your unemployment situation, the things you do to cope with your situation, how you feel about doing your mutual obligation activities (e.g.,

job seeking, training, Work for the Dole), difficulties you have experienced when applying for work etc.

The Time 2 survey contained a similar invitation and prompts (p. 14) as follows:

Please use the space below to make any further comments about your employment experiences since you completed the last survey (i.e., over the last 6 months). For example, you may like to tell us more about your job seeking experiences, any changes that have occurred in relation to your employment situation, any events that have impacted on your job seeking, any difficulties you have experienced over the past 6 months in relation to your job seeking or to your current job if you are employed, or how you feel about your current job if you are now working.

Procedure

A thematic analysis was carried out on participants' responses to the open-ended questions in both the Time 1 and Time 2 surveys, with the same procedure being used for both studies. The comments made by each participant, along with their ID number, age, and gender, were entered into a Microsoft Excel file. Prior to the analysis, the comments were read through several times to establish familiarity. A two-phase process, based on the steps outlined in Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) was used to analyse the qualitative data. These steps involved analysing the text to identify repeating ideas and then grouping those ideas into coherent categories of themes. Repeating ideas are the same or similar ideas expressed by two or more participants (Auerbach and Silverstein).

The first step involved systematically searching through the comments made by each participant, identifying recurring ideas, and making a list of the themes. The next read-through involved making a list of the relevant themes. Once the themes were listed for each participant, columns were created in an Excel database for each theme. Each time an idea relating to a particular theme was mentioned by a participant, a number 1 was placed in the relevant column. Participants were likely to mention more than one theme (e.g., financial difficulties, self-esteem, and job seeking experiences), so the number 1 was placed in each of those columns. This process was carried out for each participant until all of the text was categorised into themes. Separate files were then created for each theme and ideas not relating to that

theme were removed from the file. The end result was a database for each theme with participants' verbatim comments relevant to that theme.

The last stage of the analysis involved identifying sub-themes within each of the categories. For example, participants mentioned perceived barriers to employment, which had several sub-themes, such as age and lack of experience. A separate column for each sub-theme was added to the database and, if that sub-theme was mentioned by a participant, the number 1 was added to the relevant column for that participant. The main aim of gathering qualitative data was to gain a richer understanding of the unemployment experience and to supplement the quantitative information. Therefore, results of the qualitative analyses were included after reports on the quantitative analyses.

Quality and Trustworthiness of Qualitative Data

Morrow (2005) outlined several criteria for judging the trustworthiness of qualitative research, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. An assessment of the quality and trustworthiness of the qualitative data presented in the current research project was guided by Morrow's criteria. Credibility corresponds to internal reliability or consistency in quantitative research and is achieved by such criteria as the use of peer researchers, coanalysis, prolonged engagement with participants, a thorough description of source data, a fit between the data and the emergent themes, and rich descriptions of participants' experiences and the contexts in which those experiences occurred (Morrow). The assistance of a peer researcher was used to explore the fit between the source data and the emergent themes. The judgements between the current research and the peer researcher were generally concordant; however, the minor discrepancies were explored and mutually agreed-upon themes and thick descriptions were identified.

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of the study can be generalised to the reader's own context and is achieved when sufficient information is presented to the reader about such factors as the research context, processes, participants, and researcher-participant relationships (Morrow, 2005). Therefore, information was provided in the previous section about the method used to gather the qualitative data and the following section provides information about the characteristics of the participants so the reader can determine how the findings might transfer to his or her own context. Qualitative data are not generalisable in the same

sense as quantitative data and, as such, the results are in no way assumed to be reflective of other populations or settings (Morrow). The purpose of gathering qualitative data was to gain a better understanding of each individual participant's lived experiences of unemployment—their unique, individual experiences.

The dependability of qualitative data refers to the extent to which the study can be replicated (Morrow, 2005). This requires the researcher to provide enough detail about the way in which the data were collected and analysed so that others may examine the data and verify the conclusions. Therefore, an attempt was made to provide a detailed explanation of how the data were collected and analysed to enable others to examine the audit trail (Morrow).

Finally, confirmability refers to the issue of how well the researcher was able to set aside his or her own beliefs, theories, or biases, so as to present an objective analysis of the data (Morrow, 2005). As Morrow acknowledged, pure objectivity is never achieved, but providing a detailed account of how the data were collected and analysed goes some way towards assisting the reader to determine the integrity of the findings.

The following chapter presents information about how the data files were prepared prior to the major analyses, along with details of the characteristics of the participants who took part in both the Time 1 and Time 2 studies.

CHAPTER 4 - DATA PREPARATION AND DESCRIPTION

This chapter describes the processes used to screen the data, to handle missing data, and to evaluate the ability of the data to meet the assumptions required for the statistical tests used. It also presents results of exploratory factor analyses of the scales that were developed for this project. The final sections present descriptive statistics, results from an examination of attrition bias, tables of correlations among the variables, an exploration of the stability of the variables over time, and a summary of the demographic characteristics of participants who provided qualitative data.

Data Screening

The data were transferred from Microsoft Excel into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 12.0.1 for Windows (SPSS Inc., 2003) program. Data screening was undertaken prior to scoring the scales and running the major analyses to check on the accuracy of the data file and to ensure that there were no out-of-range values. A missing values analysis (MVA) was also carried out at this stage using SPSS MVA.

Accuracy of Data File

The frequencies of all variables in the data file were examined using SPSS FREQUENCIES to ensure that all values were within range. Some out-of-range values were found in the data set. A cross-check of those values against the original surveys revealed that the figures had been misread during the survey scanning process. The scanner was likely to misread a response where participants had altered their original response in some way, such as crossing it out and writing in a new response, or writing over the top of the original response. Out-of-range values were replaced by the correct values obtained by going back to the original surveys.

Data screening also revealed some inconsistencies in responses. For example, some participants answered “no” to the question, “have you ever worked in a full-time job?”, and proceeded to answer subsequent questions regarding previous full-time work. For these cases, it was obvious that the participants had previously held a full-time job, so their “no” responses were altered to “yes”. There was an extreme score of \$1700 on fortnightly net income and a check of the survey revealed

that this participant had checked “other” for employment status and had written “working full-time”. Given that this case was not part of the population of unemployed persons, it was deleted from the data file, leaving a sample size of 371.

T1 Missing Data

There were two types of missing data in this research project: user-missing and system-missing. User-missing data were logical exclusions from particular categories. For example, when participants answered “no” to having previously worked full-time, they were not required to answer subsequent questions relating to the full-time job. User-missing data were given arbitrary codes (e.g., “88” or “888”, depending on the range of values) and occurred for the following questions in the demographics section (pp. 2-3) of the survey: Q.11 (time since last worked full-time), Q.12 (occupation in last full-time job), Q.13 (length of time in last full-time job), Q.14 (satisfaction with last full-time job), Q.21a, b, and c (relating to training participation), and Q.22a, b, and c (relating to volunteer/unpaid work participation).

System-missing data are unexplained missing values which can occur for a number of reasons (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). For example, participants may unintentionally or deliberately miss a question, the scanner could misread a response as blank, or participants may misunderstand the instructions and omit some sections of a survey (Tabachnick & Fidell). It is important to assess the pattern of missing data to ascertain whether the values are missing at random or whether there is a systematic relationship between missingness on one variable and any of the other variables (Tabachnick & Fidell). The Missing Values Analysis (MVA) function in SPSS provides options for detecting patterns of missing data and imputing values to replace the missing data. Tabachnick and Fidell advised that there are no firm conclusions about sample size and amount of missing data, but suggested that 5% or less randomly missing data points in a relatively large data set is not likely to cause serious problems. An examination of missing values was carried out at the item level and *t*-tests were requested for variables with at least 5% of missing data to see whether missingness was related to any of the other variables (Tabachnick & Fidell). These analyses were carried out using the MVA option in SPSS.

All of the variables were entered into the MVA. The MVA revealed that two variables had more than 5% of missing data. These were both part of Question 23,

which asked whether participants were on specific support programs. Both Personal Support Program (PSP) and Transition to Work Program (TTW) had 27.2% missing data (101 cases). The MVA procedure in SPSS provides an option to carry out *t*-tests with $\alpha = .05$ using “present” and “missing” as indicator groups. The *t*-tests for PSP and TTW revealed significant age differences, with older respondents having more missing data on each of those variables. The mean age for PSP “present” was 31.69 years and for PSP “missing” was 39.58 years, $t(160.4) = -5.30, p < .01$. The mean age for TTW “present” was 31.71 years and for TTW “missing” was 39.53 years, $t(162.3) = -5.25, p < .01$. These findings suggest that the data for PSP and TTW were not missing at random, but were influenced by age. It is unclear why this would be so, but it is possible that because those two programs (i.e., PSP and TTW) were recently introduced as part of the Australians Working Together package, older participants were not familiar with them or did not know whether they were actually involved in either of them. Given that type of assistance program was not a key variable in this study, all three categories (i.e., IA, PSP, and TTW) were excluded from any further analyses. None of the other variables had 5% or more missing data, so were not deemed to be problematic.

Missing values were imputed at this stage of the analysis using the Expectation Maximisation (EM) option in SPSS MVA (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). EM was considered the most appropriate, because it does not overfit the data, it avoids impossible matrices, and it produces realistic estimates of variance (Tabachnick & Fidell). The missing values were calculated and replaced at the item level for each variable so that all of the available information for that variable could be used in the calculations. Many of the variables in this research project were total scale scores. For example, the self-esteem variable was an aggregate of the 10 items that made up that scale. If a person has data missing for any of the items that make up a particular scale, SPSS will not compute a total score for that person. Therefore, if imputation of missing values is carried out at the variable level, none of the information provided by the participant for a particular variable is used to calculate his/her scale score. Instead, the imputed value is based on other participants' scores. Hence it was decided to use all of the available information for a particular variable and calculate missing values at the item level, rather than variable level.

Missing values were calculated for the following variables: Satisfaction with current employment status, job applications in the past month, net fortnightly

income, economic hardship, self-esteem, leisure meaningfulness, employment commitment, job search intensity, job-seeking efficacy, financial strain, collective purpose, social contact, status, activity, time structure, PA, NA, and GHQ. The option in SPSS to save the individual data files containing the imputed values was chosen. Most of the imputed values contained decimals, which did not match the Likert scales used to measure the variables. Thus, the replaced values were rounded to the nearest whole number. That is, numbers containing a decimal of less than .5 were rounded down to the nearest whole number and numbers with decimal values of .5 or higher were rounded up. The data for each variable were then copied back into the full data file.

T2 Missing Data

There were 115 of the original participants who provided data at Time 2. The remaining 265 participants were given missing data codes of “88”, “888”, or “8888” on all of the Time 2 variables, depending on the range of values present for the particular variable. A new variable called *Follow-Up Status* was created to distinguish participants who took part in both Time 1 and Time 2 studies (coded as “1”) from those who took part only in the first study (coded as “0”). Similar to the first study, there were two types of missing data at Time 2—user-missing and system-missing. User-missing data were logical exclusions from particular categories. For example, when participants indicated that they were not working at Time 2, they were not required to answer any further questions relating to having a job. User-missing data were given arbitrary codes, such as “88”, “888”, or “8888”, depending on the range of data values. An analysis of the data missing due to participant attrition was carried out and is reported in the next section. The remaining variables with system-missing data were inspected to determine the frequency and pattern of missing data. There were no variables with more than 5% system-missing data, and no systematic patterns of missingness. Therefore, the EM option was used to impute missing values at the item level. Imputed values containing decimals were rounded to the nearest whole number if the variable in question was not measured on a continuous scale.

Evaluation of Assumptions for Multivariate Analysis

Assumption checks were carried out for each statistical procedure used and will be reported with the results for each of those analyses. The checks were carried out prior to, or during, the analyses, depending on the procedure used. For example, checks for univariate normality were carried out prior to running the factor analyses using SPSS FREQUENCIES to examine skewness and kurtosis. For the multiple regression analyses, checks for multivariate normality, outliers, and multicollinearity were carried out during the regression runs. Using SPSS REGRESSION, multivariate normality was assessed by checking the distribution of the standardised residuals scatterplots, histograms, and normal probability plots generated during the regression runs. Mahalanobis distance scores were also generated during the regression runs to enable the detection of multivariate outliers. A chi-square critical value, using $\alpha = .001$, and the degrees of freedom (df) equal to the number of IVs in the model, was used as the cut-off criterion for multivariate outliers. Multicollinearity among the IVs was assessed by checking the collinearity diagnostics table and tolerance levels generated by SPSS.

Factor Analyses of Leisure Meaningfulness, Job Search Intensity, and Job Seeking Efficacy Variables

Exploratory factor analyses were carried out on the scales that were adapted or modified from existing scales, including the leisure meaningfulness, job-seeking self-efficacy, and job search intensity scales. Results from the factor analyses are reported in the following sections. Scale reliabilities are presented in a later section.

Leisure Meaningfulness

The items that were used to measure leisure meaningfulness were Items 2 (*satisfying*) to 18 (*different to your daily duties*) on page 5 of the Time 1 survey. The first item on page 5 was included to measure how *social* (i.e., how much it involved other people) the activity was, rather than its meaningfulness. Therefore, it was not included in the factor analysis. Prior to running an exploratory factor analysis, the 17 leisure meaningfulness items were assessed for univariate normality. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) advised that having normally distributed variables enhances the solution, but the normality assumption is not a strict requirement if statistical

inference is not being used to determine the number of factors. Curran, West, and Finch (1996) noted that significant problems arise in factor analysis with univariate skewness of 2.0 and kurtosis of 7.0. Many of the leisure items were not normally distributed, with the highest skewness and kurtosis values being 1.18 ($z_{skew} = -9.28$, $p < .01$) and 1.77 ($z_{kurt} = 6.61$, $p < .01$), respectively, which were both for the “enjoyable” item. However, given the criteria outlined by Curran et al., the items did not exceed the levels of skewness and kurtosis that are likely to create problems with the factor analyses.

A Principal Components Analysis (PCA) with oblique (direct oblimin) rotation was used for the initial exploratory analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). According to Tabachnick and Fidell, a factorable correlation matrix should include several correlations above .30, Bartlett’s test of sphericity should be significant (although this test is very sensitive to sample size), and measures of sampling adequacy (MSA), such as the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure, should be at least .60. Many of the leisure items had correlations above .30, with some being considerably higher (e.g., .65 and .75). Bartlett’s test was significant, with $\chi^2(136) = 2475.83$, $p = .000$, the KMO test value was .87, and scores on the diagonal of the anti-image correlation matrix, which also provide measures of sampling adequacy, ranged from .71 to .93, suggesting that the matrix was factorable.

Parallel Analysis (PA) was used to determine the number of factors to retain (Hayton, Allen, & Scarpello, 2004). Hayton et al. claimed that there is evidence that PA is a more accurate method for factor retention decisions than the root one criterion, which retains factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, or the scree test, which is another common factor retention method. PA involves four main steps: (1) Generating random data sets with the same number of observations, variables, and range of values as the original data; (2) Extracting eigenvalues from the random data correlation matrix a minimum of 50 times using PCA to create a set of parallel eigenvalues; (3) Taking the mean and 95th percentile of all eigenvalues generated by the PCA; and (4) Comparing the real data with the parallel random data, and retaining only those factors with eigenvalues greater than the eigenvalues generated from the PA (Hayton et al.).

Using the steps outlined above, 50 random data matrices with 371 cases, 17 items, and scale values ranging from 1 to 5 were generated. Eigenvalues were extracted from the random data correlation matrix 50 times and the mean and 95th

percentile eigenvalues were calculated. Eigenvalues from the initial PCA run on the real data were plotted against the mean and 95th percentile eigenvalues from the parallel analysis (see Figure 1).

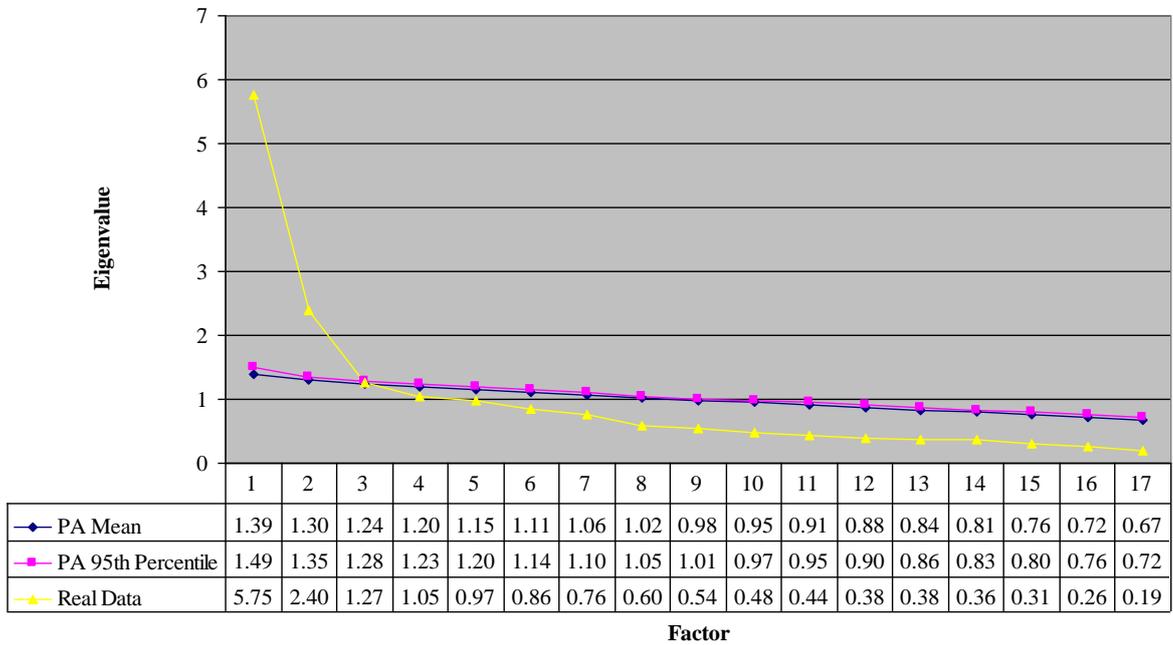


Figure 1. Plot of actual versus randomly generated eigenvalues using parallel analysis for leisure meaningfulness items ($N = 371$).

A comparison of the real eigenvalues against the PA eigenvalues suggested the presence of two components. The real eigenvalue for the third component (1.27) was greater than the PA mean eigenvalue (1.24) but less than the PA 95th percentile eigenvalue (1.28), so a decision was made to accept two components. This decision was also based on an examination of the pattern matrix generated by the PCA. Components 3 and 4 consisted mostly of items that cross-loaded onto Components 1 or 2. Components 1 and 2 also explained most of the variance. The four components explained 61.57% of the variance, with Component 1 explaining 33.85% and Component 2 explaining 14.09%. The correlation between Components 1 and 2 was .20 (only 4% overlap in variance), which suggested that an orthogonal solution was more appropriate.

Based on the results of the PCA, Maximum Likelihood (ML) factor analysis, using orthogonal (Varimax) rotation and requesting two factors, was used for subsequent runs. According to Comrey and Lee (1992, as cited in Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), if an item has less than 20% overlapping variance it is a rather poor

measure of the factor. Therefore, a factor loading of .45 (20% overlapping variance) was used as the cut-off for items to be included in the final scale. Several ML runs were conducted until a final solution was deemed acceptable. One of the criteria for acceptance was that the solution contained a minimal number of non-redundant residuals greater than $|.05|$ on the reproduced correlation matrix (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). There were 38% of residuals greater than $|.05|$ on the initial PCA, with that figure dropping to 20% for the final solution. Table 2 shows the items, ranked according to the size of their loadings, the variance explained by each factor, and its corresponding eigenvalue.

Table 2

Factor Structure of the Leisure Meaningfulness Items (N = 371)

Item	Description	Factor 1	Factor 2
6	Enjoyable	.85	
5	Interesting	.85	
2	Satisfying	.76	
15	Fulfilling	.71	
3	Important to you	.71	
10	Stimulating	.68	
17	Entertaining	.53	
13	Competitive		.75
16	Risky		.68
7	Physically challenging		.61
	Eigenvalues	3.82	1.51
	% Variance explained	38.24	15.13

An inspection of the items representing each factor suggested that the first factor was tapping into leisure meaningfulness, whilst the second factor seemed to be measuring a rather different construct related to challenging or testing one's capabilities. The *Meaningful Leisure Scale* was created by summing the scores for the seven items representing Factor 1. Items representing the second factor were not used in subsequent analyses, because the goal of the research was to have items that measured leisure meaningfulness, rather than other leisure constructs.

Time 1 Job search intensity

Prior to running the exploratory factor analysis, the 12 job search intensity items (p. 6 of survey) were assessed for univariate normality. Item 12 was found to be problematically skewed (skew = 2.66). The majority of the sample (306 or 82.5%) indicated that they had never promoted themselves in the "work wanted"

section of a newspaper or magazine. This item was removed from further analyses. The remaining items were within acceptable limits for normality. The item correlation matrix revealed many correlations above .30, with the highest being .65. A Principal Components analysis was used for the initial run and a criterion of .45 was again used as the cut-off for factor loadings. Bartlett’s test was significant, with $\chi^2(55) = 1,871.87, p = .000$, the KMO test value was .92, and MSAs ranged from .89 to .94, suggesting that the correlation matrix was factorable.

Using the steps outlined earlier for PA, 50 random data matrices with 371 cases, 11 items, and scale values ranging from 1 to 5 were generated. Eigenvalues were extracted from the random data correlation matrices. Eigenvalues from the initial PCA run on the real data were plotted against the mean and 95th percentile eigenvalues from the PA as shown in Figure 2.

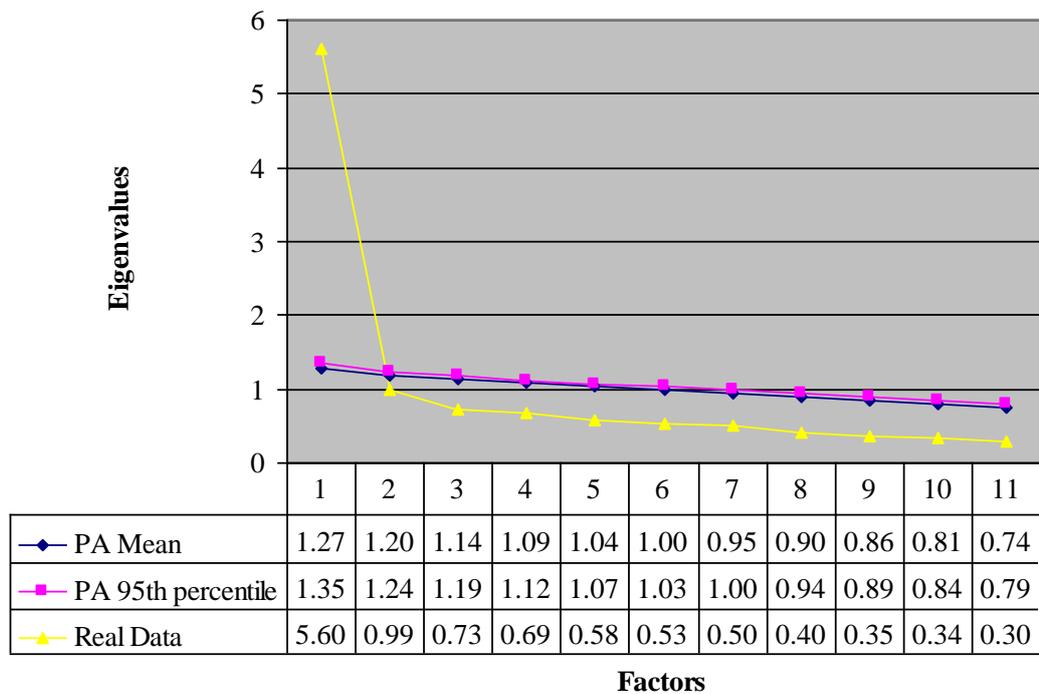


Figure 2. Plot of actual versus randomly generated eigenvalues using parallel analysis for job search intensity items ($N = 371$).

It can be seen from Figure 2 that only one component had an eigenvalue higher than the PA eigenvalues. The items were then factor analysed using the ML procedure and requesting one factor. This factor explained 46.25% of the variance in the job search intensity items. Table 3 presents a summary of the results of the factor analysis, with the items ordered by the size of their loadings.

Table 3

Factor Structure of the Job search intensity Items (N = 371)

Item	Description	Factor 1
7	Sent out your resume or CV to potential employers	.76
4	Listed skills, qualifications, work experience and personal qualities to use when promoting yourself to potential employers	.75
3	Checked with employment agencies for job vacancies	.75
8	Completed a job application	.74
11	Contacted individuals, agencies, businesses to obtain information about potential jobs	.70
9	Telephoned, written to, or visited potential employers to market yourself	.69
6	Prepared/revised your resume	.69
2	Read the newspaper and/or other publications for job vacancies	.64
10	Attended a job interview	.60
1	Spoken to friends, family, previous employers or other people you know to get information about jobs	.60
5	Used the internet to search for job vacancies	.51
	Eigenvalue	5.09
	% Variance explained	46.25

Time 2 Job search intensity

Confirmatory factor analysis was carried out on the Job search intensity variables at Time 2 using Principal Axis Factoring (PAF). Principal components analyses (PCA) is typically used as an initial step in exploratory factor analysis, whereas other factor analytic techniques, such as PAF, are used once the variables have been reduced down to a smaller number of components and the goal is to confirm the factor structure (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). For consistency with Time 1 data, Item 12 was not included in the analysis. Similar to Time 1, the majority of participants (85.3%) indicated that they had never promoted themselves in the “work wanted” section of the newspaper (Item 12), so it was deemed appropriate to discard this item. There were 75 participants who provided data for the job search intensity items at Time 2. These were people who were either not working at all or who were working but still job-hunting. The measures of sampling adequacy suggested that the matrix was factorable, with KMO = .91 and Bartlett’s $\chi^2(55) = 574.79, p < .01$. Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) was used and one factor was requested, accounting for 56.02% of the variance. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Factor Structure of the Time 2 Job search intensity Items (N = 75)

Item	Description	Factor 1
7	Sent out your resume or CV to potential employers	.85
6	Prepared/revised your resume	.84
3	Checked with employment agencies for job vacancies	.84
4	Listed skills, qualifications, work experience and personal qualities to use when promoting yourself to potential employers	.83
9	Telephoned, written to, or visited potential employers to market yourself	.82
11	Contacted individuals, agencies, businesses to obtain information about potential jobs	.81
8	Completed a job application	.77
10	Attended a job interview	.71
1	Spoken to friends, family, previous employers or other people you know to get information about jobs	.64
2	Read the newspaper and/or other publications for job vacancies	.60
5	Used the internet to search for job vacancies	.42

The factor loadings shown in Table 4 are similar to those obtained from the factor analysis of the Time 1 job search intensity items and the results provide some confirmation of the factor structure of the items.

Time 1 Job Seeking Self-Efficacy

Items 1 to 15 on page 7 of the survey were included to measure job seeking self-efficacy. Item 16 was a single-item measure of employment expectation (an appraisal variable) and therefore, it was not included in the factor analysis. An examination of the distributions of each of the 15 job-seeking efficacy items revealed that none was problematically skewed or kurtotic. The items were included in an exploratory factor analysis, using PCA for the initial run. Many of the item correlations were above .30, with the highest being .87, which was between Items 1 and 2. The matrix was suitable for factorising, with KMO = .92, Bartlett's $\chi^2(105) = 3899.57$, $p = .000$, and MSAs ranging from .86 to .95. Parallel analysis was again used to determine the number of factors to retain. Figure 3 shows the results of the PA.

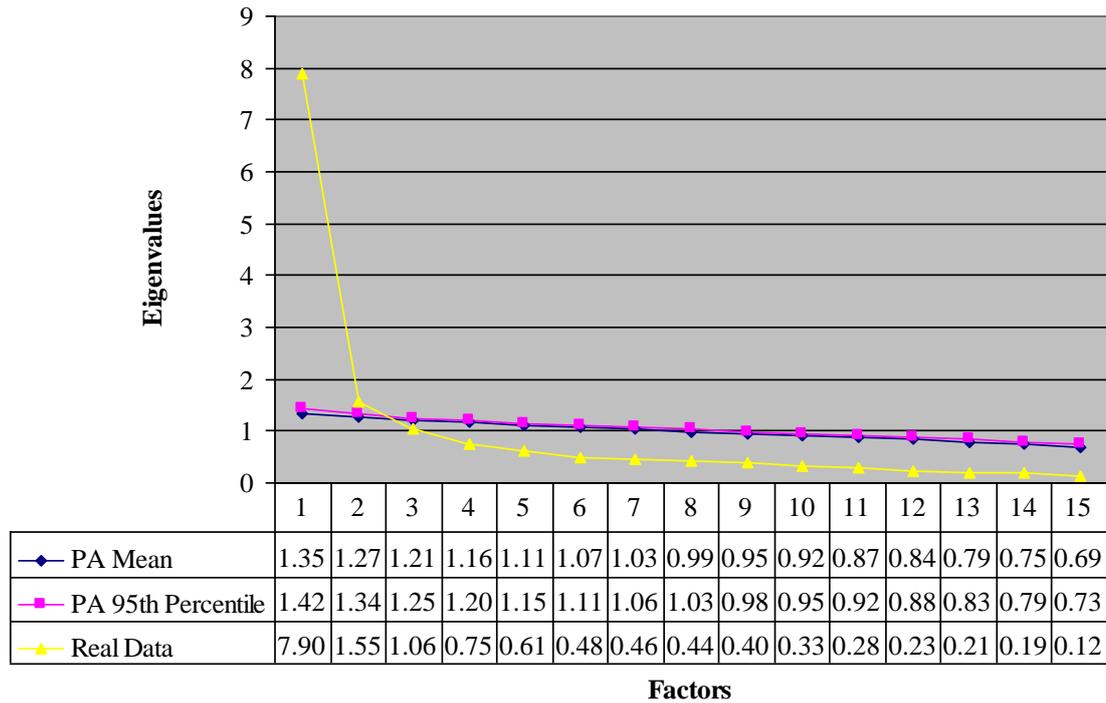


Figure 3. Plot of actual versus randomly generated eigenvalues using parallel analysis for job seeking efficacy items ($N = 371$).

As Figure 3 shows, there were two eigenvalues greater than those from the PA. An ML procedure with oblique rotation and a request for two factors was then used to determine the most suitable solution. Results from the initial PCA run suggested that an oblique rotation was suitable because the correlation between Components 1 and 2 was .43. All but one of the items (Item 12) had clear loadings higher than the criterion of .45 on a factor. Item 12 (i.e., *Writing a letter of introduction to potential employers*) was ambiguous with loadings of .42 on both factors, so it was discarded from further analyses. Results from the final analysis are presented in Table 5, with items ranked according to their factor loadings.

Table 5

Factor Structure of the Time 1 Job-Seeking Efficacy Items (N = 371)

Item	Description	Factor 1	Factor 2
11	Marketing yourself to potential employers by telephoning them and highlighting your skills, work experience, qualifications, and personal qualities and your desire to work within their organisation	.94	
13	Meeting in person with potential employers to introduce yourself, highlight your skills, work experience, qualifications, personal qualities, and desire to work within their organisation	.86	
10	Contacting organisations to find out who to speak to about a job within the organisation	.83	
15	Talking and getting your points across in an interview	.67	
2	Talking to friends and other contacts to discover promising job openings that are suitable for you	.64	
1	Talking to friends and other contacts to find employers who hire people with your skills	.62	
14	Promoting yourself in the "work wanted" section of the newspaper, flyers, community notice boards, trade magazines, or organisational newsletters	.55	
6	Completing a CV or Resume		.97
7	Tailoring your Resume or CV to suit a job application		.79
8	Completing a letter of application to a prospective employer		.71
4	Using the Internet to search for job vacancies and information on employers		.61
5	Making a list of all of your skills, qualifications, work experience, and personal qualities, to use when promoting yourself to potential employers		.54
9	Addressing selection criteria (when necessary)		.53
3	Searching for job vacancies listed in newspapers or employment agencies		.49
Eigenvalues		6.91	1.18
% Variance explained		49.33	8.44

Table 5 shows that the first factor accounted for 49.33% of the variance and the second, 8.44%. The correlation between the two factors was .63. The seven items that loaded onto Factor 1 were summed to produce a total score. The factor was interpreted as *Self-Promotion Efficacy*, because it mostly consisted of items associated with networking with others and putting oneself forward to others as a potential job candidate. Factor 2, which also consisted of seven items, was interpreted as *Task-Focused Efficacy*, because the items were mainly associated with job search tasks that do not involve others.

Time 2 Job-Seeking Efficacy

To confirm the factor structure of the two job-seeking efficacy scales created at Time 1, PAF with oblique rotation was used at Time 2 on the 14 items (Items 1-11 and 13-15, p. 8 of Time 2 survey) making up those scales. For consistency with Time 1 data, Item 12 was discarded from the analysis. Item 16 was a measure of employment expectation, so it was not included in the factor analysis. The sample size for this analysis was $n = 75$. These were participants who indicated that they were still looking for a job and included those who were not working at all at Time 2, and also those who were working in some capacity at Time 2, but were still job-hunting.

The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was .88 and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant, $\chi^2(91) = 881.75, p < .01$, suggesting that the matrix was factorable. Two factors explained a total of 63.02% of the variance. The items loaded onto their respective factors; however, two of the items from the Task-focused Efficacy scale cross-loaded onto the Self-promotion Efficacy scale. This was not deemed to be problematic as their cross-loadings were weaker, the correlation between the two scales was quite strong ($r = .72$), and Cronbach's alpha for each of the scales was .91, which suggested that they were both reliable scales. Table 6 presents the factor loadings for the job-seeking efficacy scales.

Table 6

Factor Structure of the Time 2 Job Seeking Efficacy Items (N = 75)

Item	Factor	
	Factor 1 (Self-Promotion Efficacy)	Factor 2 (Task-Focused Efficacy)
11	.90	
10	.89	
13	.86	
1	.68	
2	.65	
15	.62	
14	.36	
4		.92
6		.73
7		.70
Item	Factor	
	Factor 1 (Self-Promotion Efficacy)	Factor 2 (Task-Focused Efficacy)
5		.67
3		.55
8	.33	.55
9	.34	.48
Correlation Matrix		
Self-Promotion Efficacy	1.00	
Task-Focused Efficacy	.72**	1.00

Note. ** $p < .01$

Discriminant Validity of Time 1 Leisure Meaningfulness, Job Search Intensity, and Job Seeking Efficacy Scales

A Maximum Likelihood factor analysis, requesting 4 factors and using oblique rotation, was carried out to assess the discriminant validity of the new meaningful leisure, job search intensity, and job-seeking efficacy scales. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Factor Loadings and Factor Intercorrelations for Leisure Meaningfulness, Job Search Intensity, Self-Promotion Efficacy, and Task-Focused Efficacy Items (N = 371)

Item	Factor 1 (EffPro)	Factor 2 (LeisMean)	Factor 3 (JSI)	Factor 4 (EffTsk)
JSSE11	.86			
JSSE13	.80			
JSSE10	.78			
JSSE15	.65			
JSSE02	.62			
JSSE01	.61			
JSSE14	.52			
Leisure06		.87		
Leisure05		.86		
Leisure02		.75		
Leisure15		.71		
Leisure03		.70		
Leisure10		.69		
Leisure17		.55		
JSI03			.74	
JSI04			.74	
JSI07			.73	
JSI11			.71	
JSI09			.70	
JSI08			.70	
JSI06			.68	
JSI02			.63	
JSI10			.62	
JSI01			.56	
JSI05			.47	
JSSE06				.82
JSSE07				.70
JSSE08	.33			.63
JSSE04				.55
JSSE05	.37			.48
JSSE09	.40			.48
JSSE03				.42
Eigenvalues	9.40	3.74	2.82	1.50
% of Variance	29.37	11.70	8.23	4.70
Factor Correlation Matrix				
Factor 1	1.00			
Factor 2	.26	1.00		
Factor 3	.31	.12	1.00	
Factor 4	.36	.24	.30	1.00

Note. EffPro = Self-promotion efficacy; LeisMean = Leisure meaningfulness; JSI = Job search intensity; EffTsk = Task-focused efficacy.

An examination of the pattern matrix, as shown in Table 7, revealed that all of the items from the leisure meaningfulness, job search intensity, task-focused efficacy, and self-promotion efficacy scales loaded separately onto their respective factors. Three items from the self-promotion efficacy scale cross-loaded onto the task-focused efficacy scale. This was expected, however, given that the two scales were quite highly correlated. These results provide some support for the construct validity of the scales. Descriptive statistics and reliability coefficients are reported in a later section.

Time 2 Job Quality and Job Search Effort

Exploratory factor analyses were run on items measuring job quality and job search effort. Participants who were working at Time 2 ($n = 58$) provided data for the nine job quality items (survey p. 4). The correlation matrix was factorable as demonstrated by the measures of sampling adequacy, $KMO = .76$, Bartlett's $\chi^2(36) = 303.88$, $p < .01$. For the initial analysis, a Principal Components Analysis was carried out without rotation. This resulted in three components with eigenvalues greater than one, accounting for a total of 77.68% of the variance. The first component contributed most to the total variance explained (53.11%). Table 8 presents the results of the PCA.

Table 8

Principal Components Analysis of Job Quality Items (n = 58)

Item	Component		
	1	2	3
Task variety	.87		
Work itself	.86		
Skill use	.75		-.45
Supervisor	.75		.41
Promotion	.74	-.44	
Organisation	.74	.42	
Job Security	.68	-.52	
Pay	.47	.69	-.37
Coworkers	.63		.65

As Table 8 shows, the items loading on components 2 and 3 cross-loaded more strongly on component 1. Therefore, a PAF was run, with a request for one factor, which accounted for 46.94% of the variance in the items. The loadings are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Factor Structure of the Job Quality Items (n = 58)

	Factor 1
Task variety	.87
Work itself	.85
Skill use	.71
Supervisor	.70
Promotion	.70
Organisation	.69
Job Security	.62
Coworkers	.57
Pay	.41

All Time 2 participants provided data for the job search effort items (N = 115). The four items measuring job search effort were entered into a Principal Components Analysis without rotation. The matrix was factorable, with Bartlett's $\chi^2(6) = 422.51, p < .01$ and KMO = .86. One component with an eigenvalue greater than one was extracted and accounted for 80.74% of the variance. A PAF was then run requesting one factor and the results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

PAF Factor Structure of the Job Search Effort Items N = 115)

Item	Factor 1
Persistence	.92
Intensity	.92
Determination	.89
Effort	.87

Confirmatory Factor Analyses

A confirmatory factor analysis was carried out on all of the items used from pre-existing scales to ensure that they all loaded onto their respective factors and displayed discriminant validity. The CFA analysed items from the Self-Esteem scale, Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, Employment Commitment Scale, the Latent and Manifest Benefits scale, and the General Health Questionnaire. Table 11 presents the results of the CFA using Principal Axis Factoring and Oblimin rotation.

Table 11

*Confirmatory Factor Analysis for GHQ, LAMB, Employment Commitment,
Self-Esteem and PANAS Scales*

Item	Factor										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
GHQ12	-.65										
GHQ09	-.60										
GHQ10	-.59										
GHQ11	-.58										
GHQ03	-.57										
GHQ07	-.53										
GHQ08	-.48										
GHQ02	-.46										
GHQ06	-.44										
GHQ05	-.43										
GHQ01	-.40										
GHQ04	-.39										
SOC02		.81									
SOC05		.81									
SOC04		.80									
SOC01		.71									
SOC06		.70									
SOC03		.65									
FIN03			.85								
FIN02			.83								
FIN06			.76								
FIN05			.75								
FIN01			.73								
FIN04			.71								
TIME04				.95							
TIME03				.92							
TIME02				.87							
TIME01				.76							
TIME05				.73							
TIME06				.39							
PA04					.70						
PA01					.65						
PA02					.61						
PA07					.59						
PA09					.58						
PA08					.54						
PA05					.53						
PA03					.51						
PA06					.48						
PA10					.40						

Table 11 (cont.)

*Confirmatory Factor Analysis for GHQ, LAMB, Employment Commitment,
Self-Esteem and PANAS Scales*

Item	Factor										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
ACT03						.73					
ACT02						.72					
ACT01						.69					
ACT04						.63					
ACT05						.54					
ACT06						.49					
ECOM02							.80				
ECOM06							.75				
ECOM04							.62				
ECOM03							.61				
ECOM01							.48				
ECOM08							.47				
ECOM07							.43				
ECOM05							.33				
ESTM10								.69			
ESTM03								.62			
ESTM05								.61			
ESTM09								.59			
ESTM07								.57			
ESTM06								.53			
ESTM01								.43			
ESTM08								.42			
ESTM02								.41			
ESTM04								.40			
COLL04									.76		
COLL03									.74		
COLL05									.71		
COLL06									.63		
COLL02									.63		
COLL01									.58		

Table 11 (cont.)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis for GHQ, LAMB, Employment Commitment, Self-Esteem and PANAS Scales

Item	Factor										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
STAT03										.81	
STAT05										.70	
STAT01										.70	
STAT02										.69	
STAT04										.64	
STAT06										.56	
NA10											.83
NA04											.80
NA09											.66
NA08											.59
NA03											.57
NA07											.49
NA02											.43
NA05											.43
NA06											.38
NA01											.38

Note. COLL = Collective purpose, SOC = Social contact, STAT = Status, ACT = Activity, TIME = Time structure, FIN = Financial strain, ECOM = Employment commitment, ESTM = Self-esteem, PA = Positive affect, NA = Negative affect, and GHQ = Mental health.

As Table 11 shows, each of the items loaded onto its respective factor. There is also evidence of discriminant validity, with none of the items cross-loading onto other factors. The items were summed to form their respective scales. Scale reliabilities, along with the descriptive statistics, are presented in the following section.

Descriptive Statistics

The following sections present the descriptive statistics for all of the variables included in the data set. The first section describes the categorical data (e.g., age, education, work history). The second section provides descriptive statistics, including scale reliabilities, for the variables measured on a continuous or interval scale (e.g., satisfaction with employment status, job search intensity, self-esteem). Cell sizes were checked for variables that were measured on a nominal or ordinal scale. Some of the variables had one or more relatively small cell sizes for

some of the categories (e.g., occupation). In those instances, it made sense to combine some of the categories.

Furthermore, all of the dichotomous variables (e.g., gender) were recoded 0 or 1 (e.g., *Male* = 0, *Female* = 1) so that all bivariate correlations could be calculated using the equation for Pearson product-moment correlation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). If other coding was used (e.g., 1-2), point biserial correlations or Phi coefficients would be required, depending on the combination of variables (e.g., one dichotomous and one continuous variable, or two dichotomous variables, respectively). However, by coding the dichotomous variables 0-1, it is not necessary to use separate correlational analyses, because all three forms of correlation are identical (Tabachnick & Fidell).

The distributional properties of variables that were measured on an interval or continuous scale were assessed. Variables that were not normally distributed were either collapsed into categories or were transformed in an attempt to normalise their distributions.

Time 1 and Time 2 Categorical Data

There were some relatively small cell sizes among several of the Time 1 categorical variables, including relationship status, financial dependents, education level, and occupation. For the relationship status variable, the widowed ($n = 5$) and separated ($n = 33$) categories were relatively smaller than the other three categories. Therefore, the relationship status variable was dichotomised with 0 = *Unpartnered* and 1 = *Partnered*. Two cases had missing data for relationship status. For the financial dependents variable, two of the groups had only one case each. Most participants ($n = 235$) were financially responsible for only themselves, 72 were responsible for one other person, and the remaining 62 were responsible for at least two other people (2 others = 28, 3 others = 20, 4 others = 7, 5 others = 5, 6 others = 1, and 7 others = 1). Given the relatively small cell sizes, the financial dependents variable was dichotomised, such that 0 = *No dependents* and 1 = *One or more dependents*. Two cases had data missing on the financial dependents variable.

For education level, *Diploma* ($n = 15$), *University degree* ($n = 31$), *Postgraduate degree* ($n = 3$), and *Other qualifications* ($n = 9$) had relatively small numbers in each, so those categories were combined. The original seven categories were condensed into four: 1 = *Year 10 or less at high school*; 2 = *Year 11 or 12 at*

high school; and 3 = *Trade/TAFE certificate*; and *Diploma/Degree/ Postgraduate Degree/Other qualifications*.

Some of the occupation categories were also combined due to the small cell sizes. For example, there was only one person classified in the *Advanced Clerical, Sales, and Service Worker* category (coded 5), so categories 5 and 6 were combined. Similarly, there were 8 people in the *Managers and Administrators* category (Code 1) and 10 in the *Professional* category (Code 2), so these groups were also combined. Therefore, the original nine occupational categories were reduced to six. Also, for the purposes of this project, the occupational codes were reversed so that a higher score reflected a higher skilled occupation. The final occupation variable consisted of six categories, coded as follows: 1 = *Labourers and related workers*, 2 = *Elementary clerical, sales, and service workers*, 3 = *Intermediate production and transport workers*, 4 = *Advanced and Intermediate clerical, service, sales workers*, 5 = *Associate Professionals and Tradespersons*, and 6 = *Managers, Administrators, and Professionals*.

Time 1 and Time 2 Continuous Data

The distributional properties of the demographic, labour market experience, and psychological variables that were measured on continuous or interval scales were assessed for univariate normality. This was carried out by visually inspecting the histograms and examining standardised skewness and kurtosis values. A criterion cut-off score of $z = \pm 3.29$ ($p < .001$) was used to determine whether the variables were significantly skewed or kurtotic. Several Time 1 variables were found to be not normally distributed, including: Age ($z_{skew} = 4.03$, $z_{kurt} = -3.80$), years worked in last full-time job ($z_{skew} = 16.80$, $z_{kurt} = 19.49$), net fortnightly income ($z_{skew} = 11.09$, $z_{kurt} = 16.02$) satisfaction with employment status ($z_{skew} = 8.26$, $z_{kurt} = 5.47$), meaningful leisure ($z_{skew} = -6.87$, $z_{kurt} = 5.45$), job applications ($z_{skew} = 19.43$, $z_{kurt} = 33.90$), job search methods ($z_{skew} = -12.62$, $z_{kurt} = 10.57$), employment expectation ($z_{kurt} = -4.08$), employment commitment ($z_{skew} = -6.54$), financial strain ($z_{skew} = -10.57$, $z_{kurt} = 5.78$), collective purpose ($z_{skew} = 4.32$), social contact ($z_{kurt} = -3.37$), status ($z_{skew} = -6.51$), and GHQ ($z_{skew} = 4.87$). The non-normal Time 2 variables included GHQ ($z_{skew} = 5.36$), job-search effort ($z_{skew} = -4.28$), job quality ($z_{skew} = -3.33$), and employment commitment ($z_{skew} = -3.41$). Attempts were made to improve the distribution of the variables by using transformations. However, when transforming the variables was

unsuccessful in reducing skewness or kurtosis, the variables were collapsed into categories.

Given the deviation from normality for the age variable, it was collapsed into four categories: 16-24 years, 25-34 years, 35-44 years, and 45-65 years. Even though age was normally distributed for the smaller sample at Time 2, for consistency with Time 1 data, the age categories were used. Years worked in last full-time job was extremely skewed and kurtotic, so it was categorised as follows: 1 = *Less than 3 months*, 2 = *3 to 5 months*, 3 = *6 to 11 months*, 4 = *1 to 2 years*, 5 = *3 to 5 years*, 6 = *6 to 10 years*, 7 = *11 to 20 years*, and 8 = *More than 20 years*. When recoding the variable into categories, all decimals below .5 were rounded down and those .5 and above were rounded up. For example, people who had worked between 1.5 years and 2.4 years were included in category 4 (1 to 2 years). Those who had worked between 2.5 years and 5.4 years were included in category 5 (3 to 5 years).

Net fortnight income was extremely skewed and kurtotic, so it was categorised as: 1 = *\$0 to \$310*, 2 = *\$311 to \$364*, 3 = *\$365 to \$420*, and 4 = *\$421 or more*. The Time 2 income variable was also significantly skewed ($z_{\text{skew}} = 3.64$), so it was categorised in the same manner as Time 1 income.

The *Job applications* variable was significantly positively skewed and kurtotic, with scores ranging from 0 to 90. The stem and leaf plot identified scores of 44 and above as extreme and 16 participants were classified as outliers according to this criterion. A dummy variable was created to identify whether there were systematic differences between those 16 cases and the remainder of the sample on other key variables, such as self-esteem, affect, and mental health. The group with extreme scores also had higher scores on job search intensity and job search methods. This suggests that their job application scores were consistent with other job search intensity variables, which attests to the validity of their scores. There were no significant differences on any of the non-job-seeking variables. Therefore, to preserve the sample size, a decision was made to retain those 16 participants in the analyses. However, attempts to normalise the job applications variable were unsuccessful, so it was collapsed into six categories.

The rationale for the choice of category cut-offs was based on the number of jobs the unemployed are expected to apply for as part of their mutual obligation requirements. Most unemployed people in Australia who are receiving government income support payments are obligated under Social Security legislation to meet an

activity test, which requires them to be actively looking for work, or undertaking activities to improve their employment prospects (Social Security Act 1991, Section 601). Whilst there is some flexibility under the Activity Test provisions, the required number of job enquiries per fortnight generally ranges from 2 to 10 jobs (Wallis Consulting Group, 2001). The six categories created for number of job applications in the past month were based on those guidelines and included: 0 = *None*; 1 = *1 to 4 applications*; 2 = *5 to 8 applications*; 3 = *9 to 16 applications*; 4 = *17 to 20 applications*, and 5 = *21 or more applications*. Although job applications over the past month was normally distributed at Time 2, for consistency with Time 1 data, this variable was collapsed into the same six categories. At Time 2, job applications over the past 6 months was significantly positively skewed ($z_{\text{skew}} = 3.46$), so it was collapsed into seven categories: 0 = *None*, 1 = *1 to 12*, 2 = *13 to 24*, 3 = *25 to 36*, 4 = *37 to 48*, 5 = *49 to 60* and 6 = *61 or more applications*.

At Time 2, number of job interviews over the past 6 months was also significantly positively skewed ($z_{\text{skew}} = 9.48$) and significantly kurtotic ($z_{\text{kurt}} = 10.96$), with a random scatter of extreme scores at the higher end. Therefore, seven categories were created for this variable: 0 = *None*, 1 = *One*, 2 = *Two*, 3 = *Three*, 4 = *Four*, 5 = *Five to ten*, and 6 = *Eleven to 20*.

When transforming variables, the typical procedure used for this study was to square the variables with negative skewness and square root the variables with positive skewness. Those variable transformation methods, along with others, are recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001). When the aforementioned strategies were unsuccessful, other transformations, such as using the cube root or inverse of positively-skewed variables, and cubing the negative-skewed variables, were attempted. For the variables that had some zero values, a constant (e.g., 1) was added prior to the transformations. Transformations were successful in normalising the distributions for the remaining Time 1 and Time 2 variables. For those variables, the major analyses were carried out using the transformed and untransformed variables. Where the results differed, the results using the transformed variable(s) are reported.

The following tables present descriptive statistics for all of the variables in the research project. Table 12 presents the frequencies for the categorical data from both the Time 1 and Time 2 data sets, and Table 13 presents descriptive statistics for the continuous variables.

Table 12

Frequencies for T1 and T2 Categorical Variables

Variable	Categories	Time 1	Time 2
Age Groups	16 to 25 years	132	32
	25 to 34 years	80	15
	35 to 44 years	64	21
	45 to 65 years	95	47
	Total	371	115
Geographic region	Metropolitan (postcodes 4000-4340)	106	-
	Rural (postcodes 4341-4401)	265	-
	Total	371	-
Gender	Male	214	59
	Female	157	56
	Total	371	115
Relationship Status	Unpartnered	284	-
	Partnered	85	-
	Total	369	-
Number of financial dependents	None (only myself)	235	-
	One or more	134	-
	Total	369	-
Education level	Year 10 or less	152	-
	Year 11 or 12	98	-
	Trade/TAFE certificate	63	-
	Diploma/Degree/PG Degree/Other	58	-
	Total	371	-
Current employment status	Not currently working	260	-
	Volunteer/unpaid work	38	-
	Part-time/Casual work	65	-
	Other	8	-
	Total	371	-
Previous employment	Yes	356	-
	No	15	-
	Total	371	-
Previous full-time job	Yes	295	-
	No	76	-
	Total	371	-
Time since last full-time job	Less than 2 months	15	-
	2 to 3 months	35	-
	4 to 5 months	46	-
	6 to 11 months	40	-
	1 to 2 years	59	-
	More than 2 years	98	-
	User missing	76	-
	Missing	2	-
	Total	371	-

Table 12 (cont.)

Frequencies for T1 and T2 Categorical Variables

Variable	Categories	Time 1	Time 2
Occupation in last full-time job (ABS Classifications)	Manager/administrator/professional	18	4
	Associate professional & tradesperson	52	7
	Advanced & intermediate clerical/sales/service worker	59	18
	Intermediate production/transport worker	37	5
	Elementary clerical/sales/service worker	32	9
	Labourer	93	10
	User missing	79	5
	Total	371	58
Time in last full-time job	Less than 3 months	13	-
	3 to 5 months	36	-
	6 to 10 months	44	-
	1 to 2 years	81	-
	3 to 5 years	48	-
	6 to 10 years	38	-
	11 to 20 years	19	-
	21 or more years	13	-
User missing	79	-	
Total	371	-	
Net fortnightly income	\$0 to \$310	93	21
	\$311 to 364	89	13
	\$365 to \$420	100	18
	\$421 and over	89	63
Total	371	115	
Type of Centrelink benefit	None	20	42
	Newstart	274	55
	Youth Allowance	54	7
	Other	23	11
Total	371	115	
Number of job search training courses completed	None	116	15
	1	147	59
	2	61	26
	3 or more	44	15
	Missing	3	0
Total	371	115	

Table 12 (cont.)

Frequencies for T1 and T2 Categorical Variables

Variable	Category	Time 1	Time 2
Number of Work for the Dole programs completed	None	302	86
	1	45	21
	2	13	4
	3 or more	11	4
	Total	371	115
Current training participation	No	194	97
	Yes	174	18
	Missing	3	0
	Total	371	115
Voluntary training	No	45	12
	Yes	129	6
	User missing	194	97
	Missing	3	0
	Total	371	115
Current unpaid work participation	No	309	83
	Yes	61	32
	Missing	1	0
	Total	371	115
Voluntary unpaid work	No	49	18
	Yes	11	14
	User missing	309	83
	Missing	2	0
	Total	371	115
Intensive Assistance program	Yes	151	15
	No	167	83
	Not sure	35	10
	Missing	18	7
	Total	371	115
Personal Support program ^a	Yes	19	4
	No	225	90
	Not sure	26	9
	Missing	101	12
	Total	371	115
Transition to Work program ^a	Yes	15	2
	No	225	90
	Not sure	30	11
	Missing	101	12
	Total	371	115
Job applications in past month	None	32	48
	1 to 4	46	20
	5 to 8	58	9
	9 to 16	130	25
	17 to 20	55	7
	21 or more	50	6
	Total	371	115

Table 12 (cont.)

Frequencies for T1 and T2 Categorical Variables

Job applications in past 6 months	None	-	14
	1 to 12	-	34
	13 to 24	-	9
	25 to 36	-	12
	37 to 48	-	13
	49 to 60	-	17
	61 or more	-	13
	Missing	-	3
	Total	-	115
Job interviews in past 6 months	None	-	27
	One	-	20
	Two	-	16
	Three	-	16
	Four	-	12
	5 to 10	-	15
	11 to 20	-	9
	Total	-	115
Work Status at Time 2	Not working	-	57
	Working	-	58
	Total	-	115
Work Trajectory	Remained unemployed (UU)	-	54
	Remained employed (EE)	-	14
	Lost previous job (EU)	-	3
	Acquired a job (UE)	-	44
Total	-	115	
Work Type	Casual	-	29
	Part-Time	-	6
	Temporary/Contract	-	10
	Full-Time	-	13
Total	-	58	
Looking for work at Time 2	Yes	-	75
	No	-	40
	Total	-	115

Note. ^aThese variables were not used in further analyses because missing data were not random.

Table 13 presents descriptive statistics for the continuous variables, including the number of items, means, standard deviations, ranges, and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients (where applicable). Note that these statistics are based on the untransformed variables.

Table 13

Number of Items, Means, Standard Deviations, Ranges, and Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients for Continuous Variables (N = 371)

Variable	No. of Items	N	M	SD	Possible Range	Actual Range	α
T1 Satisfaction with last full-time job	1	290	3.35	1.02	1-5	1-5	-
T1 Leisure Frequency	1	371	3.05	1.20	1-5	1-5	-
T1 Social Leisure	1	371	3.17	1.30	1-5	1-5	-
T1 Leisure Meaningfulness	7	371	27.88	5.05	7-35	7-35	.88
T1 Satisfaction with current employment status	1	371	1.93	.91	1-5	1-5	-
T2 Satisfaction with current employment status	1	115	2.77	1.24	1-5	1-5	-
T1 GHQ-12	12	371	14.87	6.98	0-36	0-34	.91
T2 GHQ-12	12	115	12.57	7.35	0-36	1-36	.94
T1 Positive Affect	10	371	34.13	5.93	10-50	18-50	.86
T2 Positive Affect	10	115	34.87	7.41	10-50	19-50	.93
T1 Negative Affect	10	371	26.27	7.75	10-50	10-50	.89
T2 Negative Affect	10	115	25.05	7.48	10-50	11-47	.91
T1 Self-Esteem	10	371	29.96	5.13	10-40	13-40	.86
T2 Self-Esteem	10	115	30.96	4.81	10-40	18-40	.87
T1 Employment Commitment	8	371	36.88	7.95	8-48	9-48	.80
T2 Employment Commitment	8	115	36.08	8.53	8-48	9-48	.86
T1 Economic Hardship	1	371	4.47	1.07	1-6	1-6	-
T2 Economic Hardship	1	115	3.83	1.38	1-6	1-6	-
T1 Financial Strain	6	371	33.83	8.53	6-42	6-42	.92
T2 Financial Strain	6	115	28.97	10.69	6-42	6-42	.96
T1 Collective Purpose	6	371	18.96	8.67	6-42	6-42	.88
T2 Collective Purpose	6	115	19.83	8.01	6-42	6-40	.89
T1 Social Contact	6	371	22.10	9.61	6-42	6-42	.92
T2 Social Contact	6	115	23.27	9.87	6-42	6-42	.94
T1 Status	6	371	31.65	7.33	6-42	6-42	.89
T2 Status	6	115	30.59	8.01	6-42	9-42	.93
T1 Enforced Activity	6	371	28.46	7.24	6-42	6-42	.84
T2 Enforced Activity	6	115	27.76	7.94	6-42	6-42	.89
T1 Time Structure	6	371	25.08	9.51	6-42	6-42	.91
T2 Time Structure	6	115	29.88	9.31	6-42	8-42	.92
T1 Task-focused Efficacy	7	371	17.82	5.16	7-28	7-28	.91
T2 Task-focused Efficacy	7	75	19.09	5.48	7-28	7-28	.91

Table 13 (cont.)

Number of Items, Means, Standard Deviations, Ranges, and Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients for Continuous Variables (N = 371)

Variable	No. of Items	N	M	SD	Possible Range	Actual Range	α
T1 Self-promotion efficacy	7	371	19.99	5.01	7-28	8-28	.89
T2 Self-promotion efficacy	7	75	16.64	5.28	7-28	7-28	.91
T1 Employment expectation	1	371	2.71	1.00	1-4	1-4	-
T2 Employment expectation	1	75	2.05	.88	1-4	1-4	-
T2 Job search effort	4	115	14.47	3.97	4-20	4-20	.94
Number of current jobs	1	58	1.24	.54	-	1-4	-
T1 Job search intensity	11	371	22.05	9.42	0-44	0-44	.80
T2 Job search intensity	11	75	15.88	10.25	0-44	0-44	.93
T1 Job search methods	1	371	9.56	2.28	0-12	0-12	-
T2 Job search methods	1	75	4.87	3.70	0-12	0-12	-
T2 Job search strategies	1	58	8.81	2.86	1-13	1-13	-
T2 Actual working hours	1	58	31.14	12.86	-	4-60	-
T2 Ideal working hours	1	58	36.72	10.38	-	0-70	-
T2 Job satisfaction	1	58	3.47	1.03	1-5	1-5	-
T2 Job permanence	1	58	3.52	1.11	1-5	1-5	-
T2 Job quality	9	58	41.17	6.99	9-54	20-52	.88

Note. T1 = Time 1, T2 = Time 2

DeVellis (1991) considered scale reliabilities between .70 and .80 to be acceptable, with those above .80 being very good. As Table 13 shows, all of the scale reliabilities for the variables used in this study were all at a good level, ranging from .80 to .96.

Participant Attrition at Time

The data were examined to determine whether participants who remained in the study from Time 1 to Time 2 differed from those who chose not to participate at Time 2. Correlations were examined between the dichotomous variable called *Follow-Up Status* (1 = Yes and 0 = No) and each of the Time 1 study variables. There were significant positive correlations between follow-up status and age ($r = .21, p < .01$) and relationship status ($r = .10, p < .05$), and significant negative correlations between follow-up status and number of job search training courses ($r =$

-.18, $p < .01$), task-focused efficacy ($r = -.14$, $p < .01$), employment expectation ($r = -.18$, $p < .01$), and employment commitment ($r = -.11$, $p < .05$). Chi-Square tests were carried out for the categorical variables to determine whether there was a significant association between age and retention, relationship status and retention, and number of job search training courses and retention.

The chi-square difference test was significant for age, $\chi^2(3, N = 371) = 9.59$, $p < .01$, although the relationship was fairly weak, $Eta = .21$. The number of people in the younger age groups who remained in the study was less than the expected. That is, 32 people in the 16 to 24 years group and 16 people in the 25-34 years group remained in the study versus an expected 41 and 25, respectively. For the older age groups, however, the opposite was true. More people aged 35 years or older took part in the follow-up study than would be expected by chance (22 vs. 20 for the 35-44 years age group and 45 vs. 29 for the 45 years and over group). The actual and expected frequencies for age and follow-up status are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Actual and Expected Frequencies for Age and Follow-Up Status

Follow-Up	<u>Age Groups</u>							
	<u>16-24 years</u>		<u>25-34 years</u>		<u>35-44 years</u>		<u>45-65 years</u>	
	<i>Fx</i>	<i>Exp</i>	<i>Fx</i>	<i>Exp</i>	<i>Fx</i>	<i>Exp</i>	<i>Fx</i>	<i>Exp</i>
No	100	91	64	55	42	44	50	66
Yes	32	41	16	25	22	20	45	29
Total	132	132	80	80	64	64	95	95

Note. Fx = actual frequencies, Exp = expected frequencies.

The chi-square difference test just reached significance for relationship status, $\chi^2(1, N = 369) = 9.30$, $p = .045$, but again, the relationship was fairly weak ($Eta = .10$). The number of participants in the unpartnered group who took part in the follow-up study was less than expected (81 vs. 88.5, respectively), but for the partnered group, there were more people than expected who remained in the study. That is, 34 participants remained in the study, as opposed to an expected frequency of 26.5. The frequencies are presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Actual and Expected Frequencies for Relationship Status and Follow-Up Status

Follow-Up	<u>Relationship Status</u>			
	<u>Unpartnered</u>		<u>Partnered</u>	
	<i>Fx</i>	<i>Exp</i>	<i>Fx</i>	<i>Exp</i>
No	203	195.5	51	58.5
Yes	81	88.5	34	26.5
Total	284	284	85	85

Note. *Fx* = actual frequencies, *Exp* = expected frequencies.

There was also an association between follow-up status and number of previous job-search training courses participants had completed, $\chi^2(3, N = 368) = 12.64, p < .01$, but again, the strength of this relationship was rather weak (*Eta* = .18). More participants than expected (48 vs. 36) in the group who had never done a job search training course took part in the follow-up study, whereas the opposite was true for people who had completed two or more courses. Table 16 presents the actual and expected frequencies for follow-up status based on previous completion of job search training.

Table 16

Actual and Expected Frequencies for Completion of Job Search Training Courses and Follow-Up Status

Follow-Up	<u>Job Search Training Courses Completed</u>							
	<u>None</u>		<u>One</u>		<u>Two</u>		<u>Three or More</u>	
	<i>Fx</i>	<i>Exp</i>	<i>Fx</i>	<i>Exp</i>	<i>Fx</i>	<i>Exp</i>	<i>Fx</i>	<i>Exp</i>
No	68	80	102	101	45	42	38	30
Yes	48	36	45	46	16	19	6	14
Total	116	116	147	147	61	61	44	44

Note. *Fx* = Actual Frequency, *Exp* = Expected Frequency

Mean differences in task-focused efficacy, employment expectation and employment commitment between participants who took part in the follow-up study and those who did not were examined using *t*-tests. The results are presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Mean Differences in Task-focused Efficacy, Employment expectation, and Employment Commitment by Follow-Up Status

Variable	Follow-Up Status	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
Task-focused efficacy	No	256	18.30	5.12	2.70*
	Yes	115	16.75	5.10	
Employment expectation	No	256	2.83	0.98	3.43**
	Yes	115	2.45	1.00	
Employment commitment	No	256	37.45	7.57	2.06*
	Yes	115	35.62	8.65	

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

As Table 17 shows, people who took part in the follow-up study had significantly lower mean scores for task-focused efficacy, employment expectation and employment commitment at Time 1 than participants who did not provide data for Time 2. Overall, these results suggest that there may be some bias, particularly towards individuals with lower task-focused efficacy, lower employment expectation, and lower employment commitment.

Intercorrelations among Research Variables

To gain an understanding of how the variables in the study relate to one another, Pearson's product-moment correlations were run using SPSS. The full correlation table (Table C1) is presented in Appendix C. The table will be referred to only briefly in this section because the intercorrelations among the variables will be discussed and further explored in later sections.

Table C1 shows that the demographic and employment experience variables were correlated in the expected directions. For example, older participants were more likely to have financial dependents ($r = .30$), to have previously held a full-time job ($r = .43$), and to have spent longer in their last full-time job ($r = .49$). Younger people were more likely to be single ($r = .27$). Age was also significantly correlated with occupation, such that older people were more likely to have previously been in more higher-skilled jobs ($r = .19$).

Furthermore, people with lower levels of education were more likely to have been in lower skilled occupations ($r = .23$). Education was also significantly correlated with having previously worked in a full-time job ($r = -.15$), being out of

the workforce for less time ($r = -.16$), and having spent less time in the previous full-time job ($r = -.16$). Length of time since last full-time job was significantly positively correlated with number of Job Search Training courses and Work for the Doles completed by participants. Those who had been out of the workforce for longer had completed more of both of these programs ($r = .17$ and $r = .22$, respectively), which is in line with the mutual obligation requirements for the unemployed.

The results of the correlations were used as a basis for further analyses, including tests for group differences and multiple regression analyses.

Description of Sample Participants who Provided Qualitative Data

Not all participants provided qualitative data at Time 1 or Time 2. The following sections provide a description of the sample at Time 1 and Time 2 who took the opportunity to comment on their experiences and examines possible response biases in relation to demographic characteristics and labour market experiences.

Time 1 Participants

Two hundred of the 371 Time 1 participants provided qualitative data. Table 18 presents a summary of the demographic characteristics and labour market experiences of the sample of participants who provided qualitative data at Time 1.

Table 18

Descriptive Statistics for Participants who Provided Qualitative Data at Time 1

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Age Groups	< 25 years	66	33
	25-34 years	41	21
	35-44 years	32	16
	45-65 years	61	31
	Total	200	
Geographic region	Metropolitan area	59	30
	Rural area	141	71
	Total	200	
Gender	Male	104	52
	Female	96	48
	Total	200	
Relationship Status	Unpartnered	156	78
	Partnered	44	22
	Total	200	
Financial Dependents	None	135	68
	One or more	65	32
	Total	200	
Education level	Year 10 or less	72	36
	Year 11 or 12	51	26
	Trade/TAFE certificate	38	19
	Diploma	39	19
	Total	200	
Current employment status	Not currently working	136	68
	Volunteer/unpaid work	26	13
	Part-time/Casual work	33	17
	Other	5	3
	Total	200	
Previous employment	No	11	6
	Yes	189	95
	Total	200	
Previous full-time job	No	38	19
	Yes	162	81
	Total	200	100

Table 18 (cont.)

Descriptive Statistics for Participants who Provided Qualitative Data at Time 1

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Time since last worked full time	Less than a year	70	35
	A year or more	92	46
	Total	162	81
		88	38
	Total	200	
Previous occupation category	Manager/administrator/professional/associate professional/tradesperson	39	20
	Advanced & intermediate clerical, sales, & service workers	41	21
	Intermediate production & transport workers	14	7
	Elementary clerical, sales, & service	21	11
	Labourers & related workers	47	24
	Subtotal	162	81
	User Missing	38	19
	Total	200	
Type of Centrelink benefit	None	12	6
	Newstart	152	76
	Youth Allowance	23	12
	Other	13	6
Total	200		
Number of job search training courses	None	58	29
	1	86	43
	2	32	16
	3 or more	23	12
	Missing	1	
Total	200		
Number of Work for the Dole programs	None	162	81
	1	26	13
	2	6	3
	3 or more	6	3
	Total	200	

Table 18 (cont.)

Descriptive Statistics for Participants who Provided Qualitative Data at Time 1

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Current training participation	No	105	53
	Yes	95	48
	Total	200	
Voluntary training	No	29	15
	Yes	66	33
	Subtotal	95	48
	User missing	105	53
Total	200		
Current unpaid work participation	No	157	79
	Yes	43	22
	Total		
Voluntary unpaid work	No	34	17
	Yes	8	4
	Subtotal	42	21
	User missing	157	79
	Missing	1	1
Total	158	79	
		200	
Intensive Assistance program	Yes	86	43
	No	95	48
	Not sure	19	10
	Total	200	
Personal Support program	Yes	11	6
	No	172	86
	Not sure	17	9
	Total	200	
Transition to Work program	Yes	8	4
	No	170	85
	Not sure	20	10
	Missing	2	1
	Total	200	

Testing for Response Bias at T1

Statistical analyses were carried out to determine whether there were any significant differences between participants who provided comments at T1 and those who did not. Differences were noted for gender, education level, income, current volunteer work, and psychological distress. There were no differences on any other variable. Differences were tested using chi-square analyses for the categorical variables and a *t*-test for the GHQ variable. More females (61.1%) than males (48.6%) provided comments on the T1 survey. A 2 x 2 Chi-Square analysis revealed that this difference was significant, $\chi^2(1, N = 371) = 5.74, p < .05$. People who were doing volunteer work (70.5%) were more likely to make comments than those not involved in volunteer work (50.5%). The results of a 2 x 2 Chi-Square analysis revealed that this difference was significant, $\chi^2(1, N = 371) = 8.20, p < .01$. The Chi-Square tests were not significant for education or income level, with $\chi^2(3, N = 362) = 7.84, p = .05$, and $\chi^2(3, N = 371) = 6.16, p > .05$, respectively. The GHQ variable was a continuous measure, so a *t*-test was carried out to determine whether people who made comments differed in terms of level of distress to those who did not make comments. Levene's test for equality of variances was significant, suggesting that the variances were not equal. Therefore, the results of the *t*-test presented in Table 19 use the output from SPSS for when equal variances are not assumed.

Table 19

Differences in Psychological Distress between Participants who Commented at Time 1 and those who did not Comment (N = 371)

	T1 Comments	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
GHQ	No	171	13.95	6.16	-2.41*
	Yes	200	15.67	7.54	

Note. * $p < .05$.

As Table 19 shows, the mean level of distress was significantly higher for participants who provided comments at Time 1 than for those who did not, with $t(368.25) = -2.41, p < .05$. Thus, people who felt more psychologically distressed were more likely to make a comment than those with lower levels of distress. Therefore, the comments made by participants in this study may not be reflective of unemployed people with better mental health.

Time 2 Participants

Ninety-one of the 115 Time 2 participants provided qualitative comments.

Table 20 presents a summary of the demographic characteristics of those participants.

Table 20

Descriptive Statistics for Participants who Provided Qualitative Data at Time 2

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Age groups	16 to 24 years	20	22
	25 to 34 years	14	15
	35 to 44 years	16	18
	45 to 65 years	41	45
	Total	91	
Gender	Male	46	51
	Female	45	49
	Total	91	
Current work status	Not working	44	48
	Working	47	52
	Total	91	
Work status	Remained unemployed	42	46
	Remained employed	13	14
	Lost previous job	2	2
	Acquired a job	34	37
	Total	91	
Occupation	Managers and Administrators	1	2
	Professionals	3	6
	Associate Professionals	4	9
	Tradespersons and Related Workers	1	2
	Intermediate Clerical, Sales, and Service Workers	16	34
	Intermediate Production & Transport Workers	3	6
	Elementary Clerical, Sales, and Service Workers	8	17
	Labourers and Related Workers	7	15
	Missing	4	9
	Total	47	

Table 20 (cont.)

Descriptive Statistics for Participants who Provided Qualitative Data at Time 2

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Currently looking for work/another job	Yes	59	65
	No	32	35
	Total	91	
Time spent looking for work before acquiring job	Up to 3 months	7	15
	4 - 6 months	11	23
	7 - 12 months	12	26
	1-2 years	14	30
	More than 2 years	3	6
	Total	47	
Satisfaction with employment status	Extremely unsatisfied	16	18
	Very unsatisfied	20	22
	Satisfied	29	32
	Very satisfied	14	15
	Extremely satisfied	12	13
	Total	91	100
Job permanence	Not at all permanent	3	6
	Not very permanent	4	9
	Somewhat permanent	15	32
	Fairly permanent	16	34
	Completely permanent	9	19
	Total	47	
Job satisfaction	Extremely unsatisfied	2	4
	Very unsatisfied	3	6
	Satisfied	22	47
	Very satisfied	10	21
	Extremely satisfied	10	21
	Total	47	
Job applications in past month	None	43	47
	1 to 4	16	18
	5 to 8	6	7
	9 to 16	17	19
	17 to 20	5	5
	21+	4	4
	Total	91	
Job applications in past 6 months	None	13	14
	1 to 16	31	34
	17 to 32	17	19
	33 to 50	16	18
	51+	14	15
	Total	91	

Table 20 (cont.)

Descriptive Statistics for Participants who Provided Qualitative Data at Time 2

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Job interviews in past 6 months	None	24	26
	1	15	16
	2	14	15
	3	14	15
	4	10	11
	5 to 10	9	10
	11 to 20	5	5
	Total	91	
Current number of jobs	1	39	83
	2	8	17
	Total	47	
Income support payment	Newstart allowance	41	45
	Disability support pension	2	2
	Widow allowance	1	1
	Youth allowance	4	4
	Parenting payment	6	7
	None	35	38
	Other	2	2
	Total	91	
Number of Job Search Training courses	None	14	15
	1	47	52
	2	20	22
	3 or more	10	11
	Total	91	
Number of Work for the Dole programs	None	72	79
	1	14	15
	2	1	1
	3 or more	4	4
	Total	91	
Current training participation	No	75	82
	Yes	16	18
	Total	91	
Voluntary training	No	12	75
	Yes	4	25
	Total	16	
Current unpaid work participation	No	66	73
	Yes	25	27
	Total	91	
Voluntary unpaid work	No	16	64
	Yes	9	36
	Total	25	

Table 20 (cont.)

Descriptive Statistics for Participants who Provided Qualitative Data at Time 2

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Intensive Assistance program	Yes	12	13
	No	68	75
	Not sure	5	5
	Missing	6	7
	Total	91	
Personal Support program	Yes	2	2
	No	73	80
	Not sure	6	7
	Missing	10	11
	Total	91	
Transition to Work program	Yes	2	2
	No	74	81
	Not sure	6	7
	Missing	9	10
	Total	91	

Testing for Response Bias at T2

The data were examined to determine whether there were any significant differences between participants who provided comments at T2 and those who did not. Significant differences were noted for age. Participants who provided comments had a higher mean age ($M = 40.64$, $SD = 14.55$) than those who did not comment ($M = 31.88$, $SD = 12.24$), $t(113) = -2.71$, $p < .01$. Thus, the comments may not be reflective of the experiences of younger participants. No other differences were noted.

The following chapter presents the results for Study One, a cross-sectional analysis of the Time 1 survey data.

CHAPTER 5 – STUDY ONE

This chapter presents the results of cross-sectional analyses of the survey data collected at Time 1. The purpose of the cross-sectional study was to gain an understanding of how the coping variables relate to one another and to identify variables that predict coping behaviours and mental health. Correlational analyses were used to explore relationships among the demographic variables, labour market experience variables, coping resources, appraisal variables, and coping strategies. Group differences on the coping variables and mental health were examined using analyses of variance (ANOVAs) or *t*-tests. Regression analyses were used to generate and assess models for predicting job search behaviour, leisure activity, and mental health, and to identify which variables exerted the strongest influence on the dependent variables (DVs). The conceptual model presented in Figure 4 depicts the proposed relationships among the study one variables. Based on stress and coping theory, the coping resources, cognitive appraisal variables, and coping strategies were all expected to influence one another and mental health. The dynamic and transactional nature of the stress process is highlighted by Lazarus and his colleagues (e.g., Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lazarus & Launier, 1978). Therefore, as Figure 4 shows, the relationships between coping resources, appraisals, and coping strategies are expected to be reciprocal, or bi-directional.

This chapter begins with an investigation of how the current sample's mental health compared with that of the general population. It then examines group differences on the coping variables and mental health. Correlations among the coping variables and mental health are then reported, followed by the results from the regression analyses on leisure activity and job search behaviours. The final section for the quantitative analyses presents the results of the regression analyses for mental health. The results of the qualitative analyses are then presented to provide a comprehensive understanding of how participants experienced their unemployment.

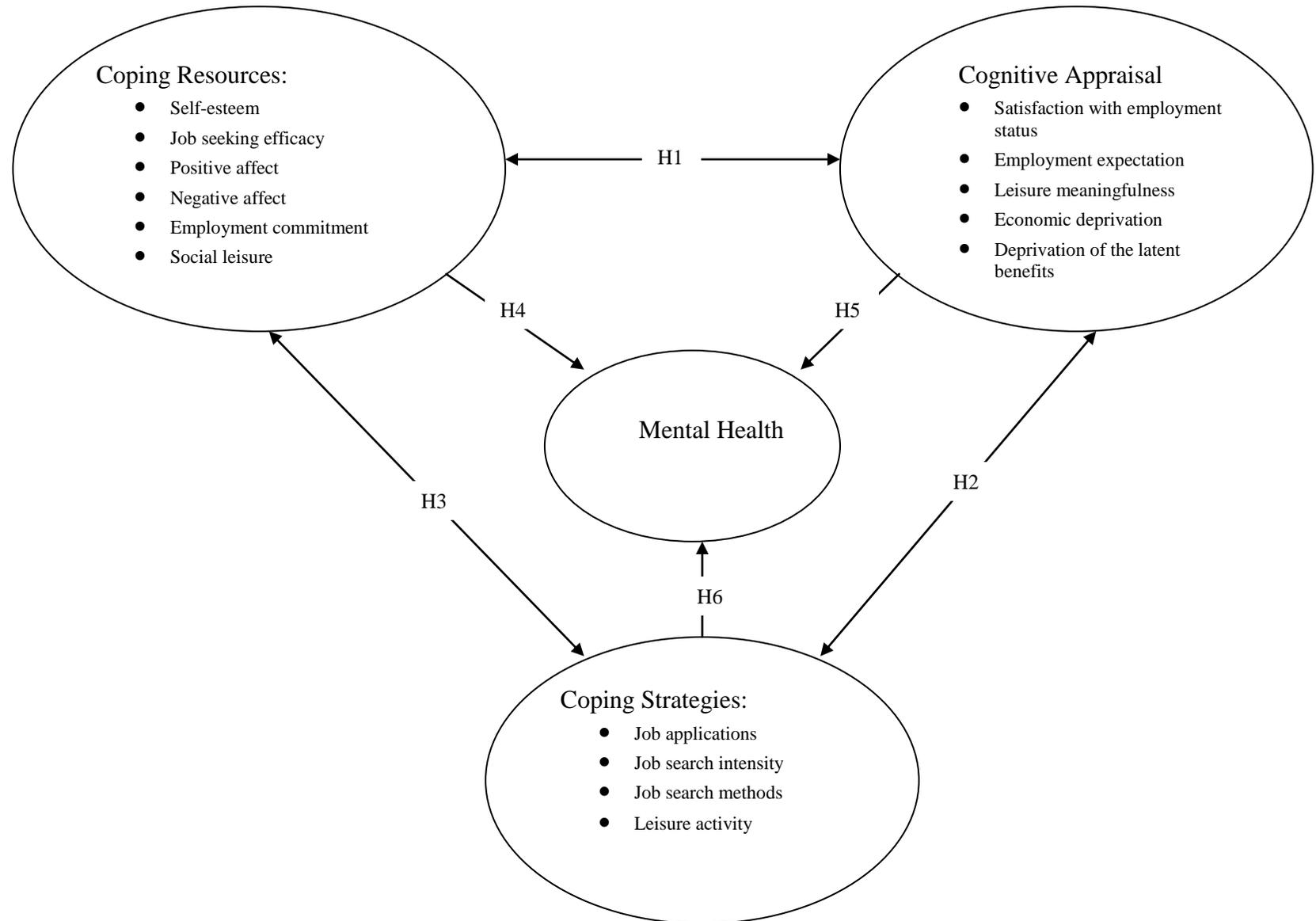


Figure 4. Conceptual model of proposed relationships among study variables.

Comparison of Mental Health to Population Data

Using the Likert scoring method, scores on the GHQ can potentially range from 0 to 36, with scores above 11 suggesting clinical or near clinical levels of symptoms (Donath, 2001). GHQ scores for participants at Time 1 of the current study ranged from 0 to 34, with a mean of 14.72 (SD = 6.98), which is indicative of significant psychological distress. There were 245 (66%) participants with scores of 12 or over and 126 (34%) with scores of 11 or less.

There are no current Australian benchmarks or norms with which to compare the current sample. However, the GHQ-12 was used in the 1997 ABS National Mental Health Survey of a representative sample of 10,641 Australian residents (Donath, 2001). Those figures provide a benchmark in terms of the mental health of the general population of Australia and can provide a guide as to how the current sample fares in comparison. Within the ABS sample, there were 444 unemployed individuals, 263 (59.3%) of whom were males and 181 (40.7%) were females (Comino et al., 2003). There were 144 (32.5%) individuals in the 18 to 24 years age bracket, 206 (46.3%) in the 25 to 44 years age bracket, and 94 (21.2%) in the 45 to 64 years age bracket (Comino et al.).

A comparison between the current sample and that of the ABS 1997 national survey is possible because the sample characteristics of the current sample are similar. For example, in the current sample there were 214 males (57.7%), 157 females (42.3%), 132 (35.6%) 18- to 24-year-olds, 144 (38.8%) 25- to 44-year-olds, and 95 (25.6%) 45 years and older. Figure 5 shows how the current sample compares to that of the 1997 Australian sample.

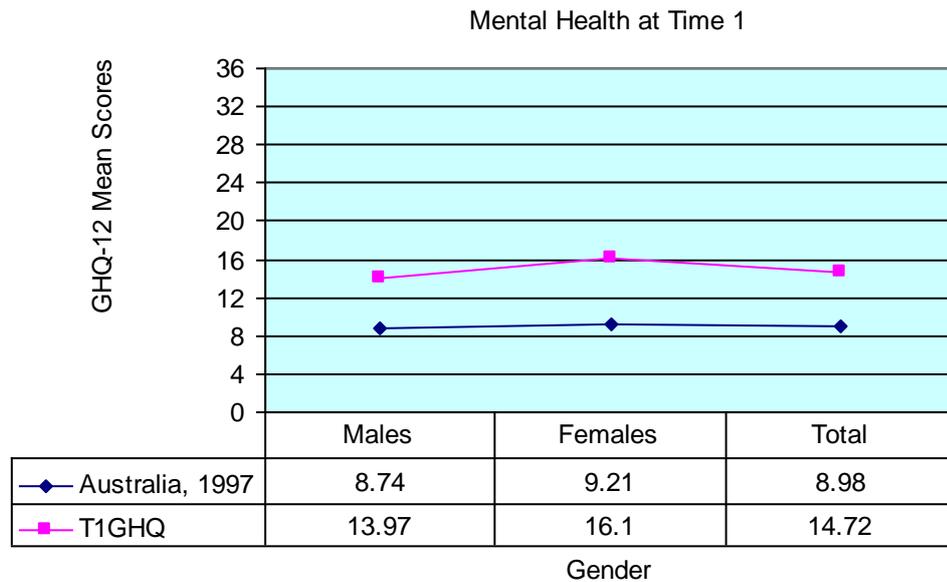


Figure 5. Comparison of mean GHQ-12 scores for unemployed samples at Time 1 and Time 2 with the 1997 ABS population sample (N = 371).

Figure 5 shows that, compared to the general Australian population in 1997, the unemployed participants in the current study were experiencing significantly higher levels of psychological distress, $t(370) = 16.25, p < .01$. In a similar vein to the general population, unemployed females in the current sample reported significantly higher distress levels than unemployed males, $t(369) = -2.93, p < .01$. Unlike the trend for the Australian population for symptoms to decline among the older age groups and for women's mental health to decline with age (Korten & Henderson, 2000), there was little difference across age groups for males and females at Time 1, as shown in Figure 6. In fact, the figure shows that women's mental health remained quite stable, apart from the 25-34 year age group, who fared slightly better than the other age groups. Mental health for males in the current study seemed to decline slightly, although not significantly, for the older age groups.

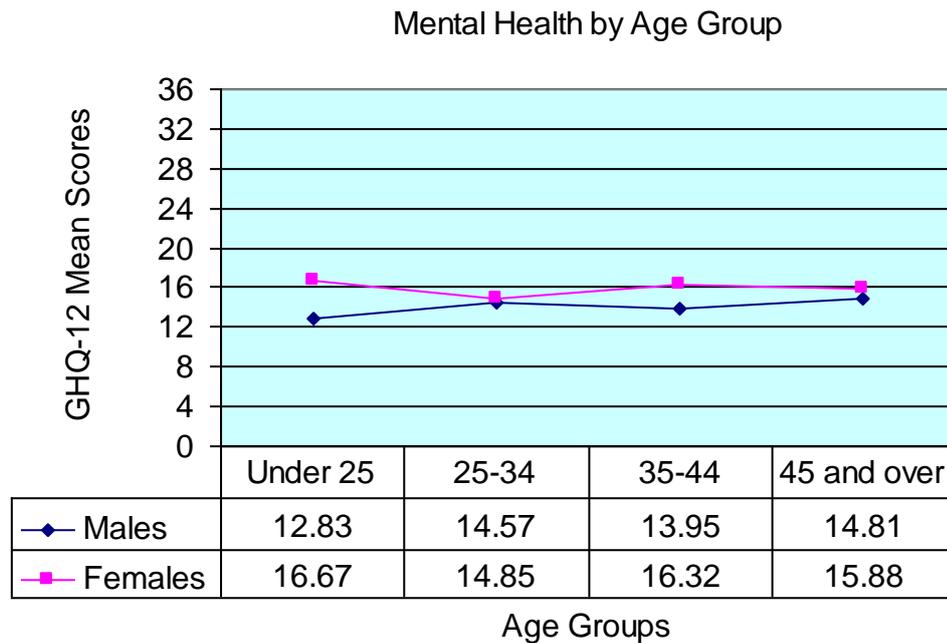


Figure 6. Comparison of Time 1 GHQ mean scores by age and gender ($N = 371$).

The graph in Figure 6 suggests that there may be an interaction between age and gender; however, a factorial analysis of variance revealed that the interaction effect was not significant. The following sections examine group differences on some of the demographic variables.

Group Differences

Given the relatively low effect sizes reported by McKee-Ryan et al. in their meta-analysis for demographic and labour market variables, group differences were not a major focus of this study. However, differences on some of the demographic variables were briefly examined using analyses of variance (ANOVAs) or t -tests.

There were significant age differences for income, social leisure, self-promotion efficacy, employment commitment, financial hardship, time structure, employment expectation, social contact, status, and job applications. Post hoc tests using Scheffe's F -test indicated that the under 25 years group reported lower income and more social contact than the other age groups. They also reported more social leisure than the 35-44 years age group, along with less time structure and more satisfaction with their employment status than the 45 years and over group. The over 45 years group reported more financial hardship than participants who were 34 years

or younger and had submitted fewer job applications than the under 25 years and 35 to 44 years age groups. The over 45s also reported significantly lower expectations for employment than the other age groups and a higher sense of status than the 35-44 years group. None of the post hoc comparisons were significant for self-promotion efficacy, employment commitment, or financial strain.

There were gender differences on employment commitment, negative affect, collective purpose, job search intensity, and mental health. Female participants had higher mean scores for employment commitment, negative affect, collective purpose, and job search intensity than the male participants. As mentioned earlier, females also reported poorer mental health than males. There were also some group differences for relationship status, with single participants reporting less financial hardship and less structured time than participants who were partnered.

Education level affected self-promotion efficacy, self-esteem, leisure meaningfulness, social contact, status, and leisure activity. Post hoc tests indicated that participants who had the lowest level of education (i.e., Year 10 or less) had lower self-promotion efficacy than the other groups, they perceived their leisure to be less meaningful than the group with Trade/TAFE certificates, and reported less social contact than the group who had completed Years 11 or 12. The group who had completed Years 11 or 12 had a lower sense of status than those who had tertiary qualifications (i.e. Diploma or above). The post hoc comparisons were not significant for self-esteem or leisure activity.

There were significant differences between rural and metropolitan participants on social leisure, positive affect, and job search behaviours, with rural participants reported less social leisure, lower PA, less job applications, lower job search intensity, and less job search methods than their city counterparts.

Finally, length of employment had an impact on task-focused efficacy, self-promotion efficacy, employment expectation, social contact, and job search behaviours. However, post hoc tests were only significant for employment expectation, job applications, and job search intensity. Participants who had been unemployed for 4 to 5 months had submitted significantly more job applications over the previous month and reported greater job search intensity than those who had been unemployed for more than 2 years. The latter group had significantly lower employment expectation than groups who had been unemployed for 5 months or less.

Correlational Analyses

The following section present results from the correlational analyses of the coping variables and mental health. For all correlations, an alpha level of $\alpha = .05$ was used as the cut-off for statistical significance. Whilst there were many significant correlations among the variables, the results focus on those with meaningful relationships; that is, variables that have correlations $\geq |.32|$, which indicates that they account for 10% or more of the variance in each other (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

Relationships among coping resources

As shown in Figure 4, the coping resources included self-esteem, job seeking efficacy, positive affect, negative affect, employment commitment, fortnightly income, and social leisure. The personal resources that are indicators of a core self-evaluation construct (i.e., self-esteem, efficacy, PA, and NA) were all significantly correlated with one another. Self-esteem, job seeking efficacy, and positive affect were positively intercorrelated, and negatively correlated with negative affect. Self-esteem was correlated with task-focused efficacy ($r = .48$), self-promotion efficacy ($r = .48$), positive affect ($r = .42$), and negative affect ($r = -.54$). Task-focused efficacy was correlated with self-promotion efficacy ($r = .67$), positive affect ($r = .53$), and negative affect ($r = -.34$). Self-promotion efficacy was correlated with positive affect ($r = .39$). Therefore, participants who reported a more positive self-concept, also experienced more positive emotions, and felt more capable of carrying out job search tasks. Those who generally experienced more negative emotions were inclined to see themselves as less worthwhile and to have less confidence in their ability to carry out job seeking activities. Employment commitment was not meaningfully related to any of the other personal resource variables.

Relationships between coping resources and appraisal variables

Hypothesis 1, as shown in Figure 4, proposed that coping resources would be correlated with appraisal variables. All of the core self-evaluation variables were significantly correlated with leisure meaningfulness, such that participants with more positive evaluations appraised their leisure as more meaningful. However, none of the correlations were large enough to be meaningful, except for PA and leisure meaningfulness ($r = .37$). This suggests that participants who expressed more positive emotionality appraised their leisure as more meaningful and those with

lower positive affect. Participants who reported higher levels of positive affect also reported greater satisfaction with their employment status, but the correlation was less than $|.32|$. Financial resources had an influence on appraisals of financial deprivation, with lower fortnightly income being associated with greater financial hardship. Once again, that relationship was statistically significant, but relatively weak.

Most of the core self-evaluations were meaningfully correlated with employment expectation: Self-esteem $r = .35$; task-focused efficacy $r = .54$; self-promotion efficacy $r = .49$; and PA $r = .41$. Thus, participants with higher self-esteem, higher efficacy, and higher PA were more confident about their chances of finding a job.

The core self-evaluation variables were all significantly correlated with the latent benefits, however, there were relatively few with meaningful associations. Self-esteem and positive affect were related to status ($r = .36$ and $r = .35$, respectively) and activity ($r = .33$ and $r = .33$, respectively). This suggests that respondents with higher self-esteem and more positive affect had a higher sense of status and were generally more active than those with lower self-esteem and positive affect. Task-focused efficacy was positively correlated with collective purpose ($r = .32$), social contact ($r = .34$), status ($r = .39$), and activity ($r = .32$), whilst self-promotion efficacy was positively correlated with social contact ($r = .32$), status ($r = .36$), and activity ($r = .38$). These results suggest that, generally, participants with more confidence in their job seeking skills felt less deprived of the latent benefits. They had more social contact, higher status, and were generally busier than those who felt less capable of carrying out job seeking tasks.

Employment commitment was significantly correlated with time structure ($r = -.32$). Participants with higher employment commitment reported having less structured time than those with lower employment commitment. It is worth noting that employment commitment was also significantly correlated with satisfaction with employment status ($r = -.26$), but they shared less than 10% of the variance in one another.

Relationships between coping resources and coping strategies

Hypothesis 3, shown in Figure 4, was that the coping resources would be correlated with coping strategies. Of the relationships between coping resources and

coping strategies, only those between job seeking efficacy and job search intensity were meaningful. Task-focused efficacy and self-promotion efficacy were both correlated with job search intensity ($r = .37$ and $r = .42$, respectively). Therefore, people who felt more confident with their job seeking skills were more actively looking for work.

Other significant, but less meaningful, correlations were observed between core self-evaluations and leisure activity. Participants with higher self-esteem ($r = .20$), higher task-focused and self-promotion efficacy ($r = .21$ and $r = .18$, respectively), higher PA ($r = .30$), and lower NA ($r = -.11$) were more actively engaged in their leisure activities.

PA was also significantly correlated with job applications ($r = .12$), job search intensity ($r = .26$), and job search methods ($r = .18$), whilst self-esteem was significantly correlated with job search intensity ($r = .13$) and job search methods ($r = .13$). Thus, more positive self-evaluations and emotions were associated with more active job seeking. Employment commitment was also significantly correlated with the three job search behaviours, with $r = .16$ for job applications, $r = .25$ for job search intensity, and $r = .22$ for job search methods. Therefore, participants with higher employment commitment were more actively looking for work.

Relationships between coping resources and mental health

Figure 4 shows that coping resources were expected to be correlated with mental health (H4). All of the personal resources were significantly correlated with mental health, including employment commitment ($r = .37$), task-focused efficacy ($r = -.35$), self-esteem ($r = -.49$), positive affect ($r = -.40$), and negative affect ($r = .69$). Negative affect had the highest correlation with mental health, followed by self-esteem and positive affect. The correlations suggest that participants who were more inclined to experience negative emotionality tended to have poorer mental health, as did those who were more strongly committed to work. Conversely, respondents who reported a more positive perception of themselves and their abilities, and who were inclined to experience more positive emotions, were more likely to have better mental health. Neither income nor social leisure was significantly correlated with mental health.

Relationships among appraisal variables, and between appraisals, coping behaviours, and mental health

Satisfaction with employment status was significantly positively correlated with financial hardship ($r = -.34$). Hence, participants who were more satisfied with their employment status reported less financial hardship than those who were less satisfied with their employment status.

Financial strain was significantly related to financial hardship ($r = .37$) and to the latent benefits of collective purpose ($r = -.48$) and social contact ($r = -.46$). Thus, participants who reported experiencing more financial strain found it more difficult to manage on their fortnightly income, they felt a lower sense of collectivity, and their social contact was more restricted than those who reported less financial strain.

Some of the latent benefits, including collective purpose, social contact, status, and activity were meaningfully interrelated. Correlations ranged from $r = .43$ for status and activity to $r = .51$ for collective purpose and social contact. None of the latent benefits, however, was meaningfully related to time structure. The correlations indicate that participants whose lives were more active and who had greater social contact felt a higher sense of status. Those with more social contact also felt less deprived of a sense of collective purpose.

The hypotheses presented in Figure 4, proposed that appraisals would be related to coping behaviours (H2) and mental health (H5). Whilst many correlations were statistically significant, none of the appraisal variables was meaningfully related to any of the coping strategies or to mental health. The following outlines some of the significant relationships. Satisfaction with employment status, employment expectation, and leisure meaningfulness were all significantly correlated with leisure activity and job search behaviours. Participants who were more dissatisfied with their unemployment situation appeared to focus their efforts more on job seeking and less on their leisure activity. Conversely, those who felt more satisfied were more actively engaged in leisure pursuits and less focused on looking for work. Respondents who appraised their leisure as more meaningful engaged in it more often and they were also more actively looking for work. Further, participants who were more confident that they would find work in the near future were more actively looking for a job than those who had lower expectations for future employment.

Appraisals of financial hardship were significantly correlated with job applications and job search intensity. Participants who found it more difficult to live on their fortnightly income had submitted more job applications in the previous month and were more intensely looking for work. Perceived access to the latent benefits was also related to job search behaviours. Participants who felt less deprived of a sense of collective purpose, social contact, status, and activity reported more intense job search activity. Conversely, those who felt more deprived of time structure were more actively looking for work.

With regards to mental health, greater felt deprivation of the latent and manifest benefits, lower satisfaction with employment status, lower employment expectation, and lower leisure meaningfulness were all related to poorer mental health. As mentioned earlier, all of the aforementioned correlations were significant, but relatively weak and did not reach $|\cdot32|$.

Relationships among coping strategies, and between coping strategies and mental health

Leisure activity was not related to any of the job search behaviours, but all of the job search behaviours were significantly intercorrelated. Number of job applications was significantly correlated with job search intensity ($r = .54$) and job search methods ($r = .45$). Job search intensity and job search methods were quite highly correlated ($r = .76$). This was to be expected because number of methods was calculated from the intensity scale. Thus, the results suggest that leisure activity and job seeking constitute two independent ways of coping with unemployment and that there is an association between the intensity of one's job seeking efforts and the number of jobs that are applied for.

Hypothesis 6, shown in Figure 4, proposed that coping behaviours would be correlated with mental health. The only coping strategy that was significantly related to mental health was leisure activity ($r = -.20$). Participants who engaged more frequently in their preferred leisure activity reported better mental health. None of the job seeking behaviours was related mental health.

Analyses of Coping Strategies

The following sections present analyses of leisure activity and job search behaviours. A summary and analysis of the leisure activities reported by participants

is provided first, followed by regression analyses to identify the significant predictors of leisure activity. Following the section on leisure activity, results from the regression analyses identifying the predictors of job search behaviours are reported.

Description of leisure activity

To gain an understanding of how participants cope with their unemployment, they were asked about their leisure activity. The survey asked participants to list the leisure activities they regularly engaged in (at least several times per week). Many participants listed more than one activity for this question. The activities were grouped into categories, and Table 21 provides a list of the activity categories and the number of participants who engaged in each activity.

Table 21

Number of Participants Engaged in each Category of Leisure Activity

Leisure Category	Frequency
Exercise/sport	252
Reading	117
Watching television/movies	95
Listening to/playing music	67
Socialising	61
Computer activities (e.g., Internet, games)	60
Spending time with family	53
Gardening	43
Arts and craft activities	39
None	36

Note. Participants could list more than one activity

Leisure involving some physical activity was reported the most frequently, followed by more sedentary activities, such as reading, watching television or movies, and listening to music. Socialising and computer activities were reported with similar frequency.

The survey included a subsequent question that asked participants to identify the leisure activity that was the most meaningful to them, and to indicate how often they engaged in that particular activity. Again, the activities were grouped into categories and frequency analysis was used to identify the number of participants who engaged in each activity. Table 22 presents a list of the meaning leisure activities and the number of participants engaging in each type of activity.

Table 22

Most Meaningful Leisure Activity and Number of Participants Engaged in each Category (N = 371)

Category	Frequency
Sport/exercise	78
Socialising/time with friends	36
Reading/research/writing/study	29
Time with family/partner	28
Listening to/playing music	19
Gardening/landscaping	17
Fishing	16
Art/craft activities	15
Car/motorbike repairs or driving	14
Computer activities	10
Watching TV/movies	10
Playing games/pool/darts	6
Going to a club/group	5
Camping	3
Meditation	3
House repairs/renovations	2
Doing charity/volunteer Work	3
Traveling/touring	3
Spending time with pets	2
Baby sitting	2
Drinking	2
Shopping	2
Working	2
Other (e.g., cooking, go-kart racing, horse races, job hunting, museum, picnic, pubs/clubs, scavenging, sex, teaching)	10
None/NA/Don't Know	26
Missing	28
Total	371

The most common category for meaningful leisure pursuits was physical activities (sport/exercise), followed by socialising with friends, reading or writing-related activities, and spending time with family/partner. Participants were asked to indicate the frequency with which they engaged in their most meaningful leisure activity, how often they would like to engage in it, and the barriers that prevented them from doing the activity as often as they would like. Table 23 compares participants' actual and ideal leisure frequency.

Table 23

Comparison between Actual and Ideal Frequency of Meaningful Leisure Activity (N = 371)

		Ideal frequency					Total
		Rarely	Sometimes	Quite often	Very often	Extremely often	
Actual frequency	Rarely	7	6	17	7	8	45
	Sometimes	2	11	40	13	11	77
	Quite often	0	3	48	45	13	109
	Very often	0	2	6	65	21	94
	Extremely often	1	1	4	2	38	46
	Total	10	23	115	132	91	371

Note. Figures in bold indicate no discrepancy between actual and ideal leisure frequency

The figures in Table 23 above the diagonal indicate the number of participants who would like to engage in their activity more often and the figures below the diagonal are for those would prefer to engage in their activity less frequently. There were 169 people who were happy with the frequency of their leisure activity, 21 people wanted to do it less often, and 181 wanted to do it more often. Examples of the activities that participants wanted to do less often include, doing “nothing”, “watching TV because no money or car to go and do anything”, “visit my mother”, “reading”, “ten pin bowling”, and “yard work”. Participants’ perceived barriers to engaging more frequently in their leisure activities are listed in Table 24.

Table 24

Barriers to Engaging more Frequently in Leisure Activity

Barriers	Frequency
Financial reasons	208
Family/home commitments	96
Reliance on others	69
Lack of transport	62
Other reasons (e.g., lack of motivation, job-seeking activities, the weather, other people’s work or family commitments)	46
Work commitments	45
Health reasons	41

Note. Participants could indicate more than one reason

As Table 24 shows, the most frequently reported barrier was lack of financial resources, followed by family or home commitments, and then reliance on others. Participants who did not report a discrepancy between their actual and ideal leisure frequency still reported several barriers, with financial reasons being cited the most frequently ($n = 72$), followed by family/home commitments ($n = 41$). Correlational analyses revealed that financial reasons, lack of transport, and reliance on others were all significantly negatively correlated with leisure activity, with $r = -.27$ ($p < .01$), $r = -.13$ ($p < .05$) and $r = -.14$ ($p < .05$), respectively. Thus, lack of finances was the barrier that had the highest correlation with leisure activity. Interestingly, as Table C1 shows, there were no significant correlations between leisure activity and other financial variables included in the study (i.e., income, financial strain, or financial hardship). The following section identifies the predictors of leisure activity using multiple regression analyses.

Predictors of Leisure Activity

This section reports on multiple regression analyses used to identify the key predictors of leisure activity. The methods used to evaluate the assumptions of multiple regression analyses were presented in Chapter 3. Any violations of those assumptions are reported with the results of the analysis.

The variables that were significantly correlated with leisure activity included three barriers to engaging more frequently in leisure activities—lack of finances, lack of transport, and reliance on others. Those three variables were dichotomous, with a score of 1 given to participants who identified the item as a barrier to their leisure and a 0 for those who did not identify the item as a barrier. Other variables significantly correlated with leisure activity included: Education, task-focused and self-promotion efficacy, self-esteem, PA, NA, leisure meaningfulness, employment expectation, collective purpose, social contact, status, time structure, and satisfaction with employment status. The 16 variables were included in a regression model as IVs, with leisure activity as the DV.

The initial regression analysis revealed a problem with the high correlation between task-focused and self-promotion efficacy ($r = .67$). Task-focused efficacy had a tolerance of .41 and a VIF of 2.44, whilst self-promotion efficacy had a tolerance of .45 and a VIF of 2.21. The remaining tolerance values ranged from .53 to .91. There were six eigenvalues below .05 and two condition indices greater than

30, with the highest being 47.21. None of the condition indices accounted for a substantial portion of the variance for any of the coefficients. A decision was made to remove self-promotion efficacy from the analysis because its correlation with leisure activity was a little lower than that of task-focused efficacy ($r = .18$ vs. $r = .21$, respectively).

The remaining 15 variables were entered into the regression analysis. Using a cut-off for Mahalanobis distance as $\chi^2 (15, N = 371) = 37.70, p < .001$, four multivariate outliers were identified. Further, as reported in Chapter 4, several variables violated the assumption of normality. Therefore, regressions were run with and without the outliers and also using transformed and untransformed variables. When the results were compared, there were no differences in the outcomes. Together, the 15 variables accounted for a significant 19% (R^2 adj.) of the variance in leisure activity, with $F (15, 355) = 6.69, p < .01$. Lack of financial resources, time structure, PA, and leisure meaningfulness were all significant unique predictors. To test whether a reduced model could explain as much of the variance as the full model, a series of hierarchical regression models were run. Variables with the lowest beta weights were included at Step 2 to determine whether their removal affected the model. The final model included lack of financial resources, time structure, PA, leisure meaningfulness, and education and accounted for 19% of the variance in leisure activity, $F (5, 365) = 18.56, p < .01$. The inclusion of the other 10 variables at Step 2 did not significantly increase R^2 above the R^2 predicted by the five variables already in the equation $F_{inc} (10, 355) = .81, p = .62$. Therefore, the results of the more parsimonious model with the set of five predictors are presented in Table 25.

Table 25

Predictors of Leisure Activity (N = 371)

Independent Variable	<i>B</i>	95% CI for B	<i>SE B</i>	β	sr^2
Lack of finances	-.56	-.78 to -.33	.11	-.23**	.05
Positive Affect	.04	.02 to .06	.01	.20**	.03
Time structure	.02	.01 to .03	.01	.15**	.02
Leisure meaningfulness	.03	.01 to .06	.01	.13**	.02
Education	.10	.00 to .20	.05	.09	.01

Note. ** $p < .01$; $R = .45, R^2 = .20, R^2$ (adj.) = .19, $F (5, 365) = 18.56, p < .01$; B = unstandardised Beta; β = standardised Beta; sr^2 = squared semi-partial correlation. Lack of finances was coded 0 = Not a barrier to leisure, 1 = A barrier to leisure.

The results suggest that people engaged more frequently in their preferred leisure activity when finances were not a barrier, when their affect was more positive, when their time was more structured, when they judged their leisure as being more meaningful, and when they were more highly educated. As Table C1 shows, more frequent leisure activity was associated with better mental health ($r = -.20$) and therefore represents a positive strategy for coping with unemployment. The results from the regression above suggest that people who maintain a positive outlook on life in general and on their leisure activities in particular tend to use leisure as an effective coping strategy. Moreover, if they are not hindered by lack of financial resources, they will engage in their leisure more often.

Predictors of job seeking behaviour

The following sections report on the analyses of the job seeking behaviours. There were three measures of job search behaviour, including number of job applications submitted in the previous month, job search intensity, and job search methods. Regression analyses were carried out to determine the key predictors of each of the three job search behaviour variables. The results are presented firstly for job applications, following by job search intensity, and then by job search methods.

Job applications

As the correlation table (Table C1) shows, number of job applications was significantly correlated with the demographic variables of age and geographic region, and the labour market experience variable, duration of unemployment. It was also significantly correlated with several coping resource variables, including income, job seeking efficacy (both task-focused and self-promotion), employment commitment, and PA, and the appraisal variables of employment expectation, financial strain, financial hardship, time structure, and satisfaction with employment status. A standard multiple regression analysis was carried out to determine how well the correlates were able to predict job applications.

Once again, the relatively high correlation between task-focused and self-promotion efficacy ($r = .67$) was problematic. Task-focused efficacy had a tolerance of .42 and a VIF of 2.41, whilst self-promotion efficacy had a tolerance of .52 and a VIF of 1.94. The remaining tolerance values ranged from .56 to .97. There were five eigenvalues below .05 and one condition index greater than 30 (47.19),

however, none of the condition indices accounted for a substantial portion of the variance for any of the coefficients. Given the unfavourable tolerance and VIF for task-focused efficacy, and the higher correlation between job applications and self-promotion efficacy ($r = .27$ vs. $r = .19$ for task-focused efficacy), task-focused efficacy was removed from the analysis.

The remaining 12 variables were entered into the regression analysis. Data were missing on the length of unemployment variable because only participants who had previously held a full-time job were asked to answer the question about how long it had been since their last full-time job. There were 293 participants who responded to that question. To maintain the full sample size for the remaining variables, pairwise (rather than listwise) deletion was selected for the regression analyses. Pairwise deletion uses as much of the data as possible, but the number of cases differs across correlation coefficients that contain length of unemployment. Because pairwise deletion was used, the degrees of freedom presented for the following analyses are based on the smallest number of cases used to calculate the correlations.

Using a cut-off for Mahalanobis distance as $\chi^2 (12, N = 293) = 32.91, p < .001$, four multivariate outliers were identified. Further, as reported in Chapter 4, several variables violated the assumption of normality. Therefore, regressions were run with and without the outliers and also using transformed and untransformed variables. When the outcomes were compared, there were no differences in the final results, so statistics for the full sample using the original variables are presented.

Together, the 12 variables were able to predict 16% (R^2 adj.) of the variance in job applications. Geographic region, length of unemployment, self-promotion efficacy, and satisfaction with employment status were the most important predictors. A smaller regression model was tested by entering those four predictors at Step 1 and the remaining eight variables at Step 2 in a hierarchical regression. At Step 1, geographic region, length of unemployment, self-promotion efficacy, and satisfaction with employment status were able to predict a significant 15% (R^2 adj.) of the variance in job applications, with $F(4, 288) = 13.87, p < .01$. The addition of the remaining eight variables at Step 2 did not significantly add to the prediction of job applications, with $F_{inc}(8, 280) = 1.48, p = .16$. Therefore, the results of the smaller model are presented in Table 26.

Table 26

Multiple Regression Analysis of Variables Predicting Job Applications at Time 1 (N = 293)

Independent Variable	<i>B</i>	95% CI for <i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	sr^2
Geographic region ^a	-.54	-.88 to -.20	.17	-.17**	.03
Duration of unemployment	-.13	-.23 to -.03	.05	-.14*	.02
Self-promotion efficacy	.07	.03 to .10	.02	.23**	.05
Satisfaction	-.30	-.47 to -.13	.09	-.19**	.04

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; $R = .40$, $R^2 = .16$, R^2 (adj.) = .15, $F(4, 288) = 13.87$, $p < .01$; B = unstandardised Beta; β = standardised Beta; sr^2 = squared semi-partial correlation; Satisfaction = Satisfaction with employment status; ^ageographic region coded: 0 = metropolitan, 1 = rural.

As Table 26 shows, the strongest predictor of job applications was self-promotion efficacy. Participants with more confidence in their job search ability had applied for more jobs over the previous month. Being from a metropolitan area, having a shorter duration of unemployment, and appraising one's unemployment status as unsatisfactory, also predicted higher numbers of job applications.

Job search intensity

Job search intensity was significantly correlated with the demographic variables of gender and geographic region, the labour market experience variables of duration of unemployment, previous full-time job, and years in last full-time job. It was significantly correlated with the coping resource variables of income, job seeking efficacy (both task-focused and self-promotion), self-esteem, employment commitment, and PA. Job search intensity was also significantly correlated with the cognitive appraisal variables of employment expectation, financial hardship, the five latent benefits (collective purpose, social contact, status, activity, and time structure), leisure meaningfulness, and satisfaction with employment status.

A standard multiple regression analysis was carried out to determine how well the correlates were able to predict job search intensity. The three labour market experience variables were not independent of each other, and hence, only length of unemployment was used in the regression analysis. This resulted in a total of 18 variables being entered into the regression analysis. Once again, the relatively high correlation between task-focused and self-promotion efficacy ($r = .67$) was problematic. Task-focused efficacy had a tolerance of .39 and a VIF of 2.55, whilst self-promotion efficacy had a tolerance of .45 and a VIF of 2.22. The remaining

tolerance values ranged from .56 to .95. There were several eigenvalues below .05 and three condition indices greater than 30, with the highest being 56.78, however, none of the condition indices accounted for a substantial portion of the variance for any of the coefficients. Given the unfavourable tolerance and VIF for task-focused efficacy, and the higher correlation between job search intensity and self-promotion efficacy ($r = .42$ vs. $r = .37$ for task-focused efficacy), task-focused efficacy was removed from the analysis.

The remaining 17 variables were entered into the regression analysis. Given that length of unemployment was included in the analysis, like before, pairwise deletion was used to account for the missing data.

Using a cut-off for Mahalanobis distance as $\chi^2 (17, N = 293) = 40.79, p < .001$, six cases were identified as multivariate outliers. Once again, the regressions were run with and without the outliers and also using transformed and untransformed variables. When the outcomes were compared, there were no differences in the final results, so statistics for the full sample using the original variables are presented.

Together, the 17 variables accounted for a significant 30% (R^2 adj.) of the variance in job search intensity, with $F (17, 275) = 8.23, p < .01$. Geographic region, self-promotion efficacy, financial hardship and employment commitment were all significant unique predictors. To test whether a smaller model including only those four predictors was more appropriate, a hierarchical regression model was run, with the four variables entered at Step 1 and the remainder at Step 2. The first block of variables accounted for a significant 28% (R^2 adj.) of the variance in job search intensity, with $F (4, 288) = 29.57, p < .01$. At Step 2, the addition of the remaining 13 variables did not significantly increase R^2 above the R^2 predicted by the four variables already in the equation $F_{inc} (13, 275) = 1.56, p = .10$. Therefore, the results of the parsimonious model with the set of four predictors are presented in Table 27.

Table 27

*Multiple Regression Analysis of Variables Predicting Job Search Intensity at Time 1**(N = 293)*

Independent Variable	<i>B</i>	95% CI for <i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	sr^2
Geographic region ^a	-3.73	-5.55 to -1.93	.92	-.18**	.03
Employment Commitment	.30	.20 to .40	.05	.25**	.06
Self-promotion efficacy	.78	.62 to .94	.08	.41**	.17
Financial Hardship	1.07	.30 to 1.84	.39	.12**	.01

Note. ** $p < .01$; $R = .54$, $R^2 = .29$, R^2 (adj.) = .28, $F(4, 288) = 29.57$, $p < .01$; B = unstandardised Beta; β = standardised Beta; sr^2 = squared semi-partial correlation; Satisfaction = Satisfaction with employment status; ^ageographic region coded: 0 = metropolitan, 1 = rural.

The regression model presented in Table 27 indicates that job search intensity is more frequent for people living in the metropolitan area, for people who have higher employment commitment and higher confidence in their ability to carry out more self-promotion job search tasks, and for those who are experiencing more financial hardship.

Job search methods

There were 12 job search methods included in the job search intensity scale. These 12 items were used to calculate the number of methods participants used in their job seeking. The mean number of job search methods used by participants at Time 1 was 9.56 ($SD = 2.61$), with a range of 1 to 12. Therefore, on average, participants were using most of the methods. The mean for each of the 12 methods is presented in Figure 7. Response options were: 1 = never, 2 = rarely (1 to 2 times a fortnight), 3 = occasionally (3 to 5 times a fortnight), 4 = frequently (6 to 9 times a fortnight) and 5 = very frequently (10 times a fortnight or more).

As Figure 7 shows, the most frequently-used job search methods were reading the newspaper or using employment agencies to check for job vacancies. Speaking to friends, family, previous employers or other people they knew to get information about jobs was also quite a common method used. Preparing or revising their resumes, attending a job interview, or contacting individuals, agencies, or businesses to obtain information about potential jobs were used less frequently by participants than some of the other methods, such as using the internet to look for a job or marketing themselves via phone, mail, or face-to-face. The least preferred method for participants was promoting themselves in the “work wanted” section of

the newspaper, flyers, community notice boards, trade magazines, or organisational newsletters. Most participants endorsed “never” for that particular method.

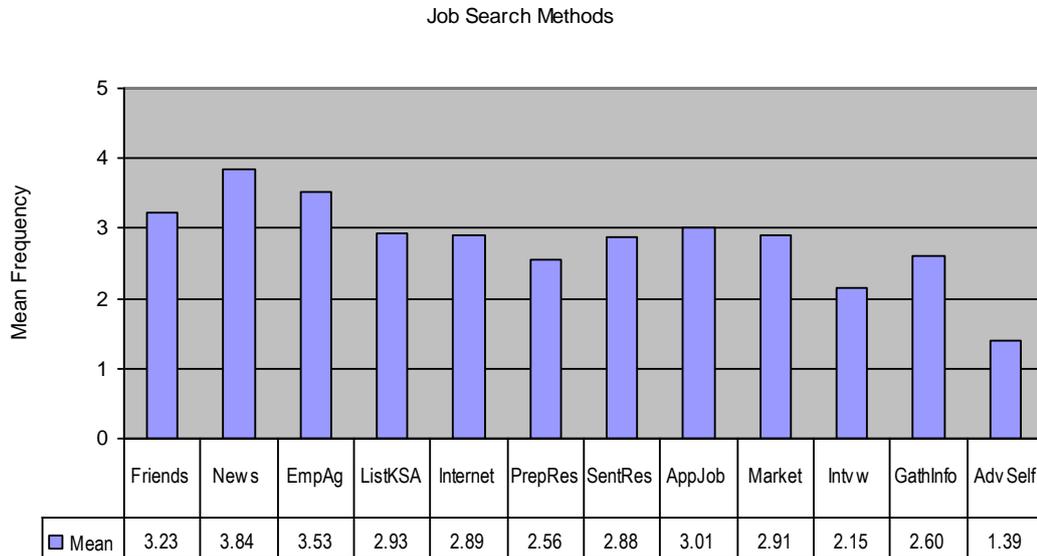


Figure 7. Mean number of job search methods used by participants at Time 1 ($N = 371$).

Job search methods was significantly correlated with geographic region, duration of unemployment, years in last full-time job, the coping resources of income, job seeking efficacy, self-esteem, employment commitment, and PA, and the appraisal variables of employment expectation, access to three latent benefits (collective purpose, social contact, and activity), and satisfaction with employment status. Duration of unemployment and years in last full-time job were not independent of each other, so only length of unemployment was included in the regression analyses. Once again, task-focused efficacy was not included in the analysis because of its collinearity with self-promotion efficacy, high VIF and low tolerance.

Therefore, 12 variables were entered into the regression model. Using a cut-off for Mahalanobis distance as $\chi^2(12, N = 293) = 32.91, p < .001$, four cases were identified as multivariate outliers. The results were no different when the outliers were removed or transformed variables were used. Results of a standard multiple regression indicated that together the 12 variables accounted for a significant 15% (R^2 adj.) of the variance in job search methods, with $F(12, 280) = 5.43, p < .01$. Geographic region, self-promotion efficacy, and employment commitment were significant unique predictors. As before, a hierarchical regression

was run with the three significant predictors entered at Step 1 and the remaining 9 variables entered at Step 2. The first block of variables accounted for a significant 15% (R^2 adj.) of the variance in job search methods, with $F(3, 289) = 17.54, p < .01$. At Step 2, the addition of the remaining 9 variables did not significantly increase R^2 above the R^2 predicted by the three variables already in the equation $F_{inc}(9, 280) = 1.33, p = .22$. Therefore, the results of the more parsimonious model with the set of three predictors are presented in Table 28.

Table 28

Multiple Regression Analysis of Variables Predicting Job Search Methods at Time 1
($N = 293$)

Independent Variable	<i>B</i>	95% CI for <i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	sr^2
Geographic region ^a	-.79	-1.26 to -.31	.24	-.16**	.02
Self-promotion efficacy	.13	.08 to .17	.02	.28**	.08
Employment commitment	.06	.04 to .09	.01	.22**	.05

Note. ** $p < .01$; $R = .39, R^2 = .15, R^2$ (adj.) = .15, $F(3, 289) = 17.54, p < .01$; B = unstandardised Beta; β = standardised Beta; sr^2 = squared semi-partial correlation; ^ageographic region coded: 0 = metropolitan, 1 = rural.

The regression model presented in Table 28 shows that being from a metropolitan area, having higher levels of efficacy, and being more committed to employment predicted the use of a higher number of job search methods. This finding is similar for job search intensity, although financial hardship did not predict job search methods, but it was a significant predictor of job search intensity.

Predictors of Mental Health

The Time 1 variables that were significantly correlated with scores on the GHQ included gender, relationship status, number of Work for the Dole programs completed, self-esteem, task-focused efficacy, self-promotion efficacy, PA, NA, employment commitment, leisure meaningfulness, satisfaction with employment status, employment expectation, financial hardship, financial strain, collective purpose, social contact, status, activity, time structure, and leisure activity.

Multiple regression analyses were used to identify the key variables influencing mental health. As mentioned in Chapter 4, several variables violated the assumption of normality. To avoid the potential problem of interpreting results using transformed variables, a decision was made to dichotomise the mental health variable

and use the non-parametric Logistic Regression technique. Logistic regression does not require IVs to be normally distributed and IVs can be either continuous, discrete, or a mix of both (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Logistic regression also allows the researcher to determine how reliable the regression model is at classifying cases for whom the outcome is known (Tabachnick & Fidell). That is, it can determine how successful the model is in correctly predicting the participants with poor mental health.

As logistic regression requires the DV to be discrete, scores on the GHQ-12 were dichotomised using research on the validity of the GHQ as a guide. Donath (2001) analysed the validity of the GHQ-12 in an Australian sample (the ABS National Mental Health Survey conducted in 1997). Donath's results suggest that a threshold of 10/11 resulted in the best combination of sensitivity (72.4%) and specificity (77.4%) for the GHQ-12 using the Likert scoring method. Whilst another option for this study was to use the binary scoring method and threshold of ≥ 4 , Donath reported a lower sensitivity (38.6%) using this scoring method. Goldberg et al. (1997) tested the validity of the GHQ in the World Health Organisation study of mental illness. The data for their sample came from 5,438 patients interviewed in 15 centres across the world. Goldberg et al. reported the best threshold was 11/12, with a sensitivity of 78.9% and specificity of 77.4%. Based on the aforementioned studies, a score of 11 was used as the cut-off for this study. The two categories created by dichotomising scores on the GHQ-12 are henceforth referred to as *Clinical* (GHQ-12 scores > 11) and *Non-Clinical* (GHQ-12 scores of ≤ 11).

Gender, marital status, number of work for the doles, satisfaction with current employment status, leisure frequency, leisure meaningfulness, task-focused efficacy, self-promotion efficacy, employment expectation, self-esteem, employment commitment, positive affect, negative affect, and the latent and manifest benefits, were all entered into the logistic regression model. There were two cases with missing data on marital status, so a mean substitution was used to replace those missing values.

A check for multicollinearity revealed squared multiple correlations (SMCs) ranging from .16 to .58. The highest SMCs for were the model predicting task-focused efficacy ($R^2 = .58$) and the one predicting self-promotion efficacy ($R^2 = .52$). The VIFs for the efficacy variables were also greater than 2 (ranging from 2.01 to 2.49) and tolerance values ranged from .40 to .48. There were several condition

indices greater than 15, but none accounted for a substantial portion of the variance in any of the coefficients. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) cautioned against including two variables with a bivariate correlation of .70 or more in an analysis. Given the high VIFs for the efficacy variables and their bivariate correlation approaching .70 ($r = .67$), it was decided to omit one of the variables from the logistic regressions. Task-focused efficacy had a relatively higher correlation with GHQ than Self-promotion efficacy, so it was decided to omit self-promotion efficacy from the analyses. Results are presented in Table 29.

Table 29

Logistic Regression of Variables Predicting Time 1 Mental Health (N = 371)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	Wald	<i>Exp(B)</i>	95% <i>CI</i> for <i>Exp (B)</i>
<u>Demographics</u>					
Gender	.53	.36	2.20	1.70	.84 to 3.41
Relationship status	-.62	.42	2.22	.54	.24 to 1.22
Work for the Dole programs	-.18	.27	.44	.84	.50 to 1.41
<u>Coping Resources</u>					
Self-esteem	-.12	.04	7.17	.89**	.82 to .97
Task-focused efficacy	-.02	.04	.14	.98	.91 to 1.07
Employment commitment	.05	.02	4.43	1.05*	1.00 to 1.10
PA	-.11	.04	9.03	.89**	.83 to .96
NA	.26	.04	46.85	1.29**	1.20 to 1.39
<u>Appraisal Variables</u>					
Employment Expectation	-.15	.21	.52	.86	.57 to 1.29
Leisure meaningfulness	.00	.04	.02	1.00	.93 to 1.07
Satisfaction	-.43	.21	4.26	.65*	.43 to .98
Financial strain	.07	.02	7.97	1.07**	1.02 to 1.12
Financial hardship	.43	.18	5.35	1.53*	1.07 to 2.20
Collective purpose	.04	.02	2.81	1.04	.99 to 1.09
Social contact	.04	.02	3.16	1.04	1.00 to 1.09
Status	.00	.03	.00	1.00	.95 to 1.06
Activity	.03	.03	.93	1.03	.97 to 1.08
Time structure	.02	.02	1.11	1.02	.98 to 1.06
<u>Coping Strategy</u>					
Leisure activity	-.15	.14	1.10	.86	.65 to 1.14
Constant	-4.64	2.48	3.49	.01	

Table 29 (cont.)

Logistic Regression of Variables Predicting Time 1 Mental Health (N = 371)

Observed	Predicted		% Correct
	Non-clinical	Clinical	
Non-clinical	91	35	72.2
Clinical	25	220	89.8
Overall %			83.8

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; -2 Log likelihood = 261.69, Model $\chi^2(19) = 213.77$, $p < .01$; Strength of association measures: Cox and Snell $R^2 = .44$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .60$; Hosmer and Lemeshow $\chi^2(8) = 1.87$, $p = .99$. Reference groups: Gender is Male (0) and Relationship status is Single (0). Response group: 1 = Clinical.

The model was significantly different from the constant-only model, $\chi^2(18, N = 371) = 213.77$, $p < .01$ and accounted for 60% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in mental health. The model was a good fit to the data, with the Hosmer and Lemeshow Chi-Square test being non-significant, $\chi^2(8, N = 371) = 1.87$, $p = .99$. Overall, the model correctly classified 83.8% of cases. The model was able to correctly classify 89.8% of Clinical cases and 72.2% of Non-Clinical cases, which suggests a good level of predictability. According to the Wald criterion, the Manifest Benefits (Financial Hardship and Financial Strain), Employment Commitment, Satisfaction with employment status, Self-Esteem, Positive Affect, and Negative Affect were all significant unique predictors of mental health. NA was the strongest predictor.

Reduced models were tested by systematically removing non-significant predictors based on their Wald statistic and testing the differences in χ^2 . The final model included self-esteem, PA, NA, employment commitment, satisfaction with employment status, and financial hardship. The model was significantly better than the constant-only model, $\chi^2(6, N = 371) = 193.13$, $p < .01$ and accounted for 56% of the variance in mental health. The model was a good fit to the data, with $\chi^2(8, N = 371) = 7.04$, $p = .53$. The difference in χ^2 between the full model and the reduced model was 20.64 with 13 degrees of freedom. Based on the χ^2 critical value of 34.53 ($p = .05$), that difference was not significant. Table 30 presents the results of the logistic regression analysis on the final nested model.

Table 30

Final Logistic Regression Model of Predictors of Mental Health at Time 1 (N = 371)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	Wald	<i>Exp(B)</i>	95% <i>CI</i> for <i>Exp(B)</i>
Self-esteem	-.09	.04	5.90	.91**	.85 to .98
PA	-.09	.03	10.99	.91**	.86 to .96
NA	.23	.03	48.62	1.25**	1.19 to 1.34
Employment commitment	.04	.02	3.47	1.04	1.00 to 1.08
Satisfaction with employment status	-.42	.19	5.11	.66**	.46 to .95
Financial hardship	.54	.16	11.16	1.71**	1.25 to 2.35
Constant	-1.67	1.90	.77	.19	

Classification Table

Observed	Predicted		% Correct
	Non-Clinical	Clinical	
Non-Clinical	93	33	73.8
Clinical	25	220	89.8
Overall %			84.4

Note. ** $p < .01$; -2 Log likelihood = 282.33, Model $\chi^2(6) = 193.13$, $p < .01$; Strength of association measures: Cox and Snell $R^2 = .41$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .56$; Hosmer and Lemeshow $\chi^2(8) = 7.04$, $p = .53$. Response group: 1 = Clinical.

There was a slight improvement in prediction success for the smaller model (84.4%) compared to the full model (83.8%). The number of cases correctly classified for the non-clinical group increased slightly from 72.2% for the full model to 73.8% for the smaller model, and the number for the clinical group remained the same (89.8%). Given that there was little change in prediction success, the fact that there was no significant difference between the full model and the nested model, and the relatively small decrease in effect size (5%), the smaller model is more desirable due to its parsimony. The model had good sensitivity but relatively poorer specificity. Tait et al. suggested $\geq .80$ as a useful guide as to an acceptable level of sensitivity and specificity for psychiatric screening tests. Given that the purpose of the model was not to be a tool for psychiatric diagnosis, the levels of sensitivity and specificity are considered acceptable.

The odds ratios [$\text{Exp}(B)$] greater than one for financial hardship, negative affect, and employment commitment indicate that for each one-unit increase in those variables the likelihood of having clinical symptoms increases by 71%, 25%, and 4% respectively. For example, a person who finds it Very Difficult to live on their fortnightly income is 1.71 times more likely to experience clinical symptoms than someone who finds it Difficult to live on their fortnightly income. Someone who scored 40 on the NA scale is 12.5 (or 10×1.25) times more likely to have clinical symptoms than a person who scored 30 on the NA scale.

The odds ratios less than one for self-esteem, positive affect, and satisfaction indicate that the odds of having clinical symptoms decrease for each one-unit increase in satisfaction with employment status, self-esteem, and positive affect. For each increment in satisfaction scores, the odds of being classified as a clinical case decrease by 34%. For both self-esteem and positive affect, a one-unit increase in scores on those variables decreases the chances of having clinical symptoms by 9%.

Results from Qualitative Analyses

There were 200 participants (104 males and 96 females) who took the opportunity to comment about their unemployment experience for this study. Their comments were analysed using thematic analysis and the results are presented in the following sections.

Emergent Themes

The method used to analyse the qualitative data was outlined in Chapter 3. A number of themes and sub-themes emerged from the analysis. They are listed in Table 31 along with the frequency with which they were mentioned by participants.

Table 31

Emergent Themes from Time 1 Qualitative Data

Theme	Frequency	Frequency
Reason for unemployment		20
Well-being:		42
Positive	2	
Negative	40	
Financial difficulties		41
Attitude to work		14
Social status		6
Employment expectation		6
Job search		27
Barriers to employment:		69
Age	32	
Health	8	
Experience/Skills	18	
Education	6	
Transport/License	7	
Location	2	
Race	2	
Unemployment	2	
Other	7	
Coping:		55
Job Search	14	
Home Duties	10	
Leisure Activities	18	
Volunteer work	7	
Family	6	
Religion	2	
Study	10	
Keeping busy	4	
Helping others	3	
Work	4	
Socialising/Social Support	7	
Negative Coping	4	
Other	4	
Perceptions of Support:		34
Government	9	
Centrelink	11	
Job Network Agencies	14	
Mutual Obligation Activities:		30
Job Search Training	15	
Work for the Dole	8	
General	7	

Selection of Comments Relating to Emergent Themes

The following sections include a selection of comments relating to each of the themes listed in Table 31. They follow the order in the Table.

Reason for Unemployment

Several participants mentioned why they were unemployed, with some of the reasons being: negative experiences in past jobs, returning from living overseas, studying, being a single parent, relocating, being recently released from prison, and recent relationship break up. The following are selected quotes related to this theme.

Female, aged 20 years:

I left my full time job because of harassment.

Female, aged 55 years:

Left nursing as after many years of shift work and what became to me a negative environment. I was totally "burnt out".

Male, aged 41 years:

My unemployment has arisen from relocating from Sydney to S. E.

Queensland. We relocated to be closer to immediate family.

Psychological Well-Being

Two participants were not distressed by their unemployment situation. For example, the following quote is from a female aged 58 years:

I am very happy as I am. Do not like looking for work at my age. I like my life as is.

Many participants, however, mentioned the negative psychological impact that their unemployment situation was having on them. Forty participants (22 females and 18 males, with ages ranging from 17 to 50 years), mentioned experiencing negative emotions in relation to being unemployed, with many participants reporting more than one emotion. The range of emotions and the frequency with which each was mentioned, included: depressed/down (10), worthlessness or loss of self-esteem (10), unhappy, sad, or upset (5); frustrated (4), bored (6), scared/worried (3), loss of confidence (3), loss of control, freedom, or feeling restricted (3), feeling strained, stretched thin, or weighed down (3), embarrassed (2), crazy (1), desperate (1), despondent (1), destroyed emotionally (1), disappointed (1), a failure (1), guilty (1), hopeless (1), overwhelmed (1), pressured

(1), rejected (1), and shocked (1). Additionally, one participant said that being unemployed “sux big time” and another said it has its “ups and downs”. The sub-themes were very reflective of the factors typically identified as indicators of psychological distress, such as depression, anxiety, negative affect, loss of self-esteem, and low self-efficacy. The following are examples of how participants responded to their unemployment.

Female, aged 21:

I have been unemployed for over 3 months now and it is getting very depressing and overwhelming for me. I am very worried that I may not be able to get a job at all!

Male, aged 34:

As I have been unemployed and on the dole for about 5 years, I am no longer confident of obtaining employment.

Female, aged 50:

I feel very pressured... “Depression” caused by pressure of Soc. Security has affected health and lifestyle and mental ability greatly. I feel useless and worthless and unwanted.

Female, aged 26:

I am disappointed that I am unemployed, and rather embarrassed that I have never held a full-time position. I often feel that I'm not good enough, because although I have good skills and wide experience, I often get passed over for applicants with “more”.

Female, aged 50:

I don't like being unemployed. Somehow it makes one feel a little less worthwhile as though you're not contributing to general life.

Female, aged 44:

Self esteem is sinking lower the longer I am without work.

The comments above provide a good example of how personal resources and appraisals influence feelings of distress and are in line with the findings from the quantitative analyses.

Some participants made comments about feeling bored, having too much time on their hands, or not being able to occupy their time, which also supports the well-established notion that time structure is an important variable in unemployment. The following are some comments made by participants in relation to their feelings of having too much time on their hands.

23-year-old female:

I have NEVER been so bored IN MY LIFE. Nothing occupies my time.

Male, aged 41:

It is boring on the dole.

Male, aged 19:

Being unemployed is very shit cause "idle hands are the Devils playground" and you have too much spare time so you get into some wrong things. Your parents think you are a disappointment and a failure for not getting or having a job. Get very bored and depressed.

Financial Difficulties

Forty-one participants, including 21 females and 20 males, with ages ranging from 17 to 63, mentioned experiencing financial difficulties. This supports the results from the quantitative analyses and also supports conclusions from previous research that financial strain is a key factor in the unemployment experience. The following is a sample of some of the comments relating to financial difficulties.

45-year-old female:

The worst things about being unemployed is not having enough money to pay all bills and buy food. You have to juggle bills to get a little food. Not being able to relax and have a weekend away or hair cut or pamper yourself to feel even better about yourself. Not being able to just buy a chocolate or something special, an outfit or anything.

21-year-old female:

I rarely go out due to lack of finances.

40-year-old female:

I feel very bitter about my lack of employment (I did not leave voluntarily), especially the financial aspect. I cannot afford to live on the dole by myself and have had to borrow money, sell and pawn possessions, just to pay everyday expenses. I have been forced to give up smoking and while that may be good for my physical health, it makes me feel extremely frustrated and anxious. I have many hobbies to keep me interested, but even these cost money I can't afford.

23-year-old male:

Not enough money to look for work properly. Can not do much socialising.

37-year-old female:

The unemployment payments are way too low, you can hardly live on them. This causes stress and you get depressed.

Attitude to Work

Fourteen participants expressed their attitude or feelings about work. The comments were varied and reflected various attitudes, such as a preference for work, distaste for being on the dole, negative aspects of work, and apprehension about working full time. The results of the quantitative analyses showed that employment commitment is one of the key variables associated with psychological distress and job search activity. Therefore, it was not surprising that many of the comments participants made were indicative of a high level of employment commitment. The following is a sample of comments relating to this theme.

20-year-old female:

... All I want is a job. I hate being unemployed.

30-year-old female:

... I want my kids to look up to me as a hard worker but enjoy what I do. I want a job.

Social Status

Six participants made reference to the perceptions of society towards the unemployed. The following are comments selected from that theme and support the notion that unemployment is associated with a lower sense of social status.

58-year-old male:

To be "on the dole" as it is called, is the most degrading situation a person could be in. I fit perfectly in the penguin box [pigeon hole] for: professional incompetent, lazy, unable to keep a job etc., in the mind of the person I may have met.

20-year-old male:

I find sometime that people put you down for being unemployed. Asking others that put me down "how would they feel to be unemployed?" Usually they say that they would find a job. But they don't realise how competitive it is to get a job especially within the hospitality field which I am in.

28-year-old male:

I find myself hoping people who know me won't see me through the day – so I don't have to tell anyone I'm unemployed. This is the third time I've been unemployed and I don't feel the intense shame I did when I was first unemployed at 22.

20-year-old male:

The unemployment experience to me often has times when society looks down upon you and degrades you because I am unemployed. But how much do they know about me. They have no idea of how often I am job searching. I job

search all the time, but it's hard to impress society especially when you come from a small town like me.

23-year-old male:

Society looks down their nose at you. Confidence drops through the floor.

Employment Expectation

Several participants (2 females and 4 males) mentioned that they felt confident about finding a job or being in paid work in the future, which reflects appraisals of employment expectation. The following comment relates to this theme and provides a good example of the link found in the quantitative analyses between personal resources (e.g., self-esteem) and appraisals.

43-year-old female:

... I feel confident I will find new work (part time) again and am now seeking employment. I believe that if you can feel good within yourself, then the outer self reflects this and people notice the happy face I wear. In turn this will help me to find new employment!

Job Search

Twenty-seven people, including 14 females and 13 males, with ages ranging from 17 to 58, made comments about their job search experiences. Some of the comments related to feeling discouraged or frustrated, not hearing back from employers, or receiving knock backs. The following is a sample of the comments relating to this theme.

42-year-old male:

It also annoys me when you don't hear back from an employer if you have been successful or not with an interview.

22-year-old female:

I think each time you don't get a reply for an application, it cuts a bit deeper and makes you a bit more desperate.

18-year-old male:

I find that after a while of applying for jobs and not even making it to an interview you start to get very fed up with applying for jobs.

Perceived Barriers to Employment

Very closely related to the theme of job search was the theme of perceived barriers to employment. A total of 69 participants made reference to some of the

factors they perceived to be associated with difficulties finding work. Age was the most frequently mentioned barrier, with 32 people referring to this factor. Lack of experience or skills was also mentioned quite frequently (18 times). Some of the other factors mentioned by participants included level of education or lack of qualifications (5), transport difficulties (7), and impaired physical health (8).

34-year-old female:

I've been looking on the net for jobs and a lot of employers either want juniors or someone with their own transport.

39-year-old female:

I feel that all my study and qualifications have been a waste of time. Age is a problem for me.

41-year-old male:

Being 41 years old, I feel like I have been put out on the scrap heap – not as competitive in the workforce as employers choose younger people as they obtain more years of work from them.

62-year-old male:

The greatest problem I have applying for work is my age, 62. You can see the look on potential employer's faces as you approach them. After the first 20 knock backs you become reluctant to continue applying for work.

35-year-old female:

Pel [people] that don't have much schooling at all have a lot of trouble finding work.

18-year-old female:

It seems like employers only want you if you have lots of experience and are not willing to train you.

22-year-old female:

I have found it extremely hard to find a job with my health disability.

Coping Strategies

Leisure Activity

Many people (55) talked about the things they did to fill in their days. A variety of behaviours were mentioned, such as leisure activities, home duties, helping others, looking for work, socialising or seeking social support, doing volunteer work, studying, spending time with family or doing things for family, keeping busy, and religious activities. A selection of comments relating to leisure activity is presented

below. Given that education level, leisure meaningfulness, time structure, and PA were identified as significant predictors of leisure frequency, participants' scores on those variables are also included, along with some demographic information.

The following comment is from a female aged 43 years, with an education level of Year 10 or less and relatively high scores on PA (42), time structure (40) and meaningful leisure (29). This participant reported engaging "quite often" in her preferred leisure activity:

I am a sole parent paying off my own home. Up until September last year I have always worked part time hours because of my children. I was very depressed when I left my job, worrying that I had made the wrong decision in giving it up to deal with my own problems and to have counselling. I know I made the right decision now, because my depression has lifted and I have a lot of positive feelings about myself... I fill my days with running around after my children before and after school, I help neighbours out where I can, and am kept busy within the home with painting and repairing the home. Most of this takes little money, but a lot of time. I get great satisfaction from the end results and take pride in the praise received from others for my hard tasks.

The following comment is from a 22-year-old tertiary-educated male, who scored highly on leisure meaningfulness (35), time structure (42), and PA (45). This participant reported engaging "very often" in his preferred leisure activity:

I have been very busy recently helping at my church youth group during the week to organise activities. I have been involved in organising 2 senior men's basketball teams, i.e., training, games, times, money and uniforms. I have also had time to learn the guitar a lot more and have formed a band. Considering last year I was sick and very withdrawn from society this year has been awesome. I believe God has healed and blessed my life and filled it up with good things and the right job will be there at the right time. It's also exciting but frustrating looking for work.

The first comment above is a good example of how personal resources, in the form of self-esteem and positive affect, are related to positive appraisals (i.e., greater employment expectation) and effective coping behaviours, which are associated with better mental health. That comment also reflects an internal locus of control, with the participant attributing her well being to her own decisions and actions. The comment from the second participant above also highlights the value of engaging in meaningful activities, but in contrast, it reflects an external locus of control. That is, the participant attributed his well-being to God.

The following comment is from a 40-year-old female, who reported having a trade or TAFE certificate. She indicated that her more meaningful leisure activity

was reading and reported doing it “extremely often”. Her scores were 28 for leisure meaningfulness, 25 for time structure, and 41 for PA:

I'm actually working part-time (about 8 hrs a week) letterbox delivering, and so this makes me feel better about myself while I look for more work. When I'm not working, I'm on the free internet at the library, or canvassing employers. Sometimes I read, which is a hobby of mine, and I especially find that self-help books are immensely valuable at this time. The exercise I get, walking around delivering brochures, really helps me to cope, and lately I've started to do special things for myself, just as pampering, while I'm in this situation – stuff like buying small treats or cooking new and favourite foods, being with friends who care and are fun. I feel fine about doing my mutual obligation activities – presently I'm in Intensive Assistance, and I think that the people who work in these areas are wonderful – very supportive and understanding.

Perceptions of Support

Several participants (34) made comments about the level of support they receive from Government agencies and Job Network providers and their perception of the activities they are expected to engage in under their mutual obligation agreements (e.g., Job Search Training courses and Work for the Dole). Selected comments relating to this broad theme are presented in the sections to follow.

Support from Government

A few participants shared their perceptions of the level of support provided by the Government (9), and in particular, Centrelink (11). The following are some of the comments made by participants in relation to this theme.

57-year-old male:

Self funded retirees are receiving little assistance/benefits through government. In the present economic times additional income is needed to supplement superannuation. People who retire at an approved government age should be given unattested support when income from super is below a recognised level of satisfying living standard.

53-year-old female:

Centrelink want you broke and penniless and begging. It's a disgrace. I could go on, but I'd fill 20 pages.

48-year-old male:

Centrelink put everyone in the one category instead of dealing with individual problems and not all people are the same.

Support from Job Network or Employment Agencies

Fourteen participants made comments about employment agencies or Job Network agencies, with half of those comments being positive and the other half being negative. Examples are presented below.

40-year-old female:

...I feel fine about doing my mutual obligation activities – presently I'm in Intensive Assistance, and I think that the people who work in these areas are wonderful – very supportive and understanding.

54-year-old male:

Employment agencies are worse than useless at either finding you work or further training. They exist only to milk Gov. Funds...as always.

Mutual Obligation Activities

Seven participants made general comments about doing their mutual obligation activities. A sample is presented below.

26-year-old female:

Mutual Obligation: What is it but control!! I've been on the dole 8 months and forced into Job Search Training etc, but know someone who's been on the dole 10 years and hasn't done a thing. You find the logic!

37-year-old male:

I think the mutual obligation activities are worthwhile. They improve our chances to find work. We get to make new friends and also teach us new skills etc.

Job Search Training

Fifteen participants shared their thoughts about Job Search Training, two of which are presented below.

21-year-old female:

Job Search Training has been a valuable experience and made me realise I have more skills to offer than originally thought. It has been comforting to meet people in the same situation as I have often felt as though I'm the only one. My greatest difficulty in applying for jobs has been lack of experience in my chosen field. I think universities and schools should provide more information on what employers look for in graduates and how to go about applying for work in that area of study.

22-year-old female:

Since I have begun Job Search Training, I have been able to realise what working hours are like and the course itself has really motivated me to do more to find work. It gets me out of the house and concentrating on the task at hand – a very positive thing.

Work for the Dole

Eight participants shared their thoughts about Work for the Dole and two of those are presented below.

26-year-old female:

Work for the Dole: I found doing work for the dole has made me a lot more comfortable with myself and made me feel like I'm actually doing something worthwhile. I'm willing to do WFD without hesitation...

20-year-old female:

For starters, work for the dole sucks! It would be better working for someone in a proper employment environment instead of the volunteer sector. And most industries don't want to know you unless you have experience, but not many employers are willing to give you a fair go.

Comments from Participants with Extreme Scores

The following section presents a selection of comments made by participants who had relatively extreme scores on some of the quantitative coping variables to provide more insight into what their experience of unemployment was like. SPSS FREQUENCIES was used to calculate cut-off scores equating to the 10th and 90th percentiles for each of the coping variables. For example, people who had a GHQ score of 7 or lower were in the 10th percentile and those who scored 25 or higher were in the 90th percentile. For each of the coping variables, a code of 0 was used for scores in the 10th percentile, a code of 1 was used for scores in the 90th percentile, and the remainder were recoded as missing data and given a discrete value of 88. Comments made by some of the participants with extreme scores are presented in the following sections.

Personal Coping Resources and Positive Appraisal

The following is a comment made by a 21-year-old female participant, whose scores for self-esteem, positive affect, and satisfaction with employment status were in the 90th percentile, suggesting that she has a generally positive view of life, herself, and her current unemployment situation. This participant was tertiary educated, single with no dependents, working casually, and receiving a Newstart Allowance of \$450 per fortnight. She indicated that she was participating in a compulsory training program at the time of the study.

I have had difficult personal problems to deal with, however they seem to make me stronger. I have felt confident about getting a job, although I have doubts here and there if I'm feeling down. I have university qualifications and I only finished my degree in 2002, so I'm not too worried about a job. It will come to me soon enough. Having clear, realistic (and ambitious) goals keeps me motivated.

The following comment was made by a female participant who scored in the 10th percentile for self-esteem, positive affect, and satisfaction with employment status. This suggests that she has relatively low personal resources and feels very dissatisfied by her unemployment. At the time of the first study, she was 45 years of age, divorced with no financial dependents, and not working. She reported having a Trade/TAFE certificate and indicated that it had been between 1 and 2 years since she had worked full-time as a process worker. She was currently receiving a Newstart Allowance and reported a fortnightly income of \$380.

45-year-old female:

Being on the dole has placed me in a position where I know the true meaning of "reality sucks"!! I never thought that at 45 years old, I would be too old to employ and the amount of employers that want you without experience. How do you get the experience if they won't train you or even employ you. Some won't even consider work for the dole because it means training someone and they haven't got the time or personnel to do it. I hate being on the dole - but I can't live without it, while I am not working. So my life has become very restricted and I find that very hard to adjust to.

Job Seeking Efficacy and Employment Expectation

The following comment was made by a male participant who scored in the 10th percentile for job seeking efficacy and employment expectation, meaning that his scores were relatively very low. At the time of the study, he was 49 years of age, single, with no financial dependents, and from a rural area. He had not had a full-time job for over 2 years and was receiving Newstart payments.

I hold a trade certificate as an electrical fitter, but have not worked in that trade for many years, consequently I do not hold a license and have no desire to obtain one because of the rigmarole involved in getting one. I was self-employed for many years in the amusement machine industry, but fell behind in the technical side as equipment evolved electronically. I worked part time for a jeweller specialising in the manufacture of surgical steel body jewellery. Cheap imports put paid to that. The end result is I'm a jack-of-all trades, but master of nothing and therefore obsolete. I welcomed the chance of entering the PSP program because that meant 3 monthly forms and not having to fill out the fortnightly time sheets. Unfortunately that runs out this year. Because of my age, I don't hold out much hope of getting any meaningful employment,

and any re-training schemes (e.g., TAFE courses). I'm expected to pay towards it even if subsidised. There isn't much money left over from dole payments, so I don't expect to be doing any courses in the near future. I also have certain health problems recently appearing that could prevent me from doing certain types of work (e.g., manual labour)

The following comment was made by a male participant who scored in the 90th percentile for job seeking efficacy and employment expectation, meaning that his scores were relatively very high. This participant was 28 years of age, single, with no financial dependents, and living in a rural area. His highest education level was Year 11/12 and he was currently doing part-time/casual work. He had previously held a full-time job in which he worked for almost a year, but he had not worked full-time for between 6 to 11 months. He was receiving a Newstart allowance and his fortnightly income was \$385. He was completing a compulsory training program at the time of the study:

I have a independent and individual personality. I like to be in control. These attributes do not fit well in low skilled jobs. After 8 years of failure in working low-skilled jobs, I have recognised that I don't fit into this type of job. I have started studying, and once again my arrogance shines through. Study does not suit my personality. I have recognised that I am a communicator. I now need to find employment (paid) for this type of job. I lacked confidence in my early career, because I could never fit into the culture. After travelling and working overseas, I have gained the confidence to recognise my strengths. In my travels, I met many highly successful people and developed life long friendships and a strong rapport. I developed these relationships because of the attributes I had previously categorised as my weaknesses. These attributes are confidence and strong ability to communicate. Now that I realise there is nothing wrong with me, all I have to do is find the correct job for my personality. This is when I will be able to contribute most to society. For these reasons I do not feel negative towards myself for being unemployed and receiving benefits. I believe in myself and abilities and am patiently waiting for the opportunity to prove myself. Only by believing in myself will I possibly reach my potential. Family and friends do not understand because they have their own values on employment. For the time being, I separate myself from these negative influences until the time comes where they accept me for who I am.

The 200 participants who gave up their time to make extra comments about their experiences provided a richer understanding of what it is like for them to be unemployed or underemployed. Their comments are also very valuable in providing an indication of the variables that could be important to the unemployment experience that were not measured quantitatively in this study. Some of the issues

mentioned by participants could be significant predictors of mental health, job search activity, or leisure and warrant further investigation.

Discussion

The main aims of Study One were to explore relationships among coping resources, cognitive appraisal, coping strategies, and mental health, and to identify predictors of coping behaviours and mental health. This study drew mainly from deprivation theory (Jahoda, 1982) and stress and coping theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). A conceptual model of the proposed relationships among study one variables was presented in Figure 4. The conceptual model was based on the transactional model of stress by Lazarus and his colleagues (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman; Lazarus & Launier, 1978), which emphasises the dynamic nature of the stress process. Stress is defined as “any event in which environmental or internal demands (or both) tax or exceed the adaptive resources of an individual, social system, or tissue system” (Lazarus & Launier, p. 296). This definition suggests that coping resources are key influences on an individual’s vulnerability to stress.

There is ample evidence in the literature that unemployment is a stressful situation that taxes an individual’s personal, financial, and social resources, and, consequently, affects their mental health being (e.g., Feather, 1990; Fryer & Payne, 1986; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Murphy & Athanasou, 1999; Winefield, 1995). The results of the current study demonstrated that unemployed participants reported significantly poorer mental health than an Australian population sample, which is in line with previous research. Whilst being unemployed is typically experienced as stressful, the unemployed are not a homogeneous group—they do not all share the same coping resources, perceptions of their unemployment situation, or responses to unemployment. There are key influences on how an individual interprets a potential stressor.

Personal factors, such as core self-evaluations, along with situational influences, such as financial resources and social support, affect the way a stressful experience is appraised and dealt with (Latack, Kinicki, & Prussia, 1995). Thus, they represent vulnerability factors which influence how easily a person is impaired by their unemployment situation and how they respond to it. Individual differences, such as age, gender, education level, and length of unemployment may also impact

on the unemployment experience and function as risk factors. However, results from the McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) meta-analytic study suggest that demographic and labour market variables are likely to have less of an influence than other factors, such as personal resources.

Cognitive appraisal and coping are thought to be critical mediators of stressful person-environmental interactions and the outcomes of those interactions (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986). Individuals evaluate their situation in terms of whether it represents a loss or a threat, or something benign or positive. They also evaluate the resources they have to manage the situation and respond accordingly. If they evaluate their unemployment as a negative experience and believe that they do not have the resources or the capabilities to change their situation, they are more vulnerable to psychological distress.

The data from Study One were first analysed for group differences. Correlation analyses were then carried out to explore interrelationships between the personal and situational factors, and to determine how those variables related to appraisals, coping behaviours, and mental health. Finally, regression analyses were used to determine which variables predicted coping behaviours and mental health.

Group differences

There were some significant group differences identified in the current study and a discussion of those follows. However, it was beyond the scope of the research project to split the sample according to demographic groups and conduct correlational and regression analyses separately for each of the groups. Rather, any demographic or labour market experience variable that was correlated with the coping variables or mental health was included in the regression models and its contribution to the variable of interest was explored.

Age

Age had an influence on some of the variables in the study. In general, older participants appeared to fare worse than their younger counterparts in terms of financial hardship, expectations for employment, social contact, a sense of status, and job applications. These findings are consistent with the research, which had typically found that unemployed youth tend to have less financial worries, better social support, and tend to see their unemployment as a more legitimate status (Creed,

1999a). As Feather (1990) pointed out, the young unemployed can often fall back on their parents for support whilst still retaining their social links with friends from school. The under 25s in the current study reported less financial hardship and that had more social contact through their leisure activities than those in the older age groups. The younger participants also reported a higher sense of status. It could be that for young people, leaving school and not acquiring a job is more socially acceptable and less detrimental to one's sense of status than actually having a job and becoming unemployed, which is typically the case for older unemployed participants.

The older participants, however, perceived their time to be more structured. A similar pattern was noted for partnered participants, who also experienced more financial strain, less social contact, and more time structure than single participants. The similarity in patterns could be attributed in part to the significant correlation between age and relationship status—older participants were more likely to be partnered. Participants who were older and married were also more likely to have financial dependents, which could account for the reports of greater financial strain and less social contact for those groups. Family commitments, for example, may restrict the amount of contact outside of the family.

The correlation between age and employment expectation is consistent with the literature. For example, Wiener et al. (1999) found that older unemployed people were less confident about obtaining work. Age was significantly negatively correlated with employment expectation ($r = -.43$). According to Kerr, Carson, and Goddard (2002), "Insecure employment and unemployment is prevalent among people aged over 45 years, many of whom become discouraged and give up attempting to find work after they become unemployed" (p. 85). Age is typically a barrier to employment, with people over 45 years of age experience being particularly affected. The lower expectations for employment among the older participants appear to be based on the reality of today's society. What is particularly concerning is that people in the older age brackets are likely to become discouraged and remove themselves from the labour market, taking on early retirement. Those who have been unemployed for some time are likely to have reduced or depleted their financial reserves and face the prospect of living in poverty because of lack of sufficient superannuation funds upon which to retire (Kerr, Carson, & Goddard, 2002; Smith, 1985).

Gender

Gender differences were also evident in this study, with females having higher employment commitment, higher NA, a greater sense of collective purpose, greater job search intensity, and poorer mental health. The finding that females had higher employment commitment than males is consistent with some research reports, but not with others. The findings in relation to gender differences on employment commitment are conflicting. For example, in a study of unemployment in Scandinavian countries, Malmberg-Heimonen and Julkunen (2002) found gender differences on employment commitment in some countries and not in others. For example, they found that females in Finland and Sweden had higher employment commitment than males, but males in Norway had higher employment commitment than females, and there were no gender differences for people from Denmark or Iceland. In a study of unemployed Israelis, Kulik (2001) found that males had higher employment commitment than females. However, Wanberg et al. (1999) found no gender differences on employment commitment.

The finding that females have poorer mental health is consistent with the research (e.g., McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). The finding of gender differences on NA or collective purpose is not consistent with Creed and Watson (2003), who found no gender differences on those variables. Furthermore, the gender differences for job search intensity found in the current study, are also somewhat inconsistent with other research (e.g., Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001). In their meta-analysis, Kanfer et al. found that males were more active job seekers than females, although the effect size was very small ($r_c = .05$). Malmberg-Heimonen and Julkunen found that, only in Sweden were females more active job seekers than males. No gender differences were found in the other Scandinavian countries. Similarly, Wanberg et al. and Vuori and Vesalainen (1999) found no gender differences on job search intensity. The mean difference between males and females for job search intensity was 1.12 and was significant at the .05 level, but on a scale with a range of 0 to 44, the difference is not meaningfully large and could be an artifact of the sample size.

Education

The results indicated that participants with the least educational qualifications (i.e., those in the Year 10 or less category) recorded the lowest scores for self-promotion efficacy, social contact, sense of status, and meaningful leisure. People

with lower education may lack the confidence in their ability to promote themselves as job seekers because their limited qualifications may put them at a competitive disadvantage. There was a significant negative correlation between social contact and length of unemployment. That is, the longer a person is out of work, the more limited their social contacts. Thus, if having fewer educational qualifications predisposes people to remaining unemployed, it is also likely to affect the amount of social contact they have.

Education was not related to employment expectation, which conflicts with Gowan et al. (1999), who found that people with higher education levels believed it would be less difficult for them to get a job. However, the path between education and reemployment expectation in their study was only marginally significant. The current findings are in line with Wanberg (1997), who did not find a significant correlation between education and perceived situational control (a measure akin to employment expectation).

In the current study, the highest mean for leisure activity was for the tertiary educated group and the lowest for the Year 10 or less group. Whilst the ANOVA showed a significant difference, none of the post hoc tests detected a significant difference between the groups. There was a similar occurrence for self-esteem. Education was significantly correlated with self-esteem and the ANOVA was significant. The lowest education group had the lowest mean self-esteem, but none of the post hoc tests were significant.

This study did not find a significant difference between education levels for job search activity, which conflicts with the results of a meta-analysis by Kanfer et al. (2001). Kanfer et al. found that people with higher levels of education were more actively looking for work, however, the effect size was relatively small ($r_c = .12$, $k = 17$, $N = 7,867$). As Wanberg, Watt, and Rumsey (1996) pointed out, frequent behaviour might not always translate into quality outcomes. It is likely, given the current low unemployment rate, that people with higher education can be more selective about their jobs and restrict their job search efforts accordingly.

Geographic region

Geographic location also emerged as an influence on the unemployment experience. Participants who lived in the Brisbane metropolitan area had significantly higher PA, and reported significantly more social leisure and job search

activity than those living in rural areas. Studies have identified a link between PA and social perceptions (e.g., Kuiper, McKee, Shahe, & Olinger, 2000), and between PA and job seeking (e.g., Cote, Saks, & Zikic, 2005), which may explain why all three were similarly influenced. What is unclear is why people from the city had higher scores on those variables. It is possible that people living in the city have more opportunities to include others in their leisure activity, because they live in closer proximity. Further, there are typically more jobs available in city areas, which may explain the greater job search activity among city dwellers. Thus, the closer proximity of people and greater job prospects may have a positive emotional influence.

Length of unemployment

Length of unemployment had an influence on the personal resources of job seeking efficacy and employment commitment, appraisals of employment expectation and social contact, and all of the job search behaviours. The long-term unemployed fared the worst on all of those variables. They were the least efficacious; they had the lowest employment commitment and expectations for employment, and the least social contact; and they were also the least active with their job seeking. Comparatively, they differed most from participants who had been unemployed for between 4 and 5 months on job applications and job search intensity, and from participants who had been unemployed for between 2 and 5 months on their employment expectation.

Intercorrelations among coping resources

Correlational analyses were used to firstly explore relationships among the personal, financial, and social coping resources that were measured in this study. Based on the work of Judge and his colleagues (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2002, 2003), several personality-related variables, including self-esteem, job seeking efficacy, positive affect, and negative affect, were measured. Those variables were expected to represent personal vulnerability or resilience factors. As expected, they were all meaningfully interrelated, which suggests that positive or negative self-evaluations are consistent across self-concept, capabilities, and emotions. Participants who had higher self-esteem and higher job seeking efficacy also had higher positive affect and lower negative affect. Conversely, those who had a lower

sense of self-worth and who felt less confident of their job seeking abilities were also more prone to negative emotional expressions.

The findings are in line with the discovery by Judge et al. (2002) that self-esteem, generalised self-efficacy, neuroticism, and locus of control represent a higher-order construct interpreted as core self-evaluations. Judge et al. conducted a meta-analysis on studies using self-esteem, locus of control, neuroticism, and generalised self-efficacy and found that the relationships among those four traits could be explained by a single factor. They also found that, individually, the four traits added little to the prediction of external criteria, such as stress and strain, after the higher-order construct had been considered. That is, after including core self-evaluations into a regression model, adding each of the factors individually did not explain much more of the variance in the DVs.

Another important variable in the unemployment literature is the value measure of employment commitment. Employment commitment provides an indication of how important work is to an individual. With this particular variable, it is *low* employment commitment that serves as a buffer to experiences of psychological distress for the unemployed. Ample studies have demonstrated that unemployed individuals with high employment commitment are more prone to experiencing poorer mental health than those who place less value on employment (e.g., P. Jackson, Stafford, Banks, & Warr, 1983; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005).

Few researchers, however, have examined how employment commitment fits into the stress and coping framework. Correlations between employment commitment and the core self-evaluations were examined in the current study and an association was found between employment commitment, self-esteem, and negative affect. Employment commitment was not significantly correlated with positive affect or job seeking efficacy. The correlation between employment commitment and self-esteem was negative—participants with higher self-esteem reported lower employment commitment. Negative affect and employment commitment were positively correlated, which indicates that participants with high employment commitment expressed more negative emotionality. Thus, participants with high employment commitment evaluated themselves more negatively and experienced more negative emotions than those who placed less value on being employed.

These findings suggest that employment commitment is tied up with one's core self-evaluations and sense of identity. For many people, the type of work they do forms part of their self-identity (Bigner, 1994; Blustein, 2006). Blustein stated that, "Working functions to provide people with a way to establish an identity and a sense of coherence in their social interactions. In other words, work furnishes at least part of our external identity in the world." (p. 3). Therefore, for some unemployed individuals, a valuable component of their identity may be lost. It makes sense then, that people whose identity is strongly merged with their jobs will place a very high importance on being employed. Those people are more likely to experience a negative impact on their self-esteem during their unemployment than those whose identity or self-concept is not so connected to their jobs.

Apart from relationships among the personal resources, the current study also examined how situational variables influenced personal resources. The situational influences included financial resources (i.e., net fortnightly income) and social resources (i.e., social contact via leisure activity). The only significant correlations between those variables and the personal resources were between income and employment commitment and between social leisure and positive affect. Participants with fewer financial resources reported higher levels of employment commitment, whilst those who expressed more positive emotions spent more time with others during their leisure activities. Participants who had less fortnightly income reported a stronger desire to be employed, and this result was no surprise. The unemployment benefits are typically just enough to cover very basic living expenses, so gaining full-time work often results in an increase in average fortnightly earnings. The results show that participants with fewer financial resources have a greater preference for working than those who receive more money each fortnight.

The results also indicate that respondents who involved others more often in their leisure activity experienced more positive emotions than those whose leisure was more solitary. Of course, the correlations indicate a reciprocal influence, so participants whose leisure was more solitary tended to experience less positive emotions than those who spent their leisure time with others.

Relationships between coping resources and appraisals

As Figure 4 shows, the study also examined reciprocal influences between coping resources and appraisals. Stress and coping theory posits that cognitive appraisals are influenced by an individual's personal and situational resources. Results from the current study have demonstrated such a link, with several correlations between coping resources and appraisals being statistically significant. The appraisal variables included satisfaction with employment status, employment expectation, leisure meaningfulness, and perceived access to the latent and manifest benefits of employment.

Relatively limited research is available on the relationships among coping resources and appraisals; however, based on stress and coping theory, it was expected that participants with fewer personal, financial, and social resources would find their unemployment situation more threatening and make more negative appraisals. That is, they would express more dissatisfaction with their current employment status, they would feel less confident about getting a job, they would find less meaning in their leisure activity, and they would feel more deprived of the latent and manifest employment benefits. Furthermore, based on the deprivation theory, it was expected that participants with a stronger desire to be in paid work would feel more deprived of the latent and manifest benefits of employment and would also perceive their state of unemployment as more dissatisfying.

The results indicated that satisfaction with employment status was influenced by positive affect and employment commitment. Participants who felt more satisfied with their employment status were those who had higher PA and lower employment commitment. Whilst the correlation was significant, the strength of the relationship between employment commitment and satisfaction was relatively weak using the criterion of 10% overlap in variance as an indicator of the meaningfulness of the relationship. Nevertheless, it makes sense that for people who strongly value employment, their current state of unemployment would be discrepant with their values and they would experience significant discomfort. Positive affect represents a general tendency to experience positive emotions, to the relationship between positive affect and satisfaction with employment status is not surprising. Individuals who generally tend to see things in a positive light would be more inclined to

evaluate their unemployment situation as positive than those who take a more negative view of life.

Employment expectation was also included as an appraisal measure. Participants were asked how confident they felt about gaining employment in the following 3 months and this item was used as a measure of employment expectation. The results indicated that employment expectation was influenced by social leisure and all of the core self-evaluations, except for negative affect. Participants who were less confident about finding a job were those with a lower sense of self-worth, less confidence in their job seeking abilities, and lower positive affect, who engaged more frequently in solitary leisure pursuits. Very little research has been carried out on relationships between employment expectation and coping resources. However, the findings are in line with Wiener et al. (1999) who reported significant correlations between self-efficacy and employment expectation, and with Wanberg (1997), who reported significant correlations between self-esteem and situational control (a measure akin to employment expectations).

Results from the current study suggest that core self-evaluations represent a vulnerability factor, whereby participants who evaluated themselves more positively obviously believed that they had the requisite personal resources to alter their situation. Those with fewer personal resources believed that they did not have the capability to change their situation. The relationship between social leisure and employment expectation suggested that participants who were more socially withdrawn were probably lacking the social resources that could provide them with support and encouragement and assistance to increase their confidence in their ability to change their unemployment situation.

Another appraisal variable included in the current study was leisure meaningfulness. Participants evaluated their leisure on seven dimensions: Enjoyment, interest, satisfaction, fulfillment, importance, stimulation, and entertainment. Appraisals of leisure meaningfulness were influenced by core self-evaluations and social leisure. Leisure was appraised as more meaningful by participants with higher self-esteem, higher job seeking efficacy, higher positive affect, lower negative affect, and more contact with others during their leisure activity. Again, personal and social resources were important influences on positive appraisals—this time in the domain of leisure.

Participants' appraisals in terms of their access to the manifest and latent benefits of employment were also measured in the current study. Two indicators of economic deprivation were included. One survey item asked participants how difficult it was for them to live on their fortnightly income. This item was used as an indicator of financial hardship. The other measure was that of financial strain. There were six items included in that measure, which sought to determine the extent to which participants felt restricted by their level of income both in general terms and in terms of their ability to socialise, to save, and to make plans for the future. The results indicated that income had an influence of appraisals of financial hardship, but not on appraisals of financial strain. Participants with less fortnightly income reported having more difficulty living on that amount of money than those with higher income. Whilst the correlation was significant, the strength of association was quite low, with those variables sharing only 2% overlap in variance. The only other relationship between coping resources and economic deprivation was that between negative affect and financial strain. Participants with more financial strain reported more negative emotionality. Once again, the correlation was significant but the relationship was weak (i.e., 3% overlapping variance).

Correlations were also assessed between perceived access to the latent benefits of employment and the coping resources. The latent benefits included collective purpose, social contact, status, activity, and time structure. Collective purpose was reflected in participants' responses to questions about how much they felt a part of, and contributed to, society and their community. Social contact was measured in terms of how often participants met new people and engaged in social activities. Status was measured by how important and valued by others participants felt. Activity was measured by how self-directed participants were in their daily activities. Items referred to participants' ability to organise and structure their days to meet their responsibilities and to effectively balance their commitments and their free time. Time structure was assessed by items measuring how well respondents felt they were able to fill up their time with purposeful activities. Perceived latent deprivation was reflected in low scores on each of those five variables.

Results from the study indicated that perceived latent deprivation was influenced by core self-evaluations. The majority of the correlations between the core self-evaluations and the latent benefits were significant, although some of the

relationships were relatively weak. For example, self-esteem was positively correlated with all of the latent benefits. Participants with higher self-esteem reported greater access to the latent benefits. Of those correlations, only the relationships between self-esteem, status, and activity were meaningful. Respondents with higher self-esteem also felt a greater sense of social status and were more self-directed in terms of their daily activities. In a similar vein, positive affect was also significantly correlated with all of the latent benefits, but only meaningfully correlated with status and activity. Higher positive affect was associated with a greater sense of status and more self-directed activity. Once again, the research is scant on relationships between coping resources and appraisals of latent deprivation. The results, however, are consistent with Waters and Moore (2001; 2002b), who reported significant correlations between self-esteem and appraisals of latent and economic deprivation.

Both of the job seeking efficacy variables were positively correlated with perceived access to the latent benefits. The correlations between task-focused efficacy, and all of latent benefits except for time structure were also meaningful. Participants with greater confidence in their ability to carry out more task-oriented job search activities, such as writing resumes, felt a greater sense of collective purpose, social contact, status, and activity. The relationships were similar for self-promotion efficacy, with the only difference being that its correlation with collective purpose was not meaningful. On the whole, personal resources were important influences on appraisals relating to deprivation. Participants who evaluated themselves more positively also evaluated their unemployment environment more positively and perceived that they had more access to the psychosocial benefits typically associated with being employed.

Relationships between employment commitment and perceived access to the latent benefits were also examined. Based on the deprivation theory, higher employment commitment was expected to be related to appraisals of deprivation. This was not borne out in the results. The only significant correlation was between employment commitment and time structure, with respondents higher in employment commitment feeling more deprived of time structure. Participants who are less able to impose their own structure and purpose to their day may rely on their jobs to do so, and may value being employed for that reason. Those with lower employment commitment may be more apt at imposing their own structure to their day and

finding purposeful things to fill up their days and, consequently, may not feel as strong a need to be employed and to have a time structure imposed on them by someone else.

Relationships between the financial and social resources and appraisals of latent deprivation were also examined. Two of the latent benefits were also influenced by social leisure. Social contact and status were both significantly correlated with social leisure, although the relationships were relatively weak. Participants who engaged more often in solitary leisure pursuits felt more deprived of social contact and reported a lower sense of status than participants who more frequently shared their leisure activities with others. Income was significantly correlated with only one latent benefit: Activity. Participants with higher income reported more self-directed activity than those with less fortnightly income. Whilst the correlation was relatively weak, it still supports Fryer's (1986) contention that lack of financial resources places restrictions on one's personal agency and their ability to make plans and organise their future. People who have limited financial resources may believe that it is futile for them to plan and organise meaningful activities, particularly those that require money. They may see no point in keeping themselves busy if the activities they do are not particularly meaningful to them.

Overall, the results are generally supportive of the relationships between coping resources and appraisals. What emerged from the correlational analyses was a general trend for participants who had better internal and external coping resources to make more positive appraisals in relation to their unemployment situation.

Relationships between coping resources and coping strategies

As Figure 4 shows, there was also an expectation for coping resources and coping strategies to be correlated. The coping strategies included job search activity variables and leisure activity. There were three job search activity variables, including number of job applications in the previous month, job search intensity, and job search methods. For the job search intensity measure, participants were asked to indicate how often over the previous fortnight they had carried out activities, such as using newspapers, the internet, or employment agencies to look for work, networking with others to find work, and contacting employers. The measure of job search methods was a derivative of the job search intensity scale. The number of different

approaches participants used to look for work was calculated based on whether or not they had used each of the 12 approaches referred to in the job search intensity scale, regardless of how often they had used them. Leisure activity was measured by asking participants what their most meaningful leisure activity was and how frequently they engaged in that activity.

Based on stress and coping theory, the expectation was for participants with better personal coping resources to deal with their unemployment by channeling their energies into looking for work and doing something meaningful in their spare time. Those with poorer resources were expected to be coping less effectively (i.e., not searching as frequently for work and not engaging in meaningful activities in their spare time). One exception to this is employment commitment. Whilst lower employment is a buffer to the negative impact of unemployment, studies have shown that higher employment commitment is related to more active job seeking (e.g., Rowley & Feather, 1987; Wiener, Oei, & Creed, 1999). Another expectation was for participants with fewer financial resources to be exerting more effort into finding work and for their leisure activities to be restricted by their finances. Finally, participants who engaged more frequently in solitary leisure were expected to engage in their leisure pursuits less regularly than those whose leisure involved others. This was based on the deprivation theory, which posits that social contact is a basic psychological need of which the unemployed are often deprived. Therefore, participants were expected to be more motivated to engage in leisure activities if their leisure involved others and thus provided access to that particular latent benefit.

The results of the study generally support the proposed relationships between coping resources and coping behaviours. Core self-evaluations were related to leisure activity and job seeking behaviour. Participants with higher self-esteem were engaged more frequently in their leisure activity, they had applied for more jobs in the previous month, they had higher scores on job search intensity, and they used more job search methods than those with lower self-esteem. Only the relationship between self-esteem and job search intensity was strong enough to be meaningful. Similarly, job seeking efficacy was positively correlated with leisure activity and job search behaviours, but only the relationships between both efficacy variables and job search intensity were meaningful. Participants who felt more confident in their job search abilities were more intensively looking for work. Positive affect was also significantly correlated with leisure activity and the job search behaviours, such that

higher PA was related to more active leisure and job seeking. However, the relationships were all relatively weak. Negative affect was significantly correlated with leisure activity, but not with any of the job search behaviours. Participants with lower negative affect were more actively engaged in their leisure activities.

From the literature reviewed, there were no studies that focused on relationships between core self-evaluations and leisure activity in the unemployed. Indeed, there is a paucity of studies that have explored what the unemployed do in their spare time to cope, as most of the literature focuses on well-being or job search outcomes. The current study suggests that positive core self-evaluations are important resources for the unemployed that assist them to cope with their situation by engaging in meaningful leisure activities.

On the other hand, many studies have looked at job search behaviour as a coping strategy and its relationship with self-esteem and self-efficacy. The research clearly demonstrates a relationship between those variables (e.g., Cote, Saks, & Zikic, 2005; Eden & Aviram, 1993; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Saks & Ashforth, 2000). Further, meta-analytic research by Kanfer, Wanberg, and Kantrowitz (2001) reported a mean corrected weighted correlation of $r_c = .27$ ($k = 28$, $N = 10,020$) between self-efficacy and job search behaviour.

Employment commitment and income were significantly correlated with all of the job search behaviours, but not with leisure activity. Respondents with higher employment commitment and lower income were more actively looking for work. The finding that income was not related to leisure frequency was surprising, given that 208 participants cited lack of financial resources as one of the reasons for why they were not engaging more frequently in their preferred leisure activities. Thus, further explorations were carried out to examine the relationship between financial resources and leisure activity, but rather than using income, the dichotomous measure, "lack of financial resources", was used. As mentioned earlier, it was one of the reported barriers to engaging more often in leisure. As expected, it was significantly correlated with leisure activity, such that participants who reported lack of finances as a barrier to their leisure were less frequently engaged in their leisure activity. The results also indicated that social leisure was significantly correlated with leisure activity, such that participants whose leisure involved others more often were more actively engaging in their leisure activity than those whose leisure was more solitary.

On the whole, the results indicate that participants who evaluated themselves more positively tended to make a more concerted effort to find a job and to regularly engage in meaningful activities during their spare time. Those who felt more strongly about being employed and who were receiving less money each fortnight were also putting more effort in to finding work. Social leisure was also an influence on how often participants engaged in their most meaningful leisure activity. Of course, the correlations do not lend themselves to causal interpretations. The relationships could just as likely go the other way, with, for example, more frequent leisure activity and job search behaviours leading to better self-evaluations. More frequent leisure activity may lead to more social contact and thus more opportunities to involve others in one's leisure. Whilst it may be tempting to conclude that lower income is a motivator to search for work, there are some instances where the reverse may be true. Most of the unemployed are expected to be actively looking for work to receive their fortnightly Centrelink benefit. Those who fail to meet their mutual obligation requirements are often breached, with a consequent reduction of even removal of their income support payments. Therefore, in some cases, more active job seeking may predict an increase in fortnightly income.

Relationships between coping resources and mental health

As Figure 4 shows, the coping resources were also expected to be related to mental health. Based on the stress and coping theory, it was expected that individuals with poorer coping resources would have poorer outcomes in terms of their mental health. The correlations generally supported this contention. All of the core self-evaluations were significantly correlated with mental health, and all but self-promotion efficacy had meaningful correlations with mental health. Participants with higher self-esteem, higher task-focused efficacy, higher positive affect, and lower negative affect reported fewer mental health symptoms than those with more negative core self-evaluations. Negative affect and mental health had the strongest relationship, with approximately 48% of shared variance. The results clearly show that personal resources are an important influence on mental health outcomes during unemployment—participants with fewer personal resources suffered with poorer mental health. Those participants most likely viewed their unemployment as taking a significant toll on their limited personal resources to the point where their mental health suffered.

On the other hand, participants who were less vulnerable to the potential negative impact of unemployment were those with better personal coping resources. This also applies to employment commitment, which was a significant influence on mental health. In line with previous research (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Rantakeisu & Jonsson, 2003; e.g., Wiener, Oei, & Creed, 1999), this study found that higher employment commitment was related to poorer mental health. Thus, placing less value on being employed appears to be a buffer against the negative mental health consequences of unemployment.

As for the situational variables, neither income nor social leisure was significantly related to mental health. This is somewhat inconsistent with previous research particularly that of Whelan (1992) and McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) who found significant correlations between income and mental health. There is evidence from the literature that subjective measures of financial hardship have stronger relationships with mental health than objective financial measures, such as income level (e.g., McKee-Ryan et al.). The relationship between financial resources and mental health may be mediated by appraisals of financial strain or hardship. This is in line with stress and coping theory, which places emphasis on individuals' interpretations of their situation. Stress is often not so much about the objective resources that people have as it is about the way they interpret their situation and their ability to deal with it. Some individuals with limited financial resources may not see their limited income as a barrier to achieving their goals and, consequently, may not feel financially frustrated. Others with the same amount of financial resources may see their income as a significant impediment to reaching their goals and thus feel financially strained.

As with income, it could be that the subjective experience of social deprivation or appraisals of leisure meaningfulness are more important influences on mental health than the actual amount of social contact a person has during their leisure. Whilst researchers have found that social leisure is beneficial to mental health (e.g., Waters & Moore, 2002; Winefield et al., 1992), Waters and Moore also found that social leisure activities were appraised as more meaningful than solitary leisure activities and reduced perceptions of latent deprivation. Thus, the relationship between social leisure and mental health may be mediated by appraisals of meaningfulness and deprivation. Whilst the relationships between appraisals and mental health are discussed later on, the results indicate that social leisure is related

to leisure meaningfulness and to perceptions of social contact, and that the latter variables both influence mental health. Similarly, income is related to perceived financial hardship, which influences mental health. These results hint at mediating effects, which were not tested in the present study but could be teased out in future research.

Another explanation for the non-significant relationship between social leisure and mental health is the measure used. Social resources are typically measured by perceived support from others or by social undermining, which are behaviours by others that are aimed at criticising or hindering a person's goal attainment (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). In such cases, social support has a relatively strong influence on mental health (McKee-Ryan et al.). Social leisure provided a measure of the amount of social contact participants had during their unemployment, rather than the amount of support participants received from their social contacts. Whilst a measure of social support would have been useful to include in the present study, one of the aims was to test the deprivation theory and to look at how perceptions of social contact might be influenced by the non-work environment. That is, were participants able to access social contact through an avenue other than employment and did this influence their mental health? Jahoda (1982) claimed that employment provided access to contacts outside of the immediate family and that the unemployed were deprived of such contacts and suffered poorer mental health as a consequence. Using social leisure as a variable provided an opportunity to answer those questions. Participants in the current study who used their leisure as a way to spend time with others felt less deprived of social contact and, consequently, reported better mental health than participants who reported feeling more deprived of social contact.

Relationships between appraisal variables, coping behaviours, and mental health

Based on stress and coping theory, cognitive appraisals were expected to influence coping behaviours. They are the mediators between the state of being unemployed and its effect on an individual. For a situation to be stressful and to have a detrimental impact on a person's well-being, it must be appraised as stressful (Lefton, 1994). If unemployment is not appraised as a negative event or situation,

then there is little need for an individual to engage in behaviours to manage the situation—it is not perceived as stressful. According to Latack, Kinicki, and Prussia (1995), stress appraisals occur when there is a relative discrepancy between a person's life goals or standards and their current situation. If such a discrepancy exists, then the unemployed individual is likely to engage in some sort of coping behaviour to close that gap. Thus, the expectation in the current study was for participants who made more positive evaluations of their unemployment situation to be doing less to change their situation—that is, they would be less actively looking for work. However, those who expressed greater dissatisfaction with their unemployment were expected to be more actively looking for work. Latack et al. also pointed out that the choice of coping behaviours depends on the extent to which individuals perceive that they have the ability to change the situation. If participants believe there is little that they can do to alter their unemployment, they are less likely to expend much energy on trying to change the situation. Therefore, the expectation for this study was for participants who thought their chances of getting a job were poor to be less actively looking for work and focusing more on their leisure activities. A further expectation was that more frequent engagement in leisure activity would be influenced by appraisals of its meaningfulness. This was based on previous research by Waters and Moore (2002a) who found that unemployed individuals who perceived their leisure activity as meaningful engaged in it more often.

The results supported the proposed relationships between satisfaction, employment expectation, leisure meaningfulness, and coping behaviours. Satisfaction with employment status was negatively correlated with job seeking and positively correlated with leisure activity. Participants who reported more satisfaction with their unemployment status were less actively looking for work and were more actively engaged in their leisure activities. Furthermore, participants who were less confident that they would find work in the near future were less actively looking for work and more actively engaged in their leisure activities. Leisure meaningfulness was also associated with leisure activity in the expected direction. More frequent engagement in leisure was influenced by its perceived meaningfulness. Interestingly, leisure meaningfulness was also related to job search intensity—participants who appraised their leisure as more meaningful were more

intensively looking for work. The correlation, however, was relatively weak, with only 1% shared variance between leisure meaningfulness and job search intensity.

The results are consistent with stress and coping theory, with negative appraisals being associated with strategies aimed at alleviating the stress of unemployment (i.e., looking for work), and positive appraisals of the leisure environment being associated with more active involvement in leisure. Participants who perceived their unemployment as dissatisfying were taking actions to find work. Those who believed they were unable to alter their situation focused their efforts on coping via their leisure activity, and those who saw their leisure as a positive experience used it to cope with their unemployment.

Based on the deprivation theory, it was expected that participants who felt more deprived of the latent and manifest benefits of employment would be more actively seeking work, and may also be looking to their leisure activity to gain access to the latent benefits. The deprivation theory focuses on the loss of the latent and manifest benefits of employment as determinants of poor psychological well-being during unemployment, but it does not indicate how such appraisals of loss influence coping behaviours. There were significant correlations between financial strain, financial hardship, and job applications, and also between financial hardship and job search intensity. Participants who felt more economically deprived were more actively looking for work. Contrary to expectations, perceived access to the latent benefits was positively related to job search intensity. That is, participants who felt less deprived of the latent benefits were more actively looking for work. Furthermore, greater perceived access to all of the latent benefits, except for activity, was associated with more frequent leisure activity.

The results suggest that rather than appraisals of deprivation being a motivator to look for work, it was a deterrent. Once again, none of the correlations were very strong; all were less than $|.32|$. Furthermore, correlations do not suggest causality, so the relationships between appraisals of deprivation and coping behaviours could just as well stand up to an alternative explanation. Job search behaviours and leisure activity could influence appraisals of deprivation. Job seeking and leisure activity may have provided alternative avenues for participants to access the latent benefits. They may, for example, feel a sense of collectivity with other unemployed individuals who are looking for work or who are doing the same leisure activity. Job seeking or leisure activities may provide more opportunities for social

contacts. Being accountable to the Government with respect to their job seeking may mean that job seeking is perceived as an enforced activity that also imposes a structure on participants' time. Participants may also feel less deprived of activity because their leisure and job seeking may be perceived as purposeful activities. The transactional nature of stress and coping lends itself to such interpretations. The relationships between appraisals and coping are not static, unidimensional relationships. They are dynamic and constantly changing in response to one another and to external influences (Lazarus & Folkman, 1991).

The findings that appraisals of deprivation were associated with *less* intensive job seeking and *less* frequent leisure activity were interesting and cast some doubt on Jahoda's (1982) theory. Intuitively, one would expect that people who felt deprived of the latent benefits of employment would be more motivated to look for work or to find alternative ways to access those benefits (e.g., via their leisure activity). The fact that some participants did not feel deprived of those benefits and that they were the ones who were more actively seeking work and engaging in their leisure suggests that employment is not the only way for people to meet those psychosocial needs. Whilst Jahoda acknowledged that there were other institutions that could provide access to those benefits, she noted that employment was the most important because it was associated with the important task of earning a living. The results from this study suggest that for some participants, job seeking and leisure activity provide alternative avenues to access the latent benefits and that there are reciprocal effects. Having those psychosocial needs met, to a certain degree, through job seeking and leisure would be a motivator to continue engaging in those activities.

Relationships between appraisals and mental health

Stress typically manifests itself in the deterioration of a person's physical or psychological well-being (Lefton, 1994). It affects the immune system, which makes individuals more vulnerable to disease (Cohen, Tyrrell, & Smith, 1993), and it can produce symptoms of poor mental health, such as anxiety and depression. Unemployed individuals who evaluate their situation as stressful are more susceptible to mental health problems than those who make more positive appraisals about their unemployment. The current study examined correlations between appraisals and mental health. The results indicated that all of the appraisal variables were significantly correlated with mental health. Participants who reported feeling

more satisfied with their employment status had better mental health than those who appraised their unemployment as dissatisfactory.

Lower employment expectation was related to poorer mental health. Participants who felt less confident that they would get a job in the near future had poorer mental health than those who were more confident that they would find work. Leisure meaningfulness was also related to mental health, with more meaningful leisure being associated with better mental health. Appraisals of deprivation of the latent and manifest benefits of employment were also related to poorer mental health. Participants who reported more financial hardship and strain had poorer mental health than those who felt less economic deprivation. Similarly, participants who reported less access to the latent benefits of employment also had poorer mental health than those who felt less deprived.

Whilst all of the correlations between appraisal and mental health were significant, the relationships were relatively weak, with none of the correlations being equal to or above $|\cdot 32|$. Nevertheless, the results are consistent with stress and coping theory and suggest that more positive appraisals of one's unemployment situation and leisure activities are related to better psychological well-being.

Relationships between coping behaviours and mental health

The current study also explored relationships between coping behaviours and mental health. None of the job search behaviours were significantly correlated with mental health, but the correlation between leisure activity and mental health was significant. More frequent engagement in leisure was associated with better mental health. This suggests that engaging in leisure activity is an effective coping strategy for the unemployed. The non-significant relationships between the job search behaviours and mental health are curious, given that many unemployed people find job seeking a frustrating and discouraging endeavour if their efforts are unsuccessful.

It may be that job seeking itself is not detrimental to mental health, but rather the rejections or lack of feedback from employers. Many of the comments made by participants in relation to their job seeking indicated that they felt frustrated or discouraged by the knock backs and the lack of feedback from employers. Job search behaviour is typically carried out with the goal of acquiring a job and thus, for it to be an effective way of coping with unemployment, it needs to result in the alleviation of the stressor (i.e., unemployment).

The research clearly shows that more intense job seeking is associated with a greater likelihood of employment and that gaining employment results in an improvement in mental health. Thus the relationship between job search behaviour and mental health may be mediated by other variables, such as employment outcomes, positive feedback by employers, or being short-listed for job interviews.

Predictors of Leisure Activity

Apart from examining the relationships among the study variables, this study aimed to identify the key influences on coping behaviours and mental health. Therefore, all of the variables that had significant relationships with the coping behaviours and with mental health were entered into regression equations to determine which ones were the most influential.

This section discusses the results of the regression analyses on leisure activity. When all of the significant correlates of leisure activity were entered into a standard multiple regression, the most important predictors were education, lack of financial resources, positive affect, time structure, and leisure meaningfulness. Together the five variables were able to predict 19% of the variance in leisure frequency, with financial resources having the highest standardised beta weight and thus being the most important predictor.

The results suggest that lack of financial resources is a significant barrier to people engaging more frequently in their leisure activity. The results also indicated that participants who took a more positive view of life and their leisure, who were more structured with their time, and who had higher levels of education engaged more often in leisure activities during their unemployment. Structuring one's time typically involves planning and organising one's activities and commitments, and the times during which they will be carried out. The results of this study suggest that people who are more effective at structuring their time are better able to fit their leisure activities into their lives and around their other commitments, such as job seeking. Those with higher education may also be more aware of the positive benefits of leisure and thus schedule their more meaningful leisure pursuits into their regular routine. The results also suggest that if leisure activities are perceived as meaningful, then people are likely to engage in them more often. Given the significant correlation between leisure activity and mental health, engaging in

meaningful leisure serves as an effective coping strategy and should be encouraged as part of an unemployed person's regular routine.

Whilst most of the support or training offered to the unemployed focuses on enhancing their employability and job seeking skills, the results from this study suggest that what the unemployed do in their spare time is also an important consideration. Assisting individuals to engage in meaningful activities as a way of coping with their unemployment warrants consideration of several important issues. Firstly, there are the financial barriers that are likely to place restrictions on the types of activities in which they engage. Secondly, some individuals may need information on the positive mental health benefits of leisure activity to help them to see its usefulness as a coping strategy. Thirdly, some individuals may have difficulty organising their time and scheduling leisure as part of their daily activities. Finally, some individuals may benefit from psychological counselling to assist them to take a more positive view of their situation and to identify activities that are likely to be meaningful to them. However, it is important that those leisure activities do not tax their already limited financial resources.

Predictors of Job Search Behaviours

Regression analyses were also carried out on the job search behaviour variables to determine which of the key correlates were the most important. All of the variables that were significantly correlated with each of the job search behaviours were entered into regression analyses to determine which ones were the most important predictors. Regression analyses were carried out on each of the three job search behaviours: Job applications, job search intensity, and job search methods. For job applications, self-promotion efficacy, satisfaction with employment status, geographic location, and length of unemployment were all significant unique predictors and accounted for 15% of the variance. For job search intensity, self-promotion efficacy, employment commitment, financial hardship, and geographic area were all important predictors and accounted for 28% of the variance. For job search methods, self-promotion efficacy, employment commitment, and geographic area were important predictors, accounting for 15% of the variance.

The results highlight a pattern of consistency in relation to self-promotion efficacy and geographic region. Both variables were significant predictors of all three job search behaviours. Participants with higher efficacy and those who lived in the

metropolitan area were more actively looking for work. The finding that geographic region had an influence on job seeking was not surprising. There are typically more jobs available in city areas and also more business and organisations for job seekers to canvass. Therefore, it makes sense that job search activity would be more restricted for rural job seekers who have less access to potential employers and fewer available jobs.

This study confirmed the importance of employment commitment as a predictor of job search intensity and number of methods used. Participants who were more committed to finding a job were more intensive with their job seeking and used more job search methods than those who placed less value on being employed. Financial hardship also emerged as a key influence on job seeking, with greater financial hardship being a predictor of more intensive job seeking. Satisfaction with employment status and length of unemployment were both significant predictors of number of job applications, but neither emerged as important influences on job search intensity or methods. Participants who had less time out of work and who were more dissatisfied with their employment status had applied for more jobs than those with longer unemployment durations and greater satisfaction. This finding suggests that the longer-term unemployed may have adapted to their situation to the point where they had developed some level of satisfaction and were less interested in finding work. This adaptation could be borne out of a sense of hopelessness if their previous attempts at finding work were repeated unsuccessful. Whilst both satisfaction and length of unemployment were significantly correlated with job search intensity and job search methods, when they were included with other variables in the model, they did not emerge as significant predictors.

Generally, these findings are consistent with the literature. For example, Kanfer et al. (2001) examined the literature on job search behaviours and employment outcomes for the unemployed and conducted a meta-analytic study to determine effect sizes for the various correlates. These researchers found that job search self-efficacy and employment commitment were significant antecedents of job search behaviours. Their meta-analysis included the personality variables of extroversion (a variable akin to PA), neuroticism (a variable akin to NA), conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness. One of the measures used for extroversion and neuroticism was the PANAS.

Other variables in the meta-analysis were locus of control, optimism, self-esteem, job seeking efficacy, financial need, employment commitment, social support, and biographical measures, such as age, gender, and job tenure. The highest correlate of job search behaviour was extroversion, with a mean corrected sample-weighted correlation of $r_c = .46$. In order of effect size, the following variables were also significant correlates of job search behaviour: Conscientiousness ($r_c = .38$), employment commitment ($r_c = .29$), job seeking efficacy ($r_c = .27$) and openness ($r_c = .27$), self-esteem ($r_c = .25$), social support ($r_c = .24$), financial need ($r_c = .21$), agreeableness ($r_c = .15$), job tenure ($r_c = -.15$), education ($r_c = .12$), NA ($r_c = -.07$), age ($r_c = -.06$), locus of control ($r_c = .05$), gender ($r_c = .05$), race ($r_c = -.05$), and optimism ($r_c = -.04$).

The present study included many of those variables and found that when they were included in a regression model, job seeking efficacy emerged as the most important predictor. When considered with efficacy, geographic location, employment commitment, and financial strain, PA, NA, self-esteem, and social contact did not emerge as important predictors.

The current results conflict somewhat with those reported by Wiener et al. (1999). Part of their research examined predictors of job seeking frequency in a sample of 118 unemployed persons from the Brisbane metropolitan area (Queensland, Australia), with a mean age of 33 years (range 18 to 62 years). Wiener et al. used a measure of general self-efficacy, along with employment commitment, employment expectation, employment need, and job search intent. They carried out a multiple stepwise regression analysis including those variables, along with age, education, and length of unemployment, and found that only job search intent significantly predicted job seeking frequency.

The present study did not include job search intent, which may have been an oversight given its relative predominance as a predictor. The discrepancy between the results of this study and that of Wiener et al. could be in the difference in measures used for efficacy. Wiener et al. used a measure of general efficacy, which did not emerge as a significant predictor of job search frequency. The more specific job-search related measure of efficacy may be more powerful predictor. It certainly demonstrated some consistency as a key predictor in the current study.

In their meta-analytic study, Kanfer et al. (2001) found that job search behaviour and job search self-efficacy were among the highest correlates of

employment outcomes, including reemployment, job offers, and duration of unemployment. Engaging in job seeking behaviour is typically one of the precursors to finding work, so factors that influence that job seeking, such as job seeking efficacy, are important to consider when providing assistance to the unemployed. Interventions aimed at increasing self-efficacy in the unemployed have typically been successful in producing positive outcomes. For example, Eden and Aviram (1993) provided a self-efficacy workshop to a group of 66 unemployed people. The participants were shown video clips of models successfully performing job search behaviours, discussions were held regarding the modeled behaviour, and then the participants engaged in role-playing activities where they enacted the job search behaviours and were provided with feedback from others on their performance. The training was successful in increasing participants' level of self-efficacy for job seeking, which resulted in an increase in their job search activity.

This study suggests that employment commitment is also very relevant to the job search process. The paradox with this variable is that high commitment promotes more active job seeking, but on the other hand, it has a negative impact on mental health. Therefore, practitioners who encourage the unemployed to place a higher value on employment need to be mindful of the possible impact that might have on their clients' mental health, and to ensure that their clients have the requisite personal resources to counterbalance an increased desire for work.

Predictors of Mental health

Most of the coping variables included in this study were significantly correlated with mental health, including personal resources, appraisals, and one of the coping variables (i.e., leisure activity). One of the main aims of this study was to determine which of those coping variables were the most important. Logistic regression analyses were used to answer that question. Participants' scores on the GHQ were dichotomised according to whether or not they met the criterion for clinical caseness. The decision to use a cut-off criterion of GHQ scores of 11 or below for clinical caseness was based on evidence from previous studies that identified scores of 11 or less as providing the best combination of sensitivity and specificity.

The regression analyses identified the most important predictors of mental health as negative affect, positive affect, self-esteem, employment commitment,

financial hardship, and satisfaction with employment status. Thus, four of the personal coping resources and two of the appraisal variables were the most influential in terms of mental health. Together, the six variables accounted for 56% of the variance in mental health and correctly classified approximately 84% of participants with a relatively good level of sensitivity and specificity. Participants with lower self-esteem, lower positive affect, higher negative affect, higher employment commitment, greater financial hardship, and less satisfaction with their employment status were more likely to have clinical symptoms than their counterparts with more positive self-evaluations and appraisals and who placed less value on employment.

The results are in line with the results from the meta-analytic study by McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) who found core self-evaluations to be the strongest correlate of mental health with an effect size of $r_c = .55$. These researchers identified 22 correlates of mental health, with financial strain and employment commitment being amongst the strongest, with effects sizes of $r_c = -.45$ and $r_c = -.34$, respectively. Stress appraisals, social undermining, time structure, reemployment expectation, and social support were other relatively strong correlates, although of lower magnitude than the aforementioned variables.

The regression model in the current study demonstrated adequate sensitivity and specificity and it was small enough to serve as a useful guide for practitioners who wish to screen their unemployed clients for risk factors that may lead to poor mental health. The results identified self-esteem, affect, employment commitment, financial hardship, and satisfaction as vulnerability factors for the current sample of unemployed participants. Participants who took a more negative view of themselves and their lives were more likely to report clinical symptoms reflective of poor mental health, such as sleep disturbances, decision-making difficulties, loss of concentration, lack of enjoyment in life, depressive symptoms, and symptoms of anxiety.

While it was certainly not surprising that those variables were related to mental health, the fact that out of a total of 19 variables, they emerged as the most important determinants of mental health is informative and provides some guidance for policy-makers and practitioners who work with the unemployed. The unemployment literature clearly shows that mental health typically improves upon gaining employment. However, what happens to the unemployed in the interim? Those who have good coping resources are more resilient to the potential detrimental

affects of unemployment and may survive their stint of unemployment relatively unscathed. However, those who do not have good coping resources are particularly vulnerable and may well need some individual counselling and assistance that places an emphasis on building up their personal coping resources.

The majority of support for the unemployed is designed to enhance their employability and job seeking skills. Job seeking efficacy did not emerge as a significant predictor of mental health, but it is very important to the job search process and should continue to be the target of intervention programs. However, the psychological vulnerability factors are also important and should also be included in special individualised programs for the unemployed. An assessment of clients' self-esteem, affect, employment commitment, level of financial hardship, and feelings of satisfaction would make for a useful screening tool for practitioners to then use as a guide to the most appropriate form of intervention. The assessment instruments used in the current study are relatively brief and can inform practitioners of the key areas that could be targeted for their clients and interventions could be tailored accordingly.

Qualitative Data

Several themes emerged from the qualitative analyse. Some participants explained why they were unemployed (e.g., difficulties in previous job, relocation), others commented on their well-being, describing feelings of worthlessness, depression, and other related emotions, and some participants referred to financial difficulties, their attitude to work, their sense of social status, their level of employment expectation, their job search behaviours, and their leisure activities. Other themes related to perceived barriers to employment and perceptions of support or assistance from Government or employment agencies.

Thus, many of the emergent themes were similar to the variables that were measured in the study, and the comments were reflective of the results from the quantitative analyses. Some of the comments made by participants reflected the associations found between personal resources, cognitive appraisals, coping behaviours, and mental health. For example, one participant commented on her positive feelings about herself, her confidence in finding work, and her engagement in meaningful activities. Her scores on the quantitative variables, such as positive

affect and leisure meaningfulness were relatively high and were thus commensurate with her comments.

Comments were presented from some of the participants with extreme scores on variables, such as positive affect, self-esteem, and satisfaction with employment status, and employment expectation, and those comments were in line with their responses for the quantitative measures. The qualitative data also provided some very useful information about other factors that can impact on well-being during unemployment, such as perceptions of support from employment agencies and Centrelink, and perceive barriers to employment, such as lack of experience, transport difficulties, and ill health, that could influence job seeking and employment outcomes.

Limitations of the study

There were several limitations to the current study, the main one being its cross-sectional nature. Such a design does not allow for causal attributions. Given the transactional nature of the stress process and the reciprocal influences of coping resources, appraisals, coping strategies, and outcomes (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), the predictors used in the regression models are likely to also be influenced by the outcome measures. For example, mental health could also influence coping resources, appraisals, and coping behaviours. People with poor mental health may have insufficient personal resources to be able to engage effectively in job seeking or to use leisure as a coping strategy.

The use of survey data and self-reports can be problematic in that such data collection methods can be subject to common method bias and social desirability (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1997). Using the same method to gather data can potentially have a spurious influence on the results. Common method variance is variance that is attributable to the methods used to measure the constructs (e.g., surveys, scale types, item characteristics, and response formats) rather than to the constructs the measures represent (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

One way of minimising this problem is to create a temporal separation of the measurement of the predictor and criterion variables, which allows previous previously recalled information to leave short-term memory, or to have respondents complete the measurement of the predictor and criterion under different conditions or circumstances (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). However, this can

also be problematic if the temporal lag is not carefully calibrated to prevent it masking a relationship that really exists (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Creating a temporal lag, or having participants complete different parts of the survey using different methodologies, was not feasible for the current study. Consequently, the potential for method bias is acknowledged and caution is advised in generalising the results until future research can confirm the current findings.

According to Podsakoff et al., social desirability “refers to the tendency of some people to respond to items more as a result of their social acceptability than their true feelings” (2003, p. 882). For example, some participants in the current study may have believed it was more socially acceptable to be strongly committed to employment and thus aligned their answers with that belief. There may have been other participants who were concerned about providing honest responses in relation to their job seeking in case the information was passed onto Centrelink. However, the fact that participants were assured that their identity would be protected and that their responses would be kept completely confidential may have prompted them to answer more honestly (Podsakoff et al.).

Research that collects data from multiple sources, such as subjective reports, objective data, and qualitative methods, such as interviews and ethnographic studies, are typically more generalisable (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1997). Whilst this study did not use all possible sources of data collection, it did gather both qualitative and quantitative data. The comments made by participants were generally reflective of what was found from the quantitative analyses, which strengthens the generalisability of the results.

A further shortcoming of the current study is the level of predictability for some of the regression models. The amount of variance accounted for by the regression models, particularly those predicting coping behaviour, was relatively small. The five variables predicting leisure activity only accounted for 19% of the variance. Similarly, the models predicting job search behaviours accounted for a range of 15% to 28% of the variance in the three behaviours. This suggests that there were other important influences on those variables that were not measured in this study, or that the measures used were not effectively tapping into the constructs for which they were indicators.

The qualitative data provided some useful indications of variables that were not measured in this study that may have an impact on leisure, coping, and mental

health. For example, eight participants identified health problems or physical disabilities as barriers to employment, and seven mentioned transport problems. For some people, their physical health or disability may place restrictions on the type of leisure activities they can do, and their ability to carry out job search tasks that involve physical mobility. Physical illness, coupled with the stressors associated with unemployment, may also be impact on mental health. Furthermore, not having a car, a license, or available public transport could be another barrier to leisure or job seeking and could prove frustrating for some people.

There were other comments relating to participants' dealings with Government organisations, such as Centrelink, and employment agencies, such as the Job Network agencies, which suggest that the perception of support from such organisations can impact on their well-being. Most of the comments relating to perceptions of support from the Government were negative. However, several participants reported positive experiences with their Job Network provider. The expectation for the unemployed to participate in training and Work for the Dole programs could also have a negative affect on some people. Some participants found those mutual obligation activities to be positive experiences, whilst others made negative comments about them. Other comments related to the lack of understanding and support from others or society for their unemployment situation. Therefore, perceptions of support may be an important influence on mental health. Future studies could include measures that tap into the unemployed person's perceived support from bureaucratic and employment agencies, their perceived level of support from others and society in general, and their perceptions of mutual obligation activities.

With regards to job seeking, there were some participants who felt discouraged or frustrated by not hearing back from employers, or receiving knock backs when they had applied for jobs. This could be a deterrent to job hunting and needs to be considered in future research. Feedback from others can provide vital information to the job seeker about the quality of their applications and can direct their job search efforts accordingly.

There were several participants who mentioned a lack of experience or skills as barriers to employment. This could translate into a reluctance to apply for jobs, particularly given the competitive nature of the current labour market. Employers can often afford to be selective, which means that those with a shortage of skills or

experience are left behind. Tapping into perceptions of the unemployed about what they have to offer an employer could be useful as it could be another important predictor of job search activity. Participants also expressed a range of reasons for their unemployment. Some participants left their previous jobs voluntarily because of negative experiences (e.g., harassment, feeling burnt out). Past negative experiences in the workplace could be a deterrent to work and affect the level of job seeking a person engages in.

Summary

This study set out to explore relationships among coping variables, including coping resources, cognitive appraisals, and coping behaviours, and to determine the key predictors of coping behaviours and mental health. To this end, it has achieved its main aims. One of the main findings was that coping variables were, for the most part, all interrelated and are therefore useful in gaining a better understanding of the unemployment experience.

Self-esteem, positive affect, negative affect, and job seeking efficacy (both task-focused and self-promotion) were considered to be representative of core self-evaluations, and Study One found that all five of those variables were significantly related to one another. Participants who were high in self-esteem were also high in PA and efficacy, and low in NA. Core self-evaluations were related to appraisals of latent deprivation, leisure meaningfulness, and employment expectation, to coping behaviours (i.e., leisure activity and job search behaviours), and also to mental health. Participants with better personal resources made more positive appraisals of their situation, they were coping by engaging more often in job seeking and their preferred leisure activity, and they had better mental health.

Whilst self-esteem, efficacy, and negative affect have been included in many studies of the unemployed, positive affect has been relatively neglected in the research. This study suggested that PA may well be just as important as NA in the unemployment experience. Whilst PA was not identified by Judge et al. (2002) as being a part of a higher-order construct, which they called core self-evaluations, its relationships with self-esteem, efficacy, and NA suggest that it is part of the constellation of self-evaluative factors. The relationships between PA and the other core self-evaluation variables (apart from NA) were significant. Furthermore, the pattern of relationships between PA and some of the other variables in the study,

such as appraisals of employment expectation, leisure meaningfulness, latent deprivation, and coping via leisure activity, was very similar to those of self-esteem and efficacy. These findings suggest that PA should be considered alongside the other core self-evaluation variables as an important personal resource. However, further research is needed to confirm its convergence with the other core self-evaluations and to determine whether there are similarities between PA and the other core self-evaluations in terms of their relationships with other variables.

Employment commitment is a measure of the value one places on being in paid work. Employment commitment was correlated with self-esteem and negative affect, with lower levels of employment commitment being related to higher levels of self-esteem and lower negative affect. It was also related to time structure, job search behaviours, and mental health, with higher employment commitment being associated with less perceived access to time structure, more active job seeking, and poorer mental health. Time structure was negatively related to job applications, job search intensity, and mental health.

The implications from those findings are that unemployed individuals who have difficulty structuring their time see employment as valuable, perhaps because it imposes a structure to their day, they expend more effort into finding a job, and they have poorer mental health. On the other hand, individuals who are more able to structure their days see less value in being employed, are less actively looking for work, and have better mental health.

More sophisticated statistical analyses, such as structural equation modeling (SEM), could tease the relationships found in the current study apart and identify direct effects, mediating effects, or moderating effects. The SEM methodology provides opportunities to test hypothesised models that can be modeled pictorially, and to examine both direct and indirect effects within those models (Byrne, 2001). A mediating effect occurs when the effect of one variable on another variable is transmitted through a third variable—the mediator (Kline, 1998). A moderating effect occurs when the impact of one variable on another varies depending on the level or value of a third variable—the moderator (Holmbeck, 1997). The terms *moderator effect* and *interaction effect* are sometimes used interchangeably (Kline, 1998).

The stress and coping model would suggest that the relationship between more stable traits (e.g., personal resources) and coping behaviours are mediated by

appraisals. Thus, appraisals of time structure may function as a mediator between employment commitment and job search behaviour, and also between employment commitment and mental health.

Situational resources (i.e., financial and social resources) were correlated with some of the cognitive appraisal variables and coping behaviours. For example, income influenced appraisals of financial hardship and also job search behaviours. Lower income was associated with greater financial hardship and more active job seeking. Income did not, however, influence mental health. This suggests that appraisals of financial hardship may also function as a mediator between income and job search behaviours, and between income and mental health. Participants with lower income reported greater financial hardship and greater financial hardship was associated with poorer mental health.

Social leisure influenced appraisals of leisure meaningfulness, employment expectation, and social contact, which were all related to leisure activity and mental health. Furthermore, leisure activity was related to mental health. That is, participants whose leisure involved other people appraised their leisure as more meaningful, they had greater expectations for employment, and reported less deprivation of social contact. Social leisure was not directly related to leisure activity or mental health. Again, there may be mediating effects happening between social leisure, leisure activity, and mental health.

Another key finding was the importance of financial resources, positive affect, leisure meaningfulness, time structure, and education as key influences of leisure activity. Given that more frequent leisure activity was related to better mental health, encouraging the unemployed to engage in activities that are meaningful to them may alleviate some of their distress. The predictors of leisure suggest that their leisure activity should be meaningful and inexpensive for people to want to do it more often. The most common category of meaningful leisure reported by participants was physical activities (sport/exercise), followed by socialising with friends, reading or writing-related activities, and spending time with their family/partner. Those activities need not cost money, so helping the unemployed find ways of doing those activities that do not involve tapping into their limited financial resources is an important consideration. Furthermore, participants with higher PA, more education, and more structured time engaged more often in their leisure, so

practitioners also need to consider those factors as part of an intervention plan involving activity scheduling.

Another outcome, and one that was expected based on the literature, was the importance of job seeking efficacy to the job search process. Employment commitment, satisfaction, and financial strain were also important influences on job search behaviour. An interesting outcome was the importance of geographic region to job search activity. It is clear that different geographic locations are subject to labour market influences, such as the availability of jobs, which have an impact on employment outcomes. Finally, another key finding in this study was the importance of the personal resources of self-esteem, PA, NA, and employment commitment, along with financial strain, and satisfaction with employment status, to the mental health of the unemployed. Whilst this outcome is not surprising, the fact that those variables were included with 13 other key correlates of mental health and emerged as the most significant predictors is an important finding. They also accounted for 56% of the variance in mental health and correctly classified a total of 84.4% of cases—73.8% of non-clinical cases and 89.8% of clinical cases. Therefore, the model was acceptable with regards to its sensitivity and specificity. Practitioners may find it useful to use the four predictors as screening tools to identify unemployed people who are at risk of suffering poor mental health and offer some type of preventative intervention.

The following chapter presents the results of the follow-up study, which provides a more in-depth understanding of how the variables in the current study performed over time. It consists of cross-sectional analyses of the follow-up data to explore the consistency of the relationships found in this study. The main focus of Study 2, however, is to identify predictors of job acquisition and to examine changes over time in the variables that were measured at both Time 1 and Time 2, to determine whether those changes are attributable to employment outcomes (i.e., getting a job or remaining unemployed).

CHAPTER 6 – STUDY TWO

Participants who took part in Study One were followed up again 6 months later to examine their employment situation and to measure their coping resources, appraisal, coping behaviours, and mental health. This chapter reports on the cross-sectional analyses of the Time 2 data gathered from the 6 month follow-up study. It also reports on the longitudinal component of the research project. A total of 115 participants took part in the follow-up study. At Time 2, participants were asked whether or not they were doing any paid work. Fifty-eight participants (Males = 30, Females = 28) reported that they were working and 57 participants (Males = 29, Females = 28) had remained unemployed.

Some of the analyses of the Time 2 data were carried out separately for participants who had remained unemployed and those who had gained employment. For example, correlations among the coping variables and mental health were analysed separately for the two groups (i.e., the continuously unemployed group and the reemployed group). This was done to answer the question of whether relationships among the variables were consistent across time and unaffected by employment status. Thus, the goal was to establish whether relationships that existed at Time 1, when participants were all unemployed (or only marginally employed), still existed at Time 2 for those who remained unemployed. Furthermore, analysing the reemployed group separately would reveal whether gaining employment changed the relationships among the variables. Study Two also investigated whether job search behaviours changed over time. Consequently, only the continuously unemployed group was used for that investigation.

The groups were also analysed separately to determine the predictors of mental health at Time 2. There is clear evidence in the literature that gaining employment improves mental health. There is also evidence that job-related variables (e.g., job satisfaction) can impact on the mental health of employed individuals. Thus, the predictors of mental health were expected to be different for the continuously unemployed and the reemployed groups. One of the aims of Study Two was to establish whether the model predicting mental health of the unemployed participants at Time 1 was robust across time and still able to predict the mental health for participants who remained unemployed at Time 2.

Study Two also examined which of the variables measured at Time 1 were able to predict job acquisition at Time 2. The whole sample of 115 participants was used for that analysis. The final part of the quantitative analyses explored changes over time on the coping variables and mental health and identified whether any of those changes could be attributed to gaining employment. Thus, the whole sample of 115 was also used for those analyses.

This chapter begins by exploring how the mental health of the employed and unemployed groups compares to that of the general population. The sample is then split, and the continuously unemployed group is analysed first to explore correlations among the study variables, to establish whether job seeking efficacy, employment expectation, and job search behaviours changed over time, and to identify predictors of job search behaviours and mental health. The employed group is then analysed to explore correlations among the study variables and to identify the variables that predict mental health during employment. The groups are then combined and the analyses turn to identifying the key predictors of job acquisition and exploring changes over time on the coping variables and mental health that are attributed to gaining employment. As with Study One, the criterion for statistical significance was set at $\alpha = .05$ for all Study Two analyses.

Comparison of mental health at Time 2 to population data

Study One presented a graphical depiction of the mental health of the unemployed participants at Time 1 compared to that of the Australian population sample from 1997. A similar comparison was carried out at Time 2. For this comparison, the groups were split according to gender and employment status. Figure 8 shows comparisons of the GHQ mean scores with the ABS 1997 data.

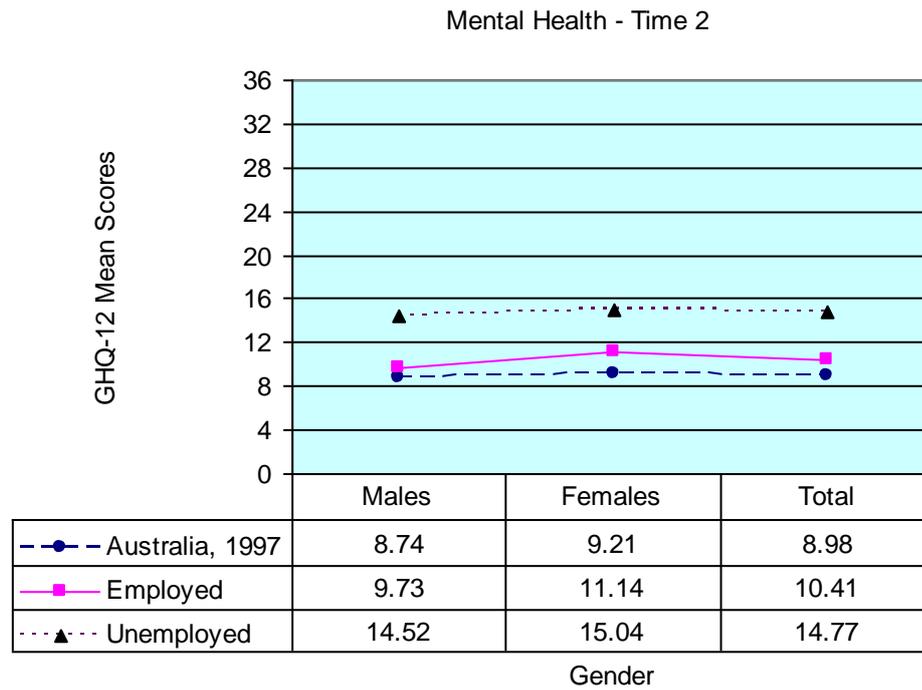


Figure 8. Comparison of mean GHQ-12 scores for unemployed and employed groups at Time 2 with the 1997 ABS population sample ($N = 115$).

Of the 115 people who took part in the follow-up study, 54 (47%) had GHQ scores above 11, suggesting that they had clinical symptoms, and 61 (53%) were under the cutoff for clinical symptoms. Figure 8 shows that, compared to the general Australian population in 1997, the unemployed participants in the current study were experiencing significantly higher levels of psychological distress, $t(56) = 5.54$. Both males and females in the unemployed group had significantly higher distress than the population sample: Males $t(28) = 4.44$; Females $t(27) = 3.49$. There were, however, no significant differences between the employed participants and the Australian sample, $t(57) = 1.79$, and no differences between males, $t(29) = .92$, $p = .37$, or females $t(27) = 1.62$, $p = .12$, in the current sample compared to those in the population sample. Thus, the mean GHQ scores for participants who gained employment were similar to those of the general population, whilst participants who remained unemployed had significantly poorer mental health than the Australian sample.

Results for the Unemployed Group

This section presents analyses of the unemployed group, which consisted of 57 participants. Correlations among the coping variables are examined first, followed by an exploration of changes over time in job seeking efficacy, employment expectation, and job search behaviours, and then regression analyses on the job search variables.

Correlations among Coping Variables

The following section presents a brief summary of some of the key correlations among the coping variables for participants who remained unemployed. The correlations are presented in Table D1 in Appendix D.

Coping Resources

Of the coping resources, the core self-evaluation variables were significantly correlated with one another, except for PA and NA. Self-esteem was correlated with task-focused efficacy ($r = .44$), self-promotion efficacy ($r = .54$), positive affect ($r = .50$), and negative affect ($r = -.58$). Positive affect was significantly correlated with task-focused efficacy ($r = .46$) and self-promotion efficacy ($r = .47$). Negative affect was significantly correlated with task-focused efficacy ($r = -.34$) and self-promotion efficacy ($r = -.31$). Whilst positive and negative affect were negatively related ($r = -.21$), the correlation was not significant. The correlations among the core self-evaluations were similar to those from Time 1, suggesting that their relationships are reliable across time, at least for people who are continuously unemployed.

Employment commitment was significantly correlated with self-esteem ($r = -.31$) and negative affect ($r = .58$). It was also correlated with both of those variables at Time 1, which suggests that their relationships are consistent across time for the unemployed. Income was not significantly correlated with any of the coping resources at Time 2. It was negatively correlated with employment commitment at Time 1, so the relationship does not appear to be very stable across time.

Cognitive Appraisals

Of the appraisal variables, satisfaction with employment status was significantly correlated with financial hardship ($r = -.57$), financial strain ($r = -.47$),

and collective purpose ($r = .28$). Those relationships were consistent across time, but the satisfaction-social contact relationship at Time 1 was not evident at Time 2.

Employment expectation was not significantly correlated with any of the other appraisal variables, yet at Time 1, it was correlated with most of them. Financial strain and financial hardship were significantly correlated with one another ($r = .68$), and with collective purpose ($r = -.52$ and $r = -.28$, respectively) and social contact ($r = -.58$ and $r = -.35$, respectively). Financial hardship was not significantly correlated with collective purpose at Time 1, so the passage of time may have made that relationship stronger. The relationships between the financial variables and social contact were consistent with Time 1.

Four of the latent benefits shared positive relationships with one another, although the correlation between collective purpose and status was not significant. Collective purpose was significantly correlated with social contact ($r = .66$) and activity ($r = .40$), social contact was significantly correlated with status ($r = .34$) and activity ($r = .27$), and status was significantly correlated with activity ($r = .38$). Time structure was not significantly correlated with the other latent benefits. The intercorrelations among the latent benefits are relatively stable across time, although collective purpose and time structure were correlated at Time 1 but not at Time 2.

Correlations between Coping Resources and Cognitive Appraisals

There were some significant correlations between the coping resources and the appraisal variables. Employment expectation was significantly correlated with task-focused efficacy ($r = .35$), self-promotion efficacy ($r = .42$), and positive affect ($r = .38$). It was also correlated with those variables at Time 1, suggesting that their relationships were relatively stable across time. Whilst employment expectation and negative affect were significantly correlated at Time 1, their relationship did not hold for Time 2.

Task-focused efficacy and self-promotion efficacy were both significantly correlated with the latent benefits of status ($r = .34$ and $r = .38$, respectively) and activity ($r = .34$ and $r = .49$, respectively). Self-promotion efficacy was also significantly correlated with collective purpose ($r = .34$). Both of the efficacy variables were significantly correlated with all of the latent benefits at Time 1, so some of the relationships could be somewhat unstable over time. Alternatively, the smaller sample size may have made it more difficult to obtain a significant effect.

Self-esteem was significantly correlated with collective purpose ($r = .38$) as well as with activity ($r = .52$). Self-esteem was correlated with all of the latent benefits at Time 1, so those relationships were also a little unstable over time.

Positive affect was significantly correlated with all of the latent benefits at Time 2, with correlations ranging from .38 for time structure to .53 for collective purpose. Thus, the relationships between PA and the latent benefits were consistent from Time 1 to Time 2.

Negative affect was significantly related to status ($r = -.31$), activity ($r = -.43$), and time structure ($r = -.35$). NA was related to all of the latent benefits at Time 1, so its relationships with status, activity, and time structure appear to be stable. However, there is some inconsistency in the relationships between NA and collective purpose and social contact.

Employment commitment was significantly correlated with employment expectation ($r = .29$), financial strain ($r = .37$), financial hardship ($r = .32$), social contact ($r = -.27$), activity ($r = -.26$), and time structure ($r = -.44$). The only one of those variables correlated with employment commitment at Time 1 was time structure. Thus, the relationship between employment commitment and time structure was consistent. Duration of unemployment may have strengthened relationships between employment commitment and the other aforementioned variables. Income was related only to satisfaction with employment status ($r = .29$) at Time 2, but it was not significantly correlated with financial strain or hardship or any of the other appraisal variables.

Correlations between Coping Resources and Job Search Behaviours

There were three coping resource variables related to the job search behaviours at Time 2: Employment commitment, task-focused efficacy, and self-promotion efficacy. Income, self-esteem, PA, and NA were not significantly correlated with any of the job search behaviours. Employment commitment was positively correlated with job search effort ($r = .44$), job search intensity ($r = .46$), job search methods ($r = .42$), and job interviews ($r = .28$). This was consistent with Time 1, where employment commitment was significantly correlated with job search intensity and job search methods.

Task-focused efficacy and self-promotion efficacy were related to job search effort ($r = .37$ and $r = .29$, respectively), job applications over the previous 6 months

($r = .35$ and $r = .44$, respectively), and job search intensity ($r = .26$ and $r = .39$, respectively). Self-promotion efficacy was also significantly correlated with job applications over the previous month ($r = .35$) and job search methods ($r = .37$). Neither of the efficacy variables was significantly correlated with job interviews. The relationships between job seeking efficacy and job search behaviours appear to be consistent across time. Both efficacy variables were related to applications, job search intensity, and job search methods at Time 1.

Correlations between Appraisals and Job Search Behaviours

The appraisal variables that shared relationships with job search behaviours were employment expectation, financial hardship, financial strain, status, activity, and satisfaction with employment status. Employment expectation was positively correlated with all six job search behaviours, with correlations ranging from .31 for job applications over the previous 6 months to .53 for job search intensity. This was consistent with Time 1, where employment expectation was correlated with job applications, job search intensity, and job search methods.

Financial hardship and financial strain were both significantly correlated with job search effort ($r = .51$ and $r = .42$, respectively) and job search intensity ($r = .40$ and $r = .33$, respectively). Financial hardship was also significantly correlated with job search methods ($r = .32$). At Time 1, financial hardship was correlated with job applications and job search intensity, whilst financial strain was correlated with job applications. Thus, there was some stability in those relationships across time.

Status was significantly correlated at $r = .27$ with job applications over the previous 6 months and job search methods. Activity was significantly related to job interviews ($r = .38$). At Time 1, all of the latent benefits were correlated with job search intensity, collective purpose, social contact, and activity were correlated with job search methods, and time structure was correlated with job applications. Thus, there was some instability across time for relationships between the latent benefits and job search behaviours.

Satisfaction with employment status was significantly correlated with job search effort ($r = -.63$), job applications in the previous month ($r = -.32$), job search intensity ($r = -.54$), and job search methods ($r = -.48$). Satisfaction was correlated with the latter three job search behaviours at Time 1, so those relationships were consistent.

Correlations between Coping Resources and Mental Health

All of the personal coping resources, apart from job seeking efficacy, were significantly correlated with mental health at Time 2. Employment commitment and negative affect were positively correlated with GHQ scores, indicating that participants with higher commitment and higher NA experienced poorer mental health.

The correlations between mental health and self-esteem and positive affect were negative, suggesting that higher self-esteem and PA are associated with better mental health. The job seeking efficacy variables were negatively correlated with mental health, but failed to reach significance. At Time 1, all of the personal coping resources were correlated with mental health, so the results suggest that the majority of those relationships were generally stable across time for participants who remained unemployed. The smaller sample at Time 2 may have made it more difficult to detect an effect.

Correlations between Cognitive Appraisals and Mental Health

Some of the appraisal variables were significantly correlated with mental health. Satisfaction with employment status and all of the latent benefits, except for collective purpose, were negatively correlated with GHQ scores. Financial strain and financial hardship were positively correlated with mental health, but the correlations failed to reach significance. At Time 1, mental health was correlated with all of the appraisal variables, so the relationships between mental health and perceived access to the manifest benefits and to collective purpose were not consistent across time. However, the relationships between mental health and the remaining appraisal variables were relatively stable.

The following sections examine changes over time in job seeking efficacy, employment expectation, and job search behaviours, before presenting results of multiple regression analyses used to identify the key predictors of job search behaviours. The analyses were carried out on the 57 continuously unemployed participants. The job search behaviours measured at Time 2 included job applications in the previous month, job applications over the previous 6 months, job interviews attended over the previous 6 months, job search intensity, job search methods, and job search effort over the previous 6 months. The methods used to evaluate the

assumptions of multiple regression analyses were presented in Chapter 3. Any violations of those assumptions are reported with the results for each analysis.

Changes over Time in Job Seeking Efficacy, Employment Expectation, and Job Search Behaviours

Job seeking efficacy, employment expectation, and job search behaviours that were measured at both Time 1 and Time 2 were examined for any changes over time for the sample of 57 continuously unemployed participants. Although there were also 18 of the 58 employed participants who were looking for another job, their data were not included to avoid the possible spurious influence of reemployment. Paired samples *t*-tests (repeated measures) were used for the analyses. The results are presented in Table 32.

Table 32

Paired Samples T-Tests for Job Seeking Efficacy, Employment Expectation, and Job Search Behaviours (n = 57) for the Continuously Unemployed Group

Variable	Time	<i>M</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
Task-focused efficacy	Time 1	16.26	57	4.75	-3.71**
	Time 2	18.84	57	5.94	
Self-promotion efficacy	Time 1	18.63	57	5.19	3.07**
	Time 2	16.49	57	5.42	
Employment expectation	Time 1	2.19	57	0.95	1.79
	Time 2	1.96	57	0.87	
Job applications	Time 1	2.25	57	1.57	-.22
	Time 2	2.30	57	1.55	
Job search intensity	Time 1	19.70	57	10.10	2.86**
	Time 2	16.39	57	10.54	
Job search methods	Time 1	8.79	57	2.80	9.04**
	Time 2	5.04	57	3.68	

Note. ** $p < .01$

As Table 32 shows, there were significant differences between Time 1 and Time 2 for task-focused efficacy, self-promotion efficacy, job search intensity, and job search methods. Apart from task-focused efficacy, the trend was for a significant decline in scores from Time 1 to Time 2. Over a 6-month period of continuous unemployment, participants felt less capable of executing job search behaviours that involved promoting themselves to others as a job seeker. They also decreased the

intensity of their job seeking and used fewer methods to look for work. Their mean scores for task-focused efficacy, however, increased from Time 1 to Time 2. Thus, they became more confident in their ability to carry out job search behaviours, such as checking newspapers, employment agencies, or the internet for jobs, or writing resumes. Those activities are more impersonal than the activities associated with self-promotion efficacy.

Predictors of Job Search Behaviours

There were several indicators of job seeking behaviour measured at Time 2, including: Job applications in the previous month, job applications in the previous 6 months, job interviews over the previous 6 months, job search intensity, job search methods, and job search effort over the previous 6 months. Each of the indicators of job search behaviour were analysed separately using multiple regression to identify the key predictors of each of those behaviours. All six job search behaviours were significantly positively correlated with one another, with correlations ranging from .35 for job applications in past 6 months and job search intensity, to .94 between job search intensity and job search methods. The high correlation for the latter variables was expected because the job search methods variable was a derivative of the intensity items. The regression analyses were based on the variables that were significantly correlated with the job search behaviours.

Job Applications over the Previous Month

The variables that were significantly correlated with number of job applications in the past month included: Education, relationship status, number of job search training courses completed, self-promotion efficacy, employment expectation, financial hardship, and satisfaction with employment status. The seven variables were entered into a standard multiple regression. Using a cut-off for Mahalanobis distance as $\chi^2(7, N = 57) = 24.32, p < .001$, no multivariate outliers were present. Together, the seven variables accounted for 39% (R^2 adj.) of the variance in job applications and the model was significant, $F(7, 49) = 5.93, p < .01$. Three of the variables—relationship status, self-promotion efficacy, and financial hardship were significant unique predictors of job applications. Reduced models were tested using hierarchical regression, with the best model being one with relationship status, self-promotion efficacy, financial hardship and job search training courses. The addition

of education, employment expectation, and satisfaction with employment status at Step 2 did not significantly improve R^2 , with $F_{inc}(3, 49) = .76, p = .52$. The reduced model was no different from the full model, accounting for the same amount of variance in job applications (i.e., 39%). The results are presented in Table 33.

Table 33

Multiple Regression Analysis of Variables Predicting Job Applications in Previous Month for Unemployed Sample (n = 57)

Independent Variable	<i>B</i>	95% CI for <i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	sr^2
Relationship status	-1.11	-1.83 to -.40	.36	-.35**	.11
Job search training courses	.35	-.01 to .71	.18	.22	.04
Self-promotion efficacy	.07	.01 to .13	.03	.25*	.06
Financial hardship	.40	.15 to .66	.13	.34**	.11

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; $R = .66, R^2 = .43, R^2(\text{adj.}) = .39, F(4, 52) = 9.94, p < .01$; B = unstandardised Beta; β = standardised Beta; sr^2 = semi-partial correlation.

The regression model indicates that being single, experiencing a greater amount of financial hardship, having higher self-promotion efficacy, and having completed more job search training courses predicted a greater number of job applications. Self-promotion efficacy was a significant predictor of job applications at Time 1 and, hence, it shows some reliability as a predictor.

Job Applications over the Previous 6 Months

At Time 2, participants were also asked to estimate how many jobs they had applied for over the 6 month duration of the study. Applications at 6 months was significantly correlated with relationship status, duration of unemployment, job search training courses, job seeking efficacy (both task-focused and self-promotion), employment expectation, and status. A note is warranted here about the variable duration of unemployment. This variable was not measured at Time 2; however, it was possible to use the Time 1 measure for participants who remained unemployed. Those participants had been unemployed for 6 months longer than they had reported at Time 1. Thus, their length of unemployment had increased by a constant of 6 months (the duration of the research period), making no mathematical difference to the variable. There were 47 participants at Time 2 who had provided data for duration of unemployment at Time 1. Therefore, pairwise deletion was used to

account for the missing data on that variable, and the reported degrees of freedom are for the smallest sample size.

The initial regression run identified a problem with the relatively high correlation between the two efficacy variables ($r = .72$). The VIF and tolerance levels for task-focused efficacy were 2.15 and .47, respectively, and for self-promotion, they were 2.59 and .39, respectively. The correlation with job applications was higher for self-promotion efficacy ($r = .44$) than for task-focused efficacy ($r = .35$), so task-focused efficacy was excluded from the analyses. Using a cut-off for Mahalanobis distance as $\chi^2 (6, N = 57) = 22.46, p < .001$, no multivariate outliers were present. Together, the six variables accounted for a significant 40% (R^2 adj.) of the variance in job applications and the model was significant, $F (6, 40) = 6.03, p < .01$. Job search training courses and length of unemployment were both significant predictors. Reduced models were tested, with the model including relationship status, job search training courses, duration of unemployment, and self-promotion efficacy being the best. When those variables were included at Step 1, they accounted for a significant 40% [$F (4, 42) = 8.65, p < .01$] of the variance. The addition of employment expectation and status at Step 2 did not significantly improve R^2 , with $F_{inc} (2, 40) = .88, p = .42$. The final model is presented in Table 34.

Table 34

Multiple Regression Analysis of Time 2 Variables Predicting Job Applications in Previous 6 Months for Unemployed Sample (N = 57)

Independent Variable	<i>B</i>	95% CI for <i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	sr^2
Duration of unemployment	-.34	-.57 to -.10	.12	-.35*	.11
Job search training courses	.55	.19 to .91	.18	.40**	.13
Self-promotion efficacy	.06	.00 to .13	.03	.25	.05
Relationship status	-.53	-1.22 to .15	.34	-.19	.03

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; $R = .69, R^2 = .48, R^2$ (adj.) = .40, $F (4, 42) = 8.65, p < .01$; *B* = unstandardised Beta; β = standardised Beta; sr^2 = semi-partial correlation.

As Table 34 indicates, participants who were single, had a shorter duration of unemployment, had completed more job search training courses, and had more confidence in their ability to carry out job search activities had applied for more jobs over the 6-month duration of the study. Relationship status accounted for more

variance in job applications over the previous month ($sr^2 = .11$) than it did for job applications over the previous 6 months ($sr^2 = .03$). This suggests that relationship status becomes less important as a predictor of job applications as duration of unemployment increases. Conversely, number of job search training courses became a more important predictor of job applications over 6 months ($sr^2 = .13$) than it was for applications over 1 month ($sr^2 = .04$). Thus, its importance as a predictor increased over time. This prompted a closer examination of job search training, which is reported in a later section.

Job Interviews in Previous 6 Months

Participants were asked to indicate, out of the jobs they had applied for over the previous 6 months, how many interviews they had attended. Job interviews was significantly correlated with relationship status, having previously been employed, number of job search training courses, employment commitment, employment expectation, activity, job search effort, job search intensity, job search methods, and job applications over the past month and past 6 months. Previous employment was not included in the analysis because only 4 of the 57 participants had never worked before, making the split between those two categories very uneven. Job applications over the previous month was also excluded because that variable was partially subsumed by job applications over the previous 6 months. Similarly, job search methods was not included due to its very high correlation with job search intensity.

Eight variables were included in the regression analysis, including: Relationship status, job search training courses, employment commitment, employment expectation, activity, job search intensity, job search effort, and job applications in the previous 6 months. Using a cut-off for Mahalanobis distance as $\chi^2(8, N = 75) = 26.13, p < .001$, no multivariate outliers were present. Together, the eight variables accounted for a significant 40% (R^2 adj.) of the variance in job interviews and the model was significant, $F(8, 48) = 5.59, p < .01$. Job applications over the previous 6 months and activity were significant unique predictors of job interviews. Reduced models were tested by systematically removing variables with low standardised beta values and testing the change in R^2 . Five variables were retained and the final model is presented in Table 35.

Table 35

Multiple Regression Analysis of Time 2 Variables Predicting Job Interviews in Previous 6 Months for Unemployed Sample (N = 57)

Independent Variable	B	95% CI for B	SE B	β	sr^2
Employment commitment	.09	.04 to .13	.02	.39**	.14
Activity	.11	.06 to .17	.03	.43**	.16
Job applications	.58	.26 to .89	.16	.38**	.14

Note. ** $p < .01$; $R = .67$, $R^2 = .44$, $R^2(\text{adj.}) = .41$, $F(3, 53) = 14.00$, $p < .01$; B = unstandardised Beta; β = standardised Beta; sr^2 = squared semi-partial correlation.

As Table 35 shows, the final model included employment commitment, activity, and job applications over the previous 6 months. When those three variables were included at Step 1, they accounted for 41% of the variance in job interviews and the model was significant, with $F(3, 53) = 14.00$, $p < .01$. The addition of the remaining 5 variables at Step 2 did not improve R^2 , with $F_{inc}(5, 48) = .74$, $p = .60$. The three predictors made unique contributions to the variance of job interviews over and above their shared contribution. Activity was the best predictor, accounting for 16% of the variance. The results suggest that greater activity, higher employment commitment, and submitting more job applications over the previous 6 months resulted in more job interviews.

Job Search Intensity

Several Time 2 variables were significantly correlated with job search intensity at Time 2. Those variables included: Education, job search training courses, task-focused efficacy, self-promotion efficacy, employment expectation, employment commitment, satisfaction with employment status, financial strain, and financial hardship. Given the high correlations between the efficacy variables ($r = .72$) and between financial strain and hardship ($r = .68$), task-focused efficacy and financial strain were not included in the regressions. Financial strain had a lower correlation with job search intensity than financial hardship ($r = .33$ vs. $r = .40$), hence its removal. This left seven variables. Using a cut-off for Mahalanobis distance as $\chi^2(7, N = 57) = 24.32$, $p < .001$, no multivariate outliers were present. Together, the variables accounted for a significant 60% of the variance in job search intensity, $F(7, 49) = 12.83$, $p < .01$. Job search training, education, and employment expectation were all significant unique predictors. Once again, reduced models were tested using

hierarchical regression. The more parsimonious model included job search training, education, financial hardship and employment expectation. The addition of self-promotion efficacy, employment commitment, and satisfaction at Step 2 did not significantly improve the model, with $F_{inc}(3, 49) = 1.72, p = .18$. The final model is presented in Table 36.

Table 36

Multiple Regression Analysis of Variables Predicting Time 2 Job Search Intensity for Unemployed Sample (N = 57)

Independent Variable	<i>B</i>	95% CI for B	<i>SE B</i>	β	sr^2
Job search training courses	3.30	1.33 to 5.27	.98	.31**	.09
Education	-2.17	-3.99 to -.35	.91	-.23*	.04
Financial hardship	2.58	1.11 to 4.06	.73	.32**	.09
Employment expectation	4.98	2.74 to 7.21	1.11	.41**	.15

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; $R = .78, R^2 = .61, R^2(\text{adj.}) = .58, F(4, 52) = 20.32, p < .01$; B = unstandardised Beta; β = standardised Beta; sr^2 = squared semi-partial correlation.

The four predictors accounted for 58% of the variance in job search intensity and all were significant. Employment expectation was the best predictor, accounting for 15% of the variance. The results from Table 36 indicate that participants who had completed more job search training courses in the past, who had lower levels of education, who reported greater financial hardship, and who had a higher expectation that they would find a job, were more active with their job seeking. Financial hardship was a significant predictor of job search intensity at Time 1, which suggests that it is a reliable predictor.

Job Search Methods

At Time 2, the average number of job search methods used by the continuously unemployed participants was 5.04 ($SD = 3.68$), which was about half of the number reported by the full sample at Time 1 ($M = 9.56, SD = 2.61$), and a large drop from the average number that those 57 continuously unemployed participants had used at Time 1 ($M = 8.79, SD = 2.80$). The mean for each of the 12 methods is presented in Figure 9. Figure 9 shows a similar pattern to that of the average number of Time 1 job search methods used.

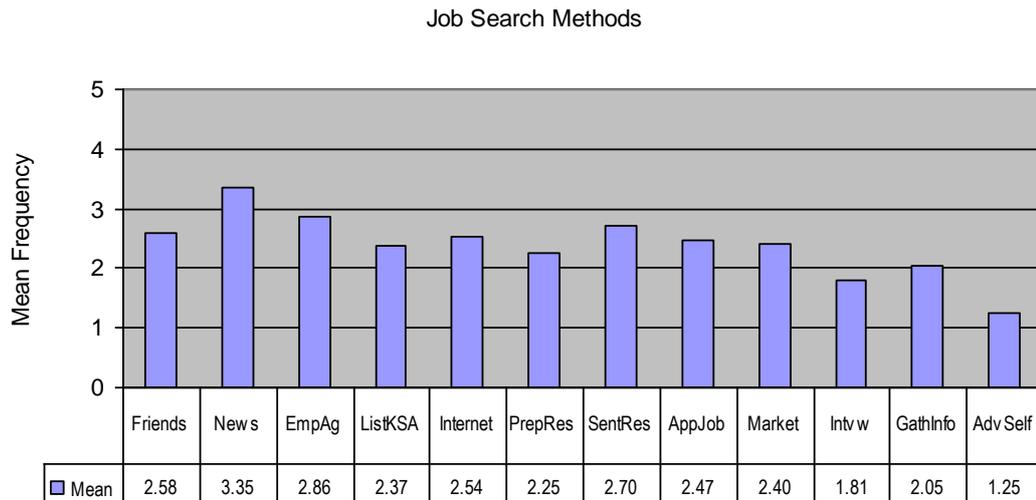


Figure 9. Mean number of job search methods used by unemployed participants at Time 2 ($N = 57$).

The most frequently-used job search method was checking the newspaper for job vacancies. Using employment agencies to check for vacancies was the next most common method used, followed by sending out a resume and speaking to friends, family, previous employers or other people to get information about jobs. Once again, the least preferred method for participants was advertising themselves in the “work wanted” section of the newspaper, flyers, community notice boards, trade magazines, or organisational newsletters. Fifty-one (or over 89%) of participants reported “never” using that particular method.

Job search methods was significantly correlated with education, number of job search training courses completed, self-promotion efficacy, employment expectation, financial hardship, status, employment commitment, and satisfaction with employment status. Only the 57 unemployed participants were included in the regression analysis. The eight variables were entered into the regression model. Using a cut-off for Mahalanobis distance as $\chi^2(8, N = 57) = 26.13, p < .001$, no cases were identified as multivariate outliers. Results of a standard multiple regression indicated that together the eight variables accounted for a significant 51% (R^2 adj.) of the variance in job search methods, with $F(7, 49) = 9.34, p < .01$.

Job search training courses was the only significant unique predictor. Smaller models were tested using hierarchical regression. The best model included job search training, education, employment expectation, and satisfaction. It accounted for 47%

of the variance in job search methods $F(4, 52) = 15.34, p < .01$. The results are presented in Table 37.

Table 37

Multiple Regression Analysis of Variables Predicting Job Search Methods for Time 2 Unemployed Sample (N = 57)

Independent Variable	B	95% CI for B	SE B	β	sr^2
Job search training courses	1.40	.64 to 2.16	.38	.37**	.12
Education	-.72	-1.39 to -.04	.34	-.21*	.04
Employment expectation	1.13	.28 to 1.98	.42	.27*	.06
Satisfaction	-.93	-1.74 to -.13	.40	-.24*	.05

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; $R = .71, R^2 = .51, R^2(\text{adj.}) = .47, F(5, 69) = 14.06, p < .01$; B = unstandardised Beta; β = standardised Beta; sr^2 = squared semi-partial correlation. Satisfaction = Satisfaction with employment status.

As Table 37 shows, job search training courses was the best predictor of job search methods. Participants who had completed more job search training courses, those who had lower educational qualifications, those who had a greater expectation for employment, and those who were less satisfied with their employment status used a greater number of methods used to search for work.

Further Analyses of Job Search Training Courses

Given that number of job search training (JST) courses was a significant predictor of job applications (in past month and past 6 months), job search intensity, and job search methods, it was explored in more detail. Its significance as a predictor posed the question of whether participants who had recently completed a job search training course were more motivated to look for work. That is, did completion of a job search training course at some point during the 6-month period of the study influence job search behaviours? To investigate this question, a difference score between Time 1 and Time 2 job search training courses was calculated and a new variable *JSTDiff* was created. There were 25 participants whose scores did not change, 30 who had completed one or more during the 6 months, and, curiously, 2 people who reported doing fewer JSTs at Time 2 than they had reported at Time 1. It is not obvious why this would be the case, so an assumption of no change was made

for those cases. The differences were scored 0 = *No difference* and 1 = *One or more*. To examine whether scores on the job search behaviours differed according to the whether participants had recently completed a job search training course, *t*-tests were carried out. The results are presented in Table 38.

Table 38

Mean Differences on Job Search Behaviours According to Differences in Number of JSTs Completed (N = 57)

Job Search Behaviour	JSTDiff	N	M	SD	t
Job applications over past month	No difference	27	1.85	1.68	-2.13*
	One or more	30	2.70	1.32	
Job applications over past 6 months	No difference	27	1.96	1.43	-1.89
	One or more	30	2.63	1.25	
Job search intensity	No difference	27	13.37	11.04	-2.11*
	One or more	30	19.10	9.44	
Job search methods	No difference	27	3.81	3.57	-2.48*
	One or more	30	6.13	3.48	

Note. * $p < .05$; JSTDiff = Difference in number of job search training courses from Time 1 to Time 2.

There were significant differences for applications of the past month, job search intensity, and job search methods. Participants who had completed one or more job search training courses during the study period were significantly more active with their job seeking than those who had not completed any JSTs during the study period. T-tests were also carried out to explore whether recent completion of JSTs had influenced participants job seeking efficacy or employment expectation. There were no significant differences for either of the efficacy variables or employment expectation. Thus, completing one or more job search training courses over the 6 month study period influenced participants' job search behaviours, but did not affect their efficacy or expectations for success.

Job Search Effort

At Time 2, participants were asked to indicate how much effort they put into finding paid work in the previous 6 months. The job search effort scale included items relating to intensity, persistence, determination, and effort. Job search effort was significantly correlated with job search training courses, task-focused and self-promotion efficacy, employment expectation, financial hardship, financial strain, employment commitment, and satisfaction with employment status. Due to the high correlation between the efficacy variables ($r = .72$), and the stronger relationship between task-focused efficacy and job search effort ($r = .37$ vs. $r = .29$ for self-promotion efficacy), self-promotion efficacy was not included in the regression analysis. Similarly, financial strain was excluded from the analysis because it had a lower correlation with job search effort ($r = .42$ vs. $r = .51$ for financial hardship). This left six variables to be entered into the regression model. Using a cut-off for Mahalanobis distance as $\chi^2(6, N = 57) = 22.46, p < .001$, no cases were identified as multivariate outliers. Results of the standard multiple regression indicated that together the six variables accounted for a significant 50% (R^2 adj.) of the variance in job search effort, with $F(6, 50) = 10.16, p < .01$. Task-focused efficacy, financial hardship, and satisfaction were significant unique predictors. Removing JSTs, employment commitment, and employment expectation did not significantly change R^2 , with $F_{inc}(3, 50) = 1.41, p = .25$. The final model, which explained 48% of the variance in job search effort, is presented in Table 39.

Table 39

Multiple Regression Analysis of Variables Predicting Job Search Effort (N = 57)

Independent Variable	<i>B</i>	95% CI for <i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	sr^2
Task-focused efficacy	.18	.06 to .30	.06	.29**	.08
Financial hardship	.63	-.02 to 1.29	.33	.23	.03
Satisfaction	-1.79	-2.70 to -.88	.45	-.46**	.14

Note. ** $p < .01$; $R = .72, R^2 = .51, R^2(\text{adj.}) = .48, F(3, 53) = 18.46, p < .01$; B = unstandardised Beta; β = standardised Beta; sr^2 = squared semi-partial correlation.

Satisfaction with employment status was the strongest predictor of job search effort, accounting for 14% of the variance. Task-focused efficacy was also a significant unique predictor. Financial hardship just failed to reach significance with

$p = .059$. The results indicate that participants put more effort into looking for work when they were less satisfied with their employment status, when they felt more confident in their ability to carry out the formal tasks related to searching for work, and when they experienced more financial hardship.

Predictors of Mental Health

At Time 1, the variables that predicted mental health during unemployment were self-esteem, positive affect, negative affect, employment commitment, satisfaction with employment status, and financial hardship. Logistic regression analyses were used to examine how well those variables, measured again at Time 2, were able to predict mental health at Time 2 for the continuously unemployed. The aim was to test the robustness of the logistic regression model produced at Time 1. The dichotomised mental variable, with the same criterion of ≤ 11 as the cut-off for clinical caseness was used as the DV. The variable was coded 0 = *Non-clinical* symptoms and 1 = *Clinical* symptoms. All six IVs were entered into the logistic regression. Assumption checks revealed that there may be a problem with multicollinearity. When each IV was entered as a DV predicted by the other IVs, the square multiple correlation (SMC) was highest for employment commitment (SMC = .74). The first regression analysis was carried out with employment commitment included in the model and the results were examined. The model is presented in Table 40.

Table 40

Logistic Regression of Variables Predicting Time 2 Mental Health for Continuously Unemployed Participants (n = 57)

Time 2 Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	95% CI for <i>Exp (B)</i>
Self-Esteem	-.15	.13	1.32	.86	.66 to 1.12
Positive Affect	-.18	.09	3.91	.83*	.70 to .99
Negative Affect	.27	.10	7.54	1.31**	1.08 to 1.60
Employment Commitment	.08	.08	1.08	1.08	.93 to 1.25
Satisfaction with Employment Status	.32	.64	.25	1.38	.39 to 4.81
Financial Hardship	.58	.47	1.52	1.78	.71 to 4.48
Constant	-1.57	5.96	.07	.21	

Classification Table

Observed	Predicted		% Correct
	Non-clinical	Clinical	
Non-Clinical	19	5	79.2
Clinical	4	29	87.9
Overall %			84.2

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; -2 Log likelihood = 36.77, Model $\chi^2(6) = 40.82$, $p < .01$; Strength of association measures: Cox and Snell $R^2 = .51$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .69$; Hosmer and Lemeshow $\chi^2(8) = 2.23$, $p = .97$. Response Group: 1 = Clinical.

Whilst the model was significantly different from the constant-only model, $\chi^2(8, N = 57) = 40.82$, $p < .01$ and a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(8, N = 57) = 2.23$, $p = .97$, a check of the beta weights indicated that there may be a suppressor effect occurring among the independent variables. A check of the simple correlations indicated that satisfaction with employment status was negatively correlated with mental health ($r = -.22$), however, the beta weight in the regression model was inflated and the sign was opposite ($B = .32$). Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) described a suppressor variable as one that enhances the prediction of the DV by virtue of its correlations with other IVs. It suppresses the variance in the other IVs that is irrelevant to the prediction of the DV (Tabachnick & Fidell). One way to identify a suppressor variable is to systematically leave out each IV and examine the changes in the regression

coefficient for the incongruent IV (i.e., satisfaction) (Tabachnick & Fidell). When employment commitment was omitted from the model, the relationship between satisfaction and mental health became congruent. The pattern of regression coefficients did not change for the other IVs. This suggested that employment commitment was having a suppressor effect on satisfaction. Given that the squared multiple correlation (SMC) was highest for employment commitment, meaning that it shared the most variance with the other IVs, and also that it was the only non-significant unique predictor of mental health at Time 1, it was removed from the Time 2 model. The final model is presented in Table 41 with figures from Time 1 included in brackets for comparisons.

The model was significantly different from the constant-only model, $\chi^2(5, N = 57) = 39.70, p < .01$ and a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(8, N = 57) = 5.49, p = .71$. Removal of employment commitment did not affect the overall prediction success of the model. Overall, the model correctly classified 84.2% of cases, which suggests a good level of predictability. It correctly classified 83.3% of non-clinical cases and 84.8% of clinical cases, which are acceptable levels of sensitivity and specificity. Positive and negative affect were the only significant unique predictors of mental health; however, the power to detect a significant effect was most reduced with the smaller sample size at Time 2.

Table 41 shows that the odds ratios for self-esteem and PA were less than one, indicating that for every one unit increase in scores on those variables, there is a decreased likelihood of having clinical symptoms. The odds ratio for negative affect was greater than one. Thus, for every one-unit increase in scores on NA, there is an increase in the likelihood of having clinical symptoms.

The odds ratios were relatively similar to the Time 1 model, except that satisfaction with employment status appeared to be relatively less important at Time 2. The prediction success was also relatively similar to Time 1, with only .2% less cases correctly classified at Time 2. The results suggest that the model is quite robust across time for participants who remained unemployed.

Table 41

Final Logistic Regression Model of Variables Predicting Mental Health for Continuously Unemployed (n = 57)

	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Exp(B)</i>	95% CI for <i>Exp (B)</i>
Self-Esteem	-.15 (-.09)	.13 (.04)	1.38 (5.90)	.86 (.91**)	.67 to 1.11 (.85 to .98)
Positive Affect	-.18 (-.09)	.09 (.03)	4.31 (10.99)	.84* (.91**)	.71 to .99 (.86 to .96)
Negative Affect	.29 (.23)	.10 (.03)	9.12 (48.62)	1.33** (1.25**)	1.11 to 1.60 (1.19 to 1.34)
Satisfaction with Employment Status	-.04 (-.42)	.53 (.19)	.01 (5.11)	.96 (.66**)	.34 to 2.70 (.46 to .95)
Financial Hardship	.53 (.54)	.45 (.16)	1.40 (11.16)	1.70 (1.71**)	.71 to 4.06 (1.25 to 2.35)
Constant	1.46 (-1.67)	5.10 (1.90)	.08 (.77)	4.29 (.19)	

Classification Table

Observed	Predicted		% Correct
	Non-clinical	Clinical	
Non-Clinical	20	4	83.3 (73.8)
Clinical	5	28	84.8 (89.8)
Overall %			84.2 (84.4)

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; -2 Log likelihood = 37.89, Model $\chi^2(5) = 39.70$, $p < .01$; Strength of association measures: Cox and Snell $R^2 = .50$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .68$; Hosmer and Lemeshow $\chi^2(8) = 5.49$, $p = .71$. Response Group: 1 = Clinical. Time 1 statistics in brackets.

Results for the Employed Group

The following section examines the correlations and predictors of mental health for the employed group. There were 58 participants who had gained employment by the time of the second study. Table E1 in Appendix E presents the correlations among the Time 2 study variables for the employed group. The criterion for statistical significance was $\alpha = .05$. The correlations among the personal

resources are examined first, followed by correlations between the personal resources and appraisal variables, and then correlations among the appraisal variables. There were several outcome variables relating to job acquisition that were also examined (i.e., working hours, job satisfaction, job quality, and job permanence), so correlations between the coping variables and those outcome variables are also reported.

Correlations among Coping Variables

There were 58 participants who had acquired jobs at the time of the second study, 18 of whom were looking for another job. Some of the Time 2 variables applied only to participants who had remained unemployed or who were looking for another job. Those variables included both of the job seeking efficacy variables and the majority of the job search behaviour variables. Given that there was a relatively small number (18) of participants in the employed group with scores on those variables, job seeking efficacy and job search behaviours were not included in the correlational analyses for the employed group.

The correlations among the personal resources for the employed group were similar to those of the unemployed group. Self-esteem was significantly positively correlated with PA ($r = .67$) and NA ($r = -.45$). PA and NA were not significantly correlated. Employment commitment and income were not intercorrelated, nor were they significantly correlated with the core self-evaluation variables. This differs from the unemployed group, whose scores on employment commitment were correlated with self-esteem and also with negative affect.

Income was significantly correlated with both financial hardship and financial strain ($r = -.46$ and $r = -.32$, respectively). Interestingly, for the unemployed group, the correlations between income and financial strain and hardship were not significant. Self-esteem, positive affect, and negative affect were significantly correlated with financial strain ($r = -.28$, $r = -.26$, and $r = .31$, respectively). Self-esteem and PA were also correlated with satisfaction with employment status ($r = .34$ and $r = .43$, respectively), and all of the latent benefits.

The correlations between self-esteem and the latent benefits ranged from .37 (self-esteem and activity) to .55 (self-esteem and time structure). This result is a little different to that for the unemployed sample, where self-esteem was only correlated with collective purpose and activity for that group. The correlations between positive

affect and the latent benefits ranged from .35 for collective purpose to .60 for social contact. This was similar to the unemployed group whose PA scores were correlated with all of the latent benefits. Negative affect was also significantly correlated with the latent benefits, apart from activity, with correlations ranging from -.31 for status to -.45 for collective purpose. For the unemployed group, NA was correlated with status, activity, and time structure, so there were some differences between the two groups. Employment commitment was not related to any of the appraisal variables for the employed group, which shows that it has a different pattern of correlations with appraisals depending on employment status. For the unemployed group, employment status was related to financial strain, financial hardship, social contact, activity, and time structure.

There were some intercorrelations among the appraisal variables. Satisfaction with employment status was significantly correlated with financial strain ($r = -.39$), financial hardship ($r = -.39$), activity ($r = .41$), and time structure ($r = .40$). For the unemployed group, satisfaction was correlated with financial strain and hardship and collective purpose. Hence, there are some similarities between the unemployed and employed groups in terms of satisfaction and access to the manifest benefits, but some differences in relation to satisfaction and access to the latent benefits. Financial strain and financial hardship were correlated with social contact ($r = -.46$ and $r = -.36$, respectively) and activity ($r = -.26$ and $r = -.27$, respectively). They were also correlated with social contact for the unemployed group, which suggests that the relations between those variables are not affected by employment status. Finally, all of the latent benefits were significantly intercorrelated, with correlations ranging from .29 for collective purpose and time structure to .74 for social contact and status. All of the latent benefits, except for time structure, were also intercorrelated for the unemployed group. This suggests that most of their relationships are not affected by employment status, but that the relationship between time structure and the other latent benefits could be influenced by employment status.

The personal resources variables of self-self-esteem ($r = -.59$), PA ($r = -.47$), and NA ($r = .66$) were significantly correlated with mental health in the employed group, but, employment commitment ($r = -.09$) was not related to mental health for that group. All of the personal resources were correlated with mental health for the unemployed group. Therefore, the relationships between self-esteem, PA, and NA exhibit stability across time, irrespective of employment status, but the relationship

between mental health and employment commitment appears to be influenced by employment status.

Appraisals of financial strain ($r = .39$) and satisfaction with employment status ($r = -.32$) were also significantly correlated with mental health. Financial strain was not related to mental health for the unemployed group, but the relationship between satisfaction with employment status and mental health appears to be consistent across time, regardless of employment status. Access to all five latent benefits were significantly correlated with mental health—collective purpose ($r = -.47$), social contact ($r = -.51$), status ($r = -.35$), activity ($r = -.35$), and time structure ($r = -.44$). This was also the case at Time 1, and also for the unemployed group, except that collective purpose was not related to mental health for the unemployed group at Time 2.

Job Search Strategies and their Perceived Helpfulness

Participants who had acquired jobs over the study period were asked to identify the job search strategies they used and to indicate how helpful they believed each strategy was in getting them their jobs. Thirteen strategies were listed, and participants were asked to firstly indicate whether they had used the strategy or not and, if so, to rate how helpful it was to them finding their job. Figure 10 provides a breakdown of their responses. The figures in brackets are the percentage of participants who actually used the strategy. The strategies included: Talking to friends and others to find suitable employers (FrdE); Taking to friends and others about job openings (FrdJ); Searching for job vacancies in the newspapers (News); Searching for job vacancies listed by employment agencies (EmAg); Searching for job vacancies on the internet (Int); Completing a job search training course (JST); Making a list of skills, qualifications, work experiences, and personal qualities to use when promoting oneself to potential employers (List); Tailoring a resume to suit a particular job (Res); Contacting organisations to find a suitable contact person (Org); Telephoning potential employers to market oneself (Phn); Writing a letter of introduction to potential employers (Let); Meeting potential employers face-to-face to market oneself (Face) and; Advertising oneself as a job seeker in newspapers and other print material (Adv).

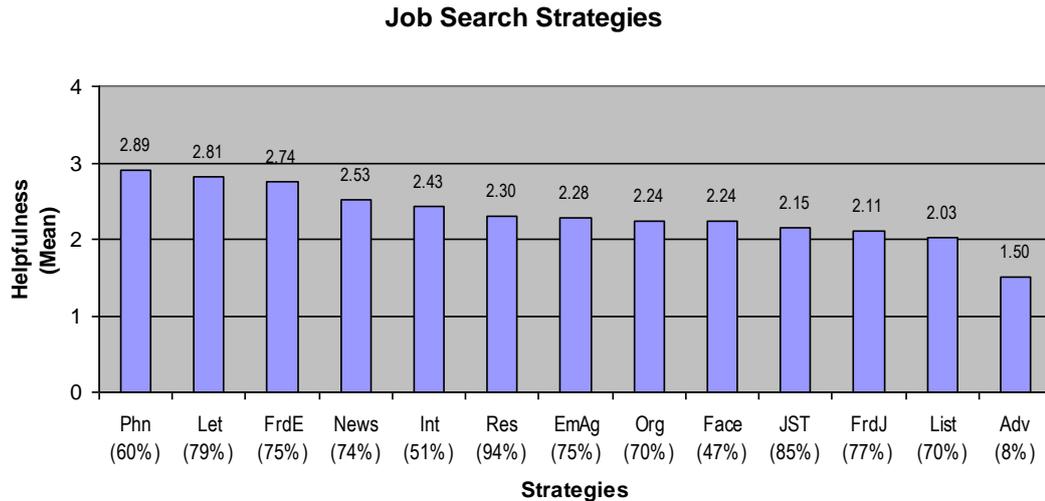


Figure 10. Strategies used by employed participants and their average ratings of helpfulness ($N = 58$).

As Figure 10 shows, the majority (94%) of participants tailored their resume to suit a particular job, 85% had attended a job search training course, 79% had written letters of introduction to prospective employers, and over three-quarters of them made use of their friends and acquaintances to find information out about jobs. Response options for helpfulness of strategies were: 1 = *not at all helpful*, 2 = *slightly helpful*, 3 = *very helpful*, and 4 = *extremely helpful*. Participants found the majority of strategies helpful to some degree. On average, they found marketing themselves to potential employers via the telephone the most helpful, followed by writing letters of introduction to potential employers, and using friends to find out about suitable employers. The few participants (8%) who had advertised themselves as jobseekers in newspapers did not find that strategy very helpful.

Predictors of Mental Health

As Table E1 shows, occupation, job satisfaction, job quality, financial strain, collective purpose, social contact, status, activity, time structure, satisfaction with employment status, self-esteem, positive affect, and negative affect were all significantly correlated with the dichotomous measure of mental health at T2. The correlations from Table E1 suggest that, better mental health for the employed group was associated with positive coping resources, greater access to the manifest and latent benefits of employment, greater job satisfaction, and better job quality. However, some of those variables were not included in the regression analyses for the reasons outlined below.

A check of the cell frequencies revealed that there were cells with very few or no values for some of the categories of occupation, and for some of the ratings of job satisfaction, and satisfaction with employment status. Occupation was collapsed into two categories, with *Labourers* through to *Intermediate production/Transport workers* coded as 0 = *lower skilled*, and *Advanced/ Intermediate clerical, sales, and service workers* through to *Managers/Professional workers* coded as 1 = *higher skilled*. Collapsing job satisfaction into satisfied and unsatisfied was not practical because there were only 7 cases who reported some level of dissatisfaction with their jobs. The remaining 51 participants reported being satisfied to some degree. Similarly, there were only 5 of the 58 participants who reported some level of dissatisfaction with their employment status. Therefore, both job satisfaction and satisfaction with employment status were excluded from the analyses. Tests for multicollinearity revealed that social contact and status had very high squared multiple correlations with the remaining IVs (SMCs = .80 and .78, respectively), so they were not included in the regression model. Table 42 presents the results from the initial logistic regression run on the nine remaining variables.

As Table 42 shows, some of the variables had relatively small Wald statistics and Beta values, so those variables were systematically removed, and the resultant models were assessed. The order of removal was as follows: Self-esteem, time structure, financial strain, and job quality. The model parameters did not change significantly when each of those variables was removed. The final model is presented in Table 43.

Table 42

Time 2 Variables Predicting T2 Mental Health for Employed Group (n = 58)

Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	Exp(B)	95% CI for Exp(B)
Occupation	-2.73	1.06	6.59	.07*	.01 to .52
Job Quality	.04	.07	.42	1.04	.92 to 1.19
Financial strain	.03	.05	.35	1.03	.94 to 1.12
Collective purpose	-.12	.09	1.95	.89	.75 to 1.05
Activity	-.07	.07	.97	.93	.82 to 1.07
Time structure	.02	.06	.11	1.02	.91 to 1.15
Self-esteem	-.04	.14	.09	.96	.73 to 1.26
Positive affect	-.14	.10	1.91	.87	.71 to 1.06
Negative affect	.21	.11	3.74	1.23	1.00 to 1.52
Constant	2.91	5.21	.31	18.30	

Classification Table

Observed	Predicted		% Correct
	Non-Clinical	Clinical	
Non-Clinical	33	4	89.2
Clinical	6	15	71.4
Overall %			82.8

Note. * $p < .05$; -2 Log likelihood = 39.84, Model $\chi^2(9) = 36.10$, $p < .01$; Strength of association measures: Cox and Snell $R^2 = .46$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .64$; Hosmer and Lemeshow $\chi^2(8) = 7.22$, $p = .51$. Occupation coded 0 = lower skilled, 1 = higher skilled (reference group is 1); Response Group: 1 = Clinical.

The model presented in Table 43 was significantly different from the constant-only model, $\chi^2(5, N = 58) = 35.02$, $p < .01$ and accounted for 62% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in mental health. The model was a good fit to the data, with the Hosmer and Lemeshow Chi-Square test being non-significant, $\chi^2(8, N = 58) = 5.31$, $p = .72$. Overall, the model correctly classified 84.5% of cases. It demonstrated acceptable specificity, with 89.2% of non-clinical cases correctly classified, and acceptable sensitivity, with 76.2% of clinical cases, correctly classified. Both occupation and negative affect were significant unique predictors. The odds ratio of .09 for occupation indicated that a move from the lower skilled occupation group to the higher skilled group decreases the odds of having clinical symptoms by 91%.

Table 43

Time 2 Variables Predicting T2 Mental Health for Employed Group (n = 58)

Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	Exp(B)	95% CI for Exp(B)
Occupation	-2.46	.95	6.74	.09**	.01 to .55
Collective purpose	-.12	.08	2.51	.88	.76 to 1.03
Activity	-.05	.05	.83	.95	.85 to 1.06
Positive affect	-.12	.07	2.81	.88	.77 to 1.02
Negative affect	.21	.09	5.58	1.23*	1.04 to 1.47
Constant	3.50	3.14	1.24	33.01	

Classification Table

Observed	Predicted		% Correct
	Non-Clinical	Clinical	
Non-Clinical	33	4	89.2
Clinical	5	16	76.2
Overall %			84.5

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; -2 Log likelihood = 40.91, Model $\chi^2(5) = 35.02$, $p < .01$; Strength of association measures: Cox and Snell $R^2 = .45$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .62$; Hosmer and Lemeshow $\chi^2(8) = 5.31$, $p = .72$. Occupation coded 0 = lower skilled, 1 = higher skilled (reference group is 1); Response Group: 1 = Clinical.

Collapsing the occupation categories into two groups meant a significant loss in the interpretability of the model. A move from the lower skilled occupation group to the higher skilled group could mean a jump across a few categories, for example, from a *Labourer* to an *Associate professional*. Whilst this is possible with an increase in educational qualifications or skills, it may not be as practical as moving up one level of occupation. The odds ratio of 1.23 for negative affect indicates that for each one-unit increase in NA, the odds of having clinical symptoms increase by 23%. The results from Time 1 and for both the employed and unemployed groups at Time 2 indicate that negative and positive affect are reliable predictors of mental health, regardless of employment status.

Results for the Full Sample at Time 2—Both Employed and Unemployed Groups

Predictors of Job Acquisition

This section presents results of logistic regression analyses aimed at identifying the factors influencing job acquisition. All of the Time 1 variables that had significant bivariate correlations with employment status at Time 2 were

considered for inclusion in the logistic regression model. They included: Age, duration of unemployment, years in last full-time job, occupation in last full-time job, job applications over the previous month, job search intensity, job search methods, self-promotion efficacy, employment expectation, time structure, employment commitment, and satisfaction with employment status. Data on duration of unemployment, years in last full-time job, and occupation were obtained only from those participants who had previously held a full-time job. For participants who provided data at Time 2 and who had acquired a job, 11 of the 58 had not worked full-time in the past. Including those labour market experience variables would preclude those participants' data and may bias the sample towards only those who had previously worked full-time in the past (at the time of the first study). Consequently, those three variables were not included in the logistic regression. The remaining variables were retained for further screening. Given that normality of the predictors is not an assumption for logistic regression, the continuous measure of age was used rather than the categorised measure.

Before proceeding with the logistic regression, the adequacy of expected cell frequencies for the discrete variables was checked using Crosstabs in SPSS. For satisfaction with employment status, there were six cells with expected frequencies less than five. Those cells were for the *very satisfied* and *extremely satisfied* categories, so the variable was dichotomised and coded 0 = *Dissatisfied* and 1 = *Satisfied*. None of the expected cell frequencies was less than five for the dichotomised variable.

Bivariate correlations were inspected for potential problems with collinearity. Given the high correlation between job search activity and job search methods ($r = .76$), job search methods was not used in the logistic regression analysis. Tolerance levels were examined for the continuous predictor variables to check for multicollinearity. A series of multiple regressions was carried out where each IV served as a DV with the other IVs as predictors. The collinearity diagnostics did not highlight any problems with multicollinearity. Tolerance levels were above .50, all of the VIFs were less than 2, and, although there were some condition indices greater than 30, none accounted for a high proportion ($>.50$) of the variance in two or more variables.

After checking the assumptions and excluding some of the original correlates of employment status, eight variables were included in the logistic regression model.

They included: Age, job search intensity, job applications in the previous month, self-promotion efficacy, employment expectation, time structure, employment commitment, and satisfaction with employment status (dichotomised). Employment Status was coded 1 = *Employed* and 0 = *Unemployed*, with employed (1) being used as the response category and unemployed (0) as the reference category.

Table 44 shows the regression coefficients, standard errors, Wald statistics, odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals for odds ratios for each of the eight predictors. None of the 115 cases had missing data on any of the variables included in the regression, so results are presented for the full Time 2 sample of 115.

Table 44

Logistic Regression Analysis of Time 1 Variables Influencing Employment Status (N = 115)

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	Wald	<i>Exp(B)</i>	95% <i>CI</i> for <i>Exp(B)</i>
Age	-.04	.02	4.94	.96*	.93 to 1.00
Self-promotion efficacy	.08	.05	2.23	1.08	.98 to 1.19
Employment commitment	.02	.03	.29	1.02	.96 to 1.08
Employment expectation	.08	.26	.11	1.09	.66 to 1.81
Satisfaction with employment status	-1.00	.57	3.14	.37	.12 to 1.11
Time structure	-.03	.02	2.12	.97	.92 to 1.01
Job applications	.12	.17	.45	1.12	.80 to 1.57
Job search intensity	.01	.03	.08	1.01	.95 to 1.06
Constant	-.22	1.85	.01	.80	

Classification Table

Observed	Predicted		% Correct
	Not Working	Working	
Not Working	40	17	70.2
Working	13	45	77.6
Overall %			73.9

Note. * $p < .05$, -2 Log likelihood = 132.68, Model $\chi^2(8) = 26.74$, $p < .01$; Strength of association measures: Cox and Snell $R^2 = .21$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .28$; Hosmer and Lemeshow $\chi^2(8) = 12.70$, $p = .12$. Reference group: Employment Status is Employed (0).

A test of the full model with all eight predictors against a constant-only model was statistically reliable, $\chi^2(8, N = 115) = 26.74$, $p < .01$. This suggests that the set of predictors reliably distinguishes between employed and unemployed people. The model was a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(8, N = 115) = 12.70$, $p = .12$. The set of predictors accounted for 28% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in employment

status, and were able to correctly predict 70.2% of the unemployed participants and 77.6% of the employed participants, making a total of 73.9% of the sample correctly classified. According to the Wald criterion, age was the most important predictor, $z = 4.94$. Odds ratios greater than one indicate an increase in odds of gaining employment, whilst those less than one indicate a decrease. Therefore, the odds ratio of .96 for age means that with each increasing year of age, the odds of gaining employment decrease by 4%.

The full model was tested against subsequent models with predictors removed based on their Wald statistics. Individual variables were systematically removed until removal of a variable compromised the model fit and accuracy of prediction, and altered the strength of association. The χ^2 difference test was carried out at each step. Job search intensity was removed first, followed by employment expectation. Removal of those variables had almost no impact on the properties of the model. At each step, the χ^2 difference test was non-significant and the model parameters remained stable. Removal of subsequent variables (i.e., employment commitment and then job applications) altered the strength of association and the prediction accuracy of the model. Thus, the final set of predictors included: Age, self-promotion efficacy, employment commitment, satisfaction with employment status, time structure, and job applications. The difference between the full model and the smaller model was not significant with $\chi^2_{diff}(2) = .21$, using the χ^2 critical value of 5.99 ($p = .05$). There were no differences in the accuracy of prediction or strength of association for the more parsimonious model. The final model is presented in Table 45.

Table 45

Logistic Regression Analysis of Time 1 Variables Influencing Employment Status (N = 115)

Predictor	B	S.E.	Wald	Exp(B)	95% CI for Exp(B)
Age	-.04	.02	5.97	.96*	.93 to .99
Self-promotion efficacy	.09	.04	3.78	1.09	1.00 to 1.19
Employment commitment	.02	.03	.37	1.02	.96 to 1.08
Satisfaction with employment status	-1.03	.56	3.35	.36	.12 to 1.08
Time structure	-.03	.02	2.21	.97	.92 to 1.01
Job applications	.14	.15	.83	1.15	.85 to 1.54
Constant	-.10	1.82	.00	.90	

Classification Table

Observed	Predicted		% Correct
	Not Working	Working	
Not Working	40	17	70.2
Working	13	45	77.6
Overall %			73.9

Note. * $p < .05$, -2 Log likelihood = 132.89, Model $\chi^2(6) = 26.53$, $p < .01$; Strength of association measures: Cox and Snell $R^2 = .21$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .28$; Hosmer and Lemeshow $\chi^2(8) = 11.45$, $p = .18$. Satisfaction with employment status 0 = Dissatisfied, 1 = Satisfied; Reference group: Employment Status is Employed (0).

The set of six predictors in the final model explained 28% of the variance in employment status, with age being the only significant unique predictor. The odds ratios for age, satisfaction with employment status, and time structure were all less than one, which indicates that for each one-unit increase in those variables, the odds of gaining employment decrease. That is, younger participants and those with less perceived time structure were more likely to gain employment than older participants and those who were able to impose their own structure on their days.

Changes over Time and by Employment Status

One of the main aims of this study was to examine changes over time in the coping variables and to determine whether those changes were influenced by employment status. The hypothesised effects are presented in Figure 11.

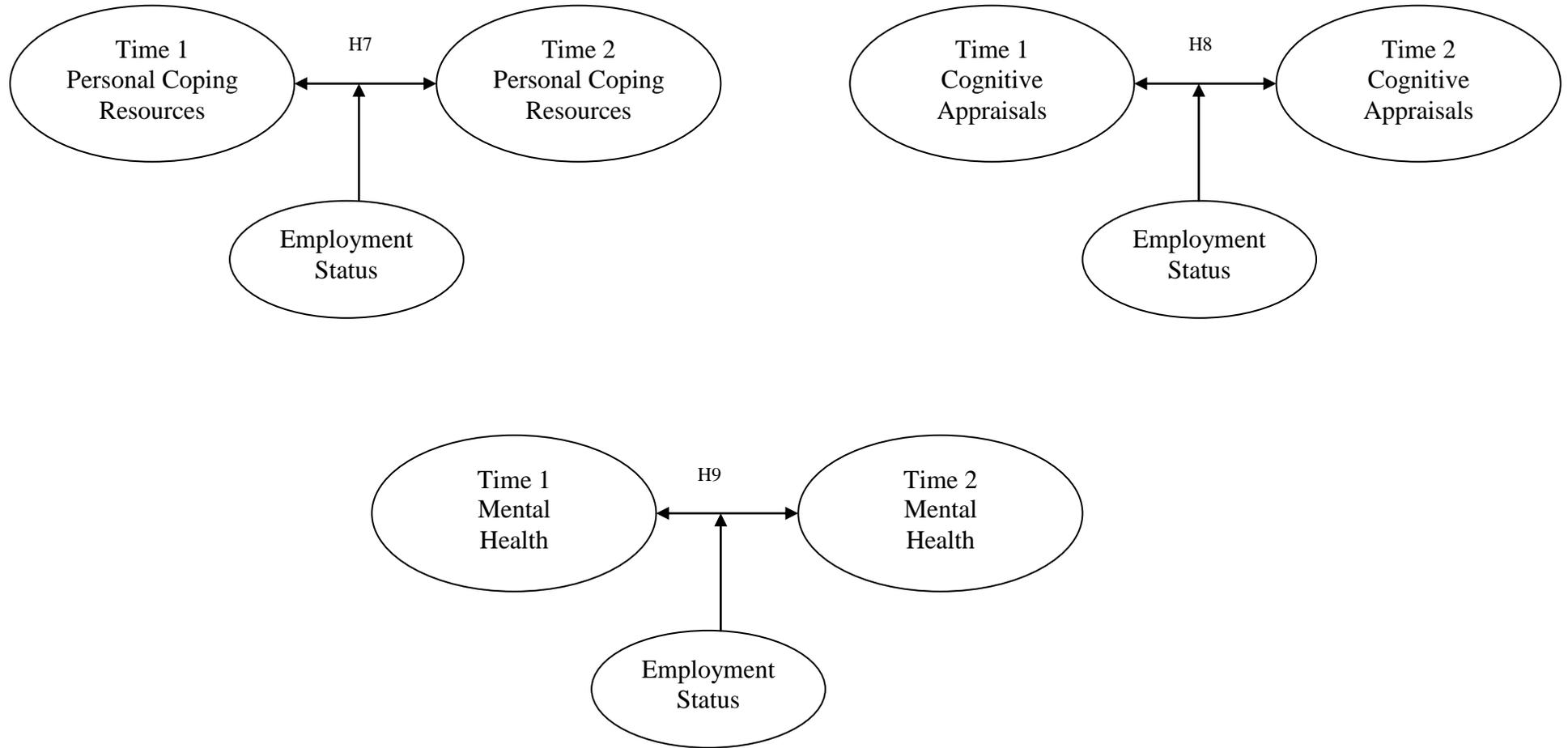


Figure 11. Conceptual model of hypothesised moderating effects of employment status.

As Figure 11 shows, each of the Time 1 personal coping resources, cognitive appraisal variables, and the mental health variable were expected to be correlated with their Time 2 measure, however, any improvement or decline in scores at Time 2 was expected to be influenced by employment status. Thus, employment status was expected to moderate the relationships between Time 1 and Time 2 coping variables and mental health. Hypothesis 7 proposed that the Time 1 personal coping resources (i.e., self-esteem, positive affect, negative affect, and employment commitment) would be correlated with their Time 2 counterparts and that any changes in the coping resources at Time 2 would be the result of employment status (either remaining employed or gaining employment). Similarly, hypothesis 8 proposed that the Time 1 appraisal variables (i.e., satisfaction with employment status, economic deprivation, and access to the latent benefits) would be related to their Time 2 counterparts and any changes in those variables would be due to employment status. Hypothesis 9 proposed that mental health at Time 1 would be correlated with mental health at Time 2, but any increase or decline in mental health would be a function of employment status.

In order to demonstrate that gaining employment has an effect on a particular variable, such as mental health, the patterns of change in that variable across time should differ depending on whether participants became employed or remained unemployed. Thus, an interaction between time and employment status should be present before the change in that variable can be attributed to gaining employment. Using a mixed model that includes repeated measures (i.e., scores for the variable at Time 1 and Time 2) and between groups (i.e., unemployed vs. employed groups) provides an opportunity to test for changes across time and interaction effects. The repeated measures represent the “time” factor. A significant main effect for time would indicate that there was some change in the variable from Time 1 to Time 2. Employment status represents the between-groups factor. A significant main effect for employment status would indicate that the differences between the employed and unemployed groups on a particular variable were present at Time 1 and also at Time 2, and that any changes that occurred across time on the variable of interest were similar for both groups. When a significant Time X Employment Status interaction is present, it provides evidence that the change in the variable of interest was dependent upon employment status. Thus the significance of the interaction term is of particular interest and the main effects become less important.

Using SPSS GLM (general linear model), mixed design ANOVAs were used to explore patterns of change across the coping resources, appraisal variables, and mental health, and to explore whether those patterns of change differed depending on whether participants gained employment. For each of the following analyses, the between-subjects IV was employment status at Time 2 (i.e., employed or unemployed) and the within-subjects factor was Time. The coping resources, appraisal variables, and mental health were included as the repeated measures variables. Job seeking efficacy, employment expectation, and the job search behaviours were not included in the mixed model because of missing data—there were only 18 employed participants who provided data on those variables at Time 2. They were analysed previously using repeated measures analysis in the section that investigated changes over time on job seeking efficacy, employment expectation, and job search behaviours. Table 46 presents the means and standard deviations for the coping variables and mental health at Time 1 and 2 by employment status groups. The results of the mixed design ANOVAs (i.e., a mix of repeated measures and between-groups analyses) follow in Table 47.

Table 46

Means and Standard Deviations for Coping Variables and Mental Health at Time 1 and Time 2 and by Employment Status (N = 115)

Variable	Employment Status	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<u>Coping Resources</u>			
T1 Esteem	Not working	29.77	5.08
	Working	29.40	5.24
	Total	29.58	5.15
T2 Esteem	Not working	30.32	4.72
	Working	31.59	4.86
	Total	30.96	4.81
T1 PA	Not working	33.33	4.98
	Working	34.53	7.18
	Total	33.94	6.19
T2 PA	Not working	33.04	6.90
	Working	36.67	7.51
	Total	34.87	7.41
T1 NA	Not working	25.32	6.71
	Working	27.22	8.15
	Total	26.28	7.50
T2 NA	Not working	26.32	7.30
	Working	23.81	7.51
	Total	25.05	7.48

Table 46 (cont.)

Means and Standard Deviations for Coping Variables and Mental Health at Time 1 and Time 2 and by Employment Status (N = 115)

Variable	Employment Status	M	SD
T1 ECom	Not working	33.77	8.98
	Working	37.43	7.97
	Total	35.62	8.65
T2 Ecom	Not working	34.12	9.18
	Working	38.00	7.42
	Total	36.08	8.53
<u>Appraisal Variables</u>			
T1 Sat	Not working	2.16	1.15
	Working	1.67	0.71
	Total	1.91	.98
T2 Sat	Not working	1.96	0.94
	Working	3.57	0.96
	Total	2.77	1.24
T1 FinHard	Not working	4.42	1.34
	Working	4.50	1.06
	Total	4.46	1.20
T2 FinHard	Not working	4.40	1.31
	Working	3.26	1.21
	Total	3.83	1.38
T1 FinStrain	Not working	33.37	9.18
	Working	35.00	6.61
	Total	34.19	8.00
T2 FinStrain	Not working	33.46	9.32
	Working	24.57	10.18
	Total	28.97	10.69
T1 Collect	Not working	19.14	8.21
	Working	18.03	8.22
	Total	18.58	8.20
T2 Collect	Not working	19.95	8.05
	Working	19.71	8.05
	Total	19.83	8.01
T1 Social	Not working	20.68	9.26
	Working	21.78	9.75
	Total	21.23	9.48
T2 Social	Not working	20.37	9.48
	Working	26.12	9.48
	Total	23.27	9.87
T1 Status	Not working	29.79	8.20
	Working	32.26	7.53
	Total	31.03	7.93
T2 Status	Not working	29.56	8.44
	Working	31.60	7.50
	Total	30.59	8.01

Table 46 (cont.)

Means and Standard Deviations for Coping Variables and Mental Health at Time 1 and Time 2 and by Employment Status (N = 115)

Variable	Employment Status	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
T1 Activity	Not working	27.65	6.88
	Working	29.26	7.39
	Total	28.46	7.16
T2 Activity	Not working	26.40	7.71
	Working	29.09	8.01
	Total	27.76	7.94
T1 Time structure	Not working	27.56	9.45
	Working	22.98	10.54
	Total	25.25	10.23
T2 Time structure	Not working	27.86	9.44
	Working	31.86	8.82
	Total	29.88	9.31
<u>Mental Health</u>			
T1 GHQ	Not working	13.96	5.42
	Working	15.93	7.33
	Total	14.96	6.50
T2 GHQ	Not working	14.77	7.89
	Working	10.41	6.11
	Total	12.57	7.36

Note. T1 = Time 1, T2 = Time 2; Esteem = Self-esteem, PA = Positive affect, NA = Negative affect, Satisfaction = Satisfaction with employment status, FinHard = Financial hardship, FinStrain = Financial strain, Social = Social contact, GHQ = Mental health.

The following table presents results of the mixed design 2 x 2 ANOVAs that analysed main effect and interaction effects for each of the variables of interest. The table also presents a measure of effect size, eta squared (η^2) and the strength of power for each of the tests.

Table 47

Main Effects and Time X Employment Status Interactions for Coping Variables and Mental Health (N = 115)

Variable	Effect	<i>F</i> (1, 113)	η^2	Power
Self-Esteem	Time	7.11**	.09	.91
	EStat	.29	.00	.08
	Time X EStat	4.01*	.03	.51
Positive Affect	Time	1.87	.02	.27
	EStat	5.23*	.04	.62
	Time X EStat	3.28	.03	.44
Negative Affect	Time	4.04*	.04	.51
	EStat	.06	.00	.06
	Time X EStat	13.51**	.11	.95
ECom	Time	.46	.00	.10
	EStat	7.09**	.06	.75
	Time X EStat	.03	.00	.05
Satisfaction	Time	66.27**	.37	1.00
	EStat	15.24**	.12	.97
	Time X EStat	99.70**	.47	1.00
FinHard	Time	29.66**	.21	1.00
	EStat	7.20**	.06	.76
	Time X EStat	28.03**	.20	1.00
FinStrain	Time	39.71**	.26	1.00
	EStat	6.29*	.05	.70
	Time X EStat	41.06**	.27	1.00
Collect	Time	3.26	.03	.43
	EStat	.25	.00	.08
	Time X EStat	.40	.00	.10
Social Contact	Time	7.11**	.06	.75
	EStat	4.57*	.04	.56
	Time X EStat	9.51**	.08	.86
Status	Time	.32	.03	.09
	EStat	3.23	.00	.43
	Time X EStat	.08	.03	.06
Activity	Time	1.05	.01	.18
	EStat	3.10	.03	.42
	Time X EStat	.60	.01	.12

Table 47 (cont.)

Main Effects and Time X Employment Status Interactions for Coping Variables and Mental Health (N = 115)

Variable	Effect	<i>F</i> (1, 113)	η^2	Power
Time Structure	Time	25.85**	.19	1.00
	EStat	.04	.00	.05
	Time X EStat	22.60**	.17	1.00
GHQ	Time	12.74**	.10	.94
	EStat	1.24	.01	.20
	Time X EStat	22.97**	.17	1.00

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; *df* = degrees of freedom, η^2 = partial eta squared; EStat = Employment status at Time 2, ECom = Employment commitment, Satisfaction = Satisfaction with employment status, FinHard = Financial hardship, FinStrain = Financial strain, Collect = Collective purpose, GHQ = Mental health.

For the mixed design ANOVAs, the repeated measures variables were Time 1 and Time 2 scores on the coping variables (e.g., self-esteem, employment commitment, and financial hardship) and on the GHQ. The between-groups variable was employment status (i.e., employed and unemployed). The mixed design ANOVAs provided statistical tests for main effects for time (i.e., differences between Time 1 and Time 2 scores on the variables), main effects for employment status (i.e., differences between employed and unemployed at Time 1 and Time 2), and interaction effects (i.e., time x employment status).

The results of the mixed design ANOVAs presented in Table 47 indicate that there were significant main effects for self-esteem, negative affect, satisfaction with employment status, financial hardship, financial strain, social contact, time structure, and mental health. Mean scores for self-esteem, satisfaction, social contact, and time structured were higher at Time 2 than at Time 1, whilst scores for NA, financial hardship and strain, and mental health were lower at Time 2. Thus, there was an improvement in all of those variables across time. The employment status main effects were significant for PA, employment commitment, satisfaction, financial hardship, financial strain, and social contact. As Table 46 shows, participants who successfully found work had higher levels of PA, more employment commitment, greater dissatisfaction with their employment status, more financial hardship and strain, and more perceived social contact at Time 1 than participants who remained unemployed. However, main effects become less important when there are interactions present.

There were significant interactions between employment status and self-esteem, negative affect, satisfaction with employment status, financial hardship, financial strain, social contact, time structure, and mental health. The following figures provide a graphic depiction of those interactions.

The significant main effect for self-esteem indicates that there was a general increase in self-esteem levels from Time 1 to Time 2. As Table 46 indicates, mean self-esteem levels improved from 29.58 at Time 1 to 30.96 at Time 2. The interaction effect (shown in Figure 12) was significant, but it only just reached significance with $p = .048$ and the effect size was very small ($\eta^2 = .03$). The interaction indicates that there was more of an improvement in self-esteem for people who had become employed at Time 2 than for those who remained unemployed.



Figure 12. The effect of time and employment status on self-esteem ($N = 115$).

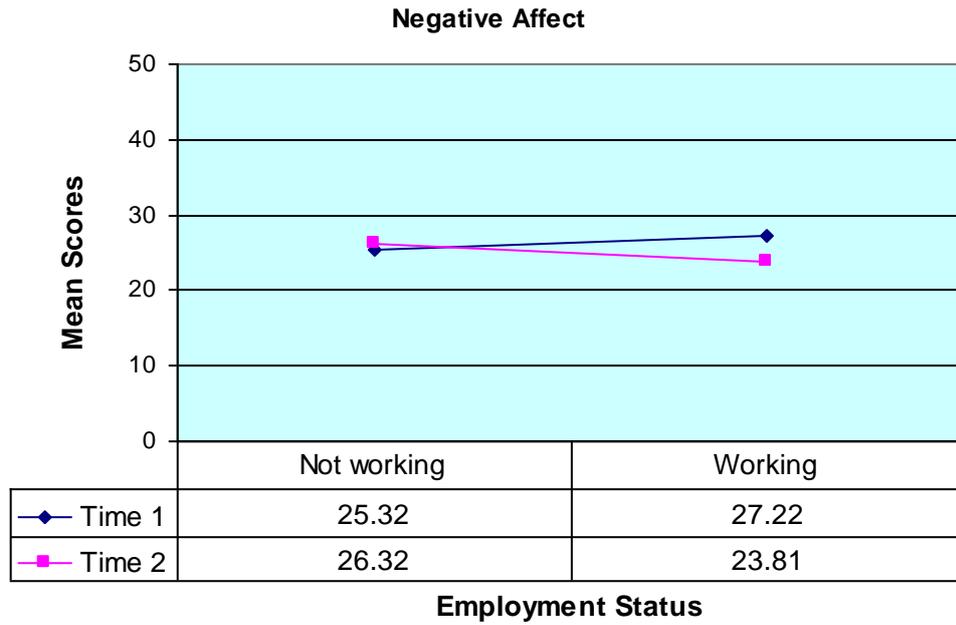


Figure 13. The effect of time and employment status on negative affect ($N = 115$).

Figure 13 shows the interaction for negative affect. The time main effect and the time X employment status interaction were significant for negative affect. NA total mean scores went from 26.28 at Time 1 to 25.05 at Time 2, suggesting that there was a general reduction in NA scores over time. However, as the interaction Figure 13 shows, negative affect decreased for participants who had gained employment at Time 2, but increased for those who remained unemployed.

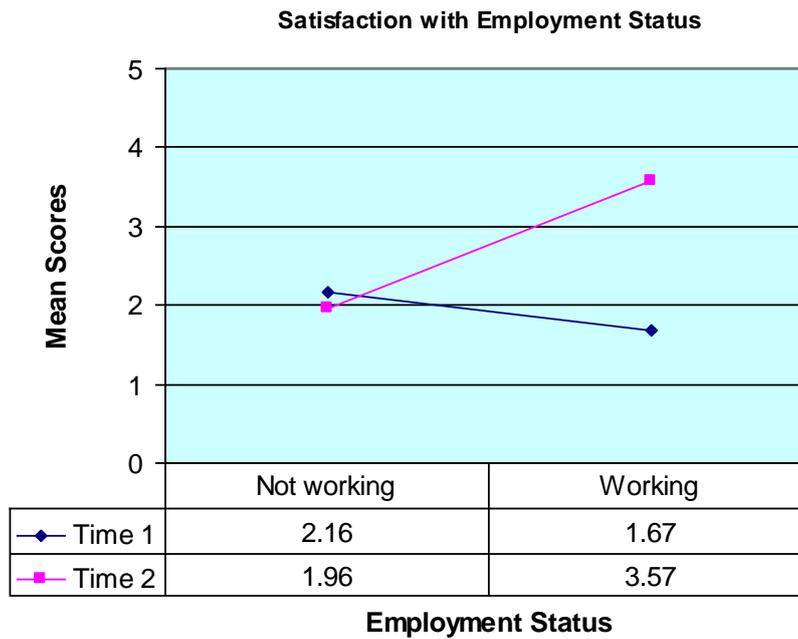


Figure 14. The effect of time and employment status on satisfaction with employment status ($N = 115$).

For satisfaction with employment status, both the time and employment status main effects were significant, with mean scores suggesting that satisfaction increased from Time 1 to Time 2, and that any differences that were apparent between employed and unemployed groups at Time 1 were also apparent at Time 2. However, the significant interaction, shown in Figure 14, indicates that satisfaction with employment status increased significantly for participants who gained employment at Time 2, whilst it dropped significantly for those who remained unemployed. The effect size was relatively high ($\eta^2 = .47$).

There was a similar pattern of results for both of the economic deprivation variables—financial hardship and financial strain. The main effects and interactions were significant for both variables. Figures 15 and 16 show the effects for the financial hardship and financial strain variables.

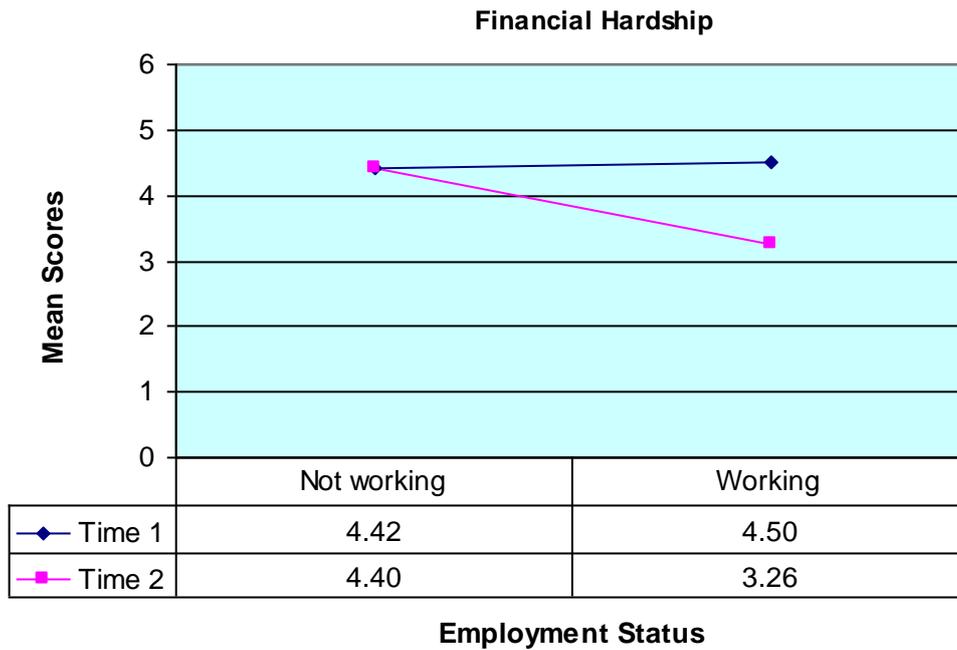


Figure 15. The effect of time and employment status on financial hardship ($N = 115$).

As Figures 15 and 16 show, participants who gained employment had greater financial hardship and financial strain at Time 1 and significantly less at Time 2. However, for those who remained unemployed, their scores showed no significant change.

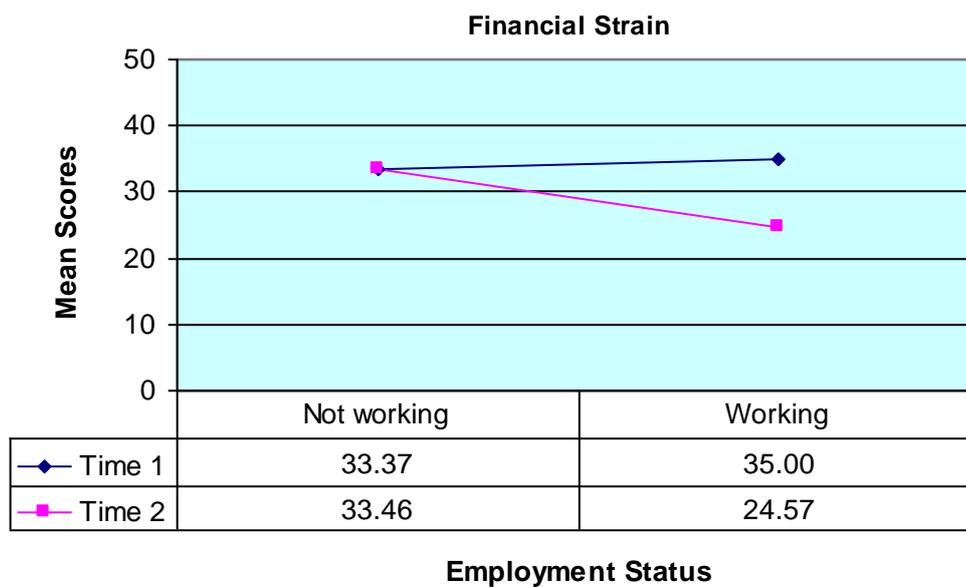


Figure 16. The effect of time and employment status on financial strain ($N = 115$).

There was also a significant interaction effect for social contact, as shown in Figure 17 below.

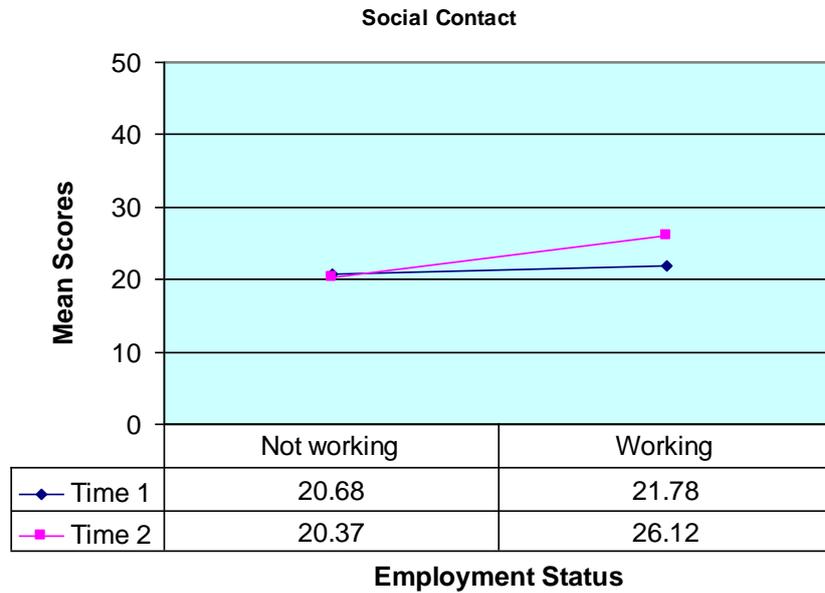


Figure 17. The effect of time and employment status on social contact ($N = 115$).

Participants who were employed at Time 2 reported a significant increase in their perceived social contact at Time 2, compared to Time 1. There was very little change for those who remained unemployed. A similar pattern was evident for time structure—the interaction effect was significant, as shown in Figure 18.

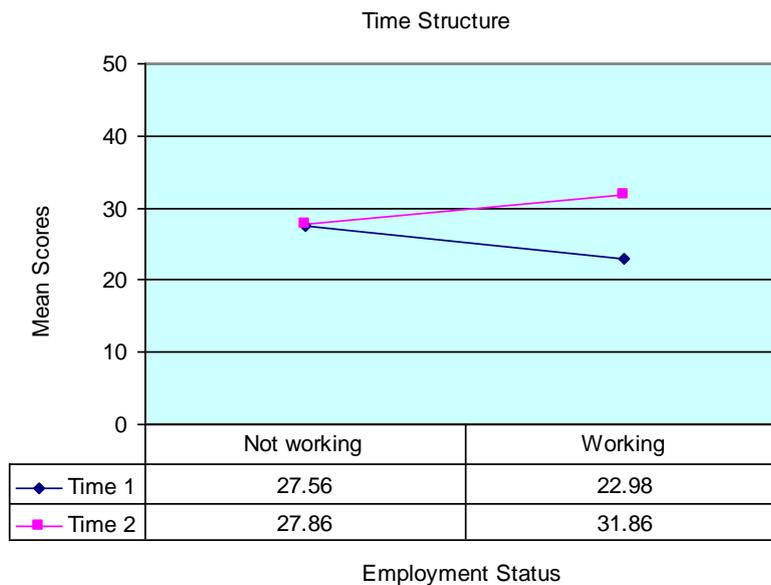


Figure 18. The effect of time and employment status on time structure ($N = 115$).

As Figure 18 shows, the mean scores for time structure at Time 1 were very similar, but they increased significantly at Time 2 for participants who had acquired jobs, but showed little change at Time 2 for those who remained unemployed.

There was also an interaction effect for mental health, as depicted in Figure 19.

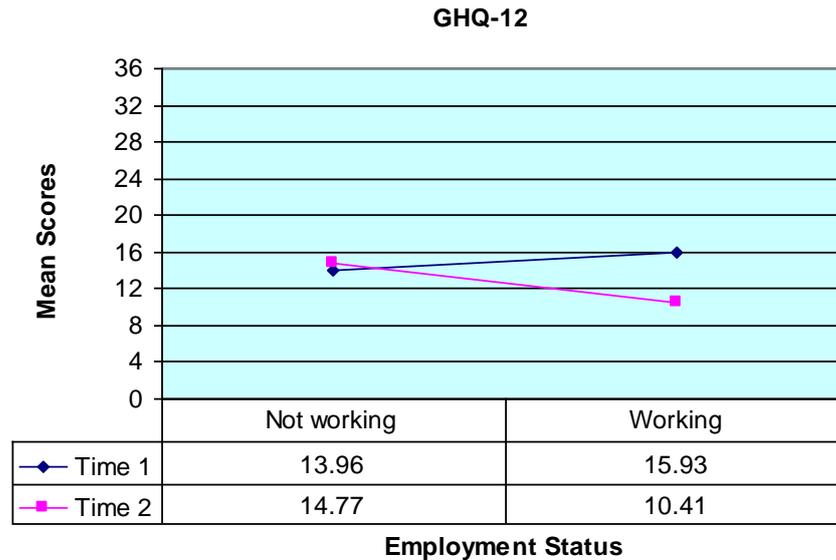


Figure 19. The effect of time and employment status on mental health ($N = 115$).

The significant interaction in Figure 19 indicates that mental health at Time 2 was a function of gaining employment. Participants who had found a job by the time of the follow-up study had a significant improvement in their mental health. Those who remained unemployed showed a decline in their mental health at Time 2.

Overall, the preceding figures show that participants who gained employment had significant improvements in their mental health, self-esteem, negative affect, and satisfaction levels from Time 1 to Time 2. They were also less financially strained and reported greater access to social contact and time structure at Time 2. Scores on all of those variables for the continuously unemployed showed either very little change or deteriorated over time. Therefore, the positive affects for the employed group can be attributed to gaining employment.

The following section presents the results of the analyses of the comments made by participants on the follow-up questionnaire. The qualitative data provide a richer understanding of the experiences of the participants and can potentially direct

future research by identifying key constructs that may not have been measured quantitatively.

Qualitative Data

This section begins by identifying the themes that emerged from the qualitative data using thematic analysis. It presents the frequencies of the themes and then goes on to provide a selection of quotations that reflect each of those themes.

Emergent Themes

Some of the comments provided by participants for the follow-up study related to their current employment status, with some becoming employed during the 6-month to follow-up, some taking up full-time study, and others withdrawing from the labour market. Some of the participants who had acquired jobs chose to comment about the quality of their jobs, their level of job satisfaction, or the level of job security they were experiencing. Psychological well-being was another theme that was identified amongst the Time 2 data. Similar to the Time 1 data, some participants reported the negative impact of unemployment. Other participants reported some of the psychological benefits of gaining employment. Another theme that emerged was work benefits, with participants commenting about some of the perceived benefits of being employed. Similar to Time 1, job search experiences were also mentioned by some participants. An additional theme at Time 2 was the job search strategies that participants found beneficial to them acquiring their jobs. Barriers to employment were also identified as a theme at Time 2. Some of the sub-themes included a lack of education, qualifications, skills, or experience, age, and poor health or injuries. Perceived support from Government or employment agencies was also mentioned by some participants. Table 48 presents the emergent themes and the frequency with which they were mentioned by participants.

Table 48

Emergent Themes from Time 2 Qualitative Data

Theme	Sub-Theme	Frequency	Total
Employment Status			14
	Intermittent Work	9	
	Studying	3	
	Out of the Labour Market	4	
Well-Being			15
	Unemployed - positive	2	
	Unemployed - negative	5	
	Employed - positive	5	
	Employed - negative	3	
Aspects of Job			26
	Job Quality	8	
	Job Satisfaction	11	
	Working Hours	5	
	Job Security	2	
Barriers to Employment			25
	Education, Qualifications, Skills, Experience	4	
	Age	9	
	Health	5	
	Other Barriers	6	
Work Benefits			7
Job Search			7
Job Search Strategies			7
Perceived Support			16

The following sections provide a selection of quotes that relate to the themes outlined in Table 48.

Current Employment Status

Many participants mentioned their current employment status. Some people had acquired and retained a job within the 6-month survey period, some had commenced studying, others were no longer in the labour market, and others had acquired and subsequently lost a job during that period.

47 year-old female:

After approx. 8 months of unemployment, I was finally able to secure a really great job, nothing too stressful, but kept me busy and I loved the work. I had great feelings of confidence, could hold my head up higher, was taking more pride in my appearance and felt like a lot of weight had been lifted off my shoulders - all because I had a job!! Unfortunately, I am no longer working because the excuse was "overstaffed!" and because I was the last employed, I was 1st let go. Do you know how demoralising that was? I felt crushed and winded, like someone had kicked me in the guts. I was extremely upset and

distressed, wanted to go out and get drunk and stoned, but of course I can't afford to and anyway that wouldn't solve things. But I've got back up again and although still not working, I'm not giving up. As we say in my country "KIA KAHHA - meaning BE STRONG!!" + I know, I am strong. I will be strong and I can be strong!!

This participant's comments provide a good example of the dynamic and transactional nature of stress. A change in her employment status resulted in a significant change in her appraisals of herself and her situation. Acquiring a job was associated with positive appraisals; losing her job had a significant impact on her well-being. However, she obviously has some adaptive coping strategies, preferring to engage in positive reappraisals rather than escape strategies, such as drugs or alcohol.

36-year-old male:

I am now studying at [University] as I got sick of being on the dole. At best now I don't have to line up for half an hour at Centrelink and it keeps them off my back.

21-year-old female:

In the past few months I haven't been looking for work at all as I was pregnant and have recently given birth and am quite happy to continue to be a "stay-at-home" mum. I feel I have obtained new full time work as a mum and am in no hurry at all to return to the workforce. Being a mum has now changed my life perspective. I once felt having a career was everything. Now I think I have finally found the career I've been searching for - motherhood. Money isn't even a consideration - my daughter's smile is the only payment I need.

The comment above suggests that the participant's values changed from having a strong commitment to employment to having a strong commitment to motherhood after the birth of her child. The results of the study indicated that employment commitment was relatively stable across time, however, for this participant, her change of circumstances clearly had an impact on her employment commitment.

Well-being

Fourteen participants made comments about their current psychological well-being and this theme was divided into four categories: Positive and negative comments made by *unemployed* participants, and positive and negative comments

made by *employed* participants. Seven unemployed participants referred to their current psychological well-being, with 5 participants describing negative feelings and 2 participants reporting positive emotions. The following statements are from *unemployed* participants.

44-year-old unemployed male:

I seem to be going in circles with no clear direction and find it all very taxing and demoralising. My life has become one big conundrum.

This participant quantitative data indicated that he was “very dissatisfied” with his employment status, which is reflected in his comments. His comments and negative appraisal of his situation indicate that his current situation is discrepant with his life goals. This comment is a good example of how appraisals can impact on an individual’s well-being.

58-year-old unemployed female:

Sometimes I think it is a waste of time at my age, especially when I see a lot of young people in the street looking for the same as me, but by the time I get home and ring up, some of the jobs have gone. I do not like ringing from [Employment Agency] about a job. The courses I have been to have helped me very much. My volunteer work I like very much because you don't have to have a lot of qualifications and age does not matter. I am happy with my life and contented. Thank you.

This participant had a relatively low GHQ score (8), which suggests that her mental health is generally good. She reported feeling “satisfied” with her employment status and her scores for self-esteem (31), PA (35), and NA (25) suggested that she has relatively good personal resources. She appeared to be coping with her situation by doing volunteer work.

The following are a selection of comments made by *employed* participants in relation to their level of well-being. Of the 8 employed people who commented on their well-being, 5 reported an increase in well-being since gaining employment, and 3 reported negative consequences relating to an increase in responsibilities.

22-year-old female:

Shortly after completing the survey last time, I found full time employment. The sense of relief was huge. Since then, my partner and I have bought a new

car and put a financial plan into action...Finding a job was of huge importance and greatly modified my outlook.

21-year-old female:

Now that I am working, I feel a lot happier and less bored and do not worry about my bills as much. Getting a job is one of the best things that's happened to me in the past 6 months. I am more energetic and feel happy about myself.

The comments above highlight the importance of the financial benefits of employment and are in line with Fryer's (1986) agency theory. The financial benefits associated with employment allow individuals to make plans for the future. The comments also support the results of the factorial ANOVAs which found a significant interaction between finance-related appraisals and employment status—there was a significant decrease in financial strain and hardship for participants who found jobs.

23-year-old female:

I'm just glad to be off Centrelink payments. It's the people who work there that make you feel like second class citizens. I don't feel any better about myself now that I have a job. A job means more responsibilities, more things to worry about. While I was out of work I used all means to find a job - they didn't work. I was either too old or not enough experience!!! I found my job because it was advertised in the window, went in, talked to the manager and told the truth about my employment. The next day I have the job. It's a lot better talking face-to-face. They can see and judge for themselves what kind of person you really are. NOT BY A 2 PAGE RESUME.

The comments from the above participant suggest that she may not have experienced any significant benefits from gaining employment, but her scores for self-esteem, NA, PA, GHQ, and satisfaction suggest definite improvements on those variables. Her scores went from 27 down to 12 on the GHQ, 28 down to 22 for NA, 26 up to 37 for PA, 25 up to 27 for self-esteem, from extremely dissatisfied to extremely satisfied with her employment status from Time 1 to Time 2. The disparity between her score and her comment highlight the advantages of carrying out interviews with participants rather than collecting written comments that cannot be clarified or elaborate upon. Her comment “It’s a lot better talking face-to-face” is certainly relevant!

Job Quality

Eight employed people made comments relating to the quality of their jobs. Some participants perceived their job to have positive qualities, such as task variety, relevance to career goals, a positive environment, and good supervisors/employers. Others reported on the negative aspects, such as no career prospects or lack of role clarity, or that the job was not suited to their qualifications or experience. The results of the study supported the link between job quality and mental health found in the quantitative data; however, when included with other variables, job quality was not an important influence on mental health. The following is a selected comment relating to this theme.

27-year-old female:

Being a chef I have always worked in hostile and high pressure jobs, where you work long hours and have no life outside of work. 5 months ago, I secured a job at [Organisation] in Brisbane as an apprentice. This is the best job I have ever had. I am encouraged to be creative within a healthy and positive environment. I have now been placed in position of 2nd chef and have a lot of responsibility which is a big challenge and I enjoy. In March, I will qualify as a chef and already have been given the chance and experience most people never get until they have been qualified for 5 years. I am also teaching a class at [Organisation] later in the year, thanks to my employer's faith in me. They put my name forward so I will be representing the restaurant in front of paying customers. Scary but also thrilling!

Job Satisfaction

Eleven people commented about how happy or satisfied they were in their current jobs, using adjectives such as *enjoy*, *love*, or *happy* to describe how they felt about their jobs. The quantitative data indicated that the majority of participants were satisfied with their jobs. The following is a sample of comments relating to job satisfaction.

49-year-old female:

I enjoy my work very much - autonomy, high level of contact with others/decision making/variety/problem solving/continuity...community-focused..19 hours per week = good safety valve for stressful aspects (keeps energy renewed and interest/motivation high). 19 hrs p/w also allows me to balance out other aspects of my life (nuts n bolts - bill paying etc.). Would prefer 25-30 hrs per week. My present income is adequate to allow me to maintain a fairly balanced and fulfilling social life, however I own my own home and car and have some savings. If I had to pay rent, repay mortgage, or car loan, I would be struggling financially I think. My position is on contract

till February. I feel fairly confident that I'll continue in this position. A concern: the management committee have mentioned possibility of increasing work hours, but decreasing award rate for my position when it is advertised. This worries me.

64-year-old male:

I am very happy with my work and employers. It is heavy work and constant, but I am glad of the opportunity to fill this position and my employers are satisfied with my efforts. I start work at 6am and work until 4pm except on Fridays when I stop at 2pm. They pay the extra hours overtime - it's work I love.

Work Hours

Five of the employed participants commented about their work hours, with most wanting more hours. Work hours did not emerge as an influential variable in relation to mental health in the quantitative analyses. Whilst it is obviously an issue for some participants, the quantitative analyses suggested that other variables have a greater impact on mental health. The following comments relate to work hours.

48-year-old female:

Current job ok, but not enough hours offered to become totally independent of spouse. This situation may change, so reluctant to apply for alternative employment at this point in time.

21-year-old male:

I got work soon after completing my last survey. Not really what I want to do but it pays the bills and gets me out of the house. Unfortunately, being casual I have only been getting 3 days work a week lately. I have applied for permanent position at the same job to get more work per week and be on a consistent roster (work is shift work). It'll do for the moment, but I still have bigger and better things I wish to move onto.

Job Security

Two participants mentioned job security as an issue. Job security was included in the measure of job quality, which did not significantly influence mental health. The following comment is from a 31-year-old male:

I enjoy the job I'm in and the places where I work as a static security guard, but I'm not happy with my employment status. I'm doing approx 50-60+ hours per week though I am still only employed casually leaving me with no job

security. I now have a family to support and this leaves me constantly stressed about our future.

Barriers to Employment

There were 25 statements made in relation to perceived barriers to employment, with sub-themes such as age, education, health, and lack of transport. Age emerged as the most important predictor of job acquisition in the quantitative analyses. Other barriers to employment were not measured and this may explain the relatively small effect size for job acquisition. The comments from participants identifying their barriers to employment provide a good insight into variables that should be included in further studies. The following are examples of participants' identified barriers to employment.

Education, Qualifications, Skills, Experience

Four participants made reference to lack of education, qualifications, work skills, or experience. The following is an example.

32-year-old male:

I feel that in having to look for work, I find difficult as knowing that not having enough education, to actually prepare my own resume. Also people not giving me a fair chance in employment when not been able to supply a resume. Even if it's only for a "trolley person" they still wanted me to have information to supply them, which I couldn't and that seems unfair. As I'm willing to work, though they just wont give me a fair chance. Also not sure if it's got to do with my background not been able to read or write. Please can you help me get this job at the [Organisation] as a trolley person. By the way, I had to get help from my fiancé to help me fill in this form or survey as might put it. Hope that's ok?

Age

As with the Time 1 data, age was a common sub-theme, with nine participants making statements about their age being a barrier to employment. Examples are provided below.

57-year-old male:

At my age, I now know that no one is going to offer me a job and would rather do something worthwhile as a volunteer than continually getting knockbacks as I am told that my age is a barrier. I do not think of myself as worthless although that is the reaction of employers when they know my age.

55-year-old male:

As employers are not interested in people my age, I try to look on my "mutual obligation" with Centrelink as a game. I have reached the stage where I put in four or more applications per fortnight without being too concerned about the outcome and without any thought given to whether I could do the job or not. While I hate being unemployed, I have blocked out the rejection factor and try to treat it as a joke.

64-year-old male:

Regarding my job seeking experience I have found I have a problem obtaining a job because of my age. On several occasions, I have reached the point of having an interview only to find when my date of birth was required the employers were no longer interested.

Health

Five participants mentioned physical health problems that were impeding their ability to find work. The following comment from a 57-year-old female is an example.

I am still finding it extremely difficult to find paid employment on a part time basis due to my physical health problems.

Other Barriers

Other barriers to employment, such as being unemployed and lack of transport, were mentioned by six participants. For example, the comment below is from a 45-year-old female.

I can't get a job without a car but I need a job to get a car.

Work Benefits

Seven participants mentioned the benefits of having a job. Three were not currently working and four were employed. The common thread was an improvement (actual or predicted) to their financial situation, but some participants also mentioned the psychological benefits (e.g., improved self-esteem). The following comment relates to this theme and highlights the importance of the manifest benefits (income) and a sense of collective purpose to well-being.

27-year-old female:

If I could get a job, we could increase our savings; I don't mind being a "homemaker" but to feel good about myself, I would like to get a part-time or casual job; to contribute to society.

Job Search

Seven participants commented about their job search experiences. Whilst one person's comments were positive, other participants' comments reported less favourable experiences, such as not hearing back from potential employers. One participant mentioned that some employers were "quite rude" and others mentioned some of the challenges they have faced when looking for work. The following are two examples of statements relating to the theme of job seeking.

43-year-old female:

Because I am applying for part time work only, I have found there are few vacancies around... I had a really great interview last week and even though I didn't get the position, I felt good in myself knowing I was one of the 10 people selected for the interview out of more than 200 applicants. My feedback from the interview was very encouraging and I know I will find the right position.

58-year-old male:

Employers only want to employ younger people, but they won't admit to that. They either never call you back or they use the other excuse of not being enough suitable for the position.

The comments presented above highlight the importance of feedback from employers. This variable was not measured in the current study, but it may be an important variable that influences job search behaviour.

Job Search Strategies

Seven people talked about the job search strategies they believed to be beneficial to gaining employment, such as applying in person, making use of one's social network, or learning job search skills through a training program. A selection of comments is presented below.

53-year-old female:

I obtained the position through someone I knew and I feel that in most country towns and cities, this is by far the easiest way to get a job. Most people want to employ someone they know or have a good knowledge of their background. Most jobs I have had in the past were through people I knew.

20-year-old male:

Giving out resumes to employers I found to be better as you can talk to the employer first hand instead of an employer leaving the opinion of a job network agent who probably doesn't even know what is truly required by the employer. I am a quiet person by nature but I have excellent customer service skills. Job agents never saw this 'cause they never even bothered talking to me which is probably why dropping resumes and talking to employers first hand worked.

Perceived Support

Similar to Time 1, participants commented on their perceptions of Centrelink or employment agencies. Sixteen (16) people expressed their thoughts or feelings about these agencies, with the majority of comments being negative. For example, 2 participants found their Job Network agency very helpful or supportive, 3 participants commented that their Job Search Training course was beneficial, 5 participants perceived their Job Network agency as unhelpful, 6 people reported difficulties with or a lack of support from Centrelink, and 3 people felt that Job Search Training courses were unhelpful. The following are examples of comments relating to this theme.

22-year-old male:

When I last did the survey I was in a job seeking course run by [Employment Agency]. This course assisted me in how to prepare a resume and how to conduct myself around employers, for example, over the telephone or in an interview. Perhaps the most valuable thing I learnt in the course was to write a good, effective covering letter for a job application. At the end of the 2 week course we had to apply for jobs. As a result of this exercise I gained employment at an accounting firm where I am now developing my skills which began at university, through a commerce degree.

62-year-old male:

I found Centrelink very hard to understand as I would receive 3 letters in one day saying different things even after I told them that I had a job. I was listed at 6 employment agencies. I found only two of them helpful in trying to find work. The job I am now doing I found in the local paper.

Discussion

The main aims of Study Two were to identify the predictors of job search behaviours, mental health, and job acquisition, and to explore changes over time in the variables as a function of employment status. Although not a major focus of the current study, the consistency of the relationships among and between the coping resources and appraisal variables was also examined. Like Study One, the follow-up study also drew heavily from the stress and coping framework, and included most of the coping measures used at Time 1. The measures of coping resources used at Time 2 were: Self-esteem, positive affect, negative affect, employment commitment, task-focused efficacy, self-promotion efficacy, and income. None of the leisure variables (i.e., social leisure, leisure meaningfulness, and leisure activity) were used at Time 2. They were excluded because the survey would have been too long and more participants may have withdrawn from the study because of the time needed to complete the survey.

The cognitive appraisal variables were the same as those used at Time 1, except that leisure meaningfulness was not included. Thus, the appraisal variables included: Satisfaction with employment status, employment expectation, financial strain, financial hardship, and perceived access to the latent benefits of collective purpose, social contact, status, activity, and time structure. Coping behaviour was measured by job seeking behaviours, including job applications over the previous month, job applications submitted over the duration of the study (i.e., 6 months), job interviews over the previous 6 months (study duration), job search intensity, job search methods, and overall job search effort over the previous 6 months. The main outcome variables for the current study were mental health and employment status (i.e., continuously unemployed or employed at Time 2).

Like Study One, a comparison of the mental health of Study Two participants and those from the ABS (1997) National Survey of Mental Health and Well-Being (NSMHWB, 1997) was carried out. For this study, however, it was possible to make comparisons between the continuously unemployed, the employed, and the national sample. The results indicated that participants who had remained unemployed had significantly poorer mental health than the national sample; however, the mental health of those who had gained employment did not differ from that of the national sample. Thus, the results from both Study One and Study Two provide clear

evidence of the detrimental impact of unemployment on mental health and are consistent with Australian and international studies (e.g., Axelsson & Ejlertsson, 2002; Feather, 1990; Kessler, Turner, & House, 1989; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Murphy & Athanasou, 1999).

Relationships among coping resources and cognitive appraisal variables

The correlations among the coping variables were examined for both the unemployed and employed groups at Time 2 to determine whether the relationships were stable across time, or whether the patterns differed according to employment status. Given that this was not the main focus of the study, the results are only briefly discussed.

The results indicated that the correlations among the core self-evaluation variables were relatively stable across time, regardless of employment status. For example, self-esteem was correlated with positive and negative affect at Time 1 and Time 2 for both the employed and unemployed groups. Efficacy was not included in the correlation analyses for the employed group because most of the employed participants were not looking for work. For the unemployed group, self-esteem, task-focused efficacy, self-promotion efficacy, and positive affect were all significantly positively correlated with one another. This was also the case at Time 1. Thus, the results suggest that the relationships among the core self-evaluation variables are relatively stable across time and respond similarly to external influences.

The results are consistent with Judge et al. (2002) who viewed self-esteem, efficacy, affect, and locus of control as indicators of a higher-order construct. The core self-evaluation components measured in this study were consistently related to one another and shared a similar pattern of relationships with other variables. For example, all core self-evaluation variables were related to employment expectation at Time 1. Self-esteem, job seeking efficacy, and positive affect were also related to employment expectation at Time 2. Participants with higher self-esteem, higher task-focused and self-promotion efficacy, and higher positive affect were more likely to believe that they would find a job in the near future.

Employment commitment was another personal coping resource that appears to share a relatively stable relationship with self-esteem and negative affect for the unemployed participants. Employment commitment was negatively correlated with self-esteem and positively correlated with negative affect at Time 1 and at Time 2 for

the continuously unemployed group. Unemployed participants with higher employment commitment tended to have lower self-esteem and higher negative affect. However, the relationships among those personal resources appear to be subject to external influences, because employment commitment was not related to self-esteem or NA for the employed group.

Participants' net fortnightly income served as a measure of their financial resources and was included as a coping resource at Time 1 and Time 2. It was related to financial strain and hardship at Time 1 and also at Time 2 for the employed group, but not for the unemployed group. It is not clear why this would be the case. Perhaps more time out of work forces people to learn to manage their finances better or they adapt to having fewer financial resources, and as a result report less financial strain.

The relationships between coping resources and appraisal variables were also assessed at Time 2 and some of the correlations were consistent across time. For example, employment expectation was significantly correlated with task-focused efficacy, self-promotion efficacy, and positive affect at both Time 1 and Time 2 for the unemployed group. Unemployed participants with higher efficacy and higher PA were more likely to believe that they would find a job in the near future. Thus, the relationships were relatively stable across time.

Perceived access to the latent benefits was influenced by positive affect and self-esteem and some of those relationships were relatively stable. Self-esteem and positive affect were related to all of the latent benefits at Time 1. Self-esteem was related to all of the latent benefits at Time 2 for the employed group, but only with collective purpose and activity for the unemployed group. Thus, there appears to be some interaction between employment status and the relationships between self-esteem and the latent benefits. Positive affect was related to all of the latent benefits at Time 2, regardless of employment status. Thus, participants who expressed more positive emotionality felt less deprived of the latent benefits of employment and those relationships remained stable across time. This was not the case for negative affect. Its relationships varied depending on the latent benefit. For example, negative affect was related to all of the latent benefits at Time 1 and all but activity for the employed group at Time 2. It was related to status, activity, and time structure, but not to collective purpose or social contact for the unemployed group at Time 2. The results suggest that many of the correlations between NA and the latent benefits are relatively stable across time and are independent of employment status but that

collective purpose, social contact, and activity are influenced by employment status or by duration of unemployment.

At Time 1, employment commitment was correlated only with time structure. However, at Time 2, it was correlated with financial strain, financial hardship, employment expectation, social contact, activity, and time structure for the unemployed group. Unemployed participants with higher employment commitment believed that they were more likely to find a job; they also reported more economic deprivation, less social contact, activity, and time structure. The relationship between employment commitment and time structure appears to be relatively stable for the unemployed, but its relationships economic deprivation, social contact, and activity were stronger at Time 2 to the point that they became statistically significant. Thus, those relationships may have been influenced by duration of unemployment.

Financial resources tend to diminish or become depleted as the length of time out of work increases (RGWR, 2000). Similarly, social contacts tend to decrease with length of unemployment (Jahoda, 1982). Continued unemployment may also make it more difficult to find purposeful activities in which to engage (Jackson, 1999). For those reasons, individuals may heighten their commitment to being in paid work. On the other hand, for participants who have found work and, as a consequence, have more access to the latent and manifest benefits of employment, employment commitment and the latent and manifest benefits may have reduced salience.

Self-esteem, positive affect, and job seeking efficacy were related to job search intensity and job search methods at Time 1. However, as the duration of unemployment increased, the relationships weakened such that self-esteem and PA were not correlated with those job search behaviours at Time 2. The relationships between self-promotion efficacy and job search behaviours demonstrated stability across time, suggesting that participants with more confidence in their ability to promote themselves as a job seeker were more actively looking for work, despite their length of unemployment. Task-focused efficacy was correlated with job search intensity at Time 1 and Time 2. It was also correlated with job applications and job search methods at Time 1, but not at Time 2. Thus, as duration of unemployment increases, task-focused efficacy has less of an influence on job search intensity.

Mental health was correlated with all of the core self-evaluation variables at Time 1. At Time 2, it was correlated with all core self-evaluation variables, except

for job seeking efficacy. The relationships between self-esteem, positive affect, negative affect, and mental health were expected to be relatively stable, given that numerous studies have linked those variables to mental health (e.g., Feather, 1990; Judge et al., 2002; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005).

Mental health was also correlated with employment commitment at Time 1 and at Time 2 for the unemployed group, but not for the employed group. This result confirms the importance of employment commitment as an influence on the mental health of the unemployed and is consistent with the research (e.g., Mean Patterson, 1997; Wiener et al., 1999; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). An interesting finding is that once employed, participants' mental health was not affected by their level of employment commitment—the relationship became non-significant. This fits well with stress and coping theory. Negative appraisals are typically a reflection of a discrepancy between an individual's current situation and their values, goals or expectations and such appraisals are linked with feelings of stress (e.g., Latack et al. 1995). Once their situation becomes congruent with their values, they are no longer in a state of dissonance and consequently, their stress is relieved. Thus, an unemployed person who highly values employment would appraise their situation as stressful and discrepant with their values. Gaining employment would be congruent with their strong work values and the associated strain on their psychological well-being would decrease or diminish.

Satisfaction with employment status was correlated with mental health at Time 1 and Time 2, irrespective of employment status. Again, this fits well with stress and coping theory. Individuals who make benign-positive appraisals of their employment situation do not see their situation as a threat to their well-being and therefore, do not experience psychological distress. However, those who perceive their employment status as incongruent with their beliefs, values, or goals are likely to make negative appraisals about their situation and experience distress.

Mental health was also correlated with all of the latent benefits at Time 1 and at Time 2 for the employed group, and all of the latent benefits, except for collective purpose, for the unemployed group. Greater perceived access to the latent benefits was associated with better mental health. These results suggest that perceived access to the latent benefits is important to mental health, regardless of employment status. Jahoda (1982) suggested that the latent benefits were related to basic psychological needs that are important to a person's psychological well-being. The results of this

study support that contention. Jahoda also proposed that employment was the most important social institution through which individuals could gain access to those latent benefits. This was not necessarily the case for the current sample. Participants with less access to the latent benefits suffered with poorer mental health, irrespective of their employment status. Furthermore, as will be discussed later, there were no differences between individuals who remained unemployed and those who had acquired jobs on their perceived access to collective purpose, status, or activity. However, participants who gained employment reported a significant increase in their perceived access to time structure and social contact.

At Time 1, mental health was correlated with both financial strain and hardship. Contrary to expectations, neither of the financial variables was correlated with mental health for the unemployed group at Time 2 and only financial strain was correlated with mental health for the employed group at Time 2. These results were surprising, given that the literature is rife with evidence for the relationship between financial strain and mental health (e.g., Brief et al., 1995; Creed & Macintyre, 2001; Creed & Reynolds, 2001; Fryer & Fagan, 2003; Payne & Hartley, 1987; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; Price et al., 2002). Both financial hardship and financial strain were normally distributed at Time 2 and demonstrated good variability. Thus, there did not appear to be any floor or ceiling effects which might have influenced the results. Financial strain was a reliable measure with Cronbach's alphas being .92 for the Time 1 measure, and .96 for the Time 2 measure. As mentioned previously, financial strain and hardship were not correlated with income for the unemployed group at Time 2, which posed the question of whether more time out of work forces people to learn to manage their finances better or whether they adapt to having fewer financial resources, and as a result report less financial strain. Perhaps there was some adaptation to their financial situation occurring for the continuously unemployed group and this was reflected in their mental health. Feather (1990) presented a comprehensive overview of stage theories of unemployment, which typically see unemployed individuals moving from initial shock through optimism to pessimism and finally to despair or fatalistic apathy. Although much criticism has been leveled at stage theories, particularly due to their lack of acknowledgement of the variability in individual's coping resources and behaviours, there may be some individuals who adapt to their unemployment situation after a certain period of time, or at least adjust to their reduced level of income.

Overall, the results suggest that Jahoda's (1982) deprivation theory is too simplistic and excludes some important psychological influences. Jahoda argued that unemployment results in a perceived loss of the latent benefits of employment. Whilst this may be the case, it is not quite so clear cut. The results of the current research project suggest that perceived losses of the latent benefits may be driven more by a person's core self-evaluations than by their employed or unemployed state. The stress and coping theory provides a more useful theoretical framework within which to examine a person's loss appraisals. Stress and coping theory emphasises coping resources and appraisals—the judgement a person makes in relation to their current situation and their available resources. The findings from this research project indicate that participants who had better coping resources, particularly those relating to their personal characteristics, consistently made more positive appraisals about their access to the latent benefits and experienced better mental health.

Whilst many of the correlations between personal resources and appraisals were relatively stable across time, some of them were not. This suggests that there are intervening influences, most likely a change in employment status, on those relationships. Whilst it was beyond the scope of this project to explore the influence of employment status on the relationships between coping resources and appraisals, the results suggest that it may be a worthwhile project for future research.

Job Search Behaviour for the Continuously Unemployed Group

The current study also examined changes over time in job seeking efficacy, employment expectation, and job search behaviours of participants who remained unemployed over the 6 month duration of the study.

Scores on self-promotion efficacy, job search intensity, and job search methods for the continuously unemployed declined over the duration of the study. Over the 6-month period, participants who were unable to secure a job felt less capable of executing job search behaviours that involved promoting themselves to others as a job seeker. They also decreased the intensity of their job seeking and used much fewer methods to look for work. Their mean scores for task-focused efficacy, however, increased from Time 1 to Time 2. Thus, they became more confident in their ability to carry out job search behaviours, such as checking newspapers, employment agencies, or the internet for jobs, or writing resumes. There were no

significant differences in mean scores for employment expectation or for job applications across the study period for participants who remained unemployed.

Given that the unemployed are generally required to apply for a set number of jobs per fortnight to receive their income support payments, it was not surprising that number of job applications did not change over time. The usual requirement is for job seekers to provide documentary evidence of the employers they have contacted over their reporting period. Centrelink does not mandate how participants look for work, so the unemployed can typically be as restrictive or diverse with their job seeking strategies as they so choose. The job search intensity variable contains a range of activities that job seekers may engage in when looking for work and it provides a measure of the frequencies with which those strategies are used. The job search methods variable measured the number of different strategies participants used to look for work. Both of those variables provide a more detailed indication participants' job seeking behaviour. It was clear from the study that participants who failed to find work were those who used a more limited number and frequency of job search strategies than those who acquired jobs.

It was also clear that prolonged unemployment had an impact on participants' job seeking and confidence. Whilst they were no less confident in their ability to carry out more impersonal activities, such as looking for work in the newspapers or writing resumes, participants who remained unemployed had lost confidence in their ability to promote themselves to others. Self-promotion and networking are often very effective ways of finding work (e.g., Wanberg et al., 2000). As will be discussed later, participants in the current study who found jobs reported that promoting themselves to potential employers helped them to get their jobs. Self-promotion efficacy was identified in Study One as a key predictor of job search behaviours. Other studies have identified job-seeking self-efficacy as an important influence on job-search behaviour and reemployment (e.g., Blau, 1994; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Wanberg, Glomb, Song, & Sorenson, 2005). Evidence suggests that long periods of unemployment can erode an individual's self-confidence (RGWR, 2000). According to Bandura's (1986) theory of self-efficacy, individuals develop efficacy for certain behaviours if they are positively reinforced and result in successful outcomes. Thus, repeated failures at getting a job can potentially decrease an individual's efficacy beliefs and lead to resignation, apathy, or feelings of helplessness (Feather, 1990). The results from this study indicated that prolonged

unemployment does indeed erode one's efficacy beliefs, specifically those related to using their social networks and promoting themselves to potential employers.

There was one consistent predictor of job applications, job search intensity, and job search methods at Time 2, and that variable was number of job search training courses completed. Analyses of job search training indicated that participants who had completed one or more training course within the 6-month study period showed a significant increase in their job search behaviours compared to participants who had not completed any job search training courses during that period.

Attendance at job search training courses is often a mandatory requirement for individuals who have been unemployed for a period of 3 months or more, although individuals can also volunteer to attend. Attending those courses appeared to be a motivator for people to engage more actively in their job seeking. Whilst training programs have been shown to provide some benefits in relation to job search behaviour, the benefits are typically derived because of an improvement in participants' self-efficacy (e.g. Eden & Aviram, 1993; Van Ryn & Vinokur, 1992). Participants from the current study did not show an improvement in their levels of efficacy or in their expectations for employment. Therefore, the results conflict somewhat with other research that highlights the mediating effect of efficacy on the relationship between training and job search behaviour.

Apart from job search training, there was relatively little consistency in the variables that predicted job search behaviours. For example, self-promotion efficacy predicted job applications over the previous month and previous 6 months, but was not a significant predictor of the other job search behaviours. Employment expectation predicted job search intensity and job search methods, but did not predict job applications. Financial hardship predicted job applications in the previous month, job search intensity, and job search effort, but not job applications over the previous 6 months or job search methods. Education predicted job search intensity and methods, but not applications.

The regression models did a reasonable job of predicting the job search variables, with effect sizes ranging from .39 to .58. Contrary to what was found at Time 1, geographic region did not influence job search behaviours at Time 2, nor did employment commitment. Self-promotion efficacy appears to be a relatively consistent predictor of job applications. It was a key predictor at Time 1 and also at

Time 2. Similarly, financial hardship was a reliable predictor of job search intensity at Time 1 and Time 2. Overall, participants who reported greater dissatisfaction with their employment status, higher task-focused efficacy, and greater financial hardship put more effort into looking for work over the 6 months of the study.

For the regression models, the smallest effect sizes were for job applications over the previous month and previous 6 months (39% and 40%, respectively), which suggests that there are other unmeasured variables that influence those behaviours. As mentioned previously, applying for jobs is a requirement for the unemployed in return for receipt of their income support payments. Therefore, that requirement is likely to have a heavy influence on number of job applications and would probably account for a large proportion of the variance. As such, future research into job search behaviours may need to take that variable into account.

Participants were also asked how many job interviews they had attended over the study period. Number of job interviews was predicted by job applications over the previous 6 months, activity, and employment commitment. Participants who had submitted more applications also had attended more job interviews. This result was not surprising, because applying for a job is typically a precursor to being offered a job interview. Most unemployed participants are required to apply for a specific number of jobs per fortnight to receive their Centrelink benefits. Failure to meet those requirements can result in a loss or decrease in income support payments. Thus, there may be some individuals who just go through the motions of applying for jobs to receive their benefits, but are not seriously committed to getting a job. There may be others who apply for jobs to receive their income support payments, but who are more selective about the type of job they want and decline interviews for jobs that they believe are unsuitable. This study did not measure the number of invitations participants received to attend an interview, nor did it measure the number of interview offers that were declined. Those may be important factors for consideration in future research.

The other key predictors of job interviews (activity and employment commitment) indicated that participants who were more active and those who more strongly valued employment had attended more job interviews over the duration of the study. Those variables provide more insight into what prompted participants to attend interviews. Obviously participants who were more serious about finding work were more likely to attend job interviews. Thus employment commitment may be a

useful variable to differentiate participants who just go through the motions of job hunting and those who are more serious about finding work.

Some participants, however, may have difficulties organising and carrying out their daily activities and this may impact on their ability to attend interviews. Participants with higher scores on activity attended more job interviews than those who scored lower on activity. Interviews need careful planning if one is to be a competitive applicant and to make a good impression on a potential employer. Individuals who have difficulty planning ahead, organising what needs to be done to prepare for the interview, arranging transport to get to the interview, and fitting their other commitments around the interview time, may be less likely to attend an interview than those who are more organised. This lack of self-enforced planning and activity may also reflect in their job applications and limit their chances of being offered an interview in the first place.

Overall, these results indicate that the stress and coping theory is useful in explaining job search behaviours. Greater personal resources in the form of job seeking efficacy, along with more negative appraisals of one's financial resources and employment situation, appeared to motivate participants to cope with their stressful situation by engaging in behaviours directly aimed at eliminating the stress.

Predictors of job acquisition

Interestingly, only one of the job search behaviours (job applications in the previous month) predicted job acquisition. The key predictors of job acquisition were job applications, age, self-promotion efficacy, employment commitment, satisfaction with employment status, and time structure. Age was the most important predictor. Being younger, having higher self-promotion efficacy, higher employment commitment, greater dissatisfaction with employment status, less structured time, and submitting more job applications were associated with a greater likelihood of gaining employment. Again, the stress and coping framework was useful in assessing job acquisition. The results identified coping resources, appraisals, and one of the coping behaviours as key predictors of job acquisition. The discrepancy between one's values (i.e., employment commitment) and one's current situation is associated with negative appraisals (e.g., dissatisfaction or lack of time structure) and behaviours aimed at reducing that discrepancy (e.g., job search activity). Together

with effective personal resources (i.e., higher efficacy), those variables lead to a successful outcome.

Together, the aforementioned variables predicted 28% of the variance in job acquisition, with a classification accuracy of approximately 74%. The accuracy of prediction was better for the working group (approx. 78%) than for the continuously unemployed group (approx. 70%). The model may be a useful guide for practitioners, although its sensitivity and specificity were not overly favourable. About 30% of continuously unemployed individuals were incorrectly classified as working, whilst approximately 22% of working participants were incorrectly classified as being unemployed.

Furthermore, the effect size (.28) for the regression model was not very impressive and suggests that there are other important, unmeasured variables that account for the remaining 72% of the variance in job acquisition. The qualitative data from the current study suggested that some of those unmeasured variables may include physical health, insufficient qualifications, education, experience, or work skills, and lack of transport. Several participants mentioned those variables as barriers to finding work, whilst others commented on the lack of feedback from employers as a difficulty relating to their job seeking.

The comments made by participants are consistent with the ABS (2004) Job Experience Survey, which found that the aforementioned variables, along with others, were barriers to finding work. The barriers identified by the unemployed in the ABS survey included: Age (being either too old or too young), insufficient work experience, too many other applicants, lack of necessary skills or education, ill health or disability, lack of vacancies in the individual's line of work, lack of vacancies in general, too far to travel/transport problems, language difficulties, unsuitable hours, difficulties with childcare/family, and lack of feedback from employers. Moreover, Creed (1999) found poorer levels of literacy were predictive of continued unemployment in a sample of 169 unemployed young Queenslanders. Given the many and varied potential barriers to employment, future research into job acquisition should include those variables to determine how important they are as predictors.

Participants who had successfully found jobs provided some useful information about how they got their jobs. They were asked to indicate what strategies they used and how helpful those strategies were in finding their jobs. The

results suggested that most participants used a range of job search strategies to get their jobs, and that they found most of them helpful to some degree. One exception was advertising themselves in newspapers and other media as job seekers, which they reported as the least helpful. The majority of participants reported that they had tailored their resumes to suit the particular job for which they were applying (94%) and had attended a job search training course (85%). They also found these strategies helpful to some degree, although not as helpful as searching for jobs in the newspaper or on the internet. On average, participants reported that phoning or writing to potential employers to market themselves were the most helpful strategies for gaining employment. Furthermore, approximately three-quarters of employed participants had used their social networks to find information about suitable employers and reported that those networks were helpful. Those results are in line with Villar et al. (2000), who reported that approximately 52% of university graduates in their study had found their jobs by using informal networking channels.

Predictors of mental health

A model of predictors of mental health was tested at Time 1 and again at Time 2 for the continuously unemployed group. At Time 1, a model with self-esteem, positive affect, negative affect, employment commitment, satisfaction with employment status, and financial hardship predicted 56% of the variance in mental health and had an overall classification accuracy of 84.4%. The model indicated that participants with lower self-esteem, lower positive affect, higher negative affect, higher employment commitment, greater dissatisfaction with their employment status, and more financial strain had poorer mental health. Employment commitment was removed at Time 2 because of its high correlations with the other IVs, but the remaining variables accounted for 68% of the variance in mental health and the model had an overall classification accuracy of 84.2%. The parameters were relatively similar at Time 1 and Time 2, except satisfaction with employment status dropped in importance at Time 2. The results suggest that those variables were relatively stable predictors of mental health and that the model may be a useful screening tool.

Whilst the results from the current study provide some support for the reliability of the regression model in predicting mental health in the unemployed, the model should be tested on different samples to determine its generalisability. The

classification accuracy of the model was used on individuals for whom their GHQ scores were known. Further tests of the model could examine how accurate it is in classifying individuals for whom GHQ scores are not known.

Predictors of mental health were also examined for the employed group. Some variables that were significantly correlated with mental health had to be excluded from the model because of their high correlations with other IVs (i.e., social contact and status), and others (i.e., job satisfaction and satisfaction with employment status) were excluded because of small cell sizes. A model consisting of occupation, collective purpose, activity, positive affect, and negative affect was able to predict 62% of the variance in mental health for participants who had acquired jobs. The overall accuracy of prediction was 84.5%, with classification accuracy being in favour of the non-clinical group (89.2% vs. 76.2% for the clinical group). Poorer mental health was predicted by being in a lower skilled occupation, feeling more deprived of collective purpose and activity, and having lower positive affect and higher negative affect. Occupation and NA were the most significant predictors, although collapsing the occupation variable into two categories because of small cell sizes made it more difficult to interpret.

Whilst other researchers have demonstrated the important influence of job satisfaction on mental health (e.g., Graetz, 1993; Wanberg, 1995; Winefield et al., 1991), the majority of the current sample (approx. 88%) reported some level of satisfaction with their jobs, so the impact of job satisfaction on mental health could not be tested. Job quality was also measured in the current study, but when it was included with other predictors, it did not significantly add to the prediction of mental health and thus was not included in the final model.

Changes in coping resources, appraisals, and mental health as a function of employment status

The results of the longitudinal study indicated that gaining employment had a significant impact on some of the coping resources, appraisal variables, and mental health, whilst others remained relatively stable across time and were impervious to changes in employment status.

At Time 1, there were no significant differences in self-esteem between participants who remained unemployed and those who later found work. Both groups showed an increase in self-esteem from Time 1 to Time 2, with the employed group

showing a greater increase than the unemployed group, although the interaction effect only just reached significance. These results are inconsistent with previous research that has found self-esteem to be relatively stable across time and not affected by gaining employment (e.g., Creed, 1999a). For example, in a longitudinal study of long-term unemployed youth, Creed found that self-esteem levels did not change over a 4-month period, nor were they affected by later employment status. Other researchers (e.g., Dooley & Prause, 1995; Mean Patterson, 1997; Waters & Moore, 2002) have found a selection effect with self-esteem, whereby participants with higher baseline levels of self-esteem were more likely to find employment than those with lower self-esteem. This was not apparent in the current study and may be due to the different sample types. The studies reported by Creed, Mean Patterson, and Dooley and Prause were carried out on youth, whilst the current study included ages ranging from 16 through to 65. Thus, there may have been differential effects of unemployment and employment according to age groups. These may have been camouflaged in the current study because interaction effects based on demographics were not explored. It was beyond the scope of this study to determine whether any of the coping variables or mental health differed across various age groups and whether employment status has a differential effect on those variables depending on the age of the participants. However, such an investigation may be warranted given the conflicting results of this study and is therefore recommended for future research.

Scores on positive affect and employment commitment did not change significantly over time, nor were they affected by employment status. This suggests that those variables are relatively stable, at least over a short period of time, and are quite robust to any changes in the external environment. Participants who became employed had higher PA and lower employment commitment at Time 1 than those who remained unemployed, which suggests that there may have been a selection effect with better personal resources leading to a greater likelihood of employment.

There were no main effects or interactions for the appraisal variables of collective purpose and activity, which suggest that they may also be measures of more stable traits. The collective purpose variable may reflect more stable values that relate to a person's sense of community and a desire to contribute to society. Such values may be more robust to changes in the environment. Similarly, the measure of activity may represent a more stable personality characteristic—an ability to successfully plan, organise, and carry out one's daily activities without needing

direction from others. Future research could observe changes in collective purpose and activity over a longer period of time to determine whether they are indeed relatively stable traits. Whilst collective purpose and activity were not influenced by employment status, other variables, such as gender or age, may affect how those variables perform over time. It was beyond the scope of the current research project to examine moderating effects of demographic variables, but collective purpose and activity cannot be assumed to be stable traits until further tests of possible moderators are carried out.

The significant main effects for employment status provide evidence of a possible selection effect for some of the personal resources and appraisal variables. Whilst the selection hypothesis contends that participants with pre-existing mental health problems are less likely to become reemployed (Dooley et al., 1992), it may also apply to variables other than mental health. The current study found that participants who became employed had higher levels of positive affect, higher employment commitment, greater dissatisfaction with their employment status, more financial hardship and strain, and more perceived social contact at Time 1 than participants who remained unemployed. Thus, individuals who successfully acquired jobs demonstrated differences in their personal resources and a different pattern of appraisals to those who had not found jobs.

One of the main aims of this study was to examine the influence of employment status on coping variables. Thus, the interaction effects were of most interest. There were significant interactions between employment status and negative affect, satisfaction with employment status, financial hardship, financial strain, social contact, time structure, and mental health. Participants who gained employment showed significant improvements in their mental health, reductions in their negative affect, and an increase in their satisfaction levels. They were also less financially strained and reported greater access to social contact and time structure at Time 2. Scores on all of those variables for the continuously unemployed showed either very little change or some deterioration over the period of the study. The results suggested that the improvements experienced by the employed group could be attributed to gaining employment.

These findings are in line with the exposure hypothesis, which contends that exposure to unemployment causes a decline in mental health, whilst gaining employment leads to an improvement in mental health (e.g., Dooley et al., 1992;

Winefield, 1995). Clearly, participants in this study who gained employment showed a significant improvement in several areas of functioning, including their personal resources (i.e., self-esteem and negative affect), their cognitive appraisals (i.e., satisfaction, perceived economic deprivation, and perceived levels of social contact and time structure), and their mental health.

The qualitative data supported the findings from the quantitative analyses, with participants reporting improved well-being after gaining employment. For example, some participants reported feeling better about themselves, feeling happier, feeling less bored, and being able to plan for the future.

Summary

Generally, the results are in line with stress and coping theory and highlight the importance of considering dispositional variables and cognitive appraisals when investigating the experiences of unemployment and reemployment. Personal resources and appraisal variables emerged as important predictors of coping behaviours and mental health. Self-promotion efficacy was the most important personal resource associated with job search behaviours. The appraisal variables of expectation of employment and financial hardship also influenced coping behaviours. The core self-evaluation variables of self-esteem, positive affect, and negative affect were key influences of mental health in the unemployed, whilst positive and negative affect also played an important role in predicting the mental health of employed participants. Whilst age clearly had the strongest influence on job acquisition, two of the personal resources—self-promotion efficacy and employment commitment—were key predictors. Appraisals of satisfaction and time structure, along with job applications also played significant parts in predicting job acquisition.

The stress process is dynamic and transactional in nature. Changes in relation to the person or the environment can influence the experience of stress. As the current study shows, a change in employment status had a significant influence on personal resources and appraisals, and consequently affected mental health. Participants who found jobs showed a significant improvement in their mental health, they reported lower levels of negative affect, and made more positive appraisals in relation to their employment situation and access to the latent and manifest benefits of time structure and social contact.

The results of the current study provide some support for Jahoda's (1982) contention that employment provides access to the latent benefits which are important for mental health. Participants who found work reported greater access to two of the latent benefits—social contact and time structure. There were also significant and meaningful correlations between mental health and all of the latent benefits for the employed group. Although not all of the latent benefits could be included in the regression model because of their collinearity, deprivation of collective purpose and activity predicted poorer mental health for the employed sample. For the continuously unemployed group, all of the latent benefits, apart from collective purpose, were correlated with mental health. However, the latent benefits were not significant predictors of mental health.

Therefore, the results of this study cast some doubt on Jahoda's (1982) claim that employment provides access to all of the latent benefits. Some participants who had gained employment still felt deprived of the latent benefits and their mental health was affected accordingly. If all employed participants had access to the latent benefits, one would expect the distribution of those variables to be significantly skewed. Their distributions were all normal, indicating that some participants felt deprived of the latent benefits and others reported greater access. The results suggest that whilst perceived access to the latent benefits has an impact on mental health, there is no guarantee that employment provides access to those benefits. There is also no evidence that all unemployed individuals feel deprived of the latent benefits.

Overall, the stress and coping framework seems to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the unemployment experience because it allows for the inclusion of variables that clearly have an impact on mental health and also on coping behaviours. Whilst the deprivation approach is informative and there is evidence that access to the latent benefits impacts on mental health, it only tells part of the story. Including other variables, such as core self-evaluations and a range of cognitive appraisal variables provides a better understanding of the experience of unemployment and reemployment.

Limitations

One of the limitations of the study was the possible response bias due to the attrition rate. Approximately 69% of the original 371 participants were either not willing to take part in the follow-up study, or withdrew from the study. Thus, the

response rate was a low 31% and may affect the generalisability of the results. The typical response rate for mail surveys is 30% (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1997), so the response rate for the current study was no unusual. However, there was some evidence of possible response bias.

Participants who dropped out of the study were younger, single, and had completed two or more job search training courses at Time 1. They also had higher task-focused efficacy, greater expectations for employment, and higher employment commitment. The associations between attrition and age, relationship status, and number of job search training courses completed were all relatively weak, so those differences may not pose a major threat to the study's generalisability. However, the significant differences on the other three variables may have biased the results, perhaps towards participants who were more likely to have remained unemployed. Participants who had remained unemployed over the duration of the study were lower on job seeking efficacy, employment commitment, and employment expectation.

The length of the survey may have been a deterrent for employed people, who may have had less time to fill in the survey. On the other hand, the survey length may not have posed such a problem for those who had remained unemployed and who may have had more time on their hands. It was not possible to determine whether this was the case, so future research is needed to determine whether the current results can be replicated for a less biased sample.

Practical implications

The significant correlations between the latent benefits and psychological distress suggest that unemployed people who are able to impose their own structure to their day, to plan and carry out daily activities, to mix with others, to maintain their sense of social status, and to make a meaningful contribution to their community have better mental health. The study suggests that employment is not a necessary condition for access to those latent benefits, although access to social contact and time structure did improve for employed participants.

Practitioners may be able to assist or encourage the unemployed to find alternative ways of accessing those benefits to provide some protection against the negative psychological consequences of unemployment. When the latent benefits are considered with other key correlates of mental health, however, they have a minimal

impact. Personal resources, including high self-esteem, low negative affect, high positive affect, and low employment commitment, along with more positive appraisals of one's employment and financial situation, appear to be a buffer against the stress of unemployment. The results show that the tendency to experience negative emotions and to view things in a negative light has a significant influence on the mental health of unemployed people. Appraisals of financial hardship and having a strong commitment to work are also detrimental to well-being. On the other hand, people with high self-esteem, who have a positive outlook on life and a positive view of their current employment situation, suffer less distress. The regression models indicated that the self-esteem, positive affect, negative affect, satisfaction, and financial hardship are reliable predictors of mental health, with relatively good accuracy of prediction. Therefore, the assessment instruments used in this research project may serve as useful tools for practitioners to make an early identification of individuals who become unemployed and are at risk of suffering clinical symptoms. Individual treatment plans can then be developed to assist those individuals.

Practitioners may find techniques from cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) useful for enhancing the well-being of the unemployed. CBT strategies could be aimed at modifying negative thoughts and activating meaningful behaviours. Several researchers have used CBT-based approaches effectively to improve levels of well-being in the unemployed (e.g., Creed, Machin, & Hicks, 1999; Proudfoot, Guest, Carson, Dunn, & Gray, 1997). The behavioural activation component of CBT has been shown to be effective in alleviating negative affect and corresponding maladaptive cognitions (Jacobson et al., 1996; Jacobson & Gortner, 2000). One such treatment is the Brief Behavioural Activation Treatment for Depression (BATD), outlined in Lejuez, Hopko, and Hopko (2001). This appears to be a useful and cost-effective approach that incorporates behaviour monitoring, activity scheduling in several life areas (e.g., social relationships, recreation, volunteer work, career/employment), and positive reinforcement.

The current study found positive affect to be an important influence on mental health and it was also associated with job search behaviours. Other researchers have noted that positive affect plays an important role in offsetting the negative consequences of stress (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000). Practitioners may find CBT

an effective tool for enhancing positive affect in their clients through assisting them to positively reframe their situation and encouraging them to engage in meaningful activities. Folkman and Moskowitz suggested that meaningful activities, which turn individual's attention to their resources and the positive aspects of their lives, can assist them to feel effective and to experience a sense of mastery and control. This may be particularly important for individuals whose self-efficacy has eroded because of continued unsuccessful job hunting. The leisure environment provides one avenue for people to engage in meaningful activities. Volunteer work may be another option for some clients, whilst care-giving, study, or training courses may be other potentially meaningful pursuits. Given the importance of self-promotion efficacy to the job search process and reemployment, the leisure environment may also provide opportunities for the unemployed to develop more social networks and to enhance their skills associated with promoting themselves as job seekers.

Age, self-promotion efficacy, employment commitment, time structure, satisfaction with employment status, and job applications predicted job acquisition. While nothing can be done to alter a person's age, the fact that Australia's workforce is aging and by 2021 there will be at least 43% of the population over 45, suggests that it is important that older people are supported to find and keep their jobs (Queensland Department of Employment and Training, 2001). The Australian Government is working towards finding solutions to prevent mature-age unemployment by exploring ways of helping employers to understand the value of having older workers, to manage mature-aged workers more effectively, and to assist mature-aged people with their career planning in a knowledge economy (Queensland Department of Employment and Training). Career development practitioners can provide valuable assistance to governments with those issues.

As previously mentioned, lack of time structure was correlated with employment commitment and both variables were predictors of job acquisition. This suggests that participants who were unable to impose their own structure to their day placed more value on employment and were more likely to obtain work. Time structure and employment are paradoxical in that reduced time structure and high employment commitment are related to poorer mental health, but also to a greater likelihood of becoming employed. Their odds ratios, however, were relatively small (1.02 and .97, respectively), so there would need to be a significant decrease in employment

commitment and a significant increase in time structure before they would have any great impact on job acquisition. The results indicated that employment commitment is relatively stable across time and impervious to the influence of employment status. On the other hand, perceived access to time structure significantly increases upon employment, which suggests that it is amenable to change. Therefore, practitioners may find activity scheduling a useful technique for individuals who are unable to impose their own structure to their day.

Given the trend for more casual or temporary forms of employment, it is important for career development practitioners to encourage individuals to plan ways to sustain their well-being during times when they may find themselves jobless. The results of this study have provided some guidance in terms of areas to be considered when making such contingency plans.

CHAPTER 7 – GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter presents an overview of the research project, a summary of the main findings from the two studies, and describes how the results relate to stress and coping and deprivation theories. The implications of the findings from the research project are discussed, along with limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Overview of the Research Project

The main aim of this research project was to examine the psychological influences on the experience of unemployment. There were several major objectives. The first was to determine how coping resources and cognitive appraisals influence coping behaviours. The second was to examine how the coping variables influence mental health. The third was to determine which variables predicted job acquisition and the final objective was to explore changes over time in the coping variables as a function of employment status. The studies drew mainly from stress and coping theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), but also examined how well Jahoda's (1982) deprivation theory would fit within the stress and coping framework.

The stress process is dynamic and constantly changing, depending on the transactions between the person and his or her environment (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Stress and coping theory posits that for an event or situation to be experienced as stressful, and for it to have an impact on an individual's well-being, the individual must judge the situation as exceeding or taxing his or her available resources and view it as harmful, as threatening, or as a loss of something that is important to him or her (Lazarus & Folkman). Thus, personal resources and cognitive appraisals are important influences in determining whether an experience or situation, such as unemployment, is stressful. Those factors also influence the cognitive or behavioural strategies an individual will use to manage their stress (Lazarus & Folkman).

In her seminal work in the 1930s, Jahoda (1982) found that unemployment results in a loss of access to five important psychosocial benefits of employment, which she believed accounted for the poor mental health experienced by the unemployed. Jahoda contended that employment not only provides a regular income (the manifest benefits), but it provides people with a sense of collective purpose, opportunities for contact with others outside of their immediate family, a sense of

social status, enforced activity, and a structure to their time. Jahoda found that unemployment reduced or deprived people of those five psychosocial benefits, causing them to experience significant distress. This suggests that the experience of distress in the unemployed is associated with appraisals associated with loss of the latent benefits. Thus, Jahoda's theory can be readily incorporated into the stress and coping framework. Other researchers (e.g., Fryer, 1996) have argued that it is the loss of the manifest, or financial, benefits of employment that better account for the distress felt by the unemployed. Fryer argued that having limited finances restricts people's ability to exercise control over their lives and to make plans for the future, which impacts on their well-being. Thus, Fryer's emphasis on the loss of the economic benefits of employment can also be incorporated into the stress and coping theory because perceived access to finances is considered to be a coping resource.

The research project consisted of two studies. The first was a cross-sectional survey of 371 unemployed participants from South East Queensland, Australia. The second study consisted of 115 of those same participants, surveyed 6 months later, and used both cross-sectional and longitudinal designs. The surveys were paper-based and were distributed by staff from employment agencies to their unemployed clients.

The variables used in the current research project included many of the variables identified by McKee-Ryan et al. in their meta-analysis as important to the mental health of the unemployed and included coping resources (i.e., personal, financial, and social resources), cognitive appraisals, and coping behaviours. Mental health was measured by the 12-item version of the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12). The leisure environment has also been identified as an important consideration in the unemployment experience as it can provide an alternative way to access the latent benefits and enhance mental health (e.g., Waters & Moore, 2002). Therefore, measures relating to leisure activity were also included in the study.

The personal coping resources measured in Study One at Time 1 included self-esteem, positive affect, negative affect, job seeking efficacy, employment commitment, financial resources (i.e., fortnightly net income), and amount of social contact via leisure activity. Factor analyses revealed that the measure of job seeking efficacy was best explained by two factors, which were interpreted as task-focused efficacy and self-promotion efficacy. Task-focused efficacy included items that were more reflective of the tasks individuals may engage in when job seeking, such as

writing resumes. The self-promotion efficacy factor included more interpersonally-oriented items, such as promoting oneself to employers and using one's social network to generate job leads.

The cognitive appraisal variables measured at Time 1 were employment expectation, satisfaction with employment status, leisure meaningfulness, economic deprivation, and perceived access to the latent benefits of employment. The inclusion of perceived access to the latent benefits of employment provided an avenue to test Jahoda's (1982) deprivation theory. The coping behaviours measured at Time 1 included frequency of leisure activity, training, volunteer work, and job search behaviours, which were measured by job applications over the previous month, job search intensity, and number of job search methods.

Most of the same variables were measured in Study Two, with the exception of the leisure variables (i.e., social leisure, leisure meaningfulness, and leisure activity). The only reason for their exclusion was to reduce the length of the survey at Time 2, because there were other measures assessing job search behaviours, job acquisition, job quality, and job satisfaction that were included in the follow-up survey. Qualitative data were also collected at Time 1 and Time 2 by asking participants to provide written comments on their unemployment experience.

Summary of Results from Study One

In line with previous research, the unemployed participants in Study One reported significantly poorer mental health than an Australian population sample. However, not all individuals' experiences of unemployment are the same. Study One examined several variables that were expected to influence the unemployment experience. As mentioned previously, those variables included personal resources, cognitive appraisals, coping strategies, and mental health.

Using the stress and coping framework, it was expected that personal resources would be related to one another, that they would influence cognitive appraisals, and that both personal resources and cognitive appraisals would influence coping behaviours and mental health. Those expectations were mostly supported by the results of the study. Participants with better personal resources (i.e., higher self-esteem, PA, and job seeking efficacy, and lower NA and employment commitment) made more positive appraisals, used more active coping strategies, and reported better mental health. For example, participants who evaluated themselves more

positively appraised their leisure as more meaningful, they were more confident that they would find a job, and they felt less deprived of the latent benefits of employment. They also had better mental health.

Employment commitment also emerged as a key variable, influencing other personal resources, appraisals, coping, and mental health. Higher employment commitment was related to lower levels of self-esteem, higher negative affect, lower time structure, lower satisfaction with employment status, more active job seeking, and poorer mental health. Thus, unemployed participants who had difficulty structuring their time saw employment as more valuable, perhaps because it imposes a structure to their day. They also expended more effort into finding a job and had poorer mental health. On the other hand, individuals who were more able to structure their days saw less value in being employed, were less actively looking for work, and had better mental health. When included with other significant correlates, employment commitment emerged as one of the key predictors of job search behaviours and mental health. Employment commitment appears to have a somewhat paradoxical effect on the unemployment experience—on the one hand, it promotes more active job seeking, but on the other hand, it has a negative impact on mental health. Therefore, practitioners who use strategies to encourage the unemployed to place more value on employment need to be mindful of the detrimental impact that might have on their clients' mental health and ensure that their clients have the requisite personal resources to deal with that increased desire for work.

Overall, the situational resources (i.e., income and social leisure) had less of an influence on coping behaviours and mental health than the personal resources and appraisal variables. Many of their relationships with coping and mental health appear to be mediated by cognitive appraisals. For example, income influenced appraisals of financial hardship, which influenced mental health, but income did not directly influence mental health. Thus appraisals of financial hardship may function as a mediator between income and mental health. Similarly, social leisure was not directly related to mental health, but it was related to appraisals of leisure meaningfulness, employment expectation, and social contact, which were all related to leisure activity and mental health. Again, this suggests that appraisals may function as mediating variables between social leisure and leisure activity and between social leisure and mental health.

The results indicated that the most consistent predictors of job search behaviours were geographic region, employment commitment, and self-promotion efficacy. Participants who lived in the metropolitan area, those who were more committed to being in paid work, and those who had more confidence in their ability to promote themselves as job seekers were more actively looking for work. Larger cities tend to have more and often larger organisations, so it makes sense that the city dwellers in this study had a larger number of potential employers to approach for work than those living in rural areas. Most of the support or training offered to the unemployed focuses on enhancing their employability and job search skills. The results of Study One demonstrated the importance of job seeking efficacy to the job search process, and those results are consistent with previous research (e.g., Blau, 1994; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Wanberg et al., 2005). Therefore, training interventions should focus not only on teaching job search behaviours, but should incorporate factors that enhance job seeking efficacy. Some of the ways job seeking efficacy can be enhanced include identifying previous successful performances of job search behaviours (e.g., being short-listed for an interview, successfully acquiring a job in the past), being positively reinforced for the behaviours, and seeing others that one can identify with successfully perform the behaviours (Bandura, 1988).

Leisure activity appeared to be an effective coping strategy for the current sample. Participants were asked to indicate their most meaningful leisure activity, the most common of which was physical activities, such as sport and exercise. Other meaningful pursuits included socialising with friends, reading or writing-related activities, and spending time with one's family/partner. Leisure activity was associated with greater satisfaction with employment status, more perceived access to the latent benefits (except for activity), greater leisure meaningfulness, and a greater expectation for employment. It was also significantly correlated with mental health, such that better mental health was associated with more frequent engagement in meaningful leisure activities. Therefore, the leisure environment appears to provide an alternative avenue for gaining access to the latent benefits and serves as a useful and psychologically healthy way of coping with unemployment. Engagement in leisure activity was predicted by availability of financial resources, positive affect, time structure, leisure meaningfulness, and education. Participants engaged more often in their preferred leisure activity when finances were not a barrier, when their

affect was more positive, when their time was more structured, when their leisure was more meaningful to them, and when they were more highly educated.

Whilst leisure activity was significantly correlated with mental health, the most important predictors were self-esteem, positive affect, negative affect, employment commitment, satisfaction with employment status, and financial hardship. Thus, participants with fewer personal resources, greater dissatisfaction with their unemployment status, and more financial hardship were more likely to report clinical symptoms than those who had reported more positive self-evaluations and appraisals and placed less value on employment. The predictive model, which included all of the aforementioned variables, demonstrated acceptable sensitive and specificity across time, correctly classifying over 84% of cases. The model accounted for 56% of the variance in mental health. Therefore, those six variables represent psychological vulnerability factors, which, if identified early, could be targeted for intervention programs to decrease the likelihood of deterioration of an unemployed individual's mental health.

The qualitative data provided insight into participants' lived experiences of unemployment. The comments made by participants appeared to align well with the results from the quantitative data. For example, comments made by participants who reported poorer coping resources and mental health in their response to the quantitative measures reflected negative lived experiences, and vice versa for those whose quantitative results indicated better coping resources and mental health. The quantitative data was also informative in terms of highlighting variables that were not measured quantitatively but that appear to be important influences on job search behaviours and well-being. For example, some participants mentioned feeling discouraged when they did not receive any feedback from employers, some commented on the lack of support and assistance from government or employment agencies, and other mentioned several barriers to employment, such as physical health, transport problems, and lack of relevant qualifications or experience.

Summary of Results from Study Two

At the time of the follow-up study, 58 participants had gained employment and 57 had remained unemployed. Some of the results were analysed separately for those groups. Like Study One, the mental health of participants who had remained unemployed was significantly poorer than that of an Australian population sample.

However, the mental health of participants who had gained employment was no different to the population sample. The results from Study One and Study Two provide clear evidence of the detrimental impact of unemployment on mental health and are consistent with Australian and international studies.

Overall, the results suggest that some of the relationships among the coping variables and between the coping variables and mental health are consistent across time and impervious to duration of unemployment or the influence of employment status. Other relationships, however, seem to alter over prolonged unemployment or when there is a change in employment status. For example, the results indicated that the correlations among the core self-evaluation variables were relatively stable across time, regardless of employment status. Self-esteem was correlated with PA and NA at Time 1 and at Time 2 for both the employed and unemployed groups. Employment commitment also shared a relatively stable relationship with self-esteem and negative affect for unemployed participants. Those variables were correlated at Time 1 and at Time 2 for the unemployed group. However, they were not correlated for the employed group. This suggests that once individuals become employed, self-esteem and negative affect do not influence their level of employment commitment.

Some of the relationships between coping resources and appraisals were also consistent across time. For example, job seeking efficacy and positive affect were related to employment expectation at Time 1 and Time 2. Positive affect was correlated with all of the latent benefits at both Time 1 and Time 2, regardless of employment status. Self-esteem was also related to all of the latent benefits at Time 1 and Time 2, but only for the employed group. For the unemployed group at Time 2, self-esteem was correlated with collective purpose and activity, but none of the other latent benefits. Negative affect was related to status, activity, and time structure at Time 1 and Time 2 for the unemployed group, but it was related to all of the latent benefits for the employed group at Time 2. Thus, employment status appears to influence some of the relationships between self-esteem and negative affect and appraisals of latent deprivation.

The relationship between employment commitment and time structure was stable across time for unemployed participants. A curious finding was that relationships between employment commitment and economic deprivation, social contact, and activity became stronger at Time 2 for the continuously unemployed group, to the point where they became statistically significant, whilst none of those

variables were related to employment commitment for the employed group. Research suggests that financial resources dwindle, social contacts decrease, and people find it harder to find purposeful activities to engage in as time out of work increases (e.g., Bjarnason & Sigurdardottir, 2003; Dockery, 2004; Fielden & Davidson, 1999; T. Jackson, 1999; Whelan, 1992). Perhaps, for those reasons, participants who had remained unemployed over the 6-month duration of the study heightened their commitment to employment.

The relationships between mental health and the core self-evaluation variables of self-esteem, PA, and NA were consistent across time, regardless of employment status. Participants with higher commitment and NA suffered with poorer mental health, whilst those with higher self-esteem and PA had better mental health. It was not surprising that negative affect was consistently related to mental health. One would expect a neurotic disposition to predict the neurotic manifestations present in mental health disorders, such as depression and anxiety. Employment commitment was also consistently related to mental health for the unemployed group, but those variables were not related at Time 2 for the employed group. Thus, once individuals with high employment commitment find jobs, it is likely that their work value and their employment status become congruent, which minimises their distress.

Whilst economic deprivation was correlated with mental health at Time 1, and financial strain was correlated with mental health for the employed group at Time 2, neither of the financial deprivation variables was related to mental health for the continuously unemployed group. Furthermore, the financial deprivation variables were not related to income for the continuously unemployed group, which prompted the question of whether prolonged unemployment leads to some sort of adaptation to one's reduced income. There is some evidence that the unemployed adapt to their situation. For example, Warr and Jackson (1987) found that after period between 12 and 24 months, there was a significant, albeit small, improvement in well-being in an unemployed sample. Similarly, there may be a point during extended periods of unemployment at which adaptation to one's financial situation takes place. Further studies could explore this issue.

The relationships between perceived access to the latent benefits and mental health were relatively stable across time, regardless of employment status. The link

between mental health and access to the latent benefits is consistent with Jahoda's (1982) deprivation theory. However, the results indicate that access to the latent benefits is not reliant on being in paid work. Indeed, Study One indicated that leisure activity was associated with greater access to the latent benefits. Similarly, at Time 1, participants who were participating in training or unpaid work reported that their time was more structured. This places some question over Jahoda's contention that employment is the primary avenue through which individuals gain access to the latent benefits. The results suggest that leisure, training, and unpaid work can also provide access to some, if not all, of those benefits.

The model predicting mental health for the unemployed was relatively stable over time, with self-esteem, positive affect, negative affect, satisfaction with employment status, and financial strain being consistent predictors at Time 1 and Time 2. Employment commitment was included in the model at Time 1, but removed at Time 2 because of its relatively high correlations with the other variables in the model. Given its relative consistency and its ability to correctly classify over 84% of cases at both Time 1 and Time 2, the regression model may serve as a useful tool for practitioners to identify unemployed individuals at risk of developing clinical symptoms.

For the employed group, positive and negative affect were also important predictors of mental health. Therefore, the relationships between PA and NA and mental health appear to be stable across time and unaffected by employment status. Poorer mental health for the employed group was also predicted by being in a lower skilled occupation, and feeling deprived of a sense of collective purpose and activity. None of the employment-related variables, such as working hours, job permanence, job satisfaction, or job quality predicted mental health. The majority of participants (51 of the 58) reported being satisfied to some degree with their jobs. Therefore, job satisfaction was not included in the predictive model. Job quality was, however, included in the model, but it had very minimal impact on mental health and was not part of the final model. The final model accounted for 62% of the variance in the mental health of the employed sample and correctly classified over 84% of participants. Apart from PA and NA, different variables appear to be important for mental health in the unemployed compared to mental health in the employed. Thus, employment status has an influence on what variables become more salient in relation to psychological well-being.

The results indicated that there were deteriorations in job seeking efficacy, employment expectation, and job search behaviours over the period of the study for the continuously unemployed, but task-focused efficacy actually increased with prolonged unemployment. Participants who were unable to secure jobs felt less capable of executing job search behaviours that involved promoting themselves to others as a job seeker. They also decreased the intensity of their job seeking, and used significantly fewer job search methods. However, they became more confident in their ability to carry out job search behaviours, such as checking newspapers or the internet for jobs and writing resumes. This suggests that unsuccessful job seeking might erode an individual's confidence in his or her networking and self-promotion abilities, which may prompt him or her to favour other, more impersonal methods.

Job search training appears to increase job seeking behaviour, with higher scores on all three behaviours (job applications, intensity, and methods) being predicted by number of job search training courses completed. Furthermore, participants who had completed a job search training course at some point during the 6 months of the study showed a significant increase in their job search behaviours compared to participants who had not completed any job search training courses over that period. Thus, job search training seems to be beneficial in terms of more active job seeking. It was not, however, beneficial in raising participants' job seeking efficacy or expectations for employment. Scores on those variables did not change according to whether participants had done a job search training course or not. Self-promotion efficacy was a consistent predictor of job search behaviours, being influential at both Time 1 and Time 2. However, there were inconsistencies with other predictors of job search behaviours. Geographic region did not influence job search behaviour at Time 2, nor did employment commitment. However both of those variables were important predictors of job search behaviour at Time 1. Employment expectation and education were predictors of job search intensity and methods at Time 2, but those variables were not important predictors at Time 1. Overall, those results suggest that the variables that influence job search behaviour are affected by duration of unemployment. Some that are important earlier in one's time of unemployment (e.g., geographic region and employment commitment) become less important as unemployment becomes prolonged and others (e.g., education and employment expectation) become more influential.

In relation to job interviews, the results indicated that participants who had applied for more jobs over the previous 6 months, those who had higher employment commitment, and those who felt less deprived of activity had attended more job interviews over the duration of the study. Whilst the number of job applications submitted by participants was expected to influence the number of job interviews they attended, the other two variables suggest that individuals who are more committed to employment and who are better able to mobilise themselves into action attend more job interviews. Given that there is a requirement for the unemployed to apply for a required number of jobs per fortnight to receive their income support payments, some individuals may just go through the motions of applying for jobs, without being seriously committed to actually getting a job. That is, they may apply for jobs, but if they are offered an interview, may turn it down. Others may be more selective about the types of jobs they are willing to take, so they may not attend every interview to which they are invited. Further research could explore this issue in more detail by including a measure of interview invitations.

With regard to job acquisition, participants who had successfully found jobs reported using a range of job search strategies and found that contacting potential employers, either by phone or by letter, was the strategy that most helped them to get their jobs. They also found using their social networks to find suitable job leads helpful. Participants were more likely to have gained employment if they were younger, if they had submitted more job applications, if they felt more dissatisfied being unemployed, and if they had higher self-promotion efficacy, higher employment commitment, and felt more deprived of time structure. However, the relatively low R^2 for the model predicting job acquisition suggests that there are other variables that were not measured in the current study that may contribute to job acquisition. The qualitative analyses indicated that insufficient work experience, the competitiveness of the job, ill health or disability, lack of relevant skills or education, and lack of transport might also influence job acquisition.

The results indicated that mental health and some of the coping variables were influenced by employment status. Self-esteem, negative affect, satisfaction with employment status, financial hardship, financial strain, social contact, time structure, and mental health were all positively influenced by gaining employment, but showed either very little change or deterioration for participants who remained unemployed. Other variables appeared to be more trait-like and unaffected by time or employment

status. Scores on positive affect, employment commitment, collective purpose, and activity all remained stable over the 6 months of the study and none was affected by employment status. Thus, positive affect appears to represent a general disposition to experience positive emotions that is resistant to changes in employment status. Employment commitment also appears to be relatively stable and is impervious to changes in the environment. Furthermore, the measures of collective purpose and activity may have tapped into more stable personality characteristics, rather than into the more transient appraisals of deprivation. Collective purpose may relate to a person's sense of community and desire to contribute to society and this may be relatively stable regardless of environment influences. Activity may represent an ingrained ability to mobilise oneself into action without needing direction from others. It too may be more robust to changes in the environment. Future research is needed to explore whether collective purpose and activity are influenced by other variables, for example, demographic factors such as age and gender.

Some participants also chose to accept the invitation to provide written comments at Time 2. Those comments provided a more comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences of unemployment and of gaining employment. The qualitative data were congruent with the results from the quantitative analyses, particularly in relation to the positive changes associated with gaining employment. Participants' comments also provided a guide for future research, with some highlighting barriers to finding work and reinforcing the difficulties they experienced when they do not receive feedback from employers.

Implications

Overall, the results of the research project appear to fit well with stress and coping theory and highlight the importance of considering personality-related variables and cognitive appraisals when investigating the experiences of unemployment and reemployment. Many of the personal resources and appraisal variables were significant correlates of coping behaviours and mental health. Some of the personal resources and appraisal variables were also important predictors of coping behaviour and mental health. Therefore, one of the ways to provide assistance and support for the unemployed is to develop intervention programs aimed at enhancing their personal resources and altering their negative cognitions.

However, the experience of unemployment is not the same for every unemployed person, so where possible, intervention programs should be tailored to suit the individual. Participants with fewer personal resources, greater dissatisfaction with their unemployment status, and more financial hardship were more likely to report clinical symptoms than those who reported more positive self-evaluations and appraisals and placed less value on employment. Thus, those variables represent psychological vulnerability factors, which, if identified early, could be targeted for intervention programs to decrease the likelihood of deterioration of an unemployed individual's mental health. A predictive model, which included self-esteem, PA, NA, satisfaction with employment status, and financial hardship, demonstrated stability over time and acceptable sensitive and specificity for it to be used as a tool to identify unemployed clients at risk of developing clinical symptoms. The assessment instruments used to measure self-esteem, PA, and NA, are relatively brief, consisting of 10 items for each scale, whilst satisfaction with employment status and financial hardship were each measured by one item. The self-esteem, PA, and NA scales also demonstrated good psychometric properties. Thus, those measures may serve as useful tools for informing practitioners of the key areas that could be targeted for individualised treatment or intervention programs.

On a theoretical level, positive affect appears to be a relatively stable disposition that plays a role in offsetting the negative consequences of unemployment. Whilst self-esteem, efficacy, and negative affect have been included in many studies of the unemployed, positive affect has been relatively neglected in the research. This study suggested that PA may well be just as important as NA in the unemployment experience. PA was one of the most important predictors of leisure activity and also of mental health. Whilst PA was not identified by Judge et al. (2002) as being a part of a higher-order construct, which they called core self-evaluations, its relationships with self-esteem, efficacy, and NA suggest that it is part of the constellation of self-evaluative factors. Furthermore, the pattern of relationships between PA and some of the other variables in the study, such as appraisals of employment expectation, leisure meaningfulness, latent deprivation, and coping via leisure activity, was very similar to those of self-esteem and efficacy. These findings suggest that PA should be considered alongside the other core self-evaluation variables as an important personal resource. However, further research is needed to confirm its convergence with the other core self-evaluations

and to determine whether there are similarities between PA and the other core self-evaluations in terms of their relationships with other variables that influence the unemployment experience.

Much of the practical assistance offered to the unemployed by Government and employment agencies relates to improving their employability and job search skills, whilst the receipt of Centrelink benefits is typically reliant on the unemployed demonstrating that they are actively looking for work or engaging in other contracted activities (e.g., volunteer work). The results of Study One demonstrated the importance of job seeking efficacy to the job search process, and those results are consistent with previous research that (e.g., Blau, 1994; Kanfer & Hulin, 1985; Wanberg et al., 2005). Therefore, training interventions should focus not only on teaching job search behaviours, but should incorporate factors that enhance job seeking efficacy.

Self-efficacy is typically acquired through past successful performances of the behaviour, through positive reinforcement, and through vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1988). The latter refers to individuals seeing others, with whom they identify, successfully carrying out the relevant behaviour. To enhance job seeking efficacy, practitioners could assist their unemployed clients to identify and acknowledge previous successes, such as being short-listed for an interview, or having been offered a job in the past, to help them to focus on previous positive outcomes. It came to light from the qualitative analyses that some participants felt discouraged because they received no feedback from employers after applying for job. Whilst it may not be feasible for practitioners to educate employers on the importance of feedback, it is possible for practitioners to provide positive reinforcement to their clients for approximating good job search behaviours in a counselling setting (e.g., through mock job interviews or mock informational interviews). Furthermore, group training sessions could provide an avenue for the unemployed to enhance their sense of efficacy through vicarious reinforcement. For example, guest speakers who were previously unemployed and successfully gained work could be invited along to a training session to share their experiences.

Although job search behaviours are important precursors to finding work, the results of this study suggest that what the unemployed do in their spare time is also an important consideration in terms of their psychological well-being. The leisure

environment appears to provide an alternative avenue for gaining access to the latent benefits and serves as a useful and psychologically healthy way of coping with unemployment. Therefore, practitioners could encourage unemployed individuals to engage in meaningful activities as a way of coping with their unemployment. In doing so, practitioners should be mindful of several pertinent issues that were borne out of the current study. The key predictors of leisure activity were financial resources, level of education, activity, leisure meaningfulness, and positive affect. Thus, some unemployed individuals are likely to have significant financial barriers that will place restrictions on the frequency and type of leisure activity in which they engage. Some of the activities reported by participants as meaningful (e.g., sport/exercise, socialising with friends) need not incur a cost, so working with unemployed clients to find out what activities they would find the most meaningful and then generating cost-effective or no-cost ways of doing them is likely to be helpful. The results suggest that individuals with lower levels of education may need information or education on the positive mental health benefits of leisure activity to help them to see its usefulness as a coping strategy. Other individuals may have difficulty organising and mobilising themselves to engage in leisure activities. Intervention programs incorporating behavioural activation strategies, such as activity scheduling, may be efficacious for assisting such individuals. Other unemployed clients may benefit from therapeutic techniques aimed at helping them to take a more positive view of, or positively reappraise, their situation, and to identify leisure activities that they would find meaningful.

Several researchers have used Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) approaches effectively to improve levels of well-being in the unemployed (e.g., Creed, Machin, & Hicks, 1999; Proudfoot, Guest, Carson, Dunn, & Gray, 1997). The behavioural activation component of CBT has been shown to be effective in alleviating negative affect and corresponding maladaptive cognitions (Jacobson et al., 1996; Jacobson & Gortner, 2000). Consequently, Lejuez, Hopko, and Hopko (2001) developed the Brief Behavioural Activation Treatment for Depression (BATD), which focuses on the behavioural component of CBT. The BATD appears to be a useful and cost-effective approach that incorporates behaviour monitoring, activity scheduling in several life areas (e.g., social relationships, recreation, volunteer work, career/employment), and positive reinforcement. Thus, it would most likely work well for some unemployed individuals who have difficulty

developing social relationships, structuring their time, mobilising themselves into action, or finding meaningful activities to occupy their time.

Although positive affect appears to be a relatively stable characteristic, CBT techniques may also be useful for helping unemployed individuals with low positive affect to reframe their negative cognitions and to engage in activities that are meaningful (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000). Meaningful activities may assist individuals to feel effective and to experience situational mastery and control, which are important for an individual's mental health (Feather, 1990; Folkman & Moskowitz). Furthermore, there is evidence that people high in PA tend to have more positive perceptions of the sociability aspects of themselves and are more interested in other people (Kuiper, McKee, Shahe, & Olinger, 2000). This suggests that people with low PA may feel more uncomfortable engaging in networking activities that are likely to enhance their job prospects. As such, intervention strategies aimed at increasing an individual's positive affect may also assist them to become more comfortable using social networks to gather job leads or to approach employers for work.

Limitations

The participants in the current research project were relatively similar to those of the sample used in the National Survey of Mental Health and Well-Being carried out by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 1997) in terms of their age and gender, which enhances the generalisability of the results. However, there may be other factors that limit the generalisability of the results. For example, all of the participants lived in the South East Queensland region of Australia, with some living in the Brisbane metropolitan area, and others living in more rural areas, such as Toowoomba and the Darling Downs. Thus, their circumstances may differ to participants from other regions in Australia, such as remote outback areas or areas with a higher multicultural or Indigenous population.

Furthermore, the majority of participants were registered with employment agencies that were members of the Job Network. That is, they were agencies contracted by the Government to provide services to the unemployed. All unemployed individuals who receive income support payments from the Government are required to register with a Job Network member. Therefore, the sample is likely

to be representative of the unemployed who receive Government financial assistance. However, there are likely to be some unemployed individuals who do not receive any Centrelink payments. The current research did not survey those individuals and, consequently, the results may not be reflective of those individuals' experiences of unemployment. Another possible restriction to the generalisability of the findings is that not all Job Network agencies were approached to assist with the recruitment of participants. Whilst attempts were made to target various suburbs in Brisbane and around Toowoomba and surrounding areas, there may have been some areas that were underrepresented.

As mentioned in Chapter 6, one of the difficulties of using surveys to collect data is the potential for common method bias (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1997). Using the same method to gather data may inflate or deflate relationships among study variables. Whilst there are some complex statistical analyses that test for common method variance, they were not carried out for the current research project. Therefore, there is no guarantee that participants' responses were not influenced by such factors as the types of scales used, the item characteristics, the order in which the items were presented, or the response formats. This being the case, the potential for method bias is acknowledged. Whilst the qualitative data were generally reflective of the findings from the quantitative analyses, other data collection methods, such as participant observations or more intensive interviews, would provide a better understanding of the unemployment experience and perhaps lend weight to the conclusions reached in the current research.

A further shortcoming of the current study is the level of predictability for some of the regression models. The amount of variance accounted for by the regression models, particularly those predicting coping behaviours at Time 1, was relatively small. For example, effect sizes ranged from .15 to .28 for the three job search behaviours measured at Time 1, and the effect size for the model predicting job acquisition at Time 2 was .28. These results suggested that there were other important influences on those variables that were not measured, or that the measures used were not effectively tapping into the constructs for which they were indicators. However, the qualitative data provided some useful indications of variables that were not measured in the current research project that might be explored in future research.

Of most concern is the possible response bias associated with the high attrition rate from Time 1 to Time 2. Only 31% of the original participants took part in both studies. There was evidence of some attrition bias, with participants who remained in the study having lower task-focused efficacy, lower expectations for employment, and lower employment commitment. Those factors were related to a greater likelihood of remaining unemployed. Therefore, caution is warranted when attempting to generalise the results of the study until future research is conducted and support is found for the results.

Future Research

This research project has demonstrated the value of the stress and coping theory as a framework for analysing the experience of unemployment, particularly its ability to allow for the inclusion of appraisals of deprivation. Jahoda (1982) and Fryer (1986) attributed the detrimental effects of unemployment to individuals feeling deprived of the benefits of employment, or feeling restricted by the resultant lack of financial resources. The correlational analyses indicated that deprivation of the latent benefits of employment play a role in influencing coping behaviours and mental health. However, when included with personal resources and felt deprivation of the manifest benefits of employment (i.e., financial hardship), their role was less important. Thus the results supported Fryer's emphasis on the importance of financial resources rather than Jahoda's emphasis on the latent benefits.

McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) provided a useful guide to the variables that are important to wellbeing among the unemployed. Similarly, the meta-analysis by Kanfer et al. (2001) highlighted the key correlates of job search behaviour and job acquisition. This research project extended the findings by McKee-Ryan et al. and Kanfer et al. by incorporating many of the key correlates identified by those researchers into the stress and coping framework and analysing their relative importance to mental health, coping behaviours, and employment outcomes. What emerged from the analyses was that personal resources and cognitive appraisals were key factors in influencing coping behaviours, mental health, and employment outcomes. Personal resources, particularly those reflecting core self-evaluations, were found to be important influences of participants' appraisals of their situation and the behaviours in which they engaged to cope with their unemployment. Personal resources and cognitive appraisals were also important influences of mental

health and job acquisition. The research project mainly utilised correlations and regressions, and identified many significant relationships. However, given the dynamic and transactional nature of the stress process, there are likely to be direct, indirect, and reciprocal effects among the variables. In particular, stress and coping theory highlights the mediating effects of cognitive appraisals.

Tests of more complex relationships, such as mediating effects, were beyond the scope of the current research project. However, the results suggest that appraisals of satisfaction with employment status, leisure meaningfulness, employment expectation, perceived economic deprivation, and perceived access to the latent benefits should be tested as mediators between personal resources and coping behaviours, and between personal resources and other outcome variables, such as mental health and job acquisition. A mediating effect occurs when the effect of one variable on another variable is transmitted through a third variable—the mediator (Kline, 1998). More sophisticated statistical procedures, such as structural equation modeling (SEM), could be used to test hypothesised stress and coping models and to identify direct and mediating effects (Byrne, 2001).

Anderson and Gerbing (1988) recommended a two-step approach to structural equation modeling whereby the measurement models are assessed using confirmatory factor analysis and then the structural portion of the model is tested. It is typical in psychological research to use scales consisting of several items as measures of latent constructs, such as self-esteem. Thus, the first step in SEM involves using confirmatory factor analysis to determine how well the observed variables (i.e., the items on the scale) are linked to their underlying latent factors (Byrne, 2001). After acceptable measurement models are found, the researcher then goes on to test the fit of the structural model and to examine paths between latent constructs (Kline, 1988).

Given that several scales with numerous items were used for the current research project, it was not feasible to use the SEM technique. The number of parameters would be huge and the resultant model too complex to adequately test hypothesised relationships. The main aim of this research endeavour was to identify the most important influences on coping behaviours, mental health, and job acquisition. In doing so, it has narrowed down the number of key variables to the extent that using SEM to test for direct and mediating effects may be more feasible for future studies. Thus, the results from the current studies may serve as a guide for

future researchers who wish to explore the more intricate relationships among the influences of the unemployment experience.

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**APPENDIX A – UNEMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY
(TIME 1)**



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Unemployment Experience Questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of an ongoing project aimed at investigating issues relating to unemployment. The information you provide will help us to better understand the experiences of people who are currently unemployed.



Ms Nancy Hoare
PhD Candidate
Psychology Department
University of Southern QLD

We appreciate your participation
in this project!



Dr Tony Machin
Senior Lecturer
Psychology Department
University of Southern QLD



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This first section asks for some general information about you. Remember that your answers will be kept completely confidential and no personal details about you will be reported.

For our numbering system, please insert your initials (in capitals) and the last two digits of the year in which you were born (e.g. TMB66) in these boxes.

--	--	--	--	--	--

1. What is your age?

					years
--	--	--	--	--	-------

2. What is your postcode?

--	--	--	--	--	--

3. Gender (tick one):

Male Female

4. Which of the following best describes your present relationship status? (cross one)

Never married Separated Widowed
 Married/de facto Divorced

5. How many people altogether (including yourself), are financially dependent on you in any way, whether or not they live with you? (cross one)

1 (only myself) 3 5 7
 2 4 6 8 or more

6. What is your highest level of education? (cross one)

Year 10 or less at High School Trade/TAFE Certificate University Degree
 Year 11 or 12 at High School Diploma Postgraduate Degree
 Other (please describe) _____

7. Have you ever previously been in paid employment? Yes No

8. How would you describe your current employment status? (cross one)

I am not currently doing any work I am currently working casually or part-time
 I am currently doing unpaid or volunteer work Other (please describe) _____

9. How satisfied are you with your current employment status? (cross one)

Extremely satisfied Very satisfied Satisfied Very unsatisfied Extremely unsatisfied

10. Have you ever worked in a full-time job?

Yes (go to question 11) No (go to question 15)

11. How long is it since you last worked in a full-time job? (cross one)

Less than 2 months 4 to 5 months 1 to 2 years
 2 to 3 months 6 to 11 months more than 2 years

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12. What was your occupation in the last full-time job that you held?

My occupation was: _____

What kind of work did you do in that occupation? _____

13. How long did you work at that job?

weeks **OR** months **OR** years

14. How satisfied were you in your previous full-time job? (cross one)

Extremely satisfied Very satisfied Satisfied Very unsatisfied Extremely unsatisfied

15. How many jobs have you applied for in the past month?

16. What kind of financial assistance are you currently receiving from Centrelink? (cross one)

Newstart allowance Youth allowance Parenting payment
 Disability support pension Mature age allowance None
 Widow allowance Partner allowance Other (please specify) _____

17. Approximately how much money do you receive per fortnight (after any deductions, such as tax) from all sources of income?

\$ (use whole dollars)

18. How easy is it for you to live on this amount of money per fortnight? (cross one)

Extremely easy Very easy Fairly easy Difficult Very difficult Extremely difficult

19. How many times have you done a Job Search Training course?(cross one)

None Once (1) Twice (2) Three (3) or more times

20. How many times have you done Work for the Dole?(cross one)

None Once (1) Twice (2) Three (3) or more times

21. Are you currently doing any training courses?

No (go to next question) Yes (please answer the following questions)

a. What type of training is it? _____

b. How many hours per week is the training? _____

c. Is the training a compulsory part of your Centrelink obligations? No Yes

22. Are you currently doing any volunteer or unpaid work?

No (go to next question) Yes (please answer the following questions)

a. What type of work is it? _____

b. How many hours per week is the work? _____

c. Is the work a compulsory part of your Centrelink obligations? No Yes

23. Are you currently on any of the following programs?(cross one box for each program)

Intensive Assistance Program Yes No Not sure

Personal Support Program Yes No Not sure

Transition to Work Program Yes No Not sure

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The following statements relate to your general feelings about yourself.

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about yourself? (Cross one box only for each item)

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| |  |  |  |  |
| 1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I am able to do things as well as most other people _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. I take a positive attitude toward myself _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. I wish I could have more respect for myself _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. I certainly feel useless at times _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. At times I think I am no good at all _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

The following questions ask about your leisure activities (activities you do in your free time) and what these activities mean to you. Leisure activities do not include your daily chores.

1. What kinds of leisure activities do you regularly engage in (at least several times a week)?

2. What is the most meaningful leisure activity you have been involved with in the past month?

3. How often do you currently engage in your most meaningful activity? (Choose one box only)

- Rarely Sometimes Quite often Very often Extremely often

4. How often would you like to engage in your most meaningful activity? (Choose one box only)

- Rarely Sometimes Quite often Very often Extremely often

5. If you are not able to do this activity as often as you would like, please indicate if any of the following reasons prevent you from doing the activity more often. (Cross all the reasons that apply to you)

- Financial reasons (e.g. cost of doing the activity, transport costs)
- Family/home commitments
- Work commitments
- Health reasons
- Lack of transport
- Reliance on other people (e.g. to do the activity with you)
- Other reasons (please explain) _____

These questions still relate to your most meaningful activity.

Please indicate the extent to which your most meaningful leisure activity is

(Cross one box only for each item)

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
1. social (involves other people) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. satisfying _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. important to you _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. rewarding in terms of achieving your goals _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. interesting _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. enjoyable _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7. physically challenging _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8. repetitive/monotonous _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9. mentally challenging _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10. stimulating _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
11. time-consuming _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
12. relaxing _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
13. competitive _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
14. exciting _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
15. fulfilling _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
16. risky _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
17. entertaining _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
18. different to your daily duties _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				

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Here are some statements which people have made about working.

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement. (Cross one box only for each item)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Even if I won a great deal of money in the lottery, I would want to continue working somewhere _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Having a job is very important to me _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I hate being on the dole _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I get bored without a job _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The most important things that have happened to me have involved my job _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. If the unemployment benefit was really high, I would still prefer to work _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I really must get a job or I'll lose my self-respect _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Being unemployed is about the worst thing that ever happened to me _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The following is a list of things that people might do when looking for a [new] job. Even if you are not looking for a job right now, please answer these questions.

In the last fortnight, how often have you..... (cross one box only for each item)

	Never	Rarely (1-2 times)	Occasionally (3-5 times)	Frequently (6-8 times)	Very frequently (9-10 times or more)
1. Spoken to friends, family, previous employers or other people you know to get information about jobs _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Read the newspaper and/or other publications for job vacancies _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Checked with employment agencies for job vacancies _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Made a list of all your skills, qualifications, work experience, and personal qualities to use when promoting yourself to potential employers _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Used the internet to search for job vacancies _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prepared/revised your resume _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Sent out your resume or CV to potential employers _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Completed a job application (can include completing a job application form, a letter of application, and/or addressing selection criteria) _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Telephoned, written to, or visited potential employers to market yourself _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Attended a job interview _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Contacted individuals, agencies, or businesses to obtain information about potential job careers _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Promoted yourself in the "work wanted" section of the newspaper, flyers, community notice boards, trade magazines, or organisational newsletters _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

The following questions ask about your confidence in your ability to perform job-search activities.

How **confident** do you feel about doing each of the following things successfully? (Cross one box only for each item)

	Not at all confident	A bit confident	Quite confident	Very confident
1. Talking to friends and other contacts to find employers who hire people with your skills _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Talking to friends and other contacts to discover promising job openings that are suitable for you _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Searching for job vacancies listed in newspapers or employment agencies _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Using the Internet to search for job vacancies and information on employers _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Making a list of all of your skills, qualifications, work experience, and personal qualities to use when promoting yourself to potential employers _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Completing a CV or Resume _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Tailoring your Resume or CV to suit a job application _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Completing a letter of application to a prospective employer _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Addressing selection criteria (when necessary) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Contacting organisations to find out who to speak to about a job within the organisation _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Marketing yourself to potential employers by telephoning them and highlighting your skills, work experience, qualifications, and personal qualities and your desire to work within their organisation _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Writing a letter of introduction to potential employers highlighting your skills, work experience, qualifications, personal qualities, and your desire to work within their organisation _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Meeting in person with potential employers to introduce yourself, highlight your skills, work experience, qualifications, personal qualities, and desire to work within their organisation _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Promoting yourself in the "work wanted" section of the newspaper, flyers, community notice boards, trade magazines, or organisational newsletters _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Talking and getting your points across in an interview _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Overall, how confident are you about getting a job in the next 3 months? _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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The next section is about some general aspects of your life, including community involvement, financial strain, social contact, social status, time structure, and activities.

Please read each pair of statements and cross the numbered box (and only one box per pair of statements) to indicate the response that best applies to you.

For example, on the sample item below, if you are usually able to pay your bills on time, you would indicate this by crossing number "1" or "2". If you usually have trouble paying your bills on time, you would cross number "6" or "7". If you are sometimes able to pay your bills on time, then you would cross number "4" or "5".

SAMPLE ITEM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I am able to pay my bills on time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have trouble paying my bills on time.
1. I usually feel very much a part of my community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely feel very much a part of my community				
2. I regularly participate in fundraising events for my church, sporting or community group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I seldom participate in fundraising events for my church, sporting or community				
3. I contribute greatly to my community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I contribute minimally to my community				
4. I often feel that I make a meaningful contribution to society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely feel that I make a meaningful contribution to society				
5. I often feel a valuable part of society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I seldom feel a valuable part of society				
6. I hold a valuable position in society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not hold a valuable position in society				
7. My income usually allows me to socialise as often as I like	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My income rarely allows me to socialise as often as I like				
8. I often have enough money to buy treats for myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely have enough money to buy treats for myself				
9. My income usually allows me to do the things I want	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My income rarely allows me to do the things I want				
10. My income doesn't restrict me from living as well as my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My income restricts me from living as well as my friends				
11. From the income I receive I often have money left for savings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	From the income I receive I rarely have money left for savings				
12. My level of income usually allows me to make plans for the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My level of income rarely allows me to make plans for the future				
13. I regularly engage in social activities with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely engage in social activities with others				
14. I usually spend a lot of time with other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely spend a lot of time with other people				
15. I often meet new people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I seldom meet new people				
16. I often go out and meet with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely go out and meet with others.				

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17. I regularly engage in social activities with people I know	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I rarely engage in social activities with people I know
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
18. I usually have a lot of opportunities to mix with people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I rarely have a lot of opportunities to mix with people
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
19. My friends usually value my company	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	My friends rarely value my company
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
20. I am often valued by the people around me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I am rarely valued by the people around me
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
21. I am usually important to my friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I am rarely important to my friends
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
22. I often help others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I rarely help others
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
23. My assistance is greatly welcomed by my family and friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	My assistance is rarely welcomed by my family and friends
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
24. People often rely on me for help	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	People rarely rely on me for help
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
25. I often have nothing to do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I rarely have nothing to do
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
26. I often wish I had more things to do to fill up the time in my days	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I rarely wish I had more things to do to fill up the time in my days
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
27. I often have a lot of time on my hands	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I rarely have a lot of time on my hands
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
28. There is usually too much spare time in my day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	There is rarely too much spare time in my day
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
29. Time usually drags for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Time rarely drags for me
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
30. I usually keep busy most of the day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I rarely keep busy most of the day
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
31. I usually do all the things I have to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I rarely do all the things I have to
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
32. I always catch up on the things I have to do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I rarely catch up with the things I have to do
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
33. My days are usually well organised	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	My days are usually not well organised.
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
34. I find it useful to structure my time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I do not find it useful to structure my time
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
35. I have a good balance in my day between responsibilities and free time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I do not have a good balance in my day between responsibilities and free
	<input type="checkbox"/>							
36. I rarely need others to push me to do things	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I usually need others to push me to do things
	<input type="checkbox"/>							

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This next section asks about your feelings and emotions over the past month.

Read each item and then cross ONE box for each item that best indicates how often you have experienced each emotion over the past 30 days.

In the past month, how often have you felt.....

	None	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
1. interested _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. distressed _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. excited _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. upset _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
5. strong _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. guilty _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7. scared _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8. hostile _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9. enthusiastic _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10. proud _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
11. irritable _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
12. alert _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
13. ashamed _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
14. inspired _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
15. nervous _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
16. determined _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
17. attentive _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
18. jittery _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
19. active _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				
20. afraid _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				

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Here are some questions about the way you have been feeling over the last few weeks.

For each question, please CROSS the box that best describes the way you have felt over the last few weeks.

HAVE YOU RECENTLY.....

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Been able to concentrate on whatever you're doing?_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Better than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| 2. Lost much sleep over worry? _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| 3. Felt that you are playing a useful part in things?_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | More so than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| 4. Felt capable of making decisions about things?_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | More so than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| 5. Felt constantly under strain?_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| 6. Felt you couldn't overcome your difficulties? _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| 7. Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | More so than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| 8. Been able to face up to your problems?_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | More so than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| 9. Been feeling unhappy and depressed?_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| 10. Been losing confidence in yourself?_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| 11. Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual |
| <hr/> | | | | |
| 12. Been feeling reasonably happy, all things considered?_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | More so than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual |

**APPENDIX B - UNEMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE SURVEY
(TIME 2)**



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**Unemployment Experience
Follow-up Questionnaire**

This is the final questionnaire in the research project looking at psychological factors relating to unemployment. The information you provide on this survey, along with the information you previously provided on the first survey, will help us to better understand some of the issues relating to unemployment.



Ms Nancey Hoare
PhD Candidate
Psychology Department
University of Southern QLD

We appreciate your participation
in this project!



Dr Tony Machin
Senior Lecturer
Psychology Department
University of Southern QLD

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This first section asks for some general information about you. Remember that your answers will be kept completely confidential and no personal details about you will be reported.

For our numbering system, please insert your initials (in capitals) and the last two digits of the year in which you were born (e.g. TMB-86) in these boxes. We need this code to be able to match your responses to the survey you completed 6 months ago, so please try to remember the exact code you used last time.

Your initials			-	Last 2 digits of year of birth		

1. What is your age? years
2. Gender (cross one): Male Female
3. Are you currently doing any paid work?
 - No. When did you cease doing paid work? _____ / /
Day Month Year
 - How many hours per fortnight did you work in your last job? _____ Hours per fortnight
 - Yes. How long were you out of work before you started this job? _____

If you are NOT currently doing any paid work, please go to question 13.
 If you are currently doing some paid work please answer the following questions:

4. How many paid jobs are you currently doing?
5. How long have you been working in your current job?
 weeks **OR** months **OR** years

If you are working more than one paid job, use the space below to answer for each of your other jobs.

- Job 2: weeks **OR** months **OR** years
- Job 3: weeks **OR** months **OR** years

6. On what date did you start working at your current job? (estimate if you are not sure).
 / /
Day Month Year

If you are working more than one paid job, use the space below to answer for each of your other jobs.

- Job 2: / /
Day Month Year
- Job 3: / /
Day Month Year

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7. How many hours per week of paid work do you do?

Hours per week

8. Based on your needs, how many hours per week would you like to work?

Hours per week

9. What kind of work are you doing? (If you have more than one job pick the one you value most and please consider this job when answering questions 10-12).

10. To what extent do you consider your job as permanent?

- Not at all Not very permanent Somewhat permanent Fairly permanent Completely permanent

11. How satisfied are you with your current employment status? (cross one)

- Extremely satisfied Very satisfied Satisfied Very unsatisfied Extremely unsatisfied

12. The following questions ask how happy you are with certain aspects of your current job.

In your current job, how happy are you with.....?

	<input type="checkbox"/>					
	Extremely happy	Very happy	Satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Very unsatisfied	Extremely unsatisfied
The people you work with (i.e. your co-workers).....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
The company, business or organisation.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
The work that you do on the job (i.e. the work itself).....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Your immediate supervisor.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
The pay.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Your chances of being promoted.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Your job security.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
The chance to use your skills.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					
The variety of different things you do at work.....	<input type="checkbox"/>					

13. Whether you are working or not, how satisfied are you with your current employment status? (cross one)

- Extremely satisfied Very satisfied Satisfied Very unsatisfied Extremely unsatisfied

14. How many times have you had each of the following types of paid work over the past 12 months?

	None	1	2	3	4 or more
Casual work.....	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Part-time work.....	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Temporary or contract work.....	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Full-time work.....	<input type="checkbox"/>				

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15. How many jobs have you applied for in the past month?

16. How many jobs have you applied for in the past 6 months?

17. Of the jobs you have applied for in the past 6 months, how many interviews did you attend?

18. These questions ask about your job seeking efforts over the past 6 months. (If you started work during the past six months, please answer for the time before you got your job). Please cross one box for each item.

In the last six (6) months.....

	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Not at all	Very little	Some	Very much
How intensive were your job search efforts? _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How persistent were you with your job seeking? _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How determined were you with your job seeking? _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How hard have you tried to find paid work? _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. What kind of financial assistance are you currently receiving from Centrelink? (cross one)

- Newstart allowance Youth allowance Parenting payment
 Disability support pension Mature age allowance None
 Widow allowance Partner allowance Other (please specify) _____

20. Approximately how much money do you receive per fortnight (after any deductions, such as tax) from all sources of income?

\$ (use whole dollars)

21. How easy is it for you to live on this amount of money per fortnight? (cross one)

- Extremely easy Very easy Fairly easy Difficult Very difficult Extremely difficult

22. How many times have you done a Job Search Training course?(cross one)

- None Once (1) Twice (2) Three (3) or more times

23. How many times have you done Work for the Dole?(cross one)

- None Once (1) Twice (2) Three (3) or more times

24. Are you currently doing any **training** courses?

- No (go to next question) Yes (please answer the following questions)

- a. What type of training is it? _____
 b. How many hours per week is the training? _____
 c. Is the training a compulsory part of your Centrelink obligations?

25. Are you currently doing any **volunteer or unpaid** work?

- No (go to next question) Yes (please answer the following questions)

- a. What type of work is it? _____
 b. How many hours per week is the work? _____
 c. Is the work a compulsory part of your Centrelink obligations?

26. Are you currently on any of the following programs?(cross one box for each program)

- Intensive Assistance Program Yes No Not sure
 Personal Support Program Yes No Not sure
 Transition to Work Program Yes No Not sure

The following statements relate to your general feelings about yourself.

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about yourself? (Cross one box only for each item)

- | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| | Strongly
Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly
Agree |
| 1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I am able to do things as well as most other people _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. I take a positive attitude toward myself_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. I wish I could have more respect for myself _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. I certainly feel useless at times_____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. At times I think I am no good at all _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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Here are some statements which people have made about working.

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement. (Cross one box only for each item)

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Even if I won a great deal of money in the lottery, I would want to continue working somewhere _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Having a job is very important to me _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I hate being on the dole _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I get bored without a job _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The most important things that have happened to me have involved my job _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. If the unemployment benefit was really high, I would still prefer to work _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I really must get a job or I'll lose my self-respect _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Being unemployed is about the worst thing that ever happened to me _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The following is a list of things that people might do when looking for a [new] job. Even if you are not looking for a job right now, please answer these questions. (If you are currently working full-time, or involved in training, please think of a typical fortnight before you began your job or training and answer these questions).

In the last fortnight, how often have you..... (cross one box only for each item)

	Never	Rarely 1-2 times	Occasionally 3-5 times	Frequently 6-8 times	Very frequently 9-10 times or more
1. Spoken to friends, family, previous employers or other people you know to get information about jobs _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Read the newspaper and/or other publications for job vacancies _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Checked with employment agencies for job vacancies _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Made a list of all your skills, qualifications, work experience, and personal qualities to use when promoting yourself to potential employers _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Used the internet to search for job vacancies _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prepared/revised your resume _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Sent out your resume or CV to potential employers _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Completed a job application (can include completing a job application form, a letter of application, and/or addressing selection criteria) _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Telephoned, written to, or visited potential employers to market yourself _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Attended a job interview _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Contacted individuals, agencies, or businesses to obtain information about potential job careers _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Promoted yourself in the "work wanted" section of the newspaper, flyers, community notice boards, trade magazines, or organisational newsletters _____ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

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The following questions ask about your confidence in your ability to perform job-search activities.

How **confident** do you feel about doing each of the following things successfully? (Cross one box only for each item)

	Not at all confident	A bit confident	Pretty confident	Very confident
1. Talking to friends and other contacts to find employers who hire people with your skills_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Talking to friends and other contacts to discover promising job openings that are suitable for you _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Searching for job vacancies listed in newspapers or employment agencies_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Using the Internet to search for job vacancies and information on employers_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Making a list of all of your skills, qualifications, work experience, and personal qualities to use when promoting yourself to potential employers_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Completing a CV or Resume_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Tailoring your Resume or CV to suit a job application_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Completing a letter of application to a prospective employer_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Addressing selection criteria (when necessary)_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Contacting organisations to find out who to speak to about a job within the organisation_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Marketing yourself to potential employers by <u>telephoning</u> them and highlighting your skills, work experience, qualifications, and personal qualities and your desire to work within their organisation_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Writing a <u>letter</u> of introduction to potential employers highlighting your skills, work experience, qualifications, personal qualities, and your desire to work within their organisation_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Meeting <u>in person</u> with potential employers to introduce yourself, highlight your skills, work experience, qualifications, personal qualities, and desire to work within their organisation_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Promoting yourself in the "work wanted" section of the newspaper, flyers, community notice boards, trade magazines, or organisational newsletters_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Talking and getting your points across in an interview_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Overall, how confident are you about getting a job in the next 3 months?_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Please complete this section only if you are currently employed and not looking for another job. We want to know whether or not you used any of the following strategies to get your job and if so, how helpful they were. For each strategy, please indicate whether or not you used it and then how helpful it was to you in getting your job.

Answer NO or YES to indicate whether you used each strategy in your job seeking.....

If you used the strategy, please indicate how helpful it was by crossing one of the boxes below

	NO	YES	Not at all	Slightly	Very	Extremely
1. Talked to friends and other contacts to find employers who hire people with your skills	<input type="checkbox"/>					
2. Talked to friends and other contacts to discover promising job openings that are suitable for you	<input type="checkbox"/>					
3. Searched for job vacancies listed in newspapers	<input type="checkbox"/>					
4. Searched for job vacancies listed by employment agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>					
5. Searched for job vacancies on the Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>					
6. Completed a job-search training course	<input type="checkbox"/>					
7. Made a list of all of your skills, qualifications, work experience, and personal qualities to use when promoting yourself to potential employers	<input type="checkbox"/>					
8. Tailored your Resume or CV to suit a particular job application	<input type="checkbox"/>					
9. Contacted organisations to find out who to speak to about a job within the organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>					
10. Marketed yourself to potential employers by telephoning them and highlighting your skills, work experience, qualifications, and personal qualities and your desire to work within their organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>					
11. Wrote a letter of introduction to potential employers highlighting your skills, work experience, qualifications, personal qualities, and your desire to work within their organisation.	<input type="checkbox"/>					
12. Met face-to-face with potential employers to introduce yourself, highlight your skills, work experience, qualifications, personal qualities, and desire to work within their organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>					
13. Promoted yourself in the "work wanted" section of the newspaper, flyers, community notice boards, trade magazines, or organisational newsletters.	<input type="checkbox"/>					

If you used any other strategies, please list them in the space below and rate how helpful they were (e.g., not at all, slightly, very, or extremely).

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The next section is about some general aspects of your life, including community involvement, financial strain, social contact, social status, time structure, and activities.

Please read each pair of statements and cross the numbered box (and only one box per pair of statements) to indicate the response that best applies to you.

For example, on the sample item below, if you are usually able to pay your bills on time, you would indicate this by crossing **either** number "1" or "2". If you usually have trouble paying your bills on time, you would cross **either** number "6" or "7". If you are sometimes able to pay your bills on time, then you would cross **either** number "4" or "5".

SAMPLE ITEM	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I am able to pay my bills on time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have trouble paying my bills on time.
1. I usually feel very much a part of my community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely feel very much a part of my community				
2. I regularly participate in fundraising events for my church, sporting or community group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I seldom participate in fundraising events for my church, sporting or community				
3. I contribute greatly to my community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I contribute minimally to my community				
4. I often feel that I make a meaningful contribution to society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely feel that I make a meaningful contribution to society				
5. I often feel a valuable part of society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I seldom feel a valuable part of society				
6. I hold a valuable position in society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not hold a valuable position in society				
7. My income usually allows me to socialise as often as I like	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My income rarely allows me to socialise as often as I like				
8. I often have enough money to buy treats for myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely have enough money to buy treats for myself				
9. My income usually allows me to do the things I want	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My income rarely allows me to do the things I want				
10. My income doesn't restrict me from living as well as my friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My income restricts me from living as well as my friends				
11. From the income I receive I often have money left for savings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	From the income I receive I rarely have money left for savings				
12. My level of income usually allows me to make plans for the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	My level of income rarely allows me to make plans for the future				
13. I regularly engage in social activities with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely engage in social activities with others				
14. I usually spend a lot of time with other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely spend a lot of time with other people				
15. I often meet new people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I seldom meet new people				
16. I often go out and meet with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely go out and meet with others.				

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17. I regularly engage in social activities with people I know	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely engage in social activities with people I know
18. I usually have a lot of opportunities to mix with people	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely have a lot of opportunities to mix with people
19. My friends usually value my company	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	My friends rarely value my company
20. I am often valued by the people around me	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	I am rarely valued by the people around me
21. I am usually important to my friends	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	I am rarely important to my friends
22. I often help others	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely help others
23. My assistance is greatly welcomed by my family and friends	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	My assistance is rarely welcomed by my family and friends
24. People often rely on me for help	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	People rarely rely on me for help
25. I often have nothing to do	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely have nothing to do
26. I often wish I had more things to do to fill up the time in my days	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely wish I had more things to do to fill up the time in my days
27. I often have a lot of time on my hands	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely have a lot of time on my hands
28. There is usually too much spare time in my day	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	There is rarely too much spare time in my day
29. Time usually drags for me	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	Time rarely drags for me
30. I usually keep busy most of the day	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely keep busy most of the day
31. I usually do all the things I have to	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely do all the things I have to
32. I always catch up on the things I have to do	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	I rarely catch up with the things I have to do
33. My days are usually well organised	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	My days are usually not well organised.
34. I find it useful to structure my time	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	I do not find it useful to structure my time
35. I have a good balance in my day between responsibilities and free time	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	I do not have a good balance in my day between responsibilities and free
36. I rarely need others to push me to do things	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	7 <input type="checkbox"/>	I usually need others to push me to do things

6867423613

This next section asks about your feelings and emotions over the past month.

Read each item and then cross ONE box for each item that best indicates how often you have experienced each emotion over the past 30 days.

In the past month, how often have you felt.....	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Extremely Often
1. interested.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. distressed.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. excited.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. upset.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. strong.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. guilty.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. scared.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. hostile.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. enthusiastic.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. proud.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. irritable.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. alert.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. ashamed.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. inspired.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. nervous.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. determined.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. attentive.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. jittery.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. active.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. afraid.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8806423618

Here are some questions about the way you have been feeling over the last few weeks.

For each question, please CROSS the box that best describes the way you have felt over the last few weeks.

HAVE YOU RECENTLY.....

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Been able to concentrate on whatever you're doing?..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Better than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual |
- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2. Lost much sleep over worry? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual |
- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3. Felt that you are playing a useful part in things?..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | More so than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual |
- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4. Felt capable of making decisions about things?..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | More so than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual |
- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5. Felt constantly under strain?..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual |
- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 6. Felt you couldn't overcome your difficulties? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual |
- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 7. Been able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities?... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | More so than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual |
- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 8. Been able to face up to your problems?..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | More so than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual |
- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 9. Been feeling unhappy and depressed?..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual |
- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 10. Been losing confidence in yourself?..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual |
- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 11. Been thinking of yourself as a worthless person?..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Not at all | No more than usual | Rather more than usual | Much more than usual |
- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 12. Been feeling reasonably happy, all things considered?... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | More so than usual | Same as usual | Less than usual | Much less than usual |

APPENDIX C – CORRELATION TABLE (TIME 1 DATA)

Table C1
Correlations among Time 1 Study Variables

	Age	Geog	Gend	RelStat	Deps	Edu	Estat	PreEmp	PreFT	LOUFT	YrJob	JobSat	Occ
Age	1.00												
Geog	-.04	1.00											
Gend	-.04	.00	1.00										
RelStat	.27**	-.05	-.06	1.00									
Deps	.30**	-.03	.04	.59**	1.00								
Edu	-.11*	.00	.06	-.03	-.12*	1.00							
Estat	.02	.03	.02	-.07	.065	-.05	1.00						
PreEmp	.16**	-.01	-.16**	.05	.01	.02	.10	1.00					
PreFT	.43**	-.10	-.19**	.12*	.19**	-.15**	-.01	.40**	1.00				
LOUFT	.25**	.01	.05	-.04	.11	-.16**	.10	.a	.a	1.00			
YrJob	.49**	.01	-.03	.09	.14*	-.16**	.03	.a	.a	.25**	1.00		
JobSat	.09	.05	.02	-.01	.08	-.12*	.08	.a	.a	.10	.23**	1.00	
Occ	.19**	-.14*	.07	.07	.04	.23**	.09	.a	.a	-.06	.20**	.13*	1.00
Ben	-.17**	.01	.17**	-.04	.10	-.15**	-.05	-.17**	-.14**	.14*	-.10	-.01	-.11
Inc	.28**	-.04	-.06	-.07	-.01	.01	.05	.17**	.26**	.20**	.12*	.05	.07
JSTs	-.06	-.06	-.09	-.11*	-.13*	-.12*	-.02	.10*	.08	.17**	-.15*	-.05	-.20**
WfDs	-.11*	.00	-.10*	-.09	-.11*	-.01	-.05	.04	.00	.22**	-.14*	.00	-.12*
Train	.00	.12*	.02	.00	.14**	.02	.06	.00	.01	.05	.03	.01	-.06
UPWk	.12*	-.01	.13*	-.04	.04	.01	.01	-.01	.00	.13*	.06	.10	.17**

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; Geog = Geographic region (0 = Metropolitan), Gend = Gender (0 = Males), RelStat = Relationship status (0 = Single), Deps = Financial dependents (0 = None), Edu = Education, Estat = Current employment status (0 = No paid work, 1 = some paid work), PreEmp = Previous employment (0 = No previous work), PreFT = Previous full-time job (0 = No previous full-time job), LOUFT = Length of time since last full-time job, YrJob = Years in last full-time job, JobSat = Satisfaction with last full-time job, Occ = Occupation in last full-time job, Ben = Centrelink benefit, Inc = Net fortnightly income, JSTs = Job search training courses completed, WfDs = Work for the Doles completed, Train = Participation in training (0 = No, 1 = Involuntary, 2 = Voluntary), UPWk = Participation in unpaid work (0 = No, 1 = Involuntary, 2 = Voluntary).

Table C1 (cont.)

Correlations among Time 1 Study Variables

	Age	Geog	Gend	RelStat	Deps	Edu	Estat	PreEmp	PreFT	LOUFT	YrJob	JobSat	Occ
LeisAct	-.02	.06	-.01	.03	.02	.16**	-.06	-.01	-.02	-.05	-.02	-.02	.04
SocLeis	-.13*	-.12*	-.07	-.09	-.08	.05	-.02	.02	-.08	-.10	-.06	.04	.14*
MLeis	-.08	.03	-.02	-.11*	-.06	.13*	.02	.00	-.02	-.09	-.07	.09	.10
JApps	-.12*	-.20**	-.02	-.04	-.09	.09	-.04	-.01	.01	-.19**	-.11	.02	-.01
JSI	-.09	-.20**	.11*	.01	-.04	-.02	.02	.02	.12*	-.21**	-.13*	.02	-.04
Meths	-.09	-.16**	.05	-.02	-.00	-.01	.09	.05	.09	-.16**	-.13*	.01	.02
EffTsk	-.11*	-.03	-.06	-.10	-.09	.10	-.01	.03	.01	-.20**	-.11	.02	.14*
EffProm	-.15**	-.06	.09	-.10	-.17**	.29**	.00	.05	-.07	-.19**	-.11	.02	.19**
EmpExp	-.32**	-.07	-.02	-.14**	-.12*	.07	.00	.00	-.08	-.31**	-.16**	-.05	-.01
FStrain	.09	.02	-.01	.00	-.01	-.05	-.06	.07	.10	.07	.09	.05	.04
FHard	.20**	-.04	-.02	.10*	.13*	-.07	-.09	.08	.15**	.03	.08	-.01	.10
Collect	.05	-.01	.11*	-.07	-.05	.09	-.05	.00	.01	-.11	.02	.04	.07
Social	-.25**	-.04	.08	-.11*	-.13*	.12*	.06	.04	-.11*	-.16**	-.13*	.00	.15*
Status	-.16**	.04	.08	-.12*	-.13*	.16**	.01	-.01	-.12*	-.10	-.07	.11	.20**
Act	.04	-.04	.10	.01	.00	.08	-.05	.01	.10	-.06	.07	.06	.09
Time	.20**	.00	-.05	.17**	.14**	.10	.10	.07	.13*	.08	.15*	.02	.20**

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; Geog = Geographic region (0 = Metropolitan), Gend = Gender (0 = Males), RelStat = Relationship status (0 = Single), Deps = Financial dependents (0 = None), Edu = Education, Estat = Current employment status (0 = No paid work, 1 = some paid work), PreEmp = Previous employment (0 = No previous work), PreFT = Previous full-time job (0 = No previous full-time job), LOUFT = Length of time since last full-time job, YrJob = Years in last full-time job, JobSat = Satisfaction with last full-time job, Occ = Occupation in last full-time job, LeisAct = Leisure activity, SocLeis = Social leisure, MLeis = Leisure meaningfulness, JApps = Job applications in past month, JSI = Job search intensity, Meths = Job search methods, EffTsk = Task-focused efficacy, EffProm = Self-promotion efficacy, EmpExp = Employment expectation, FStrain = Financial strain, FHard = Financial hardship, Collect = Collective purpose, Social = Social contact, Act = Activity, Time = Time structure.

Table C1 (cont.)

Correlations among Time 1 Study Variables

	Age	Geog	Gend	RelStat	Deps	Edu	Estat	PreEmp	PreFT	LOUFT	YrJob	JobSat	Occ
ECom	-.11*	.04	.11*	.02	.07	-.04	.08	.00	.03	-.14*	.00	.13*	-.13*
Satis	.03	.06	.01	.01	.03	-.06	.23**	-.06	-.09	.03	.06	.04	.01
Estm	.01	-.02	-.09	.02	-.001	.14**	-.01	-.03	-.05	-.06	.04	.10	.19**
PA	-.11*	-.11*	.00	-.06	-.10*	.03	-.05	-.07	-.03	-.09	-.05	.04	.11
NA	-.09	.06	.24**	.03	.02	-.02	.02	.03	.02	.00	-.08	-.10	-.13*
GHQ	.03	.04	.15**	.05	.07	.00	-.01	.04	.08	-.06	.05	.01	.00
MHCase	.00	.06	.10	.10	.05	.05	-.01	.06	.10	-.09	.04	-.08	-.03

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; T2 = Time 2; Geog = Geographic region (0 = Metropolitan), Gend = Gender (0 = Males), RelStat = Relationship status (0 = Single), Deps = Financial dependents (0 = None), Edu = Education, Estat = Current employment status (0 = No paid work, 1 = some paid work), PreEmp = Previous employment (0 = No previous work), PreFT = Previous full-time job (0 = No previous full-time job), LOUFT = Length of time since last full-time job, YrJob = Years in last full-time job, JobSat = Satisfaction with last full-time job, Occ = Occupation in last full-time job, ECom = Employment commitment, Satis = Satisfaction with employment status, Estm = Self-esteem, PA = Positive affect, NA = Negative affect, GHQ = Mental health, MHCase = Clinical caseness (0 = Non-clinical).

Table C1 (cont.)
Correlations among Time 1 Study Variables

	Ben	Inc	JSTs	WfDs	Train	UPWk	LeisAct	SocLeis	MLeis	JApps	JSI	Meths
Ben	1.00											
Inc	-.12*	1.00										
JSTs	-.03	.06	1.00									
WfDs	-.05	.10	.37**	1.00								
Train	.00	.03	.01	-.07	1.00							
UPWk	.01	.03	.06	.11*	.06	1.00						
LeisAct	-.08	-.02	-.07	.07	.06	.08	1.00					
SocLeis	-.04	-.10	.07	.01	.00	.03	-.02	1.00				
MLeis	.00	-.02	.04	-.02	.00	.07	.26**	.25**	1.00			
JApps	-.10*	-.13*	.02	.03	-.08	.05	-.03	.05	.03	1.00		
JSI	-.06	-.10*	.04	.00	-.03	.01	.04	.05	.12*	.54**	1.00	
Meths	-.05	-.12*	.08	.01	.01	.06	.01	.00	-.01	.45**	.76**	1.00
EffTsk	-.03	.03	.02	-.02	-.01	.05	.21**	.09	.30**	.19**	.37**	.27**
EffProm	-.06	.04	.01	.04	-.04	.04	.18**	.06	.26**	.27**	.42**	.29**
EmpExp	.03	-.04	-.01	-.06	.07	-.15**	.16**	.10*	.19**	.16**	.26**	.19**

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; Ben = Centrelink benefit, Inc = Net fortnightly income, JSTs = Job search training courses completed, WfDs = Work for the Doles completed, Train = Participation in training (0 = No, 1 = Involuntary, 2 = Voluntary), UPWk = Participation in unpaid work (0 = No, 1 = Involuntary, 2 = Voluntary), LeisAct = Leisure activity, SocLeis = Social leisure, MLeis = Leisure meaningfulness, JApps = Job applications in past month, JSI = Job search intensity, Meths = Job search methods, EffTsk = Task-focused efficacy, EffProm = Self-promotion efficacy, EmpExp = Employment expectation.

Table C1 (cont.)
Correlations among Time 1 Study Variables

	Ben	Inc	JSTs	WfDs	Train	UPWk	LeisAct	SocLeis	MLeis	JApps	JSI	Meths
FStrain	-.01	-.01	-.08	-.06	.02	.09	-.07	-.05	-.07	.10*	-.03	-.07
FHard	.00	-.13*	-.02	-.19**	.01	.09	-.08	-.03	-.05	.13*	.14**	.08
Collect	.01	.08	-.02	-.07	.01	.09	.13*	.08	.17**	-.02	.15**	.16**
Social	.06	-.07	.01	-.09	.01	.01	.16**	.25**	.21**	.03	.17**	.19**
Status	.00	.01	-.02	-.07	-.03	.01	.16**	.13*	.24**	.09	.11*	.07
Act	-.04	.11*	-.01	-.02	.03	-.03	.10	-.06	.11*	.08	.23**	.11*
Time	-.02	.07	-.09	-.09	.13*	.15**	.23**	-.05	.16**	-.11*	-.11*	-.04
ECom	.04	-.18**	-.04	-.05	.01	-.11*	-.07	.03	-.09	.16**	.25**	.22**
Satis	.09	.09	-.06	.06	-.03	.12*	.14**	.08	.01	-.21**	-.17**	-.11*
Estm	-.05	.04	-.07	.00	.01	.01	.20**	.02	.21**	.09	.13*	.13*
PA	.04	-.03	.05	.00	.01	.00	.30**	.12*	.37**	.12*	.26**	.18**
NA	.02	-.05	.04	.00	.04	-.05	-.11*	-.03	-.14**	-.05	.02	.00
GHQ	.03	-.06	-.05	-.10*	.02	-.06	-.20**	-.04	-.19**	.05	.03	-.02
MHCCase	-.03	-.07	-.04	-.09	.01	-.03	-.17**	-.07	-.20**	.06	.07	.04

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; T2 = Time 2; Ben = Centrelink benefit, Inc = Net fortnightly income, JSTs = Job search training courses completed, WfDs = Work for the Doles completed, Train = Participation in training (0 = No, 1 = Involuntary, 2 = Voluntary), UPWk = Participation in unpaid work (0 = No, 1 = Involuntary, 2 = Voluntary), LeisAct = Leisure activity, SocLeis = Social leisure, MLeis = Leisure meaningfulness, JApps = Job applications in past month, JSI = Job search intensity, Meths = Job search methods, FStrain = Financial strain, FHard = Financial hardship, Collect = Collective purpose, Social = Social contact, Act = Activity, Time = Time structure, ECom = Employment commitment, Satis = Satisfaction with employment status, Estm = Self-esteem, PA = Positive affect, NA = Negative affect, GHQ = Mental health, MHCCase = Clinical caseness (0 = Non-clinical).

Table C1 (cont.)
Correlations among Time 1 Study Variables

	EffTsk	EffProm	EmpExp	FStrain	FHard	Collect	Social	Status	Act	Time	ECom	Satis
EffTsk	1.00											
EffProm	.67**	1.00										
EmpExp	.54**	.49**	1.00									
FStrain	-.10	-.07	-.15**	1.00								
FHard	.05	-.03	-.08	.37**	1.00							
Collect	.32**	.26**	.18**	-.48**	-.07	1.00						
Social	.34**	.31**	.30**	-.46**	-.14**	.51**	1.00					
Status	.39**	.36**	.29**	-.08	-.02	.28**	.43**	1.00				
Act	.32**	.38**	.18**	-.13*	.01	.27**	.18**	.43**	1.00			
Time	.12*	.05	-.06	-.09	-.03	.17**	.08	.08	.07	1.00		
ECom	.00	.00	.13*	.08	.10	-.07	-.04	-.02	.02	-.32**	1.00	
Satis	.06	-.04	-.01	-.29**	-.34**	.21**	.12*	.04	.03	.20**	-.26**	1.00
Estm	.48**	.48**	.35**	-.01	.01	.24**	.21**	.36**	.33**	.24**	-.22**	.04
PA	.53**	.39**	.41**	-.08	-.01	.29**	.31**	.35**	.33**	.23**	-.06	.12*
NA	-.34**	-.29**	-.23**	.16**	.01	-.24**	-.18**	-.17**	-.22**	-.24**	.28**	-.08
GHQ	-.35**	-.25**	-.23**	.21**	.20**	-.25**	-.24**	-.20**	-.15**	-.26**	.37**	-.24**
MHCase	-.28**	-.18**	-.22**	.21**	.18**	-.15**	-.12*	-.15**	-.14**	-.16**	.30**	-.20**

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; EffTsk = Task-focused efficacy, EffProm = Self-promotion efficacy, EmpExp = Employment expectation, FStrain = Financial strain, FHard = Financial hardship, Collect = Collective purpose, Social = Social contact, Act = Activity, Time = Time structure, ECom = Employment commitment, Satis = Satisfaction with employment status, Estm = Self-esteem, PA = Positive affect, NA = Negative affect, GHQ = Mental health, MHCase = Clinical caseness (0 = Non-clinical).

Table C1 (cont.)
Correlations among Time 1 Study Variables

	Estm	PA	NA	GHQ	MHCCase
Estm	1.00				
PA	.42**	1.00			
NA	-.54**	-.26**	1.00		
GHQ	-.49**	-.40**	.69**	1.00	
MHCCase	-.42**	-.33**	.54**	.71**	1.00

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; T2 = Time 2; Estm = Self-esteem, PA = Positive affect, NA = Negative affect, GHQ = Mental health, MHCCase = Clinical caseness (0 = Non-clinical).

APPENDIX D – CORRELATIONS FOR UNEMPLOYED GROUP AT TIME 2

Table D1

Time 2 Correlations for Unemployed Group (n = 57)

	Age	Geog	Gend	RStat	Deps	Edu	LOUFT	Income	JSTs	WFDs	Train
Age	1.00										
Geog	-.03	1.00									
Gend	-.10	.03	1.00								
RStat	.32*	-.08	-.06	1.00							
Deps	.17	.00	.05	.70**	1.00						
Edu	.03	-.02	-.33*	.02	-.10	1.00					
LOUFT	-.01	-.12	.03	-.10	-.09	-.07	1.00				
Income	.05	-.17	-.03	.02	.19	.00	.08	1.00			
JSTs	-.12	-.07	-.14	-.30*	-.37**	-.26	.20	-.02	1.00		
WFDs	-.29*	-.16	-.26*	-.15	-.11	.29*	.10	.10	.21	1.00	
Train	.14	.06	.04	.12	.21	-.06	.16	-.14	-.15	-.03	1.00
UpWk	-.07	.03	.15	-.11	-.10	-.06	.08	-.19	-.02	.13	-.13
JSEff	.19	-.04	.00	-.24	-.18	-.16	-.24	-.17	.29*	-.03	.05

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; Geog = Geographic region, Gend = Gender, RStat = Relationship status, Deps = Financial dependents, Edu = Education, LOUFT = Length of time since last full-time job, JSTs = Job search training courses, WFDs = Work for the Dole programs, Train = Training participation, UpWk = Unpaid work participation, JSEff = Job search effort over previous 6 months.

Table D1 (cont.)

Time 2 Correlations for Unemployed Group (n = 57)

	Age	Geog	Gend	RStat	Deps	Edu	LOUFT	Income	JSTs	WFDs	Train
JApps1	.09	-.02	.08	-.38**	-.19	-.30*	-.09	-.13	.43**	-.12	-.05
JApps6	.04	.04	-.23	-.28*	-.22	.00	-.31*	-.11	.45**	.08	-.05
Interv	-.16	.13	.16	-.36**	-.26	-.24	-.19	-.06	.35**	-.03	-.04
JSI	.06	-.13	.19	-.14	.03	-.49**	-.04	-.08	.50**	-.06	.00
Meth	.05	-.12	.10	-.13	.01	-.45**	-.02	-.08	.56**	-.02	-.08
EffTsk	.11	-.08	-.24	.01	-.09	.24	-.16	.06	.15	-.05	.21
EffPro	.12	.13	-.28*	-.03	-.09	-.01	-.22	-.03	.27*	-.07	.18
EmpExp	-.19	.15	.16	-.27*	-.08	-.23	.10	.00	.25	.16	-.01
FHard	.37**	-.03	.05	.11	.00	-.30*	.00	-.21	.11	-.32*	.09
FStrn	.11	.04	-.06	.10	.16	-.311*	-.11	.10	.16	-.03	.18
Coll	.12	-.09	-.01	.04	-.03	.10	.01	.06	-.05	-.09	-.09
Soc	-.14	.05	.07	-.19	-.24	.06	.08	-.07	-.15	-.11	-.23
Stat	-.05	.01	.00	-.11	-.03	.07	-.06	.14	.06	.04	-.15
Act	.09	.19	.00	-.19	-.07	-.02	.01	.22	.04	-.16	.13
Time	.21	.04	.14	.11	.00	.13	.04	.11	-.26*	-.08	.03

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; Geog = Geographic region, Gend = Gender (0 = Male), RStat = Relationship status (0 = single), Deps = Financial dependents (0 = none), Edu = Education, LOUFT = Length of time since last full-time job, JSTs = Job search training courses, WFDs = Work for the Dole programs, Train = Training participation, JApps1 = Job applications over previous month, JApps6 = Job applications over previous 6 months, Interv = Job interviews over previous 6 months, JSI = Job search intensity, Meth = Job search methods, EffTsk = Task-focused efficacy, EffPro = Self-promotion efficacy, EmpExp = Employment expectation, FHard = Financial hardship, FStrn = Financial strain, Coll = Collective purpose, Soc = Social contact, Stat = Status, Act = Activity, Time = Time structure.

Table D1 (cont.)

Time 2 Correlations for Unemployed Group (n = 57)

	Age	Geog	Gend	RStat	Deps	Edu	LOUFT	Income	JSTs	WFDs	Train
ECom	-.20	.07	-.09	-.11	.08	-.38**	.05	-.06	.29*	.14	.03
Satis	-.15	-.11	.04	.11	.07	.31*	.07	.29*	-.29*	.05	-.04
Esteem	.43**	-.14	-.07	.10	.02	.00	-.02	.04	.10	-.19	.20
PA	.13	-.01	.22	-.07	-.05	.09	-.08	.08	-.11	-.18	-.02
NA	-.24	-.02	.26	-.05	.09	-.28*	.06	-.08	-.04	-.10	-.01
GHQ	-.19	-.06	.03	-.16	-.01	-.27*	-.02	-.09	.07	.02	.00
MHCase	-.14	.22	.06	-.04	.10	-.16	-.10	-.12	-.08	-.05	.01

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; Geog = Geographic region, Gend = Gender (0 = Male), RStat = Relationship status (0 = single), Deps = Financial dependents (0 = none), Edu = Education, LOUFT = Length of time since last full-time job, JSTs = Job search training courses, WFDs = Work for the Dole programs, Train = Training participation, ECom = Employment commitment, Satis = Satisfaction with employment status, Esteem = Self-esteem, PA = Positive affect, NA = Negative affect, GHQ = Mental health, MHCase = Clinical caseness (1 = clinical).

Table D1 (cont.)

Time 2 Correlations for Unemployed Group (n = 57)

	UpWk	JSEff	JApps1	JApps6	Interv	JSI	Meth	EffTsk	EffPro	EmpExp
UpWk	1.00									
JSEff	-.08	1.00								
JApps1	.04	.49**	1.00							
JApps6	-.05	.45**	.51**	1.00						
Interv	-.03	.45**	.48**	.45**	1.00					
JSI	.05	.55**	.67**	.35**	.43**	1.00				
Meth	.08	.50**	.64**	.40**	.48**	.94**	1.00			
EffTsk	-.21	.37**	.24	.35**	.09	.26*	.19	1.00		
EffPro	-.23	.29*	.35**	.44**	.25	.39**	.39**	.72**	1.00	
EmpExp	.00	.34*	.32*	.31*	.39**	.53**	.47**	.35**	.42**	1.00
FHard	.15	.51**	.35**	.06	-.14	.40**	.32*	.09	.08	-.04
FStrn	.04	.42**	.16	.07	-.06	.33*	.25	.11	.06	.05
Coll	-.03	-.05	-.02	.09	.20	.07	.09	.19	.34*	.16
Soc	.06	-.16	-.04	.05	.04	-.10	-.09	.11	.15	.16
Stat	.16	.04	.24	.27*	.22	.25	.27*	.34**	.38**	.26
Act	-.21	.09	.12	.14	.38**	.05	.05	.34**	.49**	.24
Time	.01	-.18	-.17	-.01	-.05	-.26	-.24	.02	.04	-.10

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; UpWk = Unpaid work participation, JSEff = Job search effort over previous 6 months, JApps1 = Job applications over previous month, JApps6 = Job applications over previous 6 months, Interv = Job interviews over previous 6 months, JSI = Job search intensity, Meth = Job search methods, EffTsk = Task-focused efficacy, EffPro = Self-promotion efficacy, EmpExp = Employment expectation, FHard = Financial hardship, FStrn = Financial strain, Coll = Collective purpose, Soc = Social contact, Stat = Status, Act = Activity, Time = Time structure.

Table D1 (cont.)

Time 2 Correlations for Unemployed Group (n = 57)

	UpWk	JSEff	JApps1	JApps6	Interv	JSI	Meth	EffTsk	EffPro	EmpExp
ECom	-.03	.44**	.23	.03	.28*	.46**	.42**	-.09	-.05	.29*
Satis	-.05	-.63**	-.32*	-.16	-.13	-.54**	-.48**	-.12	-.16	-.24
Esteem	-.19	.23	.17	.18	.01	.16	.15	.44**	.54**	.26
PA	-.03	.11	.17	.12	.18	.16	.10	.46**	.47**	.38**
NA	.03	.04	.09	-.17	.13	.24	.17	-.34*	-.31*	.07
GHQ	.04	.12	.14	-.02	.04	.23	.15	-.25	-.20	-.04
MHCCase	-.07	.08	-.16	-.01	-.06	.09	.04	-.30*	-.26	-.04

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; UpWk = Unpaid work participation, JSEff = Job search effort over previous 6 months, JApps1 = Job applications over previous month, JApps6 = Job applications over previous 6 months, Interv = Job interviews over previous 6 months, Meth = Job search methods, EffTsk = Task-focused efficacy, EffPro = Self-promotion efficacy, EmpExp = Employment expectation, ECom = Employment commitment, Satis = Satisfaction with employment status, Esteem = Self-esteem, PA = Positive affect, NA = Negative affect, GHQ = Mental health, MHCCase = Clinical caseness (1 = clinical).

Table D1 (cont.)

Time 2 Correlations for Unemployed Group (n = 57)

	FHard	FStrn	Coll	Soc	Stat	Act	Time	Ecom
FHard	1.00							
FStrn	.68**	1.00						
Coll	-.28*	-.52*	1.00					
Soc	-.35**	-.58**	.66**	1.00				
Stat	-.06	-.01	.19	.36**	1.00			
Act	-.26	-.07	.40**	.27*	.38**	1.00		
Time	-.05	.00	.10	.05	.07	.22	1.00	
ECom	.32*	.37**	-.22	-.27*	-.19	-.26*	-.44**	1.00
Satis	-.57**	-.47**	.28*	.23	.03	.07	.25	-.58**
Esteem	.12	.04	.38**	.18	.18	.52**	.22	-.31*
PA	.00	-.09	.50**	.53**	.52**	.47**	.38**	-.23
NA	.16	.08	-.19	-.11	-.31*	-.43**	-.35**	.58**
GHQ	.23	.17	-.24	-.29*	-.37**	-.39**	-.40**	.55**
MHCCase	.18	.25	-.25	-.25	-.37**	-.33*	-.29*	.47**

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; FHard = Financial hardship, FStrn = Financial strain, Coll = Collective purpose, Soc = Social contact, Stat = Status, Act = Activity, Time = Time structure, ECom = Employment commitment, Satis = Satisfaction with employment status, Esteem = Self-esteem, PA = Positive affect, NA = Negative affect, GHQ = Mental health, MHCCase = Clinical caseness (1 = clinical).

Table D1 (cont.)

Time 2 Correlations for Unemployed Group (n = 57)

	Satis	Esteem	PA	NA	GHQ	MHCCase
Satis	1.00					
Esteem	.04	1.00				
PA	.06	.50**	1.00			
NA	-.25	-.58**	-.21	1.00		
GHQ	-.31*	-.57**	-.38**	.81**	1.00	
MHCCase	-.22	-.49**	-.43**	.63**	.71**	1.00

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; Satis = Satisfaction with employment status, Esteem = Self-esteem, PA = Positive affect, NA = Negative affect, GHQ = Mental health, MHCCase = Clinical caseness (1 = clinical).

APPENDIX E – CORRELATIONS FOR EMPLOYED GROUP AT TIME 2

Table E1

Time 2 Correlations for Employed Group n = 58

	Age	Geog	Gend	Rstat	Deps	Edu	LOUFT
Age	1.00						
Geog	-.11	1.00					
Gend	-.09	.21	1.00				
Rstat	.23	-.01	-.06	1.00			
Deps	.55**	-.14	-.08	.59**	1.00		
Edu	-.28*	-.02	.21	-.06	-.10	1.00	
LOUFT	.35*	-.11	.10	-.22	.18	-.01	1.00
Income	.16	-.16	-.31*	.25	.18	.20	-.01
JSTs	-.06	-.02	-.25	-.23	-.07	-.07	.19
WFDs	-.19	.13	-.01	-.10	-.22	-.14	.15
Train	-.16	-.15	.15	.06	-.02	.32*	.13
UpWk	-.11	.16	.35**	-.13	.10	.32*	-.06

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; a = Variable is a constant. Geog = Geographic region, Gend = Gender, RStat = Relationship status, Deps = Financial dependents, Edu = Education, EStat = Employment status, PreEmp = Previous employment, PreFT = Previous full-time job, LOUFT = Length of time since last full-time job, YrJob = Years in last full-time job, SatJb = Satisfaction with last full-time job, Occ = Occupation in last full-time job, , JSTs = Job search training courses, WFDs = Work for the Dole programs, Train = Training participation, UpWk = Unpaid work participation.

Table E1 (cont.)

Time 2 Correlations for Employed Group n = 58

	Age	Geog	Gend	RStat	Deps	Edu	LOUFT
HrWk	.14	-.23	-.25	.10	.08	-.01	-.02
Perm	-.16	.01	-.02	.03	-.02	.25	-.11
JobSat	-.04	.02	-.07	-.14	-.11	.02	-.02
Qual	-.07	.28*	.20	-.17	-.10	.05	-.14
Strats	.15	-.05	-.06	-.07	-.12	-.11	.04
Fhard	.10	-.06	.11	.25	.19	-.15	.07
FinStr	.30*	-.19	.22	.22	.33*	-.18	.15
Coll	-.03	.03	-.17	-.10	.01	.12	-.14
Soc	-.14	.02	-.15	-.21	-.23	.01	-.22
Stat	-.21	-.02	.01	-.15	-.21	.10	-.32*
Act	-.14	.20	.09	-.03	.08	.32*	-.23
Time	-.17	-.16	-.08	.01	-.02	.21	-.24
Ecom	-.03	.12	.12	-.15	-.11	.02	.00
Satis	-.05	.05	.08	-.25	-.04	.13	-.09
Esteem	-.04	-.16	-.09	-.04	-.02	.11	.02
PA	-.25	-.07	.02	-.21	-.16	.05	-.23
NA	.15	.03	.31*	.10	.25	.03	.21
GHQ	.06	-.07	.12	.07	.17	-.04	.14
MHCCase	.09	-.10	.06	-.01	.03	-.10	.18

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; Geog = Geographic region, Gend = Gender, RStat = Relationship status, Deps = Financial dependents, Edu = Education, EStat = Employment status, PreEmp = Previous employment, PreFT = Previous full-time job, LOUFT = Length of time since last full-time job, YrJob = Years in last full-time job, HrWK = Hours of work per week, Perm = Job permanence, JobSat = Current job satisfaction, Qual = Job quality, Strats = Strategies used to find job, FHard = Financial hardship, FStrn = Financial strain, Coll = Collective purpose, Soc = Social contact, Stat = Status, Act = Activity, Time = Time structure, ECom = Employment commitment, Satis = Satisfaction with employment status, Esteem = Self-esteem, PA = Positive affect, NA = Negative affect, GHQ = Mental health, MHCCase = Clinical caseness (1 = Clinical symptoms, 0 = Non-clinical symptoms).

Table E1 (cont.)

Time 2 Correlations for Employed Group n = 58

	Income	JSTs	WFDs	Train	UpWk	HrWk	Perm	JobSat	Qual
Income	1.00								
JSTs	-.07	1.00							
WFDs	-.10	.37**	1.00						
Train	-.03	.04	-.06	1.00					
UpWk	-.23	-.07	-.18	.08	1.00				
HrWk	.60**	-.14	.02	-.01	-.24	1.00			
Perm	.16	-.06	-.04	.16	.02	.18	1.00		
JobSat	.23	.14	.16	.00	-.10	.17	.37**	1.00	
Qual	.06	.26	.23	-.03	.12	.13	.26*	.54**	1.00
Strats	.12	-.03	-.12	.03	-.12	.10	-.19	-.01	-.09
Fhard	-.46**	-.01	.03	.16	.03	-.43**	-.06	-.44**	-.38**
FinStr	-.32*	-.08	-.01	.14	.10	-.27*	-.16	-.38**	-.31*

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; SatJb = Satisfaction with last full-time job, Occ = Occupation in last full-time job, JSTs = Job search training courses, WFDs = Work for the Dole programs, Train = Training participation, UpWk = Unpaid work participation, HrWK = Hours of work per week, Perm = Job permanence, JobSat = Current job satisfaction, Qual = Job quality, Strats = Strategies used to find job, FHard = Financial hardship, FStrn = Financial strain.

Table E1 (cont.)

Time 2 Correlations for Employed Group n = 58

	Income	JSTs	WFDs	Train	UpWk	HrWk	Perm	JobSat	Qual
Coll	-.03	.06	.04	-.02	.03	.07	.06	.21	.25
Soc	.12	.04	.09	-.03	-.25	.26*	.10	.33*	.23
Stat	.07	-.09	.19	.06	-.06	.21	.13	.24	.31*
Act	.06	-.04	.08	.15	.09	.15	.15	.25	.39**
Time	.23	-.10	-.01	.29*	.05	.46**	.26	.27*	.31*
Ecom	.01	.05	.17	-.15	-.12	.07	-.02	.36**	.26
Satis	.19	.22	.07	.02	.09	.20	.33*	.62**	.71**
Esteem	.20	.13	.17	.14	-.05	.31*	.25	.39**	.33*
PA	.15	.12	.21	.19	-.15	.26*	.23	.39**	.46**
NA	-.07	.07	-.02	.00	.03	-.23	-.06	-.12	-.14
GHQ	-.13	.01	-.06	-.09	.18	-.20	-.23	-.43**	-.36**
MHCCase	-.10	.02	.03	-.16	-.03	.05	-.22	-.45**	-.27*

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; SatJb = Satisfaction with last full-time job, Occ = Occupation in last full-time job, JSTs = Job search training courses, WFDs = Work for the Dole programs, Train = Training participation, UpWk = Unpaid work participation, HrWK = Hours of work per week, Perm = Job permanence, JobSat = Current job satisfaction, Qual = Job quality, Coll = Collective purpose, Soc = Social contact, Stat = Status, Act = Activity, Time = Time structure, ECom = Employment commitment, Satis = Satisfaction with employment status, Esteem = Self-esteem, PA = Positive affect, NA = Negative affect, GHQ = Mental health, MHCCase = Clinical caseness (1 = Clinical symptoms, 0 = Non-clinical symptoms).

Table E1 (cont.)

Time 2 Correlations for Employed Group n = 58

	Strats	Fhard	FinStr	Coll	Soc	Stat	Act	Time
Strats	1.00							
Fhard	-.08	1.00						
FinStr	-.21	.77**	1.00					
Coll	.03	-.11	-.23	1.00				
Soc	.25	-.36**	-.46**	.54**	1.00			
Stat	.10	-.25	-.25	.50**	.74**	1.00		
Act	.11	-.27*	-.26*	.41**	.47**	.52**	1.00	
Time	.07	-.24	-.25	.29*	.39**	.39**	.58**	1.00
Ecom	.09	-.09	-.16	.07	.01	-.04	.10	-.11
Satis	-.02	-.39**	-.30*	.01	.22	.13	.41**	.40**
Esteem	.20	-.18	-.28*	.42**	.53**	.45**	.37**	.55**
PA	.11	-.21	-.26*	.35**	.60**	.56**	.46**	.52**
NA	-.08	.14	.31*	-.45**	-.39**	-.31*	-.18	-.38**
GHQ	.07	.25	.39**	-.47**	-.51**	-.35**	-.35**	-.44**
MHCCase	.03	.20	.30*	-.49**	-.47**	-.38**	-.32*	-.38**

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; Strats = Strategies used to find job, FHard = Financial hardship, FStrn = Financial strain, Coll = Collective purpose, Soc = Social contact, Stat = Status, Act = Activity, Time = Time structure, ECom = Employment commitment, Satis = Satisfaction with employment status, Esteem = Self-esteem, PA = Positive affect, NA = Negative affect, GHQ = Mental health, MHCCase = Clinical caseness (1 = Clinical symptoms, 0 = Non-clinical symptoms).

Table E1 (cont.)

Time 2 Correlations for Employed Group n = 58

	Ecom	Satis	Esteem	PA	NA	GHQ	MHCCase
Ecom	1.00						
Satis	.24	1.00					
Esteem	.08	.34**	1.00				
PA	.19	.43**	.67**	1.00			
NA	.12	-.04	-.45**	-.15	1.00		
GHQ	-.09	-.32*	-.59**	-.47**	.66**	1.00	
MHCCase	.14	-.26*	-.43**	-.30*	.47**	.74**	1.00

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; ECom = Employment commitment, Satis = Satisfaction with employment status, Esteem = Self-esteem, PA = Positive affect, NA = Negative affect, GHQ = Mental health, MHCCase = Clinical caseness (1 = Clinical symptoms, 0 = Non-clinical symptoms).