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The psychological impact of long-term unemployment in mature-aged men : Volunteer work as a moderating variable

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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT IN
MATURE-AGED MEN: VOLUNTEER WORK
AS A MODERATING VARIABLE

by
M. Yeu

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Award of
Master of Psychology (Clinical).

At the Faculty of Community Services, Education, and Social Sciences,
Edith Cowan University, Joondalup.

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EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY
JOONDALUP

USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

Abstract

Previous research has recognised the negative psychological distress associated with unemployment for older workers aged over 40 years, as they are considered to be more at risk of being unemployed for a longer duration than other age groups. Several moderating variables of the negative effects of unemployment such as age, length of unemployment and leisure participation have also been identified. In examining the experiences of unemployment with an Australian mature-aged group of men, this study also investigated the potential moderating effect of volunteer work participation that had been noted previously but had never been explored. One-hundred and eighteen men aged between 38 and 60 years old ($M = 48.85$ years) anonymously completed a booklet containing several measures of depression, anxiety, stress, alcohol consumption and abuse, and stress-related growth (ability to thrive as a result of negative life events). Compared to employed men, unemployed men were found to have significantly higher levels of depression, and thriving, but not increased anxiety, stress, or risk of alcohol abuse. Performing volunteer work was found to be related to lower levels of depression and stress in both employed and unemployed men. Results were explained in consideration of Jahoda's (1981, 1982) deprivation theory, Fryer and Payne's (1984) agency theory and Warr's (1987, 1994) vitamin model. Limitations of the study and recommendations for further research are also discussed.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signature: _____

Date: 31/1/2000

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Chapter One

Introduction

In 1989, when the unemployment rate was well below 7% in Australia, the lowest it had been in the previous decade (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 1999a), studies investigating the psychological impact of unemployment in Australia continued to surface (e.g., Feather, 1989; Rowley & Feather, 1987). These studies often reported increased distress experienced by those out of work compared to those in employment. Today, unemployment remains a significant problem, despite the currently moderate unemployment rate of 7.2% (over three consecutive months since July 1999) (ABS, 1999a). Unemployment is not only of interest for those in the field of psychology, but also for those in the economic, social or political disciplines. For example, attempts to develop mathematical models to identify factors that are most likely to be associated with high risk of unemployment have been made (Le & Miller, 1999). In addition, analyses of the labour market enable further understanding of trends of employment and unemployment by age, gender, and occupation, as well as labour market transition mechanisms (Mangan, n.d.).

A growing concern in the area of unemployment is the aging population. Since 1978, the 15-64 age group in Australia has increased by 35%, whilst the growth of children aged 15 years and younger has been smaller at only 5% (ABS, 1999b). Although the current unemployment rate for the 16-19 age group (17.2%) remains significantly

higher than that of the 40-60 age-groups (40-44 yrs = 6.3%; 45-49 yrs = 3.8%; 50-54 yrs = 4.6%; 55-60 yrs = 10.8%), the risks of being unemployed for these older age groups is increasing (Le & Miller, 1999). This trend may be attributable to increasing age discrimination (Faley, Kleiman, & Lengnick-Hall, 1984), or alternatively, to obsolescence of skills in the older age groups in the current labour market (Le & Miller, 1999).

Nevertheless, increasing unemployment in the older age groups is of primary concern for the Government of Australia. In early 1999, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Workplace Relations called for submissions into "Issues specific to older workers seeking employment, or establishing a business, following unemployment" in order that such issues could be inquired into and reported on (Parliament of Australia, 1999).

The impact of unemployment in young adults has been widely investigated here in Australia as well as other countries (e.g., Feather & Davenport, 1981; Heubeck, Tausch, & Mayer, 1995; Tiggeman, Winefield, Winefield, & Goldney, 1991; Winefield, Tiggeman, & Winefield, 1992a). Although the effect of unemployment in older age groups has also received some attention, there has been less research conducted into these age groups in Australia. The last published psychological study specifically investigating older Australian unemployed persons was almost a decade ago (Broomhall & Winefield, 1990).

The present study examines the mental health of older unemployed men in Western Australia, and the role volunteer work has, if any, in ameliorating the impact of unemployment. The thesis will be

structured to include a theoretical and empirical review. Jahoda's (1981, 1982) deprivation theory, Fryer and Payne's (1984) agency theory, and Warr's (1987, 1994) vitamin model will be reviewed, and studies examining the psychological effects of unemployment will be discussed. In particular, studies investigating moderating variables of the impact of unemployment such as age, length of unemployment and meaningful activity or leisure will be reviewed.

Throughout this thesis, the terms work, employment, and unemployment will be frequently referred to. However, apart from the obvious distinctions between employment and unemployment, work has often been used synonymously with employment. This is not the intention here as work is viewed differently from employment. Whereas unemployment is considered as being without paid job/s, and employment the attainment of a paid job based on a contract between the employee and employer, work can be referred to as other types of labour such as volunteer work, domestic work, academic study, or work performed in retirement. Of course, part-time employment and underemployment are also considered forms of employment, but when discussing employment in this thesis it refers to full-time occupation. These three terms are differentiated because it may have implications for the theories considered and perhaps to the findings of this study as well.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Review

Three major theories, namely deprivation theory, personal agency theory, and the vitamin model of psychological reactions to unemployment will be outlined. An exhaustive review of theories will not be the focus here, hence, many other popular theories (e.g., learned helplessness, Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978) which are more general, but can be applied to the field of unemployment, will not be presented.

Deprivation Theory

Jahoda (1981) was primarily responsible for the first published piece of work to have an influential impact on subsequent research in the field of unemployment. More than 60 years ago when it was first published in German in 1933, *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal* (English translation: *Marienthal: The Sociography of an Unemployed Community*) continued to provide a fundamental foundation for research into the psychological effects of unemployment. Marienthal was a small village outside Vienna, and in 1930, three-quarters of the families residing there did not have one single member who was employed, although employment was at its peak only just two years previously (Fryer, 1992). Jahoda and her colleagues interviewed each and every member of more than 470 families in Marienthal, and concluded that since becoming unemployed, these individuals had experienced depression, apathy, inactivity, family conflict, and a disintegrating sense of time structure.

At the time of the Marienthal study, Jahoda's viewpoint was atheoretical. It was not until more than 40 years later that she attempted to account for her findings from Marienthal (Flatau, Galea, & Petridis, 1998). The ultimate question regarding these observations of the impact of unemployment in Marienthal was whether it was economic hardship or being without a job that was causing such effects of unemployment (Jahoda, 1992).

Essentially, Jahoda (1981, 1982) recognised that both of these factors play pertinent roles when one becomes unemployed. She argued that there are manifest and latent consequences of employment (Jahoda, 1981), although more emphasis is focused on the latter. Primarily, and obviously, employment as an institution compensates one with monetary rewards. The less obvious consequences of employment provide:

- 1) time structure;
- 2) regularly shared experiences and social contacts with persons beside those from the immediate family;
- 3) goals and purposes;
- 4) status and identity assigned by virtue of having employment and,
- 5) activity (Jahoda, 1981, 1982).

Consequently, when unemployment occurs, Jahoda (1981) suggested that these manifest and latent consequences are not enforced and unemployment as an experience is psychologically destructive.

Furthermore, Jahoda (1981) insists that even 'bad' employment is preferable to non-employment as it psychologically supports or enforces these manifest and latent consequences for individuals. Leisure activities

are viewed with acceptance when complementing employment, but they are not functional alternatives to employment, as such activities do not provide monetary benefits. For the unemployed, leisure activities are not pleasurable when performed (Jahoda, 1981).

Criticisms. The deprivation theory has its critics: for example, O'Brien (1986) stated that Jahoda (1981, 1982) failed to provide measures of quantification of these functions. That is, how much time structure, social contact, or how many goals and purposes do employed (and unemployed) persons need to be 'psychologically" healthy? At what level do these benefits begin to decrease, and perhaps, become harmful? That is, can too much employment be "too good?" In addition, Winefield, Tiggeman, Winefield, and Goldney (1993) proposed that the deprivation theory does not account for differences between work and employment. The underlying implication of the deprivation theory is that housewives, retired persons, those undertaking volunteer work, academic students, and other non-employed persons alike would suffer psychological difficulties because the manifest and latent consequences are not enforced upon them through the institution of employment.

Agency Theory

Agency theory was developed in response to Jahoda' s (1981, 1982) deprivation theory. Fryer and Payne (1984) posited that persons can express active coping, planning, initiating, striving behaviours, and are not necessarily at the mercy of social institutions. They are active agents

of change and able to control the environment, rather than passive and reactive, as Jahoda assumed. Furthermore, from the experience of a negative life event such as unemployment, there is the possibility of constructively organising life such that the crisis of unemployment enabled the breaking of old behavioural patterns that existed pre-crisis. As a consequence, personal development in understanding themselves and others better after the crisis can result.

Fryer and Payne (1984) gathered data from semi-structured interviews with 11 atypical unemployed persons they found who were exceptions to the notion that unemployment is homogeneously detrimental. These particular individuals highlighted that Jahoda's (1981) often cited latent consequences of employment were at times harmful rather than beneficial. For example, too many demands, harsh working conditions, too little presence of challenge and variety in employment can hardly be beneficial. These individuals showed particular resilience to the negative impacts of unemployment in the form of structuring time for themselves, were socially active, and became active in purposeful and meaningful work despite lowered financial income. Fryer and Payne (1984) stressed the need to study the positive features of unemployment, as well as the negative features possible in employment.

Criticisms. Although proponents of the agency theory highlight the individual's ability to overcome and adjust to negative life events such as unemployment, Winefield et al. (1993) believed that this global view of human nature is erroneous. Persons vary in their abilities to be both

proactive and independent or reactive and dependent, depending on individual, social, or genetic reasons (Winefield et al., 1993).

Vitamin Model

Warr (1987, 1994) proposed nine features of the environment, that determine the negative experience of unemployment. His ideas were largely borrowed from Jahoda's (1981) deprivation theory, and continue from Fryer and Payne's (1984) agency theory in highlighting the positives and negatives associated with employment as well as unemployment. He suggested that the following features are essentially absent during unemployment:

- 1) opportunity for control: opportunities for decision-making and ability to predict consequences of action;
- 2) opportunity for skill use: environment may inhibit usage of skills already known or restrict formation of new skills;
- 3) externally generated goals: goals give rise to plans, objectives, activity, and achievement;
- 4) variety: variety from the environment prevents boredom, and encourages a number of roles, as well as diversity within each person's role;
- 5) environmental clarity: extent to which the environment provides feedback about consequences of action, degree to which other persons' behaviours or the future are predictable, and clarity of role requirements;

- 6) availability of money: includes income level, pay rises, material resources, and standard of living;
- 7) physical security: absence of danger, adequate housing, heating and hygiene;
- 8) opportunity for interpersonal contact: social contact provides friendship, social support, and assistance in achieving collective goals. It also provides the ability to compare self with others, and finally;
- 9) valued social position: this includes social prestige and status, ability to fit into a desired social niche in order to provide self-esteem.

Although the presence of these nine features are desirable in the environment of the unemployed person to ensure positive mental health, Warr (1987) also propose their utility in assessing the positive and negative aspects of employment. That is, contrary to Jahoda's assumption that any job is better than no job, Warr (1984a) posits the existence of 'good' and 'bad' employment, as well as 'good' and 'bad' unemployment. For some individuals, employment may not necessarily be better than being unemployed. For example, a stressful job accompanied with fatigue, boredom, psychosomatic symptoms, and interpersonal conflict may be more deleterious to psychological health than being proactive, independent, and coping well in unemployment (Warr, 1984b).

Employment and unemployment can be both good and bad because the nine individual features of the environment can be beneficial or harmful. Warr (1987) likened these nine environmental features to vitamins. Certain vitamins (C and E) are beneficial to physical health no

matter the level of consumption. Even at a high level of consumption, such vitamins pose no harm to physical health. In contrast, other vitamins (A and D) are favourable up to a certain point, but thereafter, further consumption results in detrimental health.

Similarly, features 6, 7, and 9 (availability of money, security, and valued social position) pose no psychological harm to the individual no matter how much they are accessible. Alternatively, the remainder of the features (opportunity for control, skill use, goals, variety, clarity, and interpersonal contact) can be unfavourable if they exceed a certain level. For example, too much control or too many goals can lead to an overly stressful environment. Exposure to high levels of interpersonal contact can likewise be psychologically harmful if it is in the form of crowded environments or excessive demands from others. Therefore, although Warr (1987) suggested these features of the environment could affect people, like the agency theory he also viewed individuals as capable of controlling the environment to maintain positive mental health.

The vitamin model is applicable to employment and unemployment. Comparisons between experiences of employment can be made as different jobs vary in levels of the nine environmental features, and likewise the experience of unemployment. If unemployment is 'bad', then the appropriate action is to move 'bad' unemployment to 'good' employment by affecting the environmental features. Given that this assumption rests on the ability for every unemployed person to obtain 'good' employment, it might be more realistic in some cases to move people from 'bad' unemployment to 'good' unemployment (Warr, 1987). In

addition, the vitamin model can be applied to forms of work such as volunteer work, domestic work, and academic work performed by the student. Therefore, it is applicable to situations of work, employment and unemployment, and within each category, can differentiate on a continuum between 'good' and 'bad' experiences (Warr, 1983).

Criticisms. Although this model encompasses aspects of both the deprivation and agency theory in that it describes the manifest and latent functions of employment and emphasises human agency, it is subject to criticism. Like deprivation theory, Warr (1987) failed to explain why these particular features of the environment are beneficial, and not other factors.

Summary

Jahoda's (1981, 1982) deprivation theory suggests that employment has manifest and latent consequences, in the form of money for the former, and time structure, social contact, goals, status and identity, and activity for the latter. These functions are enforced on the individual through the institution of employment. During unemployment, these functions are no longer present for the individual and psychological distress is experienced as a result. On the other hand, Fryer and Payne (1984) emphasised human agency since individuals are capable of controlling the environment so that it is more conducive to positive mental health. Warr (1987) borrowed much of Jahoda's (1981) work in developing his vitamin model of unemployment and mental health.

However, like Jahoda, he failed to explain why these particular features of the environment are particularly salient for individuals.

Chapter Three

Empirical Review

The Psychological Impact of Unemployment

Unemployment and its associated effects on mental health has been widely researched in Australia (e.g., Feather, 1990), the United Kingdom (e.g., Smith, 1985; Warr & Jackson, 1985), Sweden (Joelson & Wahlquist, 1987), Germany (Heubeck et al., 1995), Canada (Aubry, Tefft, & Kingsbury, 1990) and the United States (e.g., Catalano, Dooley, Novaco, Wilson, & Hough, 1993). Despite considerable research, most studies have been atheoretical (Winefield, 1995), leaving little room for integration of theory with data collection, and for expanding further systematic knowledge of work, employment, and unemployment.

Many different types of studies have been performed such as cross-sectional, longitudinal, and aggregate studies. As well, many different psychological factors have been investigated, such as the effects of unemployment on violent behaviour (Catalano, Dooley, Novaco et al., 1993), cigarette smoking (Lee, Crombie, Smith, & Tunstall-Pedoe, 1991), marital relationships and family life (Aubry et al., 1990; Liem & Liem, 1988; Schliebner & Peregoy, 1994), and child abuse (Taitz, King, Nicholson, & Kessel, 1987). A large number of the studies that have been conducted on the effect of unemployment on psychological distress use measures of general well-being such as the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ). Usually the short form of 12 items rather than the original 60-items is used in studies of unemployment, where it gives an indication of minor

psychiatric morbidity (Winefield, 1995). Less frequently, specific measures to assess depression and anxiety have been used (Maida, Gordon, & Farberow, 1989).

Unemployment and Mental Health

Depression, anxiety, and psychological distress. Interviews were conducted by Kessler, House, and Turner (1987) on a sample of almost 500 employed and unemployed individuals to determine the impact of employment status on measures such as depression, physical ill health, and anxiety. Unemployment was found to significantly affect measures of somatisation, depression, and anxiety such that responses on these dependent measures were 20-30% of a standard deviation higher than employed respondents' scores.

Melville, Hope, Bennison, & Barraclough (1985) found that depression scores as measured on the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) were significantly higher in a group of unemployed men aged 25-50 years of age and out of work for 2-18 months compared to an employed group matched for age and social class. Their General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) scores were also significantly higher than those reported by employed men.

In another study, depression as measured by the Zung Depression scale was reported in unemployed men over the ages of 45 years who had been out of employment for approximately 2 years (Frese & Mohr, 1987). However, no control groups were used so results were difficult to interpret. Also, in investigating psychological distress, Payne, Warr, and Hartley

(1984) found that their sample of unemployed men aged between 25 and 39 years old reported GHQ scores four times higher than those reported by a group of employed men.

Besides indicators of depression, anxiety, and poor general well-being found in unemployed persons, other exploratory studies using case examples have found that unemployed workers were vulnerable to feeling discouraged, hopeless, helpless, idle, socially isolated, unmotivated, and embarrassed, which may serve to maintain or precipitate further their already deprived situations (Rife & First, 1989; Zippay, 1995).

Alcohol abuse. Alcohol consumption may increase in persons experiencing unemployment, perhaps to cope with the stresses that are associated with unemployment or because of extra free time during unemployment, or both. Although Catalano, Dooley, Wilson, and Hough (1993) found a higher incidence of alcohol abuse in unemployed persons than employed individuals, other studies have not found a significant association between these two variables (Heather, Laybourn & MacPherson, 1987). A literature review by Winton, Heather, and Robertson (1986) of studies investigating the relationship between unemployment and drinking behaviour concluded that there was little support for a positive relationship between these two factors. In a study conducted by Warr and Payne (1983), almost 400 men aged between 25 and 39 years of age, and unemployed between 6 and 11 months reported that they had significantly reduced their alcohol consumption since becoming unemployed. This could be attributable to reduced income

levels in unemployed men, which limits the amount of alcohol purchased and consumed (Warr, 1984c). Replications of these studies investigating alcohol effects of unemployment have yet to be conducted using Australian samples.

Moderating Variables of Effects of Unemployment

Unemployment is not experienced homogeneously across all persons. The literature suggests many factors that potentially moderate the psychological impact of unemployment, such as age, financial stress and strain (Feather, 1989), expectation to find employment (Wooten, Sulzer, & Cornwell, 1994), negative attribution toward job loss (Ostell & Divers, 1987; Rodriguez, 1997), length of unemployment (Rowley & Feather, 1987; Warr & Jackson, 1984), social support (Atkinson, Liem, & Liem, 1986), social status (Payne et al. 1984; Warr & Payne, 1983), level of meaningful activity (Haworth, 1986; Haworth & Evans, 1987), pursuit of leisure (Glyptis, 1989; Kelvin, 1981), and use of time (Winefield, Tiggeman, & Winefield, 1992b).

Studies investigating age and length of unemployment as moderating variables will be reviewed here but for a review of other variables, Warr, Jackson, and Banks (1988) and Winefield (1995) provide excellent reviews of the literature. As this present study intends to explore volunteer work as a moderator of the effects of unemployment, the pertinent literature, although near negligible and heavily borrowed from other related concepts such as meaningful activity, time structure and leisure, will also be examined.

Age. Research by Joelson and Wahlquist (1987) and Warr, Jackson, and Banks (1988) has suggested a curvilinear relationship between age and distress experienced during unemployment.

Unemployed middle-aged persons are more likely to experience higher levels of psychological distress than either groups of unemployed young persons or those close to retirement age. For example, Broomhall and Winefield (1990), in an Australian study, compared the psychological distress as measured by the GHQ on a young sample of unemployed men with a mean age of 22 years to an older sample of unemployed men with a mean age of 48 years old. The groups had been unemployed for an average of 20 and 18 months respectively. The middle-aged group was found to have significantly higher levels of psychological distress than the younger group.

Warr's (1987) vitamin model was used by Broomhall and Winefield (1990) to account for these findings. That is, certain environmental features predominantly play a part in the heightened distress experienced by the middle-aged group. Particularly, availability of money, valued social position, and environmental clarity is lacking in the environments of these middle-aged unemployed men. They are at a life cycle stage where limited finances are more problematic due to additional commitments such as children to provide for and mortgages to pay (Warr, 1983), whereas younger unemployed are more able to rely on parental support. In addition, older persons' roles as the main breadwinner and a contributor to society can no longer be fulfilled, resulting in a social position regarded as low and perhaps deviant (Smith, 1985). Finally, in terms of environmental

clarity, planning for their future becomes difficult as it has consequences for all family members (Warr, 1987).

More specifically, Warr and Jackson (1984) divided their sample of 954 unemployed men into 6 different age groups: 16-19 years, 20-29 years, 30-39 years, 40-49 years, 50-59 years and 60-64 years. Interviews were taken in regard to reported psychological health such as anxiety, depression, insomnia, irritability, and listlessness. Psychological health in men aged between 40 and 49 years old was found to significantly worsen when unemployed compared to all other age groups. Additional studies by Frese and Mohr (1987) and Wooten et al. (1994) further support the particularly distressing experience of unemployment for middle-age groups in comparison to other age groups. There seems, therefore, to be consistent support for the notion that middle-aged persons experience significantly higher distress levels than all other age groups when unemployed. However, such studies have been limited to men, and have largely neglected females in their samples.

Length of unemployment. Research by Hepworth (1980) indicate that higher psychological distress is associated with increasing length of unemployment (Warr, 1983). Seventy-eight unemployed men aged between 19 and 63 years of age were grouped into five different lengths of unemployment categories; those unemployed for less than a month, between one and six months, between seven and twelve months, between one and two years, and those unemployed for over two years (Hepworth, 1980). The results indicated that psychological distress as measured by

the GHQ was positively associated with length of unemployment such that the longer the length of unemployment, the higher the reported psychological distress. In addition, the length of unemployment was negatively correlated with a measure of subjective well-being.

Warr and Jackson (1984) asked their sample of men the degree of change in their reported general, psychological, and physical health since becoming unemployed. Questions referring to depression, insomnia, nervousness, listlessness, angina, headaches, high blood pressure, and ulcers were asked regarding their psychological and physical health. Interestingly, they found that all three aspects of health were related to the length of unemployment, with the greatest deterioration found in those who had been unemployed just over 6 months duration. Furthermore, no increases in these measures were found after this period, suggesting that unemployed men may adapt to unemployment after approximately six months, although functioning at a significantly lower level of psychological and physical functioning compared to pre-unemployment levels.

Jackson and Warr (1984), and Warr and Jackson (1987) have replicated these findings. Jackson and Warr (1984) found that GHQ-measured psychological distress was positively correlated with length of unemployment, but stabilisation occurred at around the six-month period with no differences found in distress levels between those who had been unemployed for 6-12 months and those unemployed more than 12 months. Jackson and Warr (1984) additionally found two sets of results that are worthy of note. Firstly, during the first six months of unemployment, increasing distress levels were highly correlated with

increasing duration of unemployment, especially for those aged between 20 to 59 years. That is, the relationship between psychological distress and duration of unemployment occurs at a much steeper gradient for this age group than other age groups: in fact this relationship was not found in unemployed men aged below 20 years or those aged over 60 years old. Secondly, Jackson and Warr (1984) found that the level of financial stress significantly contributed to the reported level of psychological distress. That is, unemployed men in these age groups have had to rely on significantly less financial income than when previously employed, and this restricted income contributed to higher psychological distress.

In order to specifically test whether increasing length of unemployment was particularly distressful for an Australian sample of middle-aged men, particularly within the first 6 months of unemployment, Rowley and Feather (1987) compared a young (15 – 24 years) and middle-aged (30 – 49 years) group of unemployed men on GHQ-measured psychological distress. Participants were grouped according to duration of unemployment, which varied between less than six months, six to eighteen months, and 18 months or more. In support of Jackson and Warr's (1984) results, they also found that financial strain was significantly associated with increasing length of unemployment for the older group but not for the younger age group.

Therefore, psychological distress appears to increase as the duration of unemployment increases in the first six months of unemployment. Thereafter, levels of distress tend to stabilise, albeit at a lower level of functioning than when previously employed. Results from

Jackson and Warr (1984), and Rowley and Feather (1987), however, highlight the importance of financial stress and strain in contributing to the distress experienced especially for the middle-aged group of unemployed.

Leisure, meaningful activity, and volunteer work. Another moderator of the psychological effects of unemployment is the degree to which unemployed people use or structure their time. For example, Hepworth (1980) found that whether an unemployed individual felt his time was being occupied or not was the single best predictor of positive mental health as measured by the GHQ. Results of Swinburne (1981) from semi-structured interviews conducted with unemployed men aged between 31 and 57 years old highlighted the role of structured use of time. The views of this relatively small group of 20 participants reflected the need to be active while unemployed as it served to maintain mental alertness, discount fears, doubts, anxiety, and provided a sense of achievement and purposefulness.

Unemployed persons who participate in leisure activities or other meaningful activities have been shown to benefit. In Roberts, Lamb, Dench, and Brodie's (1989) study, body mass index, recent visits to doctors, quality of sleep, prescription drugs taken, self-assessed health and fitness were used as health indicators. These measures were recorded for employed and unemployed persons. Results indicated that the minority (20%) of unemployed persons who partook in various sport activities more than once a week were reported to be of a similar health status to employed men who also engaged in these sporting behaviours.

Although this study emphasised the value of leisure activities during unemployment, Roberts et al. (1989) cautioned that leisure might not function as an alternative to employment, particularly for those who rarely undertook leisure activities.

Other studies (e.g., Feather & Bond, 1983; Kilpatrick & Trew, 1985) also indicate that keeping active during unemployment may buffer against the detrimental effects of unemployment. In their study, Kilpatrick and Trew (1985) grouped 121 unemployed men ranging in age between 25 to 45 years into four categories of activity levels: Active, Social, Domestic, and Passive. This was obtained after a cluster analysis of time diary data that recorded behaviours for one week. GHQ scores significantly increased (indicating poorer mental health) progressively across the four categories of Active, Social, Domestic and Passive. Unemployed men who were categorised as Active had participated in sporting activities, but also in work-related activities such as volunteer work. Because of this combination of leisure and volunteer work undertaken by these participants, Kilpatrick and Trew (1985) could not identify independent benefits associated with either leisure or volunteer work.

Although leisure and meaningful activity provide at least some buffering effects of psychological distress in unemployed men, researchers who have supported this notion have not made efforts to explain such benefits. However, one can speculate on the basis of the deprivation theory and vitamin model that such activities may be able to reinforce time structure, activity, opportunity for skills use, and opportunity for social contact for the unemployed person.

Also, much of the literature on leisure and unemployment has neglected the costs associated with leisure activities during times of unemployment. Going for a walk on the beach might be perceived as inexpensive, but for an unemployed person who does not live close to the coast, driving to the destination could become a significant cost if undertaken regularly. Since financial income is limited during unemployment and most men in the middle-aged group report significant financial strain and stress compared to other age groups (Jackson & Warr, 1984; Rowley & Feather, 1987), then the type and frequency of leisure activities could be restricted.

Investigations of the benefits, if any, of volunteer work in ameliorating psychological distress associated with unemployment are rare. However, several studies (Feather, 1989; Warr, 1984c; Warr & Jackson, 1987) have found that it is one of the few reported activities that actually increases for unemployed men compared to when they were employed. Although Warr and Payne (1983) suggested that volunteer work is beneficial in times of unemployment, no systematic studies have been conducted to test this assumption.

Volunteer work can be classified as informal or formal. Informal volunteer work refers to work conducted to assist others such as helping the neighbour with gardening or driving to the doctor for a medical appointment. In contrast, formal volunteer work is:

an activity which always takes place through a registered not-for-profit organisation and is of benefit to the community

and the volunteer; undertaken of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion; for no financial payment (except direct reimbursements of out-of-pocket expenses); and underpinned by a set of principles (Australian Council for Volunteering, 1996, p.7).

No assessment is made in this study of informal volunteering due to the difficulties in defining it in any systematic way.

Performing volunteer work could be seen as a moderating variable of the impact of unemployment as it, like leisure, structures time and keeps the individual in work-related roles. In much of the literature, volunteer work is viewed as a different concept to leisure (Haworth, 1986). Wilson and Musick (1997) suggested that volunteer work is unlike leisure, and more like employment except without payment. Volunteer work was seen as a productive and meaningful activity, with individual and collective goals that also provides social contact with others besides members of the immediate family. Most importantly, volunteer work involves no monetary costs as costs are reimbursed by the volunteer agency. Hence, performing volunteer work could be perceived as less financially threatening than the pursuit of leisure activities.

Rietschlin (1998) investigated the benefits of voluntary membership in an association in a large community sample of male and female individuals aged 22 to 89 years old. As the study was not intended to examine employment status, this was not mentioned and therefore it was not known to what extent individuals in the sample were employed or

unemployed. Depression was measured by the Centre for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) was utilised in the study. Persons who were members of a voluntary organisation were found to have significantly lower levels of depression than those who were not affiliated with any organisations. These effects remained significant even after controlling for social support, indicating that voluntary association membership had a unique contribution to lowering levels of depression. Furthermore, members who were affiliated with four or more associations reported significantly reduced levels of depression compared to those who were only affiliated with one organisation.

These results lend some support to the benefits of volunteer work in reducing levels of depression, but provides no specific bases in regard to employment status. The study by Rietschlin (1998) investigated membership of volunteer organisations only, and it did not differentiate between members and volunteer workers. That is, one could be a member of a volunteer organisation but not necessarily perform volunteer work for that organisation. Therefore, the effects of simply belonging to a group or performing volunteer work were not separately investigated.

In addition, no attempts were made by Rietschlin (1998) to explain the motivation or reasons in individuals for belonging to volunteer associations. It is possible that persons who are more likely to perform volunteer work for the community are different from those that do not. For example, suggestions have been made that volunteer workers, as compared to non-volunteer workers, are intrinsically motivated rather than extrinsically motivated persons (Metzer, 1996). Obviously, implications for

differing motivations and values towards volunteer work include differences in how a particular task is carried out, and how the recipient views this 'service' (Metzer, 1996). For example, a qualitative difference in volunteering behaviour might be found between individuals who volunteer for altruistic or intrinsic reasons rather than for extrinsic reasons such as for social status.

Generally, there is evidence indicating that the majority of volunteer workers do so for altruistic reasons (Rosenberg-Russell, 1995; Unger, 1991). A report prepared by Rosenberg-Russell (1995) showed that 'helping others/community' was endorsed by 41% of volunteer workers through an ABS survey investigating the motivation for volunteering. However, non-altruistic reasons also rate highly as reasons for volunteering. For example, 34% and 30% of volunteer workers stated "personal/family involvement" and "personal satisfaction" as reasons for volunteering. Furthermore, "social contact" and "to be active" were mentioned as reasons by 15% and 12% of volunteer workers respectively (Rosenberg-Russell, 1995).

In Australia, a Voluntary Work Initiatives Program has been implemented to give unemployed persons the option of doing volunteer work rather than looking for paid work whilst receiving unemployment benefits (Hembury, 1998). However, certain conditions need to be met in that a minimum of 32 hours per fortnight of volunteer work must be completed to receive unemployment benefits. The program is not targeted at any age group although mature-aged workers do make up a proportion. There is no evidence on the effectiveness of such programs and it has

been explicitly advocated that they are not intended to be viewed as an alternative to paid employment (Cordingley, 1997). It must be noted though, that such programs differ from 'work for the dole' type programs whereby unemployed persons are involuntary performing volunteer work as a condition for receiving welfare benefits, and also from community-based order programs whereby juvenile and adult offenders are given community service activities involuntarily as a form of punishment (J. Thomson, WA. Police Service, personal communication, 8 November 1999).

Chapter Four

Rationale and Hypotheses of Study

Rationale for Study

An influential body of research on the psychological impact of unemployment was largely conducted by the Sheffield group from the U.K. (eg., Payne et al., 1984; Warr, 1982, 1983, 1984c; Warr & Jackson, 1984, 1985; Warr et al., 1988). These studies have been largely responsible for current knowledge about variables such as age, length of unemployment, financial stress and strain, level of activity and other factors in moderating the impact of unemployment. Findings from these studies have generally been replicated in Australian studies, mainly those conducted by Feather (1989, 1990; Rowley & Feather, 1987; Tiggeman et al., 1991; Winefield et al., 1992a, 1993). However, Australian studies have focused relatively more on the effects of youth unemployment, rather than on the older age groups.

Rowley and Feather (1987) emphasised the need to study the consequences of unemployment in Australia because of differing culture expectations or stigma, a different welfare system, and other social values and attitudes that might differ between countries. More importantly in Australia, recent increases in the number of older workers out of employment has captured the attention of policy makers, as the number of unemployed persons aged between 45 and 54 years rose by 156% in one year between 1997 and 1998 (Kierath, 1999). These surprising figures, coupled with increasing evidence (Le & Miller, 1999) that middle-aged

individuals are more likely to be unemployed longer than younger or older age groups have captured the WA State Government's attention. It has injected \$3 million into an early intervention program (Department of Training & Employment, 1999) targeted at mature-aged workers 45 years and older and who have been unemployed for 3 to 12 months in order to prevent further absence from the labour market.

The last published study conducted in Australia on the effects of unemployment on middle-aged workers was nearly a decade ago (Broomhall & Winefield, 1990). This particular study, as discussed previously, compared the psychological well-being of a group of unemployed young and middle-aged persons and found the latter group experienced significantly more distress. However, the study did not use comparison groups of employed workers.

Since most of the previous work in Australia has focussed on youth unemployment, the current study investigates the mental health of unemployed middle-aged workers. Additionally, it is important to use a comparison group of employed workers to enable the results to be accounted for by employment status. Although previous Australian studies have found significantly higher levels of psychological distress in unemployed middle-aged individuals in comparison to younger persons (e.g., Broomhall & Winefield, 1990; Feather, 1989, 1990; Rowley & Feather, 1987), these studies have not used control groups consisting of employed workers. This absence has been remedied in this current study.

When studies investigate psychological effects of unemployment, the GHQ is often used as a general measure of psychological distress.

However, no norms exist for the GHQ (Hepworth, 1980) and its ability to adequately measure severity is questionable (Melville et al., 1985). More specific measures of mental health functioning are required.

Although depression and anxiety have been researched in previous studies, alcohol consumption and stress, as dependent variables, have never been considered in Australian studies. Moreover, to examine Fryer and Payne's (1984) agency theory, a measure of stress-related growth was used (Park, Cohen, & Murch, 1996). This assessment allows the determination of any perceived 'benefits' reported by unemployed individuals in relation to the negative experience of being unemployed. This ability is more commonly known as thriving or resilience, in which some individuals are able to experience positive outcomes from negative experiences, such as in improvements in coping, change in life philosophy, interpersonal relationships or spirituality (Cohen, Cimboric, Armeli, & Hettler, 1998).

From the available research on the benefits of leisure in structuring use of time and keeping active whilst unemployed, it is likely volunteer work may have a buffering effect based on assumptions of the deprivation theory and vitamin model. In recognition of the monetary costs which might be associated with leisure and meaningful activities, the present study introduces volunteer work as an option in moderating the impact of unemployment as well as being a less financially threatening form of activity.

Hence, due to middle-aged workers increasingly being at risk of becoming unemployed, and unemployed for a longer duration than any

other age groups, this study has focused on the psychological impact of unemployment in mature-aged men who have been unemployed for a long time. Findings from the Sheffield group studies need to be replicated, as they were performed in the UK. Even previous Australian studies need to be replicated as most were conducted more than a decade ago, and replication is needed in light of the possibility of changing stigma, cultural, and social values and changes in the welfare system where unemployed individuals now have the option of performing volunteer work on a voluntary basis rather than looking for paid employment. This change needs to be further investigated to determine the extent of benefits (as found by Rietschlin, 1998) associated with performing volunteer work whilst one is unemployed. Assuming such benefits are found, an exploratory analysis of the type of perceived benefits, and reasons for volunteering in the first place is necessary. In summary, these considerations indicate that four different groups of men who differ in employment status (employed or unemployed) as well as volunteering status (volunteering or non-volunteering) need to be compared.

Hypotheses of Study

Specific hypotheses to be tested are:

- 1) Unemployed men will report significantly higher levels of the following dependent variables relative to employed men:
 - a. depression;
 - b. anxiety;
 - c. stress; and

- d. alcohol consumption.
2. As predicted from the personal agency theory that unemployed men can exhibit coping and proactive behaviours, unemployed men will also be more likely to report thriving on a measure of stress-related growth as a result of the negative experience of unemployment.
 3. As volunteer work has the potential to moderate unemployment effects by providing the latent consequences or environmental features inherent in employment, unemployed men who perform volunteer work will report significantly lower levels of the following dependent variables relative to unemployed men who do not perform volunteer work:
 - a. depression;
 - b. anxiety;
 - c. stress; and
 - d. alcohol consumption.
 4. Specifically, interaction effects are expected such that the difference between employed and unemployed volunteering men on the following dependent variables will be significantly smaller relative to the difference reported by employed and unemployed non-volunteering men:
 - a. depression;
 - b. anxiety;
 - c. stress; and
 - d. alcohol consumption.

5. Those who perform volunteer work are predicted to score significantly higher than those who do not do volunteer work on a measure reflecting intrinsic work motivation.

Chapter Five

Method

Design

This study is a between-subjects design consisting of two independent variables: Employment Status and Volunteer Status. Both independent variables consisted of two levels; employed versus unemployed (Employment Status), and volunteering versus non-volunteering (Volunteer Status). Hence, there are four groups utilised in this study: Employed (men with a full-time occupation), Employed Volunteers (men with a full-time occupation plus performing volunteer work), Unemployed (unemployed men without any form of employment), and Unemployed Volunteers (unemployed men without any form of employment but performing volunteer work). Five dependent variables will be investigated, chiefly depression, anxiety, stress, alcohol consumption, and stress-related growth or thriving. Therefore, 2 (Employment Status: employed versus unemployed) x 2 (Volunteer Status: volunteering versus non-volunteering) analysis of variances (ANOVAs) was conducted for each dependent variable.

Participants

A total of 190 questionnaires were sent out to men who qualified for one of the four groups and who were approximately aged between 40 to 55 years of age. One hundred and thirty-seven were returned, seven of which were not useable. This resulted in a 68.4% response rate. Hence,

130 men who belonged to one of the four groups qualified for the research. Forty men were Employed, 32 were Employed Volunteers, 35 were Unemployed, and 23 were Unemployed Volunteers. All unemployed men were continuously out of full-time employment for 6 months or more. This criterion was used to ensure 'stabilisation' of psychological distress experienced by unemployed men. This was matched for the employed group of men in that they were employed in full-time employment for at least 6 months or more. Unemployed men were excluded if they were made unemployed due to sickness or disability, as such conditions might have implications for their experience of unemployment. Participants were considered to be doing volunteer work if they provided a service, which benefited the community, of their own free will, and without financial payment (except direct reimbursements of out-of-pocket expenses).

Five employed men who completed and returned their questionnaires had not been employed in their current occupation for 6 months or more, hence they were omitted from the study. Similarly, seven unemployed men were omitted from the study: five had not been continuously unemployed for at least six months or more, one had completed the wrong questionnaire, and one was too young to qualify for the study. Therefore, a total of 12 completed and returned questionnaires were excluded from the analysis, leaving a total of 118 made up of: 36 men who were Employed, 31 Employed Volunteers, 29 Unemployed men, and 22 who were Unemployed Volunteers. Their age ranged from 38 to 60 years old, with a mean of 48.85 years (SD = 4.67 years).

Materials

All participants completed an 11-page booklet. It consisted of:

- 1) a cover and instructions page (1 page) (see Appendix A);
- 2) a demographics section, which includes specific questions in regard to volunteer work. This latter section is optional depending on whether the participant performed volunteer work or not (3 pages) (see Appendix B);
- 3) the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS) (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) - a two-page instrument measuring depression, anxiety, and stress (see Appendix C);
- 4) the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (Australian version) (Aus-AUDIT) (Conigrave & Elvy, 1998) – a one-page instrument for the purpose of screening for hazardous alcohol consumption (see Appendix D);
- 5) the Value of Work Scale (VWS) (Kazanas, Hannah, & Gregor, 1975) – a two-page instrument for measuring intrinsic and extrinsic values towards work (see Appendix E);
- 6) Stress-Related Growth Scale (SRGS) (Park et al., 1996) – a two-page instrument for measuring stress-related positive outcomes (see Appendix F).

Cover and instructions page. The cover and instructions page gave basic information regarding confidentiality, anonymity and ethics approval of the research. It also informed intending participants of consent to participate in the study should they complete and return the questionnaire.

Demographics. Two differing formats for the demographics section were used depending on the employment status of participants. All participants were asked questions in relation to their age, ethnicity, years of education, marital status, current and previous occupation, total annual income (including wife/partner's income and other benefits), and financial worries. The financial worries or strain question was drawn from the Sheffield studies (Payne et al., 1984; Warr & Jackson, 1984) and was phrased as "Thinking back over the past month, how often have you had serious financial worries?" Responses were "Never", "Hardly ever", "Frequently", "Nearly all the time", and "All the time." Work-related demographic questions were phrased for either an employed or unemployed person's situation, particularly those questions relating length of employment/unemployment and previous/current occupation (see Appendix B).

Those who performed volunteer work also completed a second section. It asked questions about the types of volunteer sector/s in which participants participated. Additionally, participants were to rate on a 5-point rating scale ranging from "Very important" (1) to "Not at all important" a set of questions about their reasons for volunteering. Reasons included "A new interest", "Assist people/community", and "Good use of time/purposeful." Likewise, a 5-point rating scale was used from "Very beneficial" (1) to "Not at all beneficial" (5) for questions relating to the benefits of volunteer work such as "Increasing self-esteem/confidence", "Sense of Status" and "Met new social contacts."

Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS). The DASS (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) is a 42-item questionnaire with responses on a 4-point rating scale, ranging from "Did not apply to me at all" (0) to "Applied to me very much, or most of the time" (3). It consists of three subscales: Depression, Anxiety, and Stress. Fourteen items referred to statements relating to depression (e.g., "I felt that life wasn't worthwhile", "I felt sad and depressed"), 14 items referred to statements about anxiety (e.g., "I had a feeling of faintness", "I felt I was close to panic"), and another 14 items referred to statements concerning stress (e.g., "I found it hard to wind down", "I found myself getting agitated").

The DASS is a measure of depressive, anxious, and stressful states, rather than traits. Each subscale gives a separate total score for depression, anxiety, and stress. The Depression Scale assesses dysphoria, inertia, anhedonia, and hopelessness. The Anxiety Scale is able to assess levels of autonomic arousal, situational anxiety, anxious affect and experience of effects of the skeletal musculature. The Stress Scale, on the other hand, measures chronic non-specific arousal pertaining to irritability, agitation, relaxation difficulties, and intolerance. The possible score range for each scale is 0 to 42.

The DASS was standardised on a normative Australian sample of 1044 males and 1870 females between the ages of 17 and 69 years old (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). Alpha values for the three scales are 0.91, 0.84, and 0.90 for Depression, Anxiety, and Stress respectively, indicating sound reliability. Furthermore, the Depression and Anxiety scales

correlate .74 and .81 with the Beck Depression Inventory and the Beck Anxiety Inventory respectively.

Aus-AUDIT. The Aus-AUDIT (Conigrave & Elvy, 1998) is an Australian version of the AUDIT, which was originally developed with the assistance of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in a collaborative project among six countries: Australia, Bulgaria, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, and the USA (Saunders, Aasland, Babor, de la Fuente, & Grant, 1993). The AUDIT is a short 10-item questionnaire that specifically assesses alcohol consumption, drinking behaviour, adverse reactions, and alcohol-related problems. Essentially, it is designed to detect early drinking problems, in addition to hazardous or harmful consumption. Responses differ according to the type of question asked but all responses are scored on a 4-point severity scale ranging from 0 to 4, with maximum possible score of 40.

The instrument was constructed from data regarding the demographics, life and health history of 1888 respondents over all six countries. Validity of the AUDIT was demonstrated through its ability to discriminate those with hazardous drinking from those who were not (Saunders et al., 1993). Calculations for sensitivity and specificity of the AUDIT ranged from 80% to 100% (Saunders et al., 1993).

Recently, the AUDIT was slightly modified (Aus-AUDIT) to comply with Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (NH & MRC) standard drinking recommendations (Conigrave & Elvy, 1998). This ensured even more sensitivity and specificity under Australian guidelines

to detect risk of problem drinking. Validity for the Australian version is pending, although no major difficulties are expected due to the minor changes to the original AUDIT and also because the first version used cross-national data of which Australia was involved in (S. Wutzke, Drug and Alcohol Services, NSW, personal communication, 15 August, 1999).

Values of Work Scale (VWS). The VWS (Kazanas et al., 1975) was developed to assess work value orientation. The VWS was used in the present study to determine whether intrinsic or extrinsic orientations to work were related to performing volunteer work. The VWS is a 42-item questionnaire, with a forced-choice format, one statement corresponding to an intrinsic value towards work and the other with an extrinsic orientation of value of work. Factor analysis of the instrument revealed seven intrinsic and seven extrinsic factors. The intrinsic factors relate to satisfaction; independence; self-discipline; altruism; self-realisation; interesting work; and self-actualisation. The extrinsic factors are labelled as economic; working conditions; prestige; interpersonal relations; social status; recognition; and security.

The VWS has sound reliability; the split half reliability coefficient was found to be .80 on a group of 1, 834 students. Although Kazanas et al. (1975) published the full scale, no mention was made of which statement in each pair was intrinsic or extrinsic, or to how the scale was scored. Attempts to contact the authors to gain this information were unsuccessful. Therefore, an inter-rater reliability procedure was used to establish classification using the responses of two Masters students in

psychology. Any initial disagreements between the two raters were resolved after discussion and agreement reached on every pair of statements within the scale.

Kazanas (1978) states the scale is scored by summing responses to the intrinsic factors, hence the final score reflects the orientation towards intrinsic work values. The possible scores range from 0 to 42.

Stress Related Growth Scale (SRGS). The SRGS (Park et al., 1996) was developed in an attempt to quantify self-reported positive outcomes from negative life experiences. Such positive outcomes include reported changes in personal resources, social resources, and coping skills. The SRGS was not developed to assess positive outcomes experienced specifically from unemployment. Rather, it is an instrument that could be used in application to various negative life events varying in severity such as “academic performance problems” to “death of a significant other.” The SRGS is a 50-item self-report instrument with responses ranging from 0 (“Not at all”) to 2 (“A great deal”) to statements such as “I don’t take things for granted any more”, “I learned to find more meaning in life”, “I learned to be open to new information and ideas” and “I became more accepting of others.”

The SRGS demonstrated acceptable test-retest reliability ($r = .81$) over a 2-week period, and sound internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha = .94, Park et al., 1996). Validity was established by correlating respondents’ scores to scores obtained from close friends and families ($r = .31$) in relation to the negative life event.

Scores of the SRGS can range from 0 to 100. Although no norms exist, the scale has been used in college samples as well as a community adult sample, and the total score usually averages approximately 50 (mean rating of about 1 = "Somewhat") (L. Cohen, University of Delaware, personal communication, 20 April 1999). For this particular study, the unemployed men were asked to answer the items in respect to their experience of unemployment, whereas the employed men were asked to answer in relation to the most stressful work-related event experienced within the last 12 months.

Procedure

Several advertisements of the study were placed in state and community newspapers, as well as local radio stations asking for participants who fitted the criteria of any of the four groups of men to contact the researcher if they were interested in participating. Circulation notices through the internal e-mail systems regarding details of the study in recruiting employed men were also placed in large business organisations after seeking permission from relevant persons.

In order to recruit unemployed persons, assistance was sought from officers in local employment agencies who were willing to distribute the questionnaires to appropriate individuals. Assistance was also sought from Volunteering WA, which has over 300 affiliated volunteer organisations. Details of the study were sent out to each of these organisations. Additionally, the researcher served as a volunteer member of Volunteering WA, and contacted by telephone a list of persons fitting

the criteria and informed them of the research. Specific help was also obtained from other volunteering agencies not affiliated with Volunteering WA such as the Fire and Emergency Services of WA, who circulated the details of the study to offices throughout the state.

Whenever information regarding the study was delivered, contact details were provided for interested participants to contact the researcher to leave a name, postal address and employment status to ensure the appropriate booklet was sent. One hundred and thirty booklets were distributed in this way, while the remainder was given to officers in unemployment agencies to distribute. As each participant indicated his interest to the researcher in participating in the study, contact details were noted down so that reminder letters could later be sent out.

Included with every questionnaire booklet was a reply-paid envelope for participants to return their completed and anonymous questionnaires. Also, every participant who completed and returned his questionnaire was eligible to go into a draw to receive a gift voucher. An entry slip was attached to each booklet, which if participants chose to enter, they were to write only their contact phone number, email, or postal address. Participants were also asked to return their blank booklets if they choose not to participate in the study.

Participants were told not to write any identifying information on the booklet to ensure anonymity and to return their booklets within seven days to enable progress and efficiency of the study. Approximately 10 days after a booklet was sent out, a reminder letter (see Appendix G) was sent

requesting participants to return their booklets if they had not already done so.

As token reward for participating in the study, a “Coping with Stress” booklet (Health Department of Western Australia, 1999) was sent to all men who were employed. A list of services that could be of help to the unemployed (see Appendix H) was sent to them. These services included financial counselling services, relationship counselling, as well as contact numbers for alternatives to finding employment such as returning to education or setting up their own businesses. The “Coping with Stress” booklet and the list of helpful services were sent in the same envelope as the reminder letter. After this initial reminder letter, the researcher made no further contact, except to the individual who was randomly drawn as the winner of the draw.

Chapter Six

Results

Results for all 118 participants were analysed using SPSS for Windows, and all statistical analyses were performed with the alpha level set at 0.05.

Sample Characteristics

Men varied in age from 38 to 60 years of age, with a mean of 48.85 years (SD = 4.67 years). No significant differences in age were found between the two groups of employed (M = 48.24 yrs, SD = 4.10 years) and unemployed men (M = 49.65 yrs, SD = 5.27 yrs), $t(116) = -1.63$, $p > .05$. Years of education varied from 3 to 22 years, with a mean of 12.73 years (SD = 3.55 years). Similarly, differences in the years of education between employed (M = 12.93 yrs, SD = 3.57 yrs) and unemployed men (M = 12.46 yrs, SD = 3.54 yrs) were not significant, $t(116) = .71$, $p > .05$. Ninety-one men (77.1%) were married, 11 (9.3%) were single, 11 were divorced (9.3%), four (3.4%) were separated, and one (0.8%) was widowed.

Table 1 shows the present family income for both employed and unemployed men. As can be seen, a large proportion of men (31.36%) are receiving income (e.g., from wife's income or benefits) in the '\$8320 and under \$16 640' category. This is the most frequent income category for the men who were unemployed. On average, unemployed men were currently living on only 55% of their previous full-time income.

Table 1

Current Family Income Levels Received by Employed and UnemployedMen

Income per annum (\$)	No. of employed (%)	No. of unemployed (%)
8 320 – 16 639	1 (1.49%)	36 (70.59%)
16 640 – 24 959	-	8 (15.69%)
24 960 – 33 279	6 (8.96%)	4 (7.84%)
33 280 – 41 599	5 (7.46%)	2 (3.92%)
41 600 – 49 919	6 (8.96%)	1 (1.96%)
49 920 – 58 239	10 (14.93%)	-
58 240 – 66 559	10 (14.93%)	-
66 560 – 74 879	6 (8.96%)	-
74 880 – 83 199	9 (13.43%)	-
83 200 – 91 519	4 (5.97%)	-
91 520 – 99 839	5 (7.46%)	-
99 840 – 108 159	3 (4.48%)	-
108 160 and over	2 (2.99%)	-
n	67	51

Seventy-seven (65.25%) men considered their race/ethnicity as 'Australian', 22 (18.64%) were of British origin, and the remaining 19 (16.1%) were categorised as 'Other.' The duration of unemployment varied from a minimum of 6 to 120 months, with a median of 19 months. Twenty-five (49.00%) of the unemployed men were made redundant, whereas the remaining 26 (51.00%) men were not. Employed men had

been employed in their full-time occupation between 6 and 396 months (median = 96 months).

All participants who performed volunteer work were asked in which volunteer sector/s they participated. A total of 52 participants from each employment status were volunteer workers, and it was possible that participants reported volunteering in more than one sector. Figure 1 indicates the percentage of participants involved in the different sectors they volunteered in.

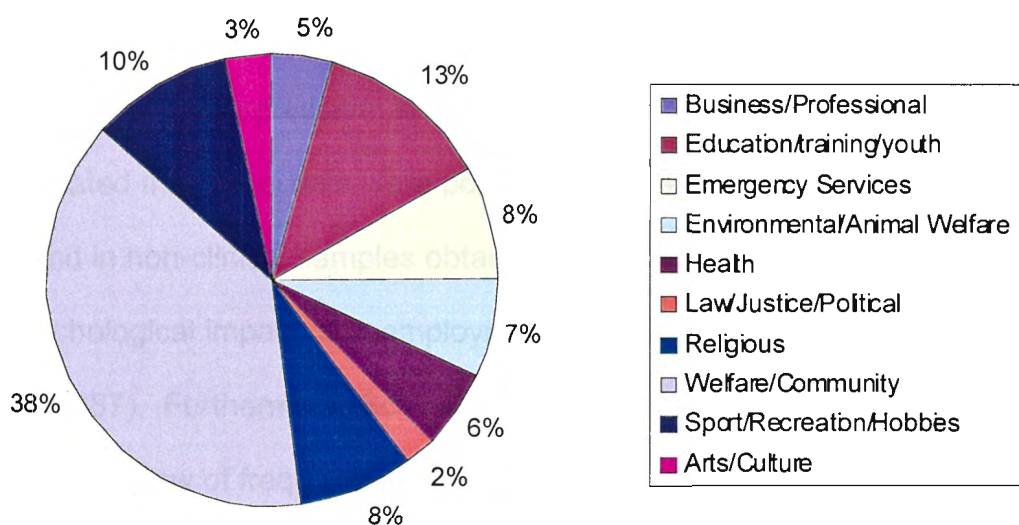


Figure 1. Percentage of volunteers in the different volunteering sectors.

The amount of time spent volunteering for employed men ranged from 20 minutes to 24 hours per week ($M = 5.39$ hours, $SD = 4.48$ hours), whereas for unemployed men it varied between 3 to 40 hours ($M = 16.48$ hours; $SD = 9.79$ hours). This difference between the two groups in hours spent volunteering is to be expected, given that employed men are presumed to spend approximately 40 hour weeks in full-time paid employment, whereas the unemployed do not.

Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Alcohol Consumption, and Stress-Related Growth

All scores were inspected to eliminate any outliers defined as scores 3 standard deviations or more from the mean. Tests of normality for each of the depression, anxiety, and alcohol use dependent variables indicated that these data were positively skewed. This has also been found in non-clinical samples obtained by other studies investigating the psychological impact of unemployment (e.g., Hepworth, 1980; Kessler et al., 1987). Furthermore, Scales of the DASS have incorporated the positive skew of frequency distributions of the normative data such that a z score of 0 corresponds to a percentile of approximately 60 (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995).

Nevertheless, these particular variables were transformed using log linear transformation with a constant factor of 1 added to all scores prior to transformation in order to eliminate scores of 0. Then, a 2 (employment status: employed versus unemployed) x 2 (volunteer status: volunteers versus non-volunteers) between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA)

was conducted for all five dependent variables. Results from ANOVAs using transformed scores did not differ in significance status from ANOVAs using untransformed scores of depression, anxiety, and alcohol measures. Hence, all further reported analyses are of untransformed scores.

Correlations between all five dependent measures were also performed to determine the extent to which these measures were highly related to each other (see Table 2). As can be seen from Table 2, the significant intercorrelations between the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scales are especially high. This is to be expected since they were also originally reported to be moderately high by the authors of the DASS (Depression-Anxiety: $r = .54$, Depression-Stress: $r = .56$, and Anxiety-Stress: $r = .65$, Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). Although these high intercorrelations between the three variables could be argued as indicating

Table 2

Total Correlation Matrix for Dependent Measures of Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Aus-AUDIT, and the SRGS

	Depression	Anxiety	Stress	Aus-AUDIT	SRGS
Depression	-				
Anxiety	.69**	-			
Stress	.76**	.68**	-		
Aus-AUDIT	.20*	.41**	.29**	-	
SRGS	-.01	.06	.10	-.01	-

Note. * Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)

**Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

different measures of the same factors, the initial construction of the DASS ensured that principal components analysis was used to derive separate factors within the DASS (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). Additionally, during item construction of the DASS, no one item was retained if it loaded more than 0.25 on the other scales of the DASS. Both of these methods served to reduce the overlapping measures of the same construct. Therefore, despite moderately high intercorrelations between scores on these three scales, the authors of the DASS maintain that they are more likely to reflect aetiological similarities between the constructs of depression, anxiety, and stress (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). At least in the literature (Nutt, 1999), depression and anxiety have been known to be comorbid, although the arguments as to why remain unresolved.

Nevertheless, despite the real possibility of these three variables being highly intercorrelated because of an underlying similarity among the independent constructs, rather than different measures of the same constructs, analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) were chosen as a more robust analysis than ANOVAs. Likewise, ANCOVAs were also performed with scores obtained on the Aus-AUDIT, as they were also significantly correlated with the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scales, though to a lesser extent. However, an ANOVA was conducted for the dependent variable of scores of SRGS since they were not significantly correlated with any other dependent variables.

With anxiety, stress and Aus-AUDIT scores held constant, a significant main effect of employment status was found for the measure of depression, $F(3, 114) = 6.10, p < .05, \eta^2 = .69$, indicating that unemployed

men ($M = 13.25$, $SD = 12.37$) reported higher levels of depression than men who were employed ($M = 5.48$, $SD = 7.43$, see Figure 2). Severity ratings of depression as indicated by the Depression Scale for unemployed and employed men were in the moderate and normal level of depression respectively, of which 13 (25.49%) unemployed men reported depression levels of 2 or more z scores (clinical range), as opposed to only 4 (5.97%) employed men scoring in this range. Additionally, a significant main effect of volunteer status, $F(3, 114) = 9.06$, $p < .01$, $\alpha = .85$, revealed that men who did volunteer work ($M = 6.17$, $SD = 8.79$)

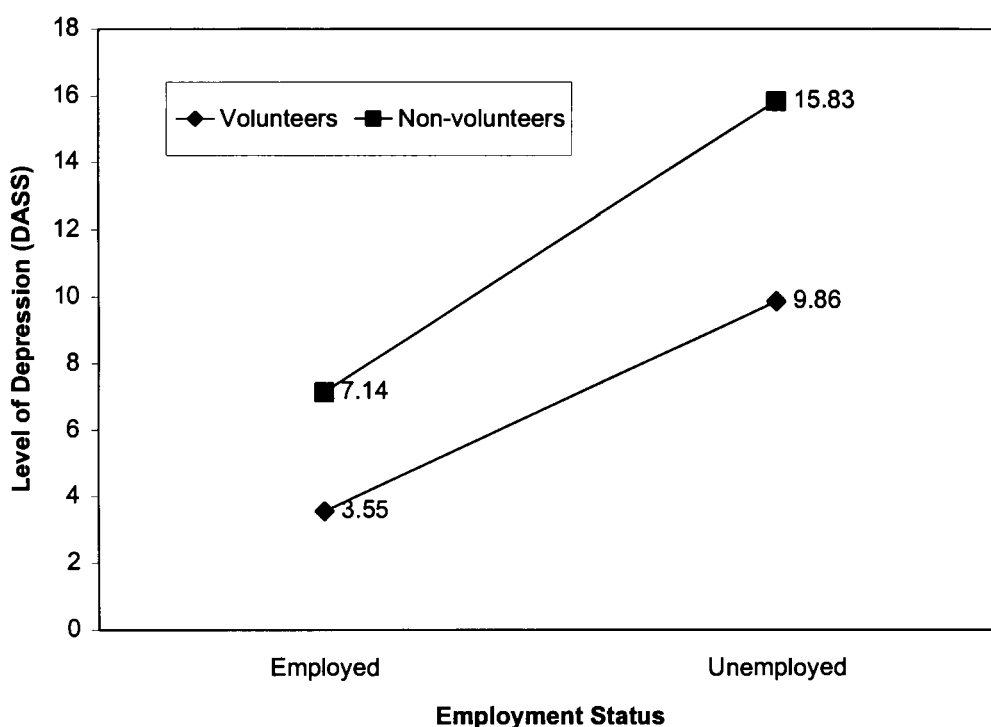


Figure 2. DASS Depression Scale scores reported by employed and unemployed volunteering and non-volunteering men.

reported lower levels of depression than men who did not ($M = 11.02$, $SD = 11.42$), regardless of employment status. These means for the volunteering and non-volunteering group indicated that depression levels were in the normal and mild range respectively, although 5 (9.43%) volunteering men scored in the clinical range, in comparison to 15 (23.08%) of the non-volunteering men. No significant interaction effects were found, $F(3, 114) = .37$, $p > .05$.

However, with the depression, stress, and Aus-AUDIT scores entered as covariates, ANCOVAs for anxiety showed no significant effects. No main effect of employment was found, $F(3, 111) = .86$, $p > .05$, between unemployed ($M = 5.10$, $SD = 6.78$) and employed men ($M = 2.15$, $SD = 3.70$). Likewise, no significant main effect of volunteer status, $F(3, 111) = .00$, $p > .05$, was found between those who volunteered ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 3.93$) and those who did not ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 5.51$). Lastly, no interaction effect between employment and volunteer status, $F(3, 111) = .00$, $p > .05$ was found.

With the appropriate dependent variables statistically controlled, scores on the Stress Scale reported by unemployed men ($M = 13.25$, $SD = 9.79$) were not statistically different to those of employed men ($M = 8.40$, $SD = 6.48$), $F(3, 114) = .00$, $p > .05$. However, a main effect of volunteer status was found to be statistically significant, $F(3, 114) = 7.27$, $p < .01$, $\alpha = .76$, such that those who performed volunteer work ($M = 10.00$, $SD = 8.10$) scored lower than those who did not do volunteer work ($M = 10.91$, $SD = 9.03$) on a measure of stress (see Figure 3). The interaction effect

between employment and volunteer status, $F(3, 114) = .12, p > .05$, were found to be not significant.

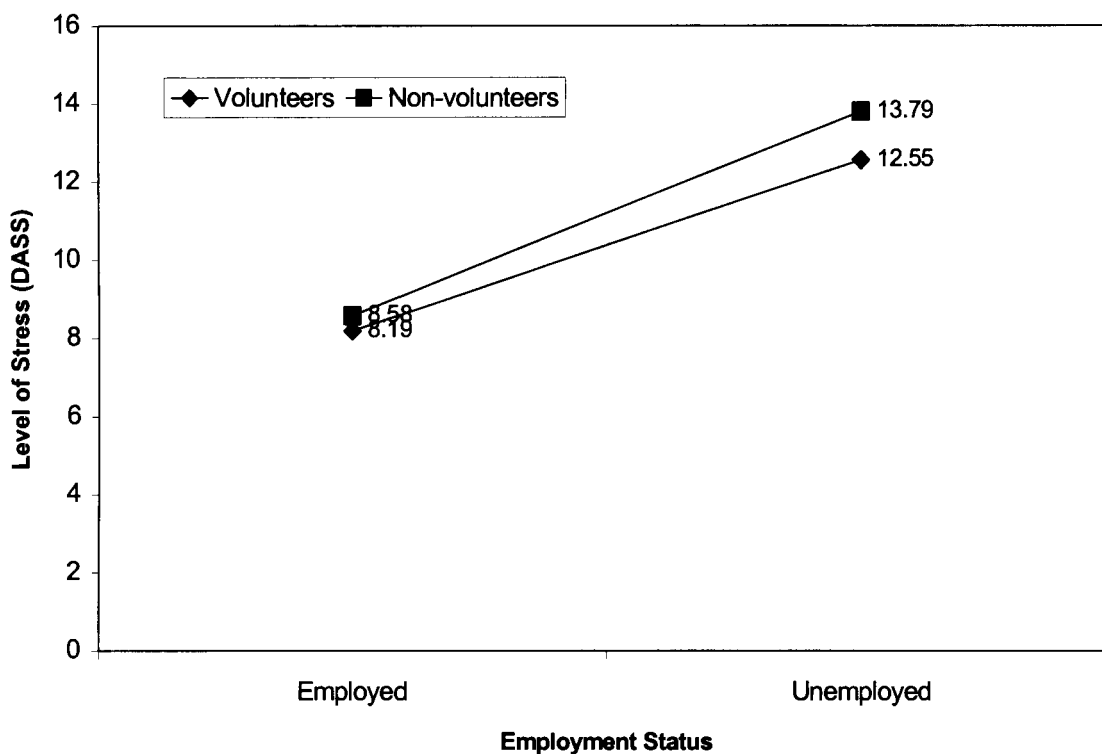


Figure 3. DASS Stress Scale scores reported by employed and unemployed volunteering and non-volunteering men.

Entering the variables of depression, anxiety, and stress as covariates, participants' responses on the Aus-AUDIT revealed no main effect of employment status, $F(3, 114) = 1.03, p > .05$, volunteer status, $F(3, 114) = 2.77, p > .05$, or interaction effect, $F(3, 114) = .17, p > .05$ found to be statistically significant on levels of alcohol consumption. Unemployed men's responses ($M = 5.36, SD = 6.25$) on the Aus-AUDIT

did not differ significantly from those reported by employed men ($M = 6.46$, $SD = 4.61$). Similarly, scores on the Aus-AUDIT reported by volunteering men ($M = 5.16$, $SD = 5.39$) were not significantly different from scores reported by non-volunteering men ($M = 6.69$, $SD = 5.38$).

On the measure of stress-related growth, ANOVA scores on the SRGS indicated a significant main effect of employment status, $F(1, 114) = 3.88$, $p < .05$, $\alpha = .50$, as unemployed men ($M = 50.61$, $SD = 25.03$) scored higher than employed men ($M = 42.18$, $SD = 18.94$), with higher scores indicating more positive outcomes experienced as a result of negative life events (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. Stress-Related Growth Scale scores reported by employed and unemployed volunteering and non-volunteering men.

However, no main effect of volunteering status, $F(1, 114) = .00, p > .05$, and interaction effect between employment and volunteer status were found, $F(1, 114) = .73, p > .05$ for the measure of SRGS.

The Role of Financial Worries

The extent of financial worries was compared between employed and unemployed men. Significant differences were found between these two groups in regard to reported financial worries. Unemployed men ($M = 1.80, SD = 1.43$) were found to experience significantly more financial worries than employed men ($M = .69, SD = .91$), $t(1, 116) = -5.18, p < .001$, on a question of frequency of financial worries. Two by two factorial ANCOVAs with scores of depression, anxiety, stress, or Aus-AUDIT and financial worries were entered as covariates to determine the extent of influence financial worries, if any, had on the dependent variables. (An ANCOVA for alcohol abuse and anxiety as dependent variables were not conducted because preliminary analyses on these variables indicated no statistical significance for main or interaction effects).

The only significant main effects of employment and volunteer status found from these ANCOVAs were for the measures of depression and stress. Although not statistically significant, there was still a tendency for unemployed men to report higher scores on the Depression Scale than employed men, $F(3, 114) = 3.28, p = .07, \alpha = .44$. More importantly, volunteer workers still reported lower levels of depression than men who do not do volunteer work, $F(3, 114) = 9.76, p < .01, \alpha = .87$. Lastly, stress levels reported by volunteer workers remained significantly lower than

those reported by non-volunteering men, as indicated by a statistically significant main effect of volunteer work, $F(3, 114) = 6.84, p = .01, \alpha = .74$.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Orientation to Work

A t-test was performed between the two groups of volunteering and non-volunteering men, regardless of employment status, to determine whether orientation to work differed between volunteers and non-volunteers. A significant difference was found, $t(1, 116) = 2.97, p < .01$, in that volunteers ($M = 32.06, SD = 5.18$) scored higher than non-volunteers ($M = 29.15, SD = 5.37$) on the VWS, indicating a more intrinsic rather than extrinsic orientation.

Reasons for and Benefits of Volunteering

Ratings for each of the reasons for and benefits of volunteering were obtained for all men who did volunteer work, irrespective of employment status. Tables 3 and 4 indicate the mean ratings and standard deviations for each statement. As can be seen from Table 3, to “assist people/community” ($M = 1.58, SD = .94$) and to “do something worthwhile” ($M = 1.77, SD = 1.20$) were given the highest ratings as reasons for volunteering. For perceived benefits of volunteering, “increasing self-esteem/confidence” ($M = 2.73, SD = 1.42$), “being more active” ($M = 2.71, SD = 1.16$), and “increase in positive mood” ($M = 2.73, SD = 1.43$), were given the highest ratings (see Table 4). For both important motivating reasons for and perceived benefits of volunteer work,

“lead to a new job” ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 1.23$) and “increase in job opportunities” ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 1.14$), respectively, were both rated lowest by volunteering participants.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Ratings for Important Reasons for Volunteering in Men Who Perform Volunteer Work

Important reasons for volunteering	Mean ratings	SD
Assist people/community	1.58	0.94
Do something worthwhile	1.77	1.20
Good use of time/purposeful	2.63	1.47
Meet new people/social contact	2.98	1.32
Develop new skills	3.40	1.49
A new interest	3.42	1.36
Lead to a new job	4.35	1.23

Note. Scales used for all items were: 1 = Very important; 2 = Quite important; 3 = Important; 4 = A little important; and 5 = Not at all important.

Although Tables 3 and 4 shows the mean ratings for important reasons for and benefits of volunteer work across all volunteering participants, significant differences were found in these ratings between unemployed and employed volunteering men. Table 5 summarises significant differences found between employed and unemployed volunteering men in relation to the importance of their reasons for

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations of Ratings for Perceived Benefits of Volunteer Work in Volunteering Men

Perceived benefits of volunteering	Mean ratings	SD
Being more active	2.71	1.16
Increasing self-esteem/confidence	2.73	1.42
Increase in positive mood	2.73	1.43
Sense of identity	3.02	1.40
Met new social contacts	3.17	1.31
Learnt new skills	3.27	1.33
Sense of status	3.42	1.42
Increase in job opportunities	4.29	1.14

Note. Scales used for all items were: 1 = Very beneficial; 2 = Quite beneficial; 3 = Beneficial; 4 = A little beneficial; and 5 = Not at all beneficial.

performing volunteer work. Specifically, unemployed men gave significantly higher importance ratings than employed men to the following reasons: a) "a new interest"; b) "good use of time/purposeful"; c) "meet new people/social contact"; and d) "lead to a new job".

Table 5

Significant Differences in Mean Importance Ratings of Reasons for
Volunteering Between Employed and Unemployed Volunteering Men

Reasons	Employed	Unemployed	t	p
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)		
A new interest	3.90 (1.00)	2.77 (1.54)	3.20	< .01
Good use of time/purposeful	3.13 (1.43)	1.95 (1.25)	3.09	< .01
Meet new people/ social contact	3.37 (1.16)	2.45 (1.37)	2.60	< .05
Lead to a new job	4.70 (0.92)	3.86 (1.46)	2.54	< .05
Assist people/ community	1.47 (0.68)	1.73 (1.20)	-0.99	ns.
Do something worthwhile	1.93 (1.26)	1.54 (1.10)	1.16	ns.
Develop new skills	3.63 (1.38)	3.09 (1.60)	1.31	ns.

Note. For all analyses, *df* = 50. ns = not significant.

Table 6 summarises the significant differences found between employed and unemployed volunteering men in their ratings of perceived benefits of volunteer work. Unemployed men gave higher beneficial ratings than employed men for the following perceived benefits: a) "being more active"; b) "sense of identity"; c) "increase in job opportunities"; and d) "sense of status."

Table 6

Differences in Mean Ratings of the Perceived Benefits of Volunteer Work
Between Employed and Unemployed Volunteering Men

Benefits	Employed	Unemployed	t	p
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)		
Being more active	3.17 (0.99)	2.09 (1.11)	3.69	< .001
Sense of status	3.83 (1.09)	2.86 (1.64)	2.56	< .05
Sense of identity	3.37 (1.22)	2.55 (1.50)	2.18	< .05
Increase in job opportunities	4.57 (0.86)	3.91 (1.38)	2.12	< .05
Increase in positive mood	2.90 (1.32)	2.50 (1.57)	1.00	ns.
Learnt new skills	3.37 (1.16)	3.14 (1.55)	0.61	ns.
Met new social contacts	3.30 (1.09)	3.00 (1.57)	0.81	ns.
Increasing self- esteem/confidence	2.87 (1.33)	2.54 (1.53)	0.80	ns.

Note. For all analyses, $df = 50$. ns = not significant.

A two-way ANCOVA conducted on the measure of depression previously indicated a significant main effect of volunteer status on depression scores in that volunteering men reported lower scores compared to men who did not perform volunteer work. Rietschlin's (1998) study found that increasing benefits were associated with increasing number of volunteer memberships. To explore a similar relationship in the present study, the number of hours spent in volunteer work was correlated

with depression and stress scores. The correlation was not significant for the former, $r = .13$, $p > .05$, or the latter, $r = .08$, $p > .05$.

Chapter Seven

Discussion

Summary of Results

Unemployed men were predicted to have significantly higher levels of depression, anxiety, stress and alcohol consumption as measured by the relevant scales on the DASS and the Aus-AUDIT compared to men who are in full-time employment (Hypotheses 1a, b, c, and d). However, unemployed men were found only to report significantly higher scores on measures of depression. Unemployed men showed no increase in risk of alcohol abuse and consumption as measured by the Aus-AUDIT relative to employed men (Hypothesis 1d).

Hypothesis 2, that unemployed men in comparison to employed men would report higher scores on a measure of thriving, is also supported as unemployed men were found to have higher scores on the SRGS than employed men, indicating increased positive outcomes from the negative experience of being unemployed. Although these findings are statistically significant, entering financial worries as a covariate into ANCOVAs shows that these results are no longer significant with the following exceptions. Approaching statistical significance, unemployed men still had a tendency to report higher levels of depression relative to employed men, and men who did volunteer work experienced lower levels of depression than non-volunteering men. Finally, men who performed volunteer work remained significantly less stressed than non-volunteering

men, regardless of employment status and after accounting for the effects of financial worries.

It was also predicted that unemployed men who perform volunteer work would report significantly lower levels of depression, anxiety, stress, and alcohol consumption than non-volunteering unemployed men (Hypotheses 3a, b, c, and d). This hypothesis was partially supported as volunteering men scored lower on the Depression Scale than did non-volunteering men, regardless of their employment status. Volunteer status did not seem to have any effects on measures of anxiety, alcohol consumption or stress-related growth in employed or unemployed men. Also, no support was found for Hypothesis 4, as no interactions between employment and volunteer status were found for any of the dependent variables. Lastly, support was found for Hypothesis 5 (volunteers are more likely to be intrinsically orientated than non-volunteers), in that volunteers did have a more intrinsic orientation to work than non-volunteers.

Mental Health of Unemployed Middle-Aged Men

In this Australian study, the results obtained generally indicated poorer mental health in long-term unemployed middle-aged men compared to employed men of a similar age and education. This is mainly reflected in depression levels between the two groups. These results are similar to international studies conducted by Kessler et al. (1987) and Melville et al. (1985) who have used comparison groups of employed and unemployed persons to investigate the psychological effects of

unemployment, but significant effects for measures of anxiety and stress were not supported. Although no significant effects of employment status were found for the dependent measures of anxiety and stress, this does not necessarily indicate that unemployed men do not experience such negative affect. Rather, the results of ANCOVAs in this study assumes that any specific anxiety or stress experienced by this particular group of men might be notably associated with high levels of reported depression. Thus, any substantial effects of anxiety and stress will not appear in the analyses when depression as a factor is controlled.

Furthermore, this study has been able to highlight specific effects associated with poor mental health, in particular depression, by using specific instruments such as the DASS, rather than less specific measures of psychological distress such as the GHQ, which is frequently used in other unemployment studies (Hepworth, 1980; Jackson & Warr, 1984; Payne et al., 1984). However, because no other unemployment studies have used the DASS, no direct comparison can be made in terms of severity experienced in this sample.

As this study was not designed to test the validity of specific theories accounting for the psychological impact of unemployment, the explanations for higher levels of depression experienced by long-term unemployed middle-aged men compared to employed men can only be speculative. For example, as Jahoda (1981, 1982) suggested, having lack of activity, goals and purposes, status and identity, social contact besides outside family members, and a time structure that would otherwise be enforced on the individual through employment, might all play a role in the

negative effects of unemployment. Similarly, Warr's (1987) vitamin model can equally apply in explaining these results. His factors 6, 9, and 5 (lack of money, social position, and environmental clarity or uncertain future) can contribute to undesirable effects such as depression. Therefore, both the deprivation theory and the vitamin model can equally account for this first set of results.

Similarly to previous studies by Heather et al. (1987) and Winton et al. (1986), the results of this study indicated no presence of increased risk of alcohol abuse when men found themselves unemployed. Warr and Payne (1983) found that their sample of men had significantly reduced their alcohol consumption since becoming unemployed. Although the design of the current study did not permit thorough investigation of such a reduction, the results of this study indicate that unemployed men did not have significantly lower scores on the Aus-AUDIT than did employed men. It is likely that only a minority of unemployed men develop drinking difficulties, and probably those with pre-existing problems are most vulnerable (Claussen & Aasland, 1993). This study was unable to investigate this assumption further, but the general indication here is that unemployed men are not more vulnerable to alcohol abuse during unemployment, despite the use of a highly sensitive measure. The fact that this sample of unemployed men is currently living on only 55% of their previous income might serve to curb an increase in alcohol consumption (Warr, 1984c).

This finding concerning alcohol in a sample of Australian men is important in dispelling popular beliefs of unemployed men abusing alcohol

due to an inability to cope with unemployment. It is possible, given the yet to be established validity of the Aus-AUDIT, that the instrument is not measuring adequately what it is purported to measure. However, given the slight modification from the original AUDIT in which Australian samples were used in the development, this is unlikely to be a factor in accounting for null findings (Conigrave & Elvy, 1998). Nevertheless, replications of these preliminary results are needed to ensure generalisability.

Positive Self-Growth From Unemployment

It must also be acknowledged that unemployment is not experienced homogeneously by all unemployed men, at least within this particular sample of long-term unemployed middle-aged men. Wide ranges in the scores on all five dependent variables were obtained, and some men would probably suffer more than others when unemployed. This is reflected in the skewed distributions of scores. Although the general pattern from the findings indicate the detrimental effects of unemployment through scores obtained on the Depression Scale, unemployed men do experience some positive outcomes from their negative life event of unemployment. This was indicated by the higher scores obtained on the SRGS by unemployed men relative to employed men. That is, unemployed men have experienced changes in life philosophy, coping skills, and spirituality as a result of being unemployed, leading to positive personal development. The possibility of such positive outcomes has not been documented in previous research on

unemployment, since most research has assumed that effects are comprehensively negative.

On the other hand, employed men in reference to the most stressful work-related experience were found to have significantly lower scores on the SRGS. These interesting findings lend support to Fryer and Payne's (1984) agency theory, in that people can be active copers of negative life experiences such as unemployment. This finding further adds to the agency theory in that thriving as a result of unemployment may no longer be restricted to atypical examples such as those from Fryer and Payne's (1984) original study. Whether this new knowledge about life in general as a result of thriving served to actually 'buffer' or protect further deterioration in mental health of unemployed persons can not be determined within this study.

It must be borne in mind that there is a possibility of self-selection biases when investigating thriving or stress-related growth in this instance. That is, the sample of unemployed men who volunteered for participation in the study could be a particularly proactive group of people who might not necessarily be a representative sample of long-term unemployed middle-aged men. This assumption could be especially relevant if this group of unemployed men were proactive in their belief in the necessity of studies investigating this topic, and hence would be more likely to participate in a study such as this one.

Likewise, this particular group of proactive and independent persons could have been as equally proactive when in employment, and not necessarily have 'thrived' as a result of unemployment. The

implications therefore might result in inflated scores on the SRGS not typical of the rest of the unemployed population. In addition, significant differences on the SRGS between unemployed and employed men were no longer found after controlling for effects of financial worries. Therefore, the possibility that thriving is related to experiences of restricted financial income, and not necessarily the experience of unemployment as a whole, must be noted.

Financial Worries and Mental Health in Unemployment

Results from previous studies (Jackson & Warr, 1984; Rowley & Feather, 1987), Warr's (1987) vitamin model, and Jahoda's (1981, 1982) deprivation theory draw attention to the role that limited financial resources have in amplifying psychological ill-health during unemployment, particular for middle-aged persons. The impact of financial resources has been quite neglected in the psychological literature of unemployment, and it is currently undergoing renewed interest in the study of unemployment and economic deprivation (Feather, 1997; Turner, 1995).

As discussed previously, middle-aged men were presumed to have more financial obligations than do persons in relatively younger or older age groups (Estes & Wilensky, 1977; Warr, 1987). In this particular sample of participants, unemployed men were currently living only on 55% of their previous pay, which is within the usually cited range of 45 – 60% of their employed income (Warr, 1987). As a measure of financial worries was found to be significantly different between employed and unemployed men, it was necessary to determine whether poor mental health in

unemployed men existed independently of perceived lack of financial resources. The fact that the results still revealed a tendency for higher levels of depression reported by unemployed compared to employed men after controlling for effects of financial worries highlights the importance that non-monetary factors play in the negative psychological impact of unemployment.

These factors might include lack of structure, activity, social status and identity, and goals and purposes which influence negative psychological effects such as depression and anxiety (Jahoda, 1981, 1982). As to which one of these factors is more influential is yet to be determined. Therefore, there seems to be some validity in Jahoda's (1981, 1982) deprivation hypothesis, in that in times of unemployment, not only are financial incomes limited, but there seems to be other psychological variables which compound the negative experience of unemployment. Likewise, Warr's (1987) vitamin model can also shed light on these findings. It is possible that despite lack of monetary benefits, other environmental features not mentioned by Jahoda (1981) such as variety, lack of skills use, and environmental clarity can contribute to a tendency for increased levels of depression in unemployed men.

Volunteer Work as a Moderating Variable

Unemployed men who perform volunteer work were hypothesised to have better mental health than unemployed non-volunteering men. This current study identified volunteer work as beneficial in lowering depression and stress levels for both employed and unemployed men. It was not

expected that doing volunteer work would be beneficial regardless of employment status. It was also hypothesised that the difference in scores on mental health measures between employed and unemployed volunteering men would be significantly smaller than scores obtained by employed and unemployed non-volunteering men. This prediction was based on the premise that performing volunteer work would 'buffer' the detrimental effects of unemployment when men find themselves out of work. However, this predicted pattern of results was not found, as there was no interaction effects between employment and volunteering status for any of the dependent variables.

Lending support to Rietschlin's (1998) findings, this study found that volunteer work was valuable in being associated with lower scores on a measure of depression as well as stress. Moreover, these significant benefits remained after accounting for effects of financial worries, indicating a unique contribution volunteer work has in decreasing negative mood and stress. These findings suggest the importance of volunteer work as a moderating variable of the psychological impact of unemployment, although it does not suggest specific benefits exclusive to unemployed persons. Importantly, the results also found no relationship between number of hours performed in volunteer work and levels of depression or stress, suggesting benefits to the person without investing vast amounts of time to volunteer work.

The mechanisms of volunteer work in lowering depressive and stress symptoms in both employed and unemployed men are not identified in the results collected. It is reasonable to assume that the mechanisms of

volunteer work might work similarly to mechanisms associated with leisure, or meaningful activity. These types of purposeful activities structure time throughout the day, which encourage direction in goals and plans, and enforce routine (Feather & Bond, 1983; Haworth, 1986). These benefits might be of particular assistance in the absence of employment which is proposed to enforce structured time, activity and planning of goals (Jahoda, 1981). However, given that Jahoda (1981) insists that employment enforce these latent consequences, it is uncertain why benefits are experienced for volunteering employed men as well. It is possible that volunteer work might have differing mechanisms in its ability to reduce depression and stress levels for employed and unemployed men.

Nevertheless, although suggestive, these findings need future replication to disprove Jahoda's (1981) assumption that having a job is central in maintaining positive mental health. From the results obtained in this study, it is likely that volunteer work has benefits for both employed and unemployed men, and that it is probably offering more than what employment (and unemployment) provides for individuals.

Warr (1987) advocated that his vitamin model was not only applicable to situations of employment and unemployment, but also to other forms of work such as volunteer work. Perhaps volunteer work has certain environmental features mentioned by Warr (1987) that are appealing for both employed and unemployed men. This could be further investigated to identify how performing volunteer work leads to reductions in reported levels of depression for these groups of men.

The Psychological Benefits of Volunteer Work

Exactly what volunteer work offers to both employed and unemployed men, and how, is not yet clear. However, a perusal of the factors that all volunteering men found beneficial might throw some light onto this matter. The three factors rated the most beneficial were “increasing self-esteem/confidence”, “being more active” and “increase in positive mood.” It is surprising that even employed men found volunteer work was beneficial in keeping one active since according to Jahoda’s (1981, 1982) deprivation theory, being kept active is enforced already from being employed. It is also interesting to discover that volunteer work was reported to be beneficial in terms of increasing self-esteem and confidence, which is closely related to depressive mood (Beck, 1995). Volunteer work might therefore reduce levels of depression through increasing self-esteem. Exactly how volunteer work serves to increase self-esteem is not clear and not investigated in this study, but deserves further research.

The Motivation Behind Volunteering

Altruistic motives such as to “assist people/community” and to “do something worthwhile” appear to influence both employed and unemployed men in performing volunteer work for the community. Indeed, more than a third (38.6%) of volunteers participated in the welfare/community sector of volunteering.

High scores on the VWS (Kazanas et al., 1975) reflect an intrinsic orientation to work and of which ‘altruism’ is one of the intrinsic factors

measured by the scale. In this study, volunteers were found to have significantly higher scores than non-volunteers on the measure, suggesting that they are more intrinsically rather than extrinsically orientated. However, the direction of causality between volunteer work and intrinsic orientation cannot be determined given the cross-sectional nature of the study. It may be that intrinsically orientated men are more likely to take up volunteer work in the first place, or that volunteer work actually increases intrinsic orientations in men when they undertake volunteer work. The implications of the former assumption would mean that intrinsically orientated persons would be more likely to do volunteer work and any benefits of such work could be restricted to this group of people.

Moreover, the nature of volunteer work and the motivation for undertaking such work has implications for both employed and unemployed volunteer workers. Metzger (1996) has highlighted the possibility of qualitative differences in volunteer work in individuals with intrinsic or extrinsic orientations, as the motivation for performing such work is different. Indeed, a debate exists in the helping literature regarding egoistic versus altruistic motivations for helping (Unger, 1991). Nevertheless, given the generally reported altruistic motives for volunteering in this study, these intrinsic motives might suggest a link with the benefits of volunteer work by increasing positive mood and self-esteem or confidence through perceptions of doing valued and worthwhile work to assist the community.

Volunteer Work and the Unemployed

Although volunteering men rated some reasons as more important than others, and rated particular gains from volunteer work more beneficial than the others, there are substantial differences between employed and unemployed volunteering men in these ratings. Investigating these differences lends some insight to the specific situation unemployed men find themselves in.

Firstly, unemployed men rated higher in importance the following reasons in doing volunteer work: a) "a new interest"; b) "good use of time/purposeful"; c) "meet new people/social contact"; and d) "lead to a new job." These reasons for volunteering suggest that unemployed men were having difficulty in maintaining interest, structuring the day and feeling purposeful, and retaining social contacts, especially in meeting new persons. These three factors lend support to Jahoda's (1981, 1982) deprivation theory (lack of time structure and social contact) and also to Warr's (1987) vitamin model (variety, interpersonal contact and externally generated goals that helps to structure time).

Secondly, unemployed men reported that volunteer work was significantly beneficial in "being more active", having a "sense of identity" and "sense of status", and an "increase in job opportunities" than employed men. Once again, these benefits can be accounted for by Jahoda's deprivation theory (status, identity and activity) and Warr's (1987) vitamin model (valued social position), in that both theories propose the presence of these factors is necessary to ensure positive mental health. However, given that unemployed men can find a "sense of

identity”, “sense of status” and “being more active” through alternative means of employment such as in volunteer work, this contradicts Jahoda’s (1981) claim that only the institution of employment is able to provide these latent consequences. It is correct of Jahoda (1981, 1982) to insist that leisure activities (or any other meaningful work) cannot be functional alternatives to employment, as the results suggest that unemployed men still report higher levels of depression regardless of whether they perform volunteer work or not. However, it must be emphasised that other varieties of work such as volunteer work may significantly reduce depression levels in unemployed men, as well as providing specific benefits such as daily stress reduction. As Warr (1987) suggested, if it is not feasible to provide employment to all unemployed persons, then at least the environment of unemployed persons should be modified from ‘bad’ unemployment to ‘good’ unemployment, such as through taking up unpaid voluntary work.

Limitations of Study and Future Research

Due to the cross-sectional nature of the study, it is difficult to determine the direction of causality in the obtained results. For example, it cannot be established whether it is the loss of employment which causes the detrimental mental health effects, or whether persons who are more depressed are more likely to lose their job in the first place (Warr, 1984a). Similarly, as the results in this study indicate that volunteer work was associated with lower depression and stress levels, it is not possible to ascertain whether doing volunteer work causes the reduction in

depressive and stress symptoms, or whether men who were depressed as well as stressed are less likely to perform volunteer work. Indeed, there is evidence in the literature that persons who are in a positive mood are more likely to perform prosocial or helping behaviour so that the less depressed persons in this study were more likely to perform volunteer work (Carlson, Charlin, & Miller, 1988).

Furthermore, the use of volunteering men who have volunteered to take part in this study could result in self-selective biases. These men could be considered as particularly altruistic, confident, and positive persons whose scores might distort the results obtained in this study. That is, the inclusion of such men in this study might account for the significantly lower scores of depression for volunteering as opposed to non-volunteering men. Longitudinal studies that follow the same employed and volunteering persons in transition to unemployment are needed to remedy these types of problems.

It must be emphasised that although volunteer work has potential benefits in promoting positive mental health, these results are limited to the characteristics of this particular sample of long-term middle-aged unemployed men. It is possible that volunteer work may not have any advantages, or be an option for those who have only been unemployed for a brief time, particularly within the first six months when hopes are higher of finding employment, and when persons are still physically and socially active and optimistic (Warr, 1987). It is also possible that volunteer work might not be an attractive option for unemployed persons in younger age

groups as statistics indicate that the 15-24 age group have the lowest percentage of voluntary work participants (Rosenberg-Russell, 1995).

This study has resulted in some important new findings, especially in regard to the likely role volunteer work has in moderating the psychological impact of unemployment, and results indicating the absence of increased problem drinking in long-term unemployed middle-aged men. These results should be replicated to ensure generalisability of findings. Future research should investigate further the benefits of volunteer work in unemployed persons of a wider age range, as well as a wider variability in length of unemployment.

Additionally, most research examining the effects of unemployment has utilised males and studies of females have been neglected. This renders the results of unemployment research limited to the experience of males, rather than a representative population. Given the growing equality of males and females in the workplace (females in full-time employment accounted for 83.75% of the rise in full-time employment in September 1999 (ABS, 1999a), this represents a significant shortcoming in the research effort. Future studies should therefore make more effort to include both males and females, as studies have indicated possibilities of gender differences in abilities and experiences in coping with unemployment (Winefield, 1995). Considering that a larger proportion of females participate in volunteer work than males in all age groups (Rosenberg-Russell, 1995), it is also of interest to explore possible gender differences in the motivation to perform, and benefits of, volunteer work.

Conclusion

This study replicated findings of negative mental health effects of unemployment found in other international studies using an Australian sample of long-term unemployed mature-aged men. Specifically, significantly higher scores on measures of depression were reported by unemployed compared to employed men. Despite the detrimental effects experienced during unemployment, unemployed men reported positive outcomes on a measure of stress-related growth or thriving. This latter finding indicated that thriving may no longer be restricted to atypical samples such as those studied by Fryer and Payne (1984), and should be further investigated in the future to determine the possibility of its role as a 'buffer' in further mental health deterioration of unemployed persons.

Studies of unemployment should also incorporate the economic context of unemployment. This study underscored the importance of financial worries in contributing to poor mental health during unemployment. However, controlling for the effect of financial worries, unemployed men were still found to have a tendency to report higher levels of depression compared to employed men. This shows that other psychological factors, besides the influence of restricted financial income, play a role in the detrimental effects of unemployment. These factors might be attributable to those mentioned by Jahoda (1981, 1982) or Warr (1987) such as lack of environmental clarity (clouded future), social status, social contact, structured time, goals, and variety/novelty.

Contrary to popular beliefs that men are at risk of abusing alcohol when unemployed, unemployed men were not found to have higher

scores than employed men on a measure of alcohol consumption and abuse. A 45% reduction in income since becoming unemployed might have restricted increases in alcohol consumption as suggested in other studies (Warr, 1984c), although it must be emphasised as well that unemployed men did not report significantly lower scores on the Aus-AUDIT compared to employed men.

The finding that volunteer work was probably beneficial in reducing levels of depression and stress in both employed and unemployed men was not expected. To a degree, these results compromise Jahoda's (1981) deprivation theory in claiming that being in employment is sufficient to maintain positive mental health, and the assumption that no other form of meaningful activity can be of assistance in times of unemployment besides being in employment. Nevertheless, the results of this study indicate benefits for volunteer workers, particularly in the form of increasing self-esteem, positive mood, and becoming more active. Future research is needed to identify the mechanism/s whereby performing volunteer work serves to reduce levels of depression and stress.

Although doing volunteer work was beneficial for both employed and unemployed men, unemployed men identified some factors that were especially beneficial for them, such as a) being more active, b) regaining a sense of identity and c) sense of status, and d) increase in job opportunities. The first three benefits suggests that unemployed men might be suffering from lack of activity, identity, and status when unemployed, and that performing volunteer work assists in by regaining those features lost during unemployment. These results, of course, lend

some support to both Jahoda's (1981, 1982) deprivation theory and Warr's vitamin model.

In summary, the results of this study have indicated specific effects in the form of depression in long-term unemployed mature-aged men. The study highlights the importance of another moderating variable that previously has not been researched, that is, performing volunteer work to ameliorate depression and stress in unemployed men. However, the benefits of volunteer work are not restricted solely to unemployed persons, as they also seem to be beneficial to men who are in full-time employment. Although unemployed men experience benefits in performing volunteer work, it is important to emphasise that generally, unemployed men still report significantly higher levels of depression in comparison to employed men. Therefore, performing volunteer work is certainly not a complete alternative to employment, though it is a valuable option for unemployed men to perform in the interim of finding employment.

Finally, the results of this study must be interpreted with some caution due to the nature of the cross-sectional study. The direction of causality for effects of employment and volunteer status cannot be determined. Benefits of volunteer work in reducing levels of depression and stress are limited to this group of long-term unemployed mature-aged men, and such benefits might not be found for other unemployed age groups or for those who have been unemployed for a relatively short period of time. Most importantly, there is a need for the inclusion of females in studies of unemployment, as the number of females in full-time

employment is increasing and their experience and abilities to cope with unemployment may differ from those of men. Future research should also make stronger efforts to integrate findings with theories in order to enhance knowledge about the psychological correlates of employment, unemployment, and work, for interested researchers and policy makers alike.

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Appendix A
Cover and Instructions Page

IMPORTANT!!! PLEASE READ BEFORE STARTING.

*Hi! Thank you for registering your interest in participating in this study. My name is Ming Yeu, and this research is for the partial requirement of the completion of my Master's degree in clinical psychology. My interests in the field include the well-being of people in, as well as out, of the occupational sector. I am also interested in age and gender differences in coping abilities, hence the focus of this particular research. Please complete and return this questionnaire **within 7 days** to ensure progress and efficiency. Thank you.*

INSTRUCTIONS

- This questionnaire is about mature-aged men and their experiences with work or unemployment/redundancy and the impact volunteering might have on this. You will be asked questions regarding your well-being, demographic details, drinking habits, and work preferences. It should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.
- Please note that there are new instructions for every different section. Also make sure that you answer each question. Try not to spend too much time on any one question. Just answer as quickly as you can. There are no right or wrong answers, just individual opinions and views.
- You may find that some questions are personal. Please bear in mind that absolutely no identifying information will be used or published in any form or matter as all data would be presented in group form.
- All information gathered is strictly **confidential** and anonymous. Please do not write your name, or any other comments that will make you identifiable. Therefore, you are free to answer as honestly as you can.
- By completing the questionnaire you are consenting to take part in this research. Participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any stage in this research. *However, should you wish to withdraw, please return the questionnaire in the reply paid envelope to me, so that it can be used for another participant.*
- This study has been fully approved by the School of Psychology Ethics Committee for the Conduct of Ethical Research at Edith Cowan University.
- A report of the study and results will be available on request to all participants.
- All personal information (raw data) gathered is accessible **only** to my supervisor, Associate Professor Andrew Ellerman and myself. It is **NOT** accessible to your employer/s, or to any business, community or government organisations.
- Questions regarding the research? For more information or concerns, please address to:

Ms Ming Yeu
 (Principal Researcher)
 School of Psychology
 Edith Cowan University
 Ph: [REDACTED]

OR

Associate Prof. Andrew Ellerman
 (Supervisor)
 School of Psychology
 Edith Cowan University
 Ph: [REDACTED]

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY.

Appendix B

Demographics For Employed and Unemployed Participants

“About You”

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer all questions as accurately as you can by filling in, or ticking the most appropriate answer.

1. Age: _____
2. Race/ethnicity: _____
3. Years of education or part-time equivalent (include post-secondary) : _____
4. Marital Status: Married
 Single
 Divorced
 Separated
 Widowed
5. How many dependants do you have in your household? _____
6. Are you currently employed in full-time work? **Yes** **No**
7. What is your current occupation? _____
8. How long have you been employed in your current job (to the nearest month or years)? _____
9. Is your wife/partner working? **Yes** **No**
10. If so, please state whether she is working full-time or part-time. _____
11. What is your **total annual** income before tax deductions (include wife’s income and other benefits if applicable)?

<i>Gross weekly pay</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>Annual income (equivalent)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> \$160 and under \$320.....		\$8 320 and under \$16 640
<input type="checkbox"/> \$320 and under \$480.....		\$16 640 and under \$24 960
<input type="checkbox"/> \$480 and under \$640.....		\$24 960 and under \$33 280
<input type="checkbox"/> \$640 and under \$800.....		\$33 280 and under \$41 600
<input type="checkbox"/> \$800 and under \$960.....		\$41 600 and under \$49 920
<input type="checkbox"/> \$960 and under \$1120.....		\$49 920 and under \$58 240
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1120 and under \$1280.....		\$58 240 and under \$66 560
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1280 and under \$1440.....		\$66 560 and under \$74 880
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1440 and under \$1600.....		\$74 880 and under \$83 200
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1600 and under \$1760.....		\$83 200 and under \$91 520
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1760 and under \$1920.....		\$91 520 and under \$99 840
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1920 and under \$2080.....		\$99 840 and under \$108 160
<input type="checkbox"/> \$2080 and over.....		\$108 160 and over

Please turn the page

12. Thinking back over the past month, how often have you had serious financial worries?

- Never Hardly ever Frequently Nearly all the time All the time

13. Have you or are you considering counselling for personal problems, and if so, state purpose: Yes _____ No

14. Do you currently participate in voluntary work* outside of your paid employment?

- Yes No

**Volunteers are people who provide a service which benefits the community, of their own free will, and without financial payment (except direct reimbursements of out-of-pocket expenses).*

15. If you don't currently undertake voluntary work, have you participated in voluntary work within the last 10 years? Yes (approximate hours per week): _____ No

THE FOLLOWING SECTION APPLIES ONLY TO THOSE WHO CURRENTLY PARTICIPATE IN VOLUNTARY WORK.

16. How many hours per week do you participate in volunteering? _____

17. How long have you been involved in volunteer work? _____

18. In which sector/s do you volunteer?

- Sport/recreation/hobby
 Welfare/community
 Education/training/youth development
 Religious
 Health
 Arts/culture
 Emergency services
 Environmental/animal welfare
 Business/professional/union
 Law/justice/political
 Other (please state): _____

Please turn the page

(Continued)

THE FOLLOWING SECTION APPLIES ONLY TO THOSE WHO CURRENTLY PARTICIPATE IN VOLUNTARY WORK.

19. How important for you are the following reasons for volunteering?

- 1 = Very important
 2 = Quite important
 3 = Important
 4 = A little important
 5 = Not at all important

<input type="checkbox"/> Meet new people/social contact	<input type="checkbox"/> Lead to a new job
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop new skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Good use of time/purposeful
<input type="checkbox"/> A new interest	<input type="checkbox"/> Do something worthwhile
<input type="checkbox"/> Assist people/community	

Other : _____ (rate how important): _____

20. For the following, how beneficial do you find volunteering?

- 1 = Very beneficial
 2 = Quite beneficial
 3 = Beneficial
 4 = A little beneficial
 5 = Not at all beneficial

<input type="checkbox"/> Increasing self-esteem/confidence	<input type="checkbox"/> Being more active
<input type="checkbox"/> Learnt new skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Met new social contacts
<input type="checkbox"/> Increase in job opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> Increase in positive mood
<input type="checkbox"/> Sense of identity	<input type="checkbox"/> Sense of status

Other : _____ (rate how important): _____

Please check that all appropriate questions have been answered.

“About You”

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer all questions as accurately as you can by filling in, circling, or ticking the most appropriate answer.

1. Age: _____
2. Race/ethnicity: _____
3. Years of education or part-time equivalent (include post-secondary) : _____
4. Marital Status: Married
 Single
 Divorced
 Separated
 Widowed
5. How many dependants do you have in your household? _____
6. Are you currently employed in full-time work? Yes No
7. What was your former occupation? _____
8. How long were you employed in your previous full-time job (to the nearest month or years)? _____
9. How long have you been out of work (to the nearest month)? _____
10. Were you made redundant? Yes No
11. Is your wife/partner working? Yes No
12. If so, please state whether she is working full-time or part-time. _____
13. **PRESENTLY**, what is your **total annual** income before tax deductions (include use of superannuation, wife’s income and other benefits if applicable)?

<i>Gross weekly pay</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>Annual income (equivalent)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> \$160 and under \$320.....		\$8 320 and under \$16 640
<input type="checkbox"/> \$320 and under \$480.....		\$16 640 and under \$24 960
<input type="checkbox"/> \$480 and under \$640.....		\$24 960 and under \$33 280
<input type="checkbox"/> \$640 and under \$800.....		\$33 280 and under \$41 600
<input type="checkbox"/> \$800 and under \$960.....		\$41 600 and under \$49 920
<input type="checkbox"/> \$960 and under over.....		\$49 920 and over

Please turn the page

14. **PREVIOUSLY WHEN YOU HELD A FULL-TIME JOB**, what was your **total annual** income before tax deductions (include wife's income and other benefits if applicable)?

<i>Gross weekly pay</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>Annual income (equivalent)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> \$160 and under \$320.....		\$8 320 and under \$16 640
<input type="checkbox"/> \$320 and under \$480.....		\$16 640 and under \$24 960
<input type="checkbox"/> \$480 and under \$640.....		\$24 960 and under \$33 280
<input type="checkbox"/> \$640 and under \$800.....		\$33 280 and under \$41 600
<input type="checkbox"/> \$800 and under \$960.....		\$41 600 and under \$49 920
<input type="checkbox"/> \$960 and under \$1120.....		\$49 920 and under \$58 240
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1120 and under \$1280.....		\$58 240 and under \$66 560
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1280 and under \$1440.....		\$66 560 and under \$74 880
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1440 and under \$1600.....		\$74 880 and under \$83 200
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1600 and under \$1760.....		\$83 200 and under \$91 520
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1760 and under \$1920.....		\$91 520 and under \$99 840
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1920 and under \$2080.....		\$99 840 and under \$108 160
<input type="checkbox"/> \$2080 and over.....		\$108 160 and over

15. Thinking back over the past month, how often have you had serious financial worries?

- Never Hardly ever Frequently Nearly all the time All the time

16. Have you or are you considering counselling for personal problems, and if so, state purpose: Yes _____ No

17. Do you currently participate in voluntary work?* Yes No

**Volunteers are people who provide a service which benefits the community, of their own free will, and without financial payment (except direct reimbursements of out-of-pocket expenses).*

18. If you don't currently undertake voluntary work, have you participated in voluntary work within the last 10 years? Yes (approximate hours per week): _____ No

19. When you were in full-time employment, did you volunteer, and if so, how many hours per week? Yes (approximate hours per week): _____ No

THE FOLLOWING SECTION APPLIES ONLY TO THOSE WHO CURRENTLY PARTICIPATE IN VOLUNTARY WORK.

20. How many hours per week do you participate in volunteering? _____

21. How long have you been involved in volunteer work? _____

Please turn the page

(Continued)

THE FOLLOWING SECTION APPLIES ONLY TO THOSE WHO CURRENTLY PARTICIPATE IN VOLUNTARY WORK.

22. In which sector/s do you volunteer?

- Sport/recreation/hobby
 Welfare/community
 Education/training/youth development
 Religious
 Health
 Arts/culture
 Emergency services
 Environmental/animal welfare
 Business/professional/union
 Law/justice/political
 Other (please state): _____

23. How important for you are the following reasons for volunteering?

- 1 = Very important
 2 = Quite important
 3 = Important
 4 = A little important
 5 = Not at all important

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| _____ Meet new people/social contact | _____ Lead to a new job |
| _____ Develop new skills | _____ Good use of time/purposeful |
| _____ A new interest | _____ Do something worthwhile |
| _____ Assist people/community | |

Other : _____ (rate how important): _____

24. For the following, how beneficial do you find volunteering?

- 1 = Very beneficial
 2 = Quite beneficial
 3 = Beneficial
 4 = A little beneficial
 5 = Not at all beneficial

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| _____ Increasing self-esteem/confidence | _____ Being more active |
| _____ Learnt new skills | _____ Met new social contacts |
| _____ Increase in job opportunities | _____ Increase in positive mood |
| _____ Sense of identity | _____ Sense of status |

Other : _____ (rate how important): _____

Please check that all appropriate questions have been answered.

Appendix C

Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS) (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995)

DASS


Date: _____

Please read each statement and circle a number 0, 1, 2 or 3 which indicates how much the statement applied to you *over the past week*. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any statement.

The rating scale is as follows:

- 0 Did not apply to me at all
- 1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time
- 2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time
- 3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time

1	I found myself getting upset by quite trivial things	0	1	2	3
2	I was aware of dryness of my mouth	0	1	2	3
3	I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all	0	1	2	3
4	I experienced breathing difficulty (eg, excessively rapid breathing, breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion)	0	1	2	3
5	I just couldn't seem to get going	0	1	2	3
6	I tended to over-react to situations	0	1	2	3
7	I had a feeling of shakiness (eg, legs going to give way)	0	1	2	3
8	I found it difficult to relax	0	1	2	3
9	I found myself in situations that made me so anxious I was most relieved when they ended	0	1	2	3
10	I felt that I had nothing to look forward to	0	1	2	3
11	I found myself getting upset rather easily	0	1	2	3
12	I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy	0	1	2	3
13	I felt sad and depressed	0	1	2	3
14	I found myself getting impatient when I was delayed in any way (eg, lifts, traffic lights, being kept waiting)	0	1	2	3
15	I had a feeling of faintness	0	1	2	3
16	I felt that I had lost interest in just about everything	0	1	2	3
17	I felt I wasn't worth much as a person	0	1	2	3
18	I felt that I was rather touchy	0	1	2	3
19	I perspired noticeably (eg, hands sweaty) in the absence of high temperatures or physical exertion	0	1	2	3
20	I felt scared without any good reason	0	1	2	3
21	I felt that life wasn't worthwhile	0	1	2	3

Please turn the page 

Reminder of rating scale:

- 0 Did not apply to me at all
 1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time
 2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time
 3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time

22	I found it hard to wind down	0	1	2	3
23	I had difficulty in swallowing	0	1	2	3
24	I couldn't seem to get any enjoyment out of the things I did	0	1	2	3
25	I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical exertion (eg, sense of heart rate increase, heart missing a beat)	0	1	2	3
26	I felt down-hearted and blue	0	1	2	3
27	I found that I was very irritable	0	1	2	3
28	I felt I was close to panic	0	1	2	3
29	I found it hard to calm down after something upset me	0	1	2	3
30	I feared that I would be "thrown" by some trivial but unfamiliar task	0	1	2	3
31	I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything	0	1	2	3
32	I found it difficult to tolerate interruptions to what I was doing	0	1	2	3
33	I was in a state of nervous tension	0	1	2	3
34	I felt I was pretty worthless	0	1	2	3
35	I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing	0	1	2	3
36	i felt terrified	0	1	2	3
37	I could see nothing in the future to be hopeful about	0	1	2	3
38	I felt that life was meaningless	0	1	2	3
39	I found myself getting agitated	0	1	2	3
40	I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself	0	1	2	3
41	I experienced trembling (eg, in the hands)	0	1	2	3
42	I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things	0	1	2	3

Appendix D

Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (Australian version) (Aus-
AUDIT) (Conigrave & Elvy, 1998)



INSTRUCTIONS: Please circle the answer that is correct for you.

1. How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?
 Never Monthly Once a week Two to four Five or more
 or less or less times a week times a week
2. How many standard drinks do you have on a typical day when you are drinking? (see above diagram)
 1 2 3 or 4 5 or 6 7 or more
3. How often do you have 6 or more standard drinks on one occasion? (see above diagram)
 Never Less than Monthly Weekly Daily or
 monthly almost daily
4. How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you had started?
 Never Less than Monthly Weekly Daily or
 monthly almost daily
5. How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected from you because of drinking?
 Never Less than Monthly Weekly Daily or
 monthly almost daily
6. How often during the last year have you needed an alcoholic drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?
 Never Less than Monthly Weekly Daily or
 monthly almost daily
7. How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or regret after drinking?
 Never Less than Monthly Weekly Daily or
 monthly almost daily
8. How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?
 Never Less than Monthly Weekly Daily or
 monthly almost daily
9. Have you or someone else been injured as a result of your drinking?
 No Yes, but not in Yes, during
 the last year the last year
10. Has a friend, doctor or other health worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested you cut down?
 No Yes, but not in Yes, during
 the last year the last year

Please check that all questions have been answered.

Appendix E

Value of Work Scale (VWS) (Kazanas et al., 1975)

INSTRUCTIONS: Each of the following items contain a pair of statements about work. The statements are all preceded by – “I PREFER WORK WHERE I CAN:....”

Read each pair of statements carefully and indicate your preference for one of the two statements. REMEMBER there is no right or wrong answer and there is no time limit, but you should work as rapidly as possible. Please respond to every pair of statements and mark only one choice. (Circle “a” or “b”).

I prefer work where I can:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. A. utilise my abilities.
B. gain salary increases. | 14. A. develop self-discipline.
B. have authority over other people. |
| 2. A. accomplish a lot, according to my own standards.
B. be secure. | 15. A. be sure that it will last.
B. control my work situation. |
| 3. A. have the good feeling I get from helping others.
B. be provided cost of living pay increases. | 16. A. be one of the group.
B. do things my way. |
| 4. A. exhibit my concern for people.
B. mix with people. | 17. A. feel important.
B. feel fulfilled. |
| 5. A. be my own boss.
B. supervise others. | 18. A. do what I want to do.
B. have other people depend on me. |
| 6. A. form friendships.
B. contribute to society. | 19. A. find variety and challenge.
B. feel secure. |
| 7. A. gain prestige in my field.
B. learn more about how and why things work. | 20. A. feel pride in my workmanship.
B. earn enough pay to live comfortably. |
| 8. A. be paid on the basis of effort.
B. be inspired to total participation. | 21. A. help others.
B. talk to other people. |
| 9. A. use my abilities.
B. be provided opportunities for raises. | 22. A. add order and meaning to my life.
B. have other people look to me for direction. |
| 10. A. develop self-control.
B. perform in pleasant surroundings. | 23. A. find opportunities to gain status.
B. add to the well-being of others. |
| 11. A. direct other people.
B. exhibit my personal contribution to society. | 24. A. be recognised for my competencies.
B. obtain feelings of accomplishment. |
| 12. A. receive considerate treatment from my supervisor.
B. develop my abilities and talents. | 25. A. exhibit self-control.
B. be in charge of others. |
| 13. A. take part in making decisions which affect my work.
B. have good contacts with fellow workers. | 26. A. take an interest in it.
B. earn good pay. |

REMINDER OF INSTRUCTIONS: *Each of the following items contain a pair of statements about work. The statements are all preceded by – “I PREFER WORK WHERE I CAN:....”*

Read each pair of statements carefully and indicate your preference for one of the two statements. REMEMBER there is no right or wrong answer and there is no time limit, but you should work as rapidly as possible. Please respond to every pair of statements and mark only one choice. (Circle “a” or “b”).

I prefer work where I can:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 27. A. have opportunities for personal growth and development.
B. have sick leave and retirement benefits. | 35. A. do something I like.
B. develop new friendships. |
| 28. A. participate in the decision making process.
B. plan and organise the activities of others. | 36. A. be helpful to others.
B. meet interesting people. |
| 29. A. make my own decisions.
B. be assured of a job with the company. | 37. A. perform without close supervision.
B. be considered important by others. |
| 30. A. make my community a better place in which to live.
B. earn extra pay for extra work. | 38. A. become carried away with the activity.
B. socialise with fellow employees. |
| 31. A. benefit others through my labours.
B. become acquainted with people. | 39. A. enjoy performing the duties.
B. receive reasonable pay and many fringe benefits. |
| 32. A. feel stimulated.
B. be looked up to by other people. | 40. A. find support for my goals in life.
B. earn more pay than other jobs around. |
| 33. A. perform the function all year round.
B. direct myself. | 41. A. determine my own rate of performance.
B. command high pay. |
| 34. A. adhere to a schedule.
B. be the boss. | 42. A. achieve success.
B. be useful to society. |

Please check that all questions have been answered.

Appendix F

Stress-Related Growth Scale (SRGS) (Park et al., 1996)

INSTRUCTIONS: *Rate how much you experienced each item below as a result of the most stressful work-related experience in the past 12 months. For each item, circle the most appropriate answer using the following guide:*

0 = Not at all
 1 = Somewhat
 2 = A great deal

1. I developed new relationships with supportive others.	0	1	2
2. I gained new knowledge about the world.	0	1	2
3. I learned that I was stronger than I thought I was.	0	1	2
4. I became more accepting of others.	0	1	2
5. I realised I have a lot to offer other people.	0	1	2
6. I learned to respect others' feelings and beliefs.	0	1	2
7. I learned to be nicer to others.	0	1	2
8. I rethought how I want to live my life.	0	1	2
9. I learned that I want to accomplish more in life.	0	1	2
10. My life now has more meaning and satisfaction.	0	1	2
11. I learned to look at things in a more positive way.	0	1	2
12. I learned better ways to express my feelings.	0	1	2
13. I learned that there is a reason for everything.	0	1	2
14. I developed/increased my faith in God.	0	1	2
15. I learned not to let hassles bother me the way they used to.	0	1	2
16. I learned to take more responsibility for what I do.	0	1	2
17. I learned to live for today, because you never know what will happen tomorrow.	0	1	2
18. I don't take most things for granted anymore.	0	1	2
19. I developed/increased my trust in God.	0	1	2
20. I feel freer to make my own decisions.	0	1	2
21. I learned that I have something of value to teach others about life.	0	1	2
22. I understand better how God allows things to happen.	0	1	2
23. I learned to appreciate the strength of others who have had a difficult life.	0	1	2
24. I learned not to freak out when a bad thing happens.	0	1	2
25. I learned to think more about the consequences of my actions.	0	1	2
26. I learned to get less angry about things.	0	1	2
27. I learned to be a more optimistic person.	0	1	2
28. I learned to approach life more calmly.	0	1	2
29. I learned to be myself and not try to be what others want me to be.	0	1	2
30. I learned to accept myself as less than perfect.	0	1	2
31. I learned to take life more seriously.	0	1	2
32. I learned to work through problems and not just give up.	0	1	2
33. I learned to find more meaning in life.	0	1	2
34. I changed my life goals for the better.	0	1	2
35. I learned how to reach out and help others.	0	1	2
36. I learned to be a more confident person.	0	1	2
37. I learned not to take my physical health for granted.	0	1	2
38. I learned to listen more carefully when others talk to me.	0	1	2
39. I learned to be open to new information and ideas.	0	1	2

REMINDER OF INSTRUCTIONS: Rate how much you experienced each item below as a result of the most stressful work-related experience in the past 12 months. For each item, circle the most appropriate answer using the following guide:

0 = Not at all
1 = Somewhat
2 = A great deal

40. I now better understand why, years ago, my parents said/did certain things.	0	1	2
41. I learned to communicate more honestly with others.	0	1	2
42. I learned to deal better with uncertainty.	0	1	2
43. I learned that I want to have some impact on the world.	0	1	2
44. I learned that it's OK to ask others for help.	0	1	2
45. I learned that most of what used to upset me were little things that aren't worth getting upset about.	0	1	2
46. I learned to stand up for my personal rights.	0	1	2
47. A prior relationship with another person became more meaningful.	0	1	2
48. I became better able to view my parents as people, and not just as "parents."	0	1	2
49. I learned that there are more people who care about me than I thought.	0	1	2
50. I developed a stronger sense of "community," of "belonging" – that I am part of a larger "group."	0	1	2

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Please check that all questions have been answered.



YOU HAVE FINISHED THE QUESTIONNAIRE BOOKLET!

**IF APPLICABLE, PLEASE RETURN IT IN THE REPLY PAID ENVELOPE
WITHIN 3 DAYS.**

UPON RETURN OF YOUR COMPLETED BOOKLET, YOU WILL RECEIVE AN INFORMATION PAMPHLET/LEAFLET THAT MIGHT ASSIST IN LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT FOR YOUR CURRENT SITUATION.

Again, thank you very much for your involvement in this study.

INSTRUCTIONS: *Rate how much you experienced each item below as a result of your unemployed experience. For each item, circle the most appropriate answer using the following guide:*

0 = Not at all

1 = Somewhat

2 = A great deal

1. I developed new relationships with supportive others.	0	1	2
2. I gained new knowledge about the world.	0	1	2
3. I learned that I was stronger than I thought I was.	0	1	2
4. I became more accepting of others.	0	1	2
5. I realised I have a lot to offer other people.	0	1	2
6. I learned to respect others' feelings and beliefs.	0	1	2
7. I learned to be nicer to others.	0	1	2
8. I rethought how I want to live my life.	0	1	2
9. I learned that I want to accomplish more in life.	0	1	2
10. My life now has more meaning and satisfaction.	0	1	2
11. I learned to look at things in a more positive way.	0	1	2
12. I learned better ways to express my feelings.	0	1	2
13. I learned that there is a reason for everything.	0	1	2
14. I developed/increased my faith in God.	0	1	2
15. I learned not to let hassles bother me the way they used to.	0	1	2
16. I learned to take more responsibility for what I do.	0	1	2
17. I learned to live for today, because you never know what will happen tomorrow.	0	1	2
18. I don't take most things for granted anymore.	0	1	2
19. I developed/increased my trust in God.	0	1	2
20. I feel freer to make my own decisions.	0	1	2
21. I learned that I have something of value to teach others about life.	0	1	2
22. I understand better how God allows things to happen.	0	1	2
23. I learned to appreciate the strength of others who have had a difficult life.	0	1	2
24. I learned not to freak out when a bad thing happens.	0	1	2
25. I learned to think more about the consequences of my actions.	0	1	2
26. I learned to get less angry about things.	0	1	2
27. I learned to be a more optimistic person.	0	1	2
28. I learned to approach life more calmly.	0	1	2
29. I learned to be myself and not try to be what others want me to be.	0	1	2
30. I learned to accept myself as less than perfect.	0	1	2
31. I learned to take life more seriously.	0	1	2
32. I learned to work through problems and not just give up.	0	1	2
33. I learned to find more meaning in life.	0	1	2
34. I changed my life goals for the better.	0	1	2
35. I learned how to reach out and help others.	0	1	2
36. I learned to be a more confident person.	0	1	2
37. I learned not to take my physical health for granted.	0	1	2
38. I learned to listen more carefully when others talk to me.	0	1	2
39. I learned to be open to new information and ideas.	0	1	2

REMINDER OF INSTRUCTIONS: *Rate how much you experienced each item below as a result of your unemployed experience. For each item, circle the most appropriate answer using the following guide:*

- 0 = Not at all
 1 = Somewhat
 2 = A great deal

40. I now better understand why, years ago, my parents said/did certain things.	0	1	2
41. I learned to communicate more honestly with others.	0	1	2
42. I learned to deal better with uncertainty.	0	1	2
43. I learned that I want to have some impact on the world.	0	1	2
44. I learned that it's OK to ask others for help.	0	1	2
45. I learned that most of what used to upset me were little things that aren't worth getting upset about.	0	1	2
46. I learned to stand up for my personal rights.	0	1	2
47. A prior relationship with another person became more meaningful.	0	1	2
48. I became better able to view my parents as people, and not just as "parents."	0	1	2
49. I learned that there are more people who care about me than I thought.	0	1	2
50. I developed a stronger sense of "community," of "belonging" – that I am part of a larger "group."	0	1	2

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Please check that all questions have been answered.



YOU HAVE FINISHED THE QUESTIONNAIRE BOOKLET!

**IF APPLICABLE, PLEASE RETURN IT IN THE REPLY PAID ENVELOPE
WITHIN 3 DAYS.**

UPON RETURN OF YOUR COMPLETED BOOKLET, YOU WILL RECEIVE AN INFORMATION PAMPHLET/LEAFLET THAT MIGHT ASSIST IN LIFESTYLE MANAGEMENT FOR YOUR CURRENT SITUATION.

Again, thank you very much for your involvement in this study.

Appendix G
Reminder Letter

With Compliments

Recently, you participated in research relating to men's experiences of being employed or unemployed. This is a reminder notice to return your questionnaire booklet as soon as possible if you have not already done so. Your participation will help increase awareness into men's experiences of employment and unemployment and the difficulties associated with each, in particular the latter. In addition, I am interested to see whether volunteer work has any benefits for either of these groups. Enclosed is a leaflet/booklet related to your employment status. I intend to hold an open forum on the outcome of my research towards the end of this year. You are very welcome to attend this, so please be on the lookout for further details of it in the newspaper.

Yours Sincerely,
Ms Ming Yeu
Master of Psychology (Clinical) Student
Edith Cowan University Joondalup
Ph: [REDACTED]

Your participation in this study was very much appreciated.

Appendix H

List of Services for the Unemployed

Your participation in the study was very much appreciated.

Being unemployed can be a stressful and taxing time. Listed are some services which might be able to assist during your period of unemployment, and perhaps other difficulties that you could also be experiencing. Options other than finding full-time employment are presented should you find these interesting.

Financial Counselling Services

Financial counsellor assists in debt recovery, options with overdue bills, advocacy, budgeting, housing, bankruptcy and appeals. The service is free and confidential. For enquiries, ring Kingsley office [REDACTED] or Merriwa office [REDACTED]

Relationships Australia

Provides confidential counselling for relationships skills and mediation. Offices located in Fremantle, Mandurah, Midland and Joondalup. Fees applicable. For head office, contact East Victoria Park on [REDACTED]

Men's Meeting Place Incorporated.

"Promoting health and support for men of all ages and all cultures."

Confidential service offering groups/counselling on personal concerns, drug and alcohol, domestic violence, relationships, gambling, sexual abuse counselling. Assists with advocacy. Services are run by men for the needs of men. Can assist with unemployment issues. A place where men of all cultures and backgrounds can meet, discuss, obtain information, education, counselling, referral, support and advocacy. Groups are held in the metropolitan area. For head office contact [REDACTED]

Salvo Care Line – Phone [REDACTED] for a 24 hr crisis telephone counselling and referral service.

Have you thought of returning to education?

For Course Information:

Edith Cowan University [REDACTED]

Murdoch University [REDACTED]

University of Western Australia [REDACTED]

Curtin University [REDACTED]

TAFE [REDACTED]

Some courses available externally so on-campus attendance not necessary.

Have you thought of running your own business?

For more information:

Small Business Institute of WA [REDACTED]

Small Business Legal Advice [REDACTED]

Ministry of Fair Trading [REDACTED]

Have you thought of volunteering?

Contact **Volunteering WA** on [REDACTED] for positions. Volunteering teaches new skills, can lead to paid work, and provides a great opportunity to meet people. Phone [REDACTED] or go to City West Lotteries House, 2 Delhi Street in WEST PERTH.

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