

**PSYCHOLOGICAL CORRELATES OF UNEMPLOYMENT: LOW
SELF-ESTEEM AND DEPRESSION**

by

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the rate of unemployment in South Africa has been steadily increasing. In 1990, it was 28 %. This percentage excluded the TBVC states and employment in subsistence agriculture which is characterised by a cyclical form of employment. In 1993 and 1994, a number of industries closed and retrenchment took place in some companies as a rationalisation strategy. This resulted in retrenchment of more than 50 000 workers excluding more than 21 000 retrenched before January 1993. The level of unemployment among Blacks is six times higher than that of whites which is 6.4 % according to the South African Living Standard and Development (Democracy in Action, 1996). In general, more women are unemployed than men.

Unemployment has been linked to a number of negative psychological consequences and physical health effects including loss of self-esteem, severe depression, loss of social status, alcohol abuse, suicide, minor psychiatric morbidity and the probability of being identified as a psychiatric patient or a client. In this study the researcher focuses on unemployment and its psychological correlates: depression and low self-esteem.

The aims of the study were to determine the existence of any statistically significant relationships between unemployment, depression and low self-esteem and to determine whether depression and low self-esteem are significantly related to such personal variables as age, gender, duration of unemployment and marital status.

The researcher administered the questionnaires to unemployed respondents seeking employment in Unemployment Insurance Fund Offices in Johannesburg and employed respondents working at Ngwelezane Hospital, Empangeni and Portnet, Richards Bay.

The study failed to find a statistically significant relationship between unemployment and either depression or low self-esteem. Both unemployed and employed respondents had similar depression and self-esteem scores. About 20.5 % and 10.3 % of unemployed and employed respondents respectively were not depressed. About 78.2 % and 89.5 % of unemployed and employed respondents respectively were mild to moderately depressed. Only 1.3 % on the unemployed respondents were severely depressed. About 41.1 % and 33.3 % of unemployed and employed respondents respectively had low self-esteem. About 58.9 % and

64.1 % of unemployed and employed respondents respectively had mild to moderate self-esteem. Only 1.3 % of the employed respondents had high self-esteem.

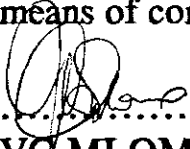
Personal variables such as age, gender, duration of unemployment and marital status were not found to be statistically significantly related to depression and self-esteem scores obtained by the unemployed respondents. Both unemployed and employed respondents gave their experiences of being unemployed in terms of thoughts, feelings and acts. Their experiences are not different from those highlighted by other researchers with the exception of thoughts of prostitution. Their experiences ranged from loss of trust, hopelessness, helplessness, boredom, financial hardships, dependency, frustration, stigma, poverty, loss of confidence, loss of friends, unhappiness, inability to meet children's needs and to pay for their school tuition, thoughts of house breaking and stealing, to optimism and hopefulness.

The researcher made the following recommendations:

- Further longitudinal studies on psychological effects of unemployment that include all racial groups should be conducted.
- Self-help groups that are coordinated by such mental health professionals as psychologists and social workers should be designed in the communities in order to cater for the needs of the unemployed groups.
- Counselling and psychotherapy should be provided in the form of crisis intervention and brief short-term psychotherapy to help individuals and families with debilitating symptoms associated with unemployment.
- Vocational guidance material should include material on job-seeking skills.

DECLARATION

I, Vuyelwa Christa Mlomo, declare that this dissertation is my work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



.....
VC MLOMO

EMPANGENI
NOVEMBER 1996

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Nombulelo and John Mogiba for taking care of my son, Mfana when I was busy with my studies and for their financial and psychological support and encouragement they rendered throughout all the years I have spent in tertiary education.

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CHAPTER 1.

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

In recent years, the rate of unemployment in South Africa has steadily been increasing. In 1990 it was 28% excluding the TBVC states and employment in subsistence agriculture which is characterized by a cyclical form of employment (Cawker and Whiteford, 1993:13). In 1993 and 1994 a number of industries closed and retrenchment took place in some companies as a rationalisation strategy. Amongst others these include: Pan Textiles and Progress Textiles in the Natal Midlands, Operation Gold Rush, Impala Platinum, Malmesbury and Ezakheni Rainbow Chicken farms, Flitestar Airline, Deep Durban mine, seven Taiwanese Knitting factories in Kimberly and 80% of the casinos in Johannesburg (Business Day, Citizen, Daily News, Natal Witness and Star, 1994). This resulted in the retrenchment of more than 50 000 workers excluding more than 21 000 retrenched before January 1993 (Citizen, 1994). A number of these industries did not offer their employees a retrenchment package or assist them in securing other jobs, with the exception of Tiger Oats and Operation Hunger. In situations where retrenchment packages were available, many employees chose to avail themselves of the package voluntarily (Citizen and Financial Mail, 1994).

When unemployment is considered, four major groups have to be regarded: retrenched employees, school leavers, those who have been unemployed for a long period and immigrants. A large number of immigrants from the neighbouring countries of Mozambique, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Swaziland are seeking employment. Some immigrants have obtained South African citizenship because of the long duration of their stay in the country. This creates a crisis situation in South Africa as the number of job-seekers increases. A large number of job-seekers are semi skilled or unskilled and this decreases their chance of getting employment in the formal sector. This situation is also worsened by the fact that in 1990 the highest job vacancy rates were observed in the professional, semi-professional/technical/ transport/communication and artisan/apprenticeship occupational groups with vacancy rates of 4,7%, 4,3% and 3,45 respectively. The professions which had a critical shortage of people were engineering, technical engineering, natural sciences, technology, computer science and the artisan professions (Cawker and Whiteford, 1993:16).

Unemployment has been linked to a number of negative psychological and physical health effects, including loss of self esteem, severe depression, loss of social status, loss of social contacts, alcohol abuse, suicide, minor psychiatric morbidity and the probability of being identified as a psychiatric patient or client (Feather and O'Brien, 1986; Goldsmith and Darity, 1992; Gurney, 1981; Jackson, Staffords, Banks and Warr, 1983; Jones, 1991; Kilpatrick and Trew, 1985; Mallinckrodt and Bennett, 1992; Sheeran and McCarthy, 1992; Tiggemann and Winefield, 1984 1985 1991; Reynolds and Gilbert, 1991; Warr, 1983; Warr, Banks and Ullah, 1985).

Transition from employed status to that of being unemployed is likely to bring more negative effects to individuals since they have to reorder their perceived needs. As people attempt to cope with this reordering, they tend to experience emotional reactions. Finley and Lee (1981), used the grieving model of Kubler-Ross (1969), to describe emotional reaction to loss of employment, i.e., denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Studies conducted in the 1930's (Bakke, 1933), 1970's (Jahoda, 1979) and the 1980's (Tiggemann and Winefield, 1984), revealed that the subjective experience of unemployment tends to pass through a number of stages. These stages are similar to the above mentioned grieving model. There is an immediate drop in morale due to shock, this is then followed by a period of optimism, in which efforts to find a job are made. When these effort fail there is a much greater drop in morale and confidence and financial worry begins. Boredom, declining self-respect and recognition of the diminishing chances of getting another job all take their toll and induce pessimism. This is finally succeeded by fatalism in which individuals adapt themselves to their unemployed states.

Loss of employment is associated with loss of income and independence since an individual has to rely on others for financial support. After the closure of a number of casinos in Johannesburg many individuals were concerned about their financial position (The Daily News, 1994). Some were breadwinners and others were family fathers and mothers who had and still have responsibilities and obligations to their families. This was worsened by the fact that it was towards Christmas. In South Africa most families enjoy this day by spending sprees on food, clothing (especially for children) and recreation and this is only possible if there is sufficient money. Some retrenched employees failed to pay their debts and others could not afford to pay their children's tuition fees. Some discovered that their names had been registered with South African Credit Bureau and this diminished their chances of opening accounts and securing loans in future. This

on its own is likely to cause frustration and anger. In a study conducted by Mallinckrodt and Bennett (1992), financial concerns were shown to be a significant source of stress.

Change from employed status to that of being unemployed may result in a sense of failure especially for parents. Children's needs including such basics as food, security, shelter and education are parents' responsibilities. Failure to satisfy these needs as a result of loss of the income is likely to result in family arguments, conflicts and tension. Financial assistance from Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) is not sufficient because the benefits payable to the contributor are calculated at the rate of 45% of his/her last weekly or monthly rate of earnings (Unemployment Insurance Act, 1966). Four women who lost their jobs five years ago at the Natal Provincial Administration each received R320, R220, R360 and R100 respectively (The Natal Witness, 1994). An explanation given by a 23 year old woman in a household which included her husband, herself, two young children, her husband's younger brother and his elderly parents was:

"There is so much tension with my husband being out of work too. Money is a big problem. Lack of money creates a lot of tension, a lot of bickering, a lot of conflict. The wife suffers the most. It is really depressing. You get pressurized from all directions. You end up borrowing money from relatives" (Allen, Waton, Purcell and Wood, 1986:70).

Unemployment is associated with stigma and negative status. This is demonstrated by unemployed people's strategies for avoiding being labelled as such by trying to hide the fact that they are unemployed even occasionally from their families (Watts, 1984:103). The comment "what are you doing in life" is not comforting to unemployed individuals hence they protect their self-esteem by lying. Tiggemann and Winefield (1984), postulated that getting a job is a desirable option in our society and provides something valuable for one's identity and self-concept, something the unemployed miss. Some unemployed individuals become squeezed out of the public realm and tend to retreat into a private realm by isolating themselves from the social activity and interpersonal relationships they enjoyed while employed. According to Buss and Redburn (1983), isolation may occur for a variety of reasons: workers may blame themselves for their loss of work and may seek to avoid contact with others, some may feel embarrassed and inadequate.

Unemployment may not have significant psychological consequences for young school leavers since they are able to get support from parents and family relatives such as aunts and uncles. With the exception of those who have to pay their study loans, their financial position is not at stake compared to individuals with families to support. Boredom, unhappiness and helplessness which were reported by some school leavers in a study conducted by Tiggemann and Winefield (1984), were considered as reasonably transient states.

Long term effects of unemployment which are characterized by financial hardship, social isolation, decline in the quality of life, decreased life chances or opportunities may eventually erode stress suppressors so that more severe depression begins to appear (Buss and Redburn, 1983:73). People unemployed for a period of more than a year are likely to be depressed than the school leavers because of their continuous failure to secure jobs. They also spend a lot of money attending interviews that are unsuccessful. Unemployed married males would generally be more depressed than females because of societal expectations that impose family responsibility to them as heads of the family in terms of financial support. In practice females are the ones who show more responsibility towards their children and husbands, if married, by borrowing from their neighbours in times of difficulty so that they can be able to support their families. Divorced women are always left with the responsibility of rearing children even if they do not receive any financial support from their ex-husbands. This responsibility coupled with unemployment is likely to cause a lot of stress to divorced women. There is no evidence to support this view.

Unemployed people who are in their late adulthood are likely to be more depressed than the adolescent group. Late adulthood is critical stage for such serious commitments in life as marriage and starting a family. Without any secured job it becomes difficult for a male in the Black community to pay lobola and this diminishes the chances of getting a wife. Contrary to unemployment, employment imposes a time structure on the day. It provides regularly shared experiences and contacts with people outside the immediate family, transcending goals and purposes, a sense of status and identity and finally it enforces activity. These benefits of employment are psychologically supportive hence their removal explains why unemployment is psychologically harmful (Jahoda, 1982 cited by Banks and Ullah, 1988).

Huzynnski (1978), cited by Frost and Clayson (1991), had a positive evaluation of unemployment. He suggested that in some instances unemployment may be welcomed rather than being perceived as a disaster for it may give an individual an opportunity to rest, spend time with the family, pursue other interests, escape from an undesirable work situation and investigate career opportunities. The researcher feels that this generally pertains to voluntary unemployment and not involuntary unemployment.

The proposed study is a replication and extension of previous studies conducted in countries like Australia, Britain and South Africa. The study conducted in South Africa was limited to English-speaking married men only and focused on the relationship between unemployment and work-related self concept (Brand & Pullen, 1991; Feather & O'Brien, 1986; Warr, 1984).

The information obtained from all the previous studies conducted is contradictory with some studies accepting the relationship between unemployment and lowered self-esteem and depression and other studies rejecting the relationship between these variables. The proposed study has been conducted in the era when unemployment rate is high throughout the country because of economic reactivity, continuing technological advancement, restructuring of services in both public and private sectors and high rate of people immigrating from the neighbouring states and East countries such as China and India.

The proposed study will provide further information on the relationship between unemployment and depression and self-esteem with a limited sample of Black South Africans. In view of the fact that the total South African political and economical context are in a state of transition and transformation, the findings of the proposed study will be of necessity and should be considered preliminary and transitional. Further longitudinal and cross sectional studies should be conducted which will include all population groups once the situation has become stabilised.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The findings of previous studies have indicated that a change from employed status to that of being unemployed results in loss of income, loss of job- and social status, loss of friends and social contacts. These result in an inability to perform one's social roles and functions at home and in the community. With a prolonged period of unemployment one moves from being optimistic to being

pessimistic about obtaining a job. This may lead to negative consequences such as negative self-esteem, extreme mood changes and eventually depression (Tiggemann and Winefield, 1984; Mallinckrodt and Bennett, 1992).

This is a descriptive study aimed at gathering data on the relationship between unemployment and depression and lowered self-esteem in a sample of South African Black men and women.

1.3 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.3.1 Unemployment

Unemployment refers to a condition of being without a paid job, and it is characterized by the desire and search for a job (Cawker and Whiteford, 1993:2)

1.3.2 Self-esteem

This refers to perception of one's own character and abilities which may be either positive or negative. A self-esteem scale will be administered to determine subjects' perception of themselves.

1.3.3 Depression

Depression is a state in which one has a negative view of oneself, future and experiences. A depressive affect scale will be used to identify subjects with depression (Beck, Rush, Shaw and Emery, 1981:11).

1.4 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

(a) To determine any statistically significant relationship, between unemployment and:

- (i) lowered self-esteem
- (ii) depression

(b) To find out whether self-esteem and depression are significantly related to the following personal variables:

- (i) age
- (ii) gender
- (iii) duration of unemployment
- (iv) marital status

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- (i) age
- (ii) gender
- (iii) duration of unemployment
- (iv) marital status

1.5 HYPOTHESES TO BE TESTED

- (a) There is a statistically significant positive relationship between unemployment and the following variables:
- (i) low self-esteem
 - (ii) depression
- (b) Other personal variables will be statistically significantly related to depression and low self-esteem in the following way:
- unemployed males will be more depressed with low self-esteem than unemployed females.
 - unemployed respondents above the age of 25 years will be more depressed with low self-esteem than those below the age 25years.
 - respondents unemployed for more than a year and a half will be more depressed with low self-esteem than those respondents unemployed for a period less than a year and a half.
 - married and divorced unemployed respondents will be more depressed with low self-esteem than unmarried unemployed respondents.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The proposed study will provide information on the relationship between unemployment and both depression and low self-esteem with a limited sample of Black South Africans as there has been no study on this group. Only one other study on South Africans has been conducted with a small sample of White- english speaking males. Generalization of findings to other population groups may be unclear.
- This study should be seen as exploratory. It is relatively biased in terms of its sampling. Only small samples were used and no attempt was made to match individual respondents across the experimental and control groups in terms of age, gender, educational level, marital status and occupational status.
- This study is correlational, therefore no cause-effect statements can be made or causal relationships inferred.

- The proposed study will provide information based on cross-sectional survey only, therefore it not possible to idealise the subjective experience of unemployed according to different stages of a particular model of grief such as that proposed by Kubler-Ross.
- The proposed study is diagnostic and descriptive in nature rather than interventional, therefore information gathered will have little contribution towards designing strategies and programmes for the jobless people.

1.7 PLAN OF STUDY

This study will be presented in chapters. Chapter one will present the motivation for the study, a statement of the problem and definition of terms. Chapter two will offer a review of the literature. Chapter three will describe research methodology. Chapter four will consist of analysis and interpretation of data and chapter five will provide a discussion of findings and conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 BACKGROUND TO THE UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM

2.1.1 The Dimension of Unemployment

The multifaceted problem of unemployment is one of the most serious developmental problems in the world. In South Africa unemployment is at the centre of politics and economics. It can be regarded as equivalent to poverty since poverty may be caused by unemployment and vice versa. This link is critical since the absence of income implies no food, no shelter, no clothing and all other things that money can buy.

In South Africa, the South African Living Standards and Development (SALSD) survey reported that about 18.4% of people aged between 16 and 64 or 3.88 million people were without work in 1983. According to October Household Survey (1994), about 28 out of every 100 workers were unemployed. Democracy in Action (1996), regionalised the problem of unemployment as follows: the overall rate of unemployment in Gauteng and Western Cape is 28.7% and 17.3% respectively. In the Northern Province and in Eastern Province, 47 and 45 out of every 100 workers respectively do not have jobs. The incidence of unemployment differs across the nine provinces, between urban and rural areas and across age, sex and race. The level of unemployment among Blacks is six times higher than that of whites which is 6.4%. In general more women are unemployed than men. The disparity in rural-urban job opportunities is the main factor driving people in rural areas to relocate in urban areas.

According to the Reserve Bank, only 52 000 new formal sector jobs were created in the 12 month period ending in March 1995. As between 350 000 and 500 000 new workers join the workforce each year, this means that unemployment levels continue to increase. Given this disparity, there is little hope that job creation will rise to a level where it would halt the increase in the number of jobless people in South Africa. South Africa is not the only country faced with unemployment issues. In Germany early this year unemployment topped 4 million while in France it was more than 3 million because of labour markets problem (Mail and Guardian 1996).

2.1.2 Causes of Unemployment

According to Rip (1973) cited by Mphahlele (1995), the causes of unemployment are classified into two main categories namely: impersonal and personal causes. These categories can influence each other however.

2.1.2.1 Impersonal Causes

- ***Seasonal Unemployment.*** Employment in this case is influenced by climatic conditions which means there are no jobs during off-seasons. Fruit markets operate in this manner with workers who pick and pack fruit being employed only when the fruit is ripe. This type of unemployment is very common in almost all regions in South Africa. The seasonal workers affected in this way are largely unskilled.
- ***Cyclical Unemployment.*** Production is limited when available goods exceed the demand because consumer need is satisfied or purchasing power is limited. As a result of this limited production retrenchment takes place. The situation in South Africa has been worsened by a flood of Chinese and other East Asian goods into the local market, thus causing job losses. This has occurred especially in textile industries.
- ***Technological Unemployment.*** Technological improvement leads to the replacement of people by machines which are automatic and can do a lot of work within a short period of time. Where new production techniques are invented and applied, the need for less manpower per unit produced often results. Job losses especially among skilled and semi-skilled workers through technological upgrades will probably continue as the companies aspire to raise production and become more competitive in international markets (Business day, 1996; Democracy in Action, 1996).
- ***Frictional Unemployment.*** This type of unemployment is usually associated with short-term transitions in individual's lives such as the typically brief interval between jobs for professionals or the transition from school to work for the most youth.
- ***Depletion of Natural Resources.*** If workers are directly engaged in the exploitation of natural resources, such resources become depleted and mass unemployment will definitely follow. The said natural resources could be forests, coal and gold mines.

2.1.2.2 Personal Causes

- ***Lack of Education and Training.*** People without education and training find it difficult to secure jobs. If such people lose jobs, it becomes very difficult for them to be re-employed. Due to current technological advancements and restructuring of services in both public and private sectors, unskilled workers are the first to be dismissed (Mphahlele, 1995).
- ***Physical and Mental Illness.*** Certain job requirements cannot accommodate physical and mental illness with the result that a person loses his /her job such as schizophrenia and organic brain syndromes.

Unemployment can also be caused by the following factors:

- ***Economic factors.*** The economy collapsed when a lot of companies withdrew from investing in South Africa due to economic sanctions. These withdrawals resulted in retrenchment and a lot of people remained unemployed for a long period. Those who were fortunate enough to be re-employed were mostly skilled. The sanctions, though politically motivated, drastically affected the economy of the country.

According to Democracy in Action (1996), recent economic activity has generated few jobs because of the following reasons:

- Capital inflows have largely been invested into stocks and shares rather than in new plants.
- Where there have been new plants, these were driven by the perceived need to upgrade production technology, raise productivity and become more competitive in the international markets. While output might have increased, new jobs have not been created.
- The gold mining industry has been experiencing increasing costs with the result that a number of mines have already been closed and more closures are being considered.
- ***Labour Factors.*** Most Workers in South Africa decided to affirm themselves through the establishment of labour movements. Poor working conditions have led to strikes, low productivity and due to that, the companies lose a lot of money and have to reduce employees.

- **Demographic Factors.** Unemployment results from the high population growth and the movement of people from rural to urban areas which are already crowded with those hopeful of finding employment. People from neighbouring states flock to this country seeking employment.

Retrenchment or loss of jobs will probably continue for an indefinite period since the government of National Unity (GNU) plans to restructure public service (Democracy in Action, 1996; Natal Witness, 1996; The Citizen, 1996).

Another way of viewing unemployment problem is to consider the issue from the perspective of the individual: that is to focus on the skills that the individuals would need in order to make a successful transition to employment. These needs are commonly referred to as specific versus general employability skills. Specific employability skills refer to those skills that the job or transition specifically requires and are usually developed in educational institutions or through job related experiences. General employability skills pertain to the social and attitudinal skills that facilitate movement into and coping with workforce in general (Magnusson, 1992).

2.2 PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Considerable research effort has gone into exploring the relationships between unemployment and psychological well-being. Conclusions appear to be unclear based on extensive individual level studies, both longitudinal and cross-sectional. Cross-sectional comparisons of groups of unemployed and employed have typically shown increased psychological distress, depression and anxiety, less happiness, lowered self-esteem and a greater experience of strain among the unemployed. Longitudinal research has identified greater impairment as a result of unemployment and also significant improvements after reemployment. A number of processes have been incorporated in a model accounting for the responses to unemployment. These include reduced income, restriction of behaviour and environment, goal structure, reduced scope for decision making and skill utilization, reduced interpersonal contact and change in social position (Banks and Ullah, 1988).

Research on unemployment and economic conditions and suicide does not suggest any clear causal link however, individual cross-sectional studies indicate that suicide occurs more among the unemployed than the employed. Studies on parasuicide again reveal high rates among the unemployed, but interviews with the

survivors rarely point to unemployment as a major precipitating factor (Platt and Kreitman, 1985).

Unemployment represent a personal threat to an individual's economic security, the individual loses his common sense of values and self confidence, the individual's prestige is lost in his own eyes and feelings of inferiority develop (Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, 1938). Rundquist and Sletto (1936), found that unemployed people have poor adjustment to the home and social environment, experience discouragement, a sense of hopelessness particularly with reference to a job, general depression and distrust one's fellow men. There is a disruption of time pattern and a consequent loss of sense of passage of time due to sudden termination of established daily work habits. There is a common belief that people tend to feel inferior when out of work however, Rundquist and Sletto (1936), found that unemployed men are not characterized by feelings of inferiority. It seems that objectively an individual should have feelings of inferiority about being unemployed only when he knows that unemployment has been selective and that he cannot hold a job because of personal deficiencies. The unemployed may feel inferior particularly if the attitude of the family is such that they put all the blame on him.

One would suspect that women would probably react differently to the situation of unemployment because of differing cultural pressures. Man's status is considered to be superior to that of the woman's and it is considered a man's duty to have a job. To support this view Rundquist and Sletto (1936), found that women were little affected in their attitude toward the economic system due to unemployment. Men were characterized by greater general maladjustment, greater discouragement and a sense of hopelessness. Gatti cited by Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938), describes the course of moods of the unemployed. First there is a surprise, particularly if the individual has never been employed before, then fear with renewed hope while the worker is actively looking for a job and then anxiety prevails. When hope fails the unemployed have a feeling that life has forgotten them and become apathetic. Long duration of unemployment makes the individual even more apathetic.

The fact that the unemployed suffer depressing effects is not surprising in the light of the structure of our society where the job one holds is the prime indicator of a man's status and prestige. The unemployed tends to withdraw into himself and even from his family. In that sense he would become more introvertive and less sociable. The unemployed are more susceptible to advertising, money

schemes, fortune tellers and leaders. They might be more suspicious of others. They would certainly wish to make money and thus might fall for any schemes presented to them. The political implications may be very important since the unemployed might follow any political group or leader who appealed to their needs.

Bakke cited by Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938), points out that the unemployed spend a good deal of time in the streets talking, watching others and waiting for something to happen. This is mostly true of the unskilled labourers. Some unemployed adjust to the condition by reading magazines. The stage of unemployment is a critical factor that is related to reading habits. According to Bakke cited by Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938), in the early stages where optimism is current, the individual might very well increase his reading, but in later stages when apathy and discouragement is the rule, the individual is not so likely to turn to reading. Some unemployed adjust to the condition by keeping the ego-level and aspiration-level as high as possible. If the individual has other sources of security or he feels that the fault of his unemployment is not his, he will probably remain in a non-depressive state. If the individual loses all his footholds then it is likely that his ego level will be shattered. The need to avoid failure will be stronger to keep his aspiration level as high as possible and consequently the aspirations-level will go down. What happens to the individual depends in some measure on the length of unemployment and his personality make up (Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld, 1938).

The researcher focuses on two variables that are linked to unemployment, depression and self-esteem. These variables have been selected on the belief that depression accompanies low self esteem and if depressed feelings rise to the surface, then people with low self-esteem should appear more depressed. This hypothesis was examined among a special group of subjects using Guttman self-esteem scale and depressive affect scale. People with low self-esteem were not only depressed but, were more likely to express feelings of unhappiness, gloom and discouragement (Rosenberg, 1965).

2.3 SELF-ESTEEM

2.3.1 The Dimension of Self-esteem

Self-esteem is a positive or negative attitude towards a particular object namely, self. Self-esteem has two quite different connotations. One connotation of high self-esteem is that the person thinks s/he is very good and another connotation

is that he thinks s/he is good enough. It is possible for a person to consider himself superior to most others but to feel inadequate in terms of certain standards he has set for himself. High self-esteem expresses the feeling that one is good enough. The individual simply feels that s/he is a person of worth and s/he respects himself for what he is (Rosenberg, 1965).

An individual with high self-esteem knows what he is, is aware of his virtues and deficiencies and accepts what he sees without regret. Individuals with high self-esteem do not simply accept themselves for what they are, they also want to grow, to improve, and to overcome deficiencies. They respect the self they observe, but they note the imperfections and inadequacies with confident anticipation of success that they will overcome these deficiencies. Low self-esteem on the other hand implies self-rejection, self-dissatisfaction, and self-contempt. The individual lacks respect for the self s/he observes. The self-picture is disagreeable and he wishes it were otherwise. Self-esteem which may either be positive or negative stems from the self-image. Clinical and experimental studies have provided valuable insights into the nature of the self-image but there is little that is known about the nature and distribution of self-esteem and self-perceptions. Self-image is a critical issue at the adolescent stage. Questions related to self-image are:

- What am I like?
- How good am I?
- What should I or might I become?
- On what basis shall I judge myself? (Rosenberg, 1965:4)

The heightened awareness of the self-image during adolescence is related to the following factors:

- Major decisions have to be made on the choice of occupation and marriage. This is equated with one's intellectual ability, logical talents required and readiness for one to commit oneself to the choice made.
- Late adolescence is a critical period of unusual status ambiguity. Society does not have a clear set of expectations for the adolescent. He/ she is treated as a child at one time and as an adult at another time. This makes them unclear about their social duties and responsibilities. The ambiguity is accentuated by the fact that both remnants of the past and portents of the future influence the self-image (Rosenberg, 1965: 5).

Self-image and self-esteem are related in the sense that the attitudes one holds toward self have an impact on the developing self-esteem. Other factors that play an important role in the development of self-esteem are such social factors as family structure, authority in the family, child rearing values and group norms. Social factors importantly determine the individual's self values; these values have an important bearing upon self-esteem. One does not evaluate oneself in the abstract, evaluation is always with reference to a certain criteria. The criteria of excellence will derive from the particular historical conditions of the society and the characteristic emphases of the group. Nowadays occupational success and business and organizational skills are more likely to be applauded. Every society or group has its standards of excellence and it is within the framework of these particular standards that evaluation occurs (Rosenberg, 1965:6).

2.3.2 The Structure of Self-image

According to Rosenberg (1965:7) self-image can be described in terms of the following dimensions:

- **Content.** The study of the content of self picture may focus on how one sees oneself i.e. either as intelligent or kind and considerate or good in performing certain activities.
- **Direction.** This may either be positive or negative.
- **Intensity.** One may feel very strong or bad about one's self-estimate.
- **Importance.** Some people regard self as a very important aspect in themselves while others regard other people more important than self.
- **Salience.** Some people give less thought to self.
- **Consistency.** Self-attitudes may be strong at one time and weak at another time.
- **Stability.** Some people have changing and shifting self-attitudes while others have stable self attitudes.
- **Clarity.** Self pictures vary in clarity, some people have a clear sharp, unambiguous picture of themselves while others have a more vague, lazy and blurred picture of themselves.

2.3.3 Effects of Unemployment on Self-esteem

Most research into unemployment and self-esteem has used the Rosenberg Scale or some adaptation of it. Tiggemann and Winefield (1980), report results on two items 'satisfied with yourself' and worthwhile as an individual. The study showed that the unemployed had become less satisfied with themselves since leaving school, but did not consider themselves less worthwhile as individuals.

Warr and Jackson (1983), report results on 4 items on positive and negative self-esteem of school leavers. The study was conducted before the sample left school in 1978 and continued on 3 occasions in 1979: at 8 months, 15 months and 31 months. Unemployed respondents were found to have significantly more negative self-esteem than those who had jobs. Longitudinal comparisons indicate that those who were employed at 15 and 31 months had positive changes in their self-esteem and this suggests that changes in negative self-esteem accompany changes in employment status.

Perfetti and Bingham (1983), reported significant cross sectional differences between the employed and the unemployed. Their sample was drawn from the membership lists of a metal refinery workers union. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem (RSE) scale was used to evaluate either positive or negative attitude towards self. Unemployed workers scored lower on self-esteem than employed workers and re-employed workers scored between the employed and unemployed. Re-employment offered some opportunities to recover some portion of the lost self-esteem. If self-esteem is not recaptured or only partially recaptured in a new position then the worker's long run outlook may not be very favourable.

Winefield and Tiggemann (1985), report similar results in a longitudinal study conducted from 1980 to 1982. Males had generally higher self-esteem than females and there was an overall increase over time among the employed group and those who were furthering their studies. Females showed a greater increase over time than males.

According to Breakwell, Harrison and Propper (1984), there is a relationship between self-esteem and length of unemployment. They conducted a study among unemployed people between the ages of 16 and 19 years. The sample was drawn from the career office's register. The sample consisted of 3 groups of subjects: those registered for less than 3 weeks, those registered for 3 to 9 weeks and those registered for 9 to 16 weeks. An 8 item scale based upon the measure of Rosenberg (1965) and Bachmen and O'Malley (1977), was used as an instrument to collect data. The results showed that young people unemployed for between 4 to 9 weeks suffered greater loss of self-esteem than those unemployed for longer or shorter periods. There were no significant sex differences in response to varying lengths of unemployment. Their study showed that negative rather than positive aspects of self-esteem are sensitive to unemployment. This means that the unemployed are more self-critical than the employed and less likely to praise themselves.

There is a significant correlation between social support during times of stress such as a period of unemployment and self-esteem. This correlation was supported by Mallinckrodt and Bennett (1992), who recruited subjects from a training programme for dislocated workers. The programme was sponsored by the government and a community college. Training groups of 36 men and 5 women met each weekday for 2 weeks of formal training with job search resources and follow up assistance was available as needed thereafter. The findings of their study suggest that support that validates the self-worth of dislocated workers may be a critical point. Reassurance of worth was associated with higher self-esteem. Unemployed subjects had significantly less social support than the sample of professional workers.

Muller (1992), also reported significant differences between two groups of unemployed women actively seeking work. These women were registered with Commonwealth Employment Services (CES) for a period greater than 6 months. The experimental and control group consisted of 32 and 7 subjects respectively. Subjects in the experimental group were invited to attend one week training courses at their local CES. The training course, termed a workforce preparation course, consisted of personal development and vocational elements designed to increase self-esteem and encourage consideration of a broader range of vocational options. Specific elements included were:

- Discussion on the effects of long term unemployment
- Communication exercises
- Identifying skills
- Goal skills
- Employer and industry visits
- Discussion about job clubs and sharing of skills
- Stress management and assertion training
- Grooming and presentation
- Employer expectations
- Resume and applications
- Action planning.

The Coopersmith Self-Esteem inventory was used to collect data at the onset of the course, at the end of the course, 2 months after the end of the course and 6 months after the end of the course. The control group scored significantly lower on self-esteem than the experimental group 2 months and 6 months after the

course ended. The personal development course was instrumental in having a positive effect on the psychological state of these long term unemployed women since the control group maintained a significantly lower level of self-esteem than the experimental group 6 months after the course ended. With increased self-esteem women were placed in a better position to learn how to help themselves. They were empowered by the knowledge and confidence gained from their participation in the course.

There are factors which may be regarded as helpful or hindering during the experience of unemployment. Klein, Amundson and Borgen (1992), highlighted some of these factors as identified by social assistance recipients (11 women and 9 men) who participated in "Project Job Keep" which was co-funded by the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission and the British Columbia Ministry of Social Services and Housing. Respondents were encouraged to recall their unemployment experience from when they were first unemployed and to describe their experience in terms of thoughts, feelings and acts. Prominent negative factors mentioned include frustration with job search, shame due to being on welfare, marital and family problems, feeling un-marketable, contact with the social service office, and boredom, stress and tension due to financial hardship. Financial hardship was seen to be a catalyst for other downward pulls including loss of self-esteem. Unfortunately this places many of the participants in a vicious circle, because the lower their feeling of self-esteem, the more difficult it is for them to summon up the energy to conduct a job search. Furthermore, their sporadic job search activities are probably sabotaged by their lower levels of self-esteem since this is bound to adversely affect their self-presentation to potential employers.

The studies conducted by Brand and Pullen (1991), Frost and Clayson (1991), and Winefield, Tiggemann and Winefield (1991), show no significant relationship between unemployment and self-esteem. Brand and Pullen (1991), used regression analysis to determine whether employed subjects would have higher work related self concepts than the unemployed. They hypothesized that the former would feel more confident about their worth in the area of work. There was no conclusive evidence that unemployment weakens self-confidence and lowers self-esteem. This finding corresponds with those of Hartley (1980) and of Rundquist and Sletto cited by O'Brien (1986). The factors that may have influenced the results are:

- ▶ The fact that participation was voluntary with the result that it might be possible that only those unemployed subjects who felt positive about themselves volunteered and those who were despondent and doubted their own abilities declined to participate.
- ▶ The self-concept scale used was constructed for this study the available self concept scales were not suitable as they measure a combination of aspects of self concept including aspects relating to work, personal, family and social life.

Frost and Clayson (1991), utilized a simplified Osgood semantic differential suggested by Lawson and modified by Clayson with 14 adjective pairs to collect data from Blue-collar workers to measure the three Osgoodian factors of Evaluation, Potency and Activity without the need for factor analysis. Every subject was asked to complete a differential on 4 concepts; *Yourself, Good, Bad and Spouse*. Self-esteem was evaluated in three ways each of which measured a slightly different aspect:

- the evaluation dimension of the content "yourself".
- the geometrical mean of three Osgoodian dimensions: evaluative, potency and activity on the concept "yourself".
- the ratio of the semantic distances between the concepts "yourself" and "bad" with the distance between "yourself" and "good".

The first measure of self-esteem gives the respondents' own evaluation along the dimension of self - "likability". Though there were no significant differences between the employed and the unemployed on any measure of self-esteem, on the evaluative dimension of the Osgood, the employed rated themselves slightly better than the unemployed but the difference did not reach a statistical significance. On the good/ bad ratio measure, the employed rated themselves more positive but again not significantly. The pattern of responses on the semantic differential of the two groups was remarkably similar. The factor that should be considered when interpreting these findings is that the typical individual in the study had been laid off before but had been re-employed several times. It may very well be that the individual feels confident he will be rehired especially if the company has a retrenchment and reemployment history. The unemployed may perceive the present lay off as a respite from work if they believe that they will be hired again, that the present lay off is only temporal and that through unemployment benefits their financial needs will be met.

Another possible explanation for these results is reflected in the study of Finley and Lee (1981) in which they describe a worker's reaction to unemployment by using the grieving model of Kubler-Ross (1969). The participants in this study may be in the denial and anger phases. Rather than confront the unemployed situation directly, the individual may deny its existence and believe as if it were not happening. Another explanation is offered by Warr and Jackson (1982), in which they suggest that the unemployed uncouple their positive and negative conceptions with the result that although the unemployed are faced with adversity, their belief that they are "as good a person as anybody else." is retained. Hence they report feeling good about themselves despite experiencing a negative employment situation. From a sociological point of view, Cohn (1978), suggests that the attitudes and perceptions of the employed and unemployed reflect societal expectations for certain sub-cultures. In African culture unemployed blue collar workers might buffer themselves with the acceptance that there will be economic ups and downs associated with their work careers.

Winefield et al (1991), employed the Rosenberg self-esteem scale to collect data from young men and women (15 to 17 years) and the first survey was done while they were still at school. The self-esteem scores for the satisfied employed and students were higher than for the dissatisfied employed and the unemployed, but these differences were not statistically significant.

Positive self conception are psychologically fundamental in the sense that they are retained in the face of moderate adversity, despite being out of work an unemployed worker in a period of generally high unemployment rate can retain the belief that s/he is a good person as anybody else. The unemployed might retain their fundamental feelings of self-worth despite experiencing negative feelings associated with employment.

2.4 DEPRESSION

2.4.1 Dimension of Depression

The term depression is used very often in day-to-day conversation to describe a normal down swing of mood. Such down swings of mood may be adaptive. When depression deepens, more symptoms appear. The result is clinical depression, a syndrome that is a cluster of symptoms that tend to occur together. These symptoms are themselves very diverse. They include emotional changes such as feeling of sadness often referred to as dysphoria; cognitive changes such

as low self-esteem, guilt, rumination, memory and concentration difficulties; behavioural changes such as agitation or psychomotor retardation and reduced engagement in social and recreational activities and bodily changes such as insomnia or hypersomnia, loss of- or increased appetite, loss of energy and sexual problems. Some of these symptoms are central to the diagnosis of depression (Mark and Williams, 1992:4).

Other symptoms that accompany depression are experiences of hopelessness and despair, total emphasis and lack of motivation to do many things one used to find enjoyable or feelings of discomfort about meeting other people. People become depressed for many reasons, for varying lengths of time and in varying degrees. Unemployment is one of the factors that may lead to depression. When depressed, people have various ways of coping.

Mark and Williams (1992:7), postulate that some researchers find that the population of women who are depressed exceeds the population of men. Women are between 2 and 3 times more likely to be depressed than men. The reason for this is uncertain. Young women with young children are particularly vulnerable, a fact which has prompted some researchers to suggest that women's disadvantaged roles with regard to paid employment opportunities and their increased responsibility for unpaid child care is a major cause. The correlation between the onset of depression, an increase in life stress and absence of social support is wholly consistent with this conclusion.

2.4.2 The Cognitive Model of Depression

The cognitive model postulates three specific concepts to explain the psychological substrate of depression: cognitive triad, schemas and cognitive errors or faulty information processing (Beck, Rush, Shaw and Emery, 1981).

2.4.2.1 Concept Cognitive Triad

The cognitive triad consists of three major cognitive patterns that induce the person to regard himself, his future and his experiences in an idiosyncratic manner. The first component revolves around the person's negative view of himself. *One sees oneself as defective, inadequate or deprived. One tends to attribute ones unpleasant experiences to a psychological, moral or physical defect in oneself. One believes that because of one's presumed defects one is undesirable and worthless. One tends to underestimate or criticize oneself because of these defects. Finally one believes one lacks the attributes one considers essential to attain happiness and contentment.*

The second component of the cognitive triad consists of the depressed person's tendency to interpret his ongoing experiences in a negative way. One sees the world as making exorbitant demands on one or presenting insuperable obstacles to reaching one's life goals. These negative misinterpretations are evident when one observes how depressed individuals negatively construe situations when more plausible, alternative interpretations are available. The depressed person may realize that his initial negative interpretations are biased if he is persuaded to reflect on the less negative alternative explanations. In this way he can come to realize that he has tailored the facts to fit his preformed negative conclusion.

The third component of the cognitive triad consists of a negative view of the future. As the depressed person makes long-range projections, he anticipates that his current difficulties or suffering will continue indefinitely. He expects unremitting hardship, frustration and deprivation. When he considers undertaking a specific task in the immediate future he expects to fail. The cognitive model views the other signs and symptoms of the depressive system as consequences of the activation of negative cognitive patterns.

The motivational symptoms can be explained as consequences of negative cognitions. Paralysis of the will results from the person's pessimism and hopelessness. If a person expects a negative outcome, s/he will not commit himself to a goal or undertaking. Suicidal wishes can be understood as an extreme expression of the desire to escape from what appear to be insoluble problems or an unbearable situation.

Finally the cognitive model explains the physical symptoms of depression. Apathy and low energy may result from the person's belief that s/he is doomed to failure in all effects. A negative view of the future may lead to psychomotor inhibition.

2.4.2.2 Structural Organization of Depressive Thinking

A second major ingredient in the cognitive model consists of the concept of schemas. This concept is used to explain why a depressed person maintains his pain-inducing and self-defeating attitudes despite objective evidence of positive factors in his life. Different persons may conceptualize the same situation in different ways and a particular person tends to be consistent in his/ her responses to similar types of events. Relatively stable cognitive patterns form the basis for the regularity of interpretations of a particular set of situations. The term "schema" designates these stable cognitive patterns. When a person faces a

particular circumstance, a schema related to the circumstance is activated. The schema is the basis for moulding data into cognitions. Schemas constitute the basis for screening out, differentiating and coding stimuli that confront the individual. The individual categorizes and evaluates his experiences through a matrix of schemas.

The kinds of schemes employed determine how an individual will structure different experiences. A schema may be inactive for long periods of time but can be energized by specific environmental inputs such stressful situations, in this case unemployment. The schema activated in a specific situation directly determine how the person responds.

In milder depressions the patient is generally able to view his negative thoughts with some objectivity. As depression worsens, his thinking becomes increasingly dominated by negative ideas, although there may be no logical connection between actual situation and his negative interpretations. As the idiosyncratic schemas lead to distortion of reality and consequently to systematic errors in the depressed person's thinking, he/ she is less able to entertain the notion that his negative interpretations are erroneous. In more severe states of depression the person's thinking may become completely dominated by the idiosyncratic schema. S/he is completely pre-occupied with perseverative, repetitive negative thoughts and may find it extremely difficult to concentrate on external stimuli such as reading or answering questions or engage in voluntary mental activity such as problem solving and recall. In such instances the idiosyncratic cognitive organization is regarded as autonomous.

2.4.2.3 Faulty Information Processing

The cognitive errors in the thinking of the depressed person maintain the person's belief in the validity of his/ her negative concepts irrespective of the presence of contradictory evidence. A way of understanding the thinking disorder in depression is to conceptualize it in terms of "primitive" versus "mature" modes of organizing reality. Depressed people are prone to structuring their experience in relatively primitive way. They tend to make broad global judgments regarding events that impinge on their lives. The meanings that flood their consciousness are likely to be extreme, negative, categorial, absolute and judgemental. Their emotional response tend to be negative and extreme. In contrast, more mature thinking automatically integrates life situations into many dimensions or qualities in quantitative rather than absolute standards. The depressed person tends to view his experiences as total deprivations or defects and as irreversible. He

categorizes himself as a loser and doomed.

2.4.2.4 Predisposition to and Precipitation of Depression

The cognitive model proposes that early experiences provide the basis for forming negative concepts about one's self, the future and the external world. These negative concepts may be latent but can be activated by specific circumstances which are analogous to experiences initially responsible for embedding the negative attitude. For example loss of employment may activate the concept of financial hardship associated with the loss of essential basic needs. Depression may also be triggered by a physical abnormality. Unpleasant, even extremely adverse life situations do not necessarily produce a depression unless the person is particularly sensitive to the specific type of situation because of the nature of his/ her cognitive organization.

In response to traumatic situations the average person will still maintain interest in and realistically appraise other nontraumatic aspects of his life. On the other hand, the thinking of the depression-prone person becomes markedly constricted and negative ideas develop about every aspect of life. A depressed person may withdraw from significant other people. The significant others (family, friends, peers,) may respond with rejection and criticisms which in turn activate or aggravate the person's own self-rejection and self criticism. A harmonious interpersonal relationship may provide a buffer against the development of a full blown depression. A strong local support system may provide such powerful evidence of acceptance, respect and affection that it neutralizes the person's tendency to downgrade himself/ herself.

2.5 EFFECTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT ON DEPRESSION

Several studies have used different measures of depression or depressive affects as outcome measures of school leaver unemployment with comparison groups of young people in employment, in further education, in youth training or still at school. A other studies have focused on blue collar workers and professionals. The following scales have been used to determine the effect of unemployment on depression: the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), Centre for Epidemiological Studies - Depression (CES-D), the Leeds Depression Scale and Zung Depression Scale (Donovan and Oddy, 1982; Feather and O'Brien, 1986; Hamilton, William, Hoffman, Clifford, Broman and Rauma, 1993; Kasl, Gore and Cobb, 1975; Kessler, Turner and House 1988; Oddy, Donovan and Pardoe, 1984; Reynolds and Gilbert, 1991; Winefield, Tiggemann and Winefield, 1991).

Klein, Amundson and Borgen (1992), used a combination of phenomenological and critical incident approaches. Their questions focused on the experience of unemployment with particular reference to positive and negative critical incidents. Most respondents reported prominent negative categories including depression and shame due to being on welfare. Depression was found to be related to financial pressures. Respondents reported difficulties in meeting basic survival needs such as food, shelter and clothing for themselves and their families. The financial factor stood out prominently as a constant and pervasive source of depression.

Patton and Noller (1984), using the BDI identified significantly greater depression in a small sample ($n = 21$) of unemployed young people compared to those in employment or still at school. Winefield and Tiggemann (1985), had similar finding when using the Rosenberg Depressive Affect Scale in a longitudinal study with a larger sample ($N = 1636$). They also report gender differences with females being more depressed than the males. Depression decreased over time for the employed, unemployed and further study group except for the group that was still at school.

Feather and O'Brien (1986), failed to find any significant relationship between unemployment and depression using the Depressive Affect Scale in their longitudinal study. Warr, Banks and Ullah (1985), report racial differences in their sample of 374 Blacks and 776 Whites using a 6- item measure of depressed mood drawn from 20- item depression scale created for use in clinical research by Zung. White respondents exhibited lower psychological health than Blacks. Such differences appear to run counter to the pattern for the population as a whole. One possible explanation of the ethnic group difference would be that Blacks are less willing than Whites to admit symptoms of the kind included in the inventories. There is however no published evidence to support this view.

Winefield et al (1991), report contradictory results in a longitudinal study using the Rosenberg Depressive Affect scale. In 1980 a significant relationship was not observed between unemployment and depression among the four groups of young people; satisfied employed, dissatisfied employed, unemployed and full time tertiary students. There were significant differences between the groups in 1987 with satisfied employed less depressed than the dissatisfied employed and unemployed. Unemployed males were more depressed than each of the other groups. Dissatisfied employed females were more depressed than the satisfied employed and the students.

Mallinckrodt and Bennett (1992), report findings on the impact of the length of unemployment and financial concern on depression. They used a CES-D on a small sample ($N = 41$) of blue collar workers who were former wood products industry employees. These respondents were significantly depressed. Re-employment and social network had an impact on CES-D scores with re-employed group and those with higher scores on social networks showing a decrease in depressive symptoms. The longer one is unemployed, the more important contact with friends is in protecting a person from experiencing an increase in depressive symptoms. This finding is consistent with the literature that describes networks as buffers against the detrimental effects of adverse life events (Jones; 1991).

Another study conducted by Kasl, Gore and Cobb (1975), on the experience of losing a job focus on male blue collar workers. Data was collected at various intervals; 4-7 weeks before the plant closed, 5-7 weeks after closure, 4-8 weeks after and 1 year after closure. A measure of depression demonstrated that changes in psychological well-being were not influencing the physical well being indices based on daily health diary kept by the respondents. According to Hamilton, Hoffman, Broman and Rauman (1993), unemployment is associated with depression and vice versa. They conducted a longitudinal study on workers in 4 closing and 12 non-closing general motor plants. Workers were interviewed 3 months before plants closed, one year after and two years after. Their findings show that unemployment and depression predict one another, but they do not prove that they cause one another.

Feather and Davenport (1981), conducted a study to test the hypothesis that the negative effect that follows failure to obtain employment will be stronger among the individuals who are strongly motivated to seek employment than among those who are less motivated. The subjects were recruited through the helping agencies concerned with unemployment. The subjects with higher levels of depressive affect indicated that they were initially more confident of getting the job and more in need of a job after leaving school than those with lower levels of depressive affect. They viewed employment as an attractive goal. There was no statistically significant sex difference.

Reynolds and Gilbert (1991), employed BDI to test the specific interactional model in which specific protective factors interact with vulnerability to depression in individual who are unemployed. Half of the subjects were recruited by the health visitors and the other half was recruited through a mandatory one

week skill's course of unemployed white-collar workers. There were no significant differences in mean BDI score between two unemployed groups (BDI mean = 10) . There were no significant correlations between BDI scores and gender.

2.6 CONCLUSION

All writers who have described the course of unemployment seem to agree on the following points. Firstly, there is a shock which is followed by an active hunt for a job, during which the individual is still optimistic and unresigned. He still maintains an unbroken attitude. Secondly, when all efforts fail, the individual becomes pessimistic, anxious and suffers active distress. This is the most crucial stage. Thirdly, the individual becomes fatalistic and adapts himself to his new state but with a narrow scope. He now has a broken attitude. However there are large individual differences, but one would suspect that the various types of attitude maintained are more a function of a stage of unemployment than anything else though there is no doubt that they are also a function of the other predisposing factors.

In respect of possible relationships between unemployment and measures of depression and unemployment and the measure of self-esteem, there is no clear evidence to suggest such a relationship. Contradictory findings have been obtained. These findings might be influenced by the following factors:

- The fact that different scales have been used to determine the relationship between unemployment and depression and unemployment and self-esteem. Depression scales measure different aspects of depression. The Hamilton rating scale, the Leeds- and Zung Self Rating Depressive scales assess depressive mood or affect and BDI assesses the severity of depression. The self-esteem scales measure either negative or positive self-esteem but they failed to yield similar findings.
- Financial pressures, social networks, reemployment opportunities and dissatisfaction with employment might have a significant impact on depression and self-esteem scores obtained by the subjects. This is supported by the findings of Klein et al (1992), Mallinckrodt and Bennett (1992), Muller (1992) and Winefield et al (1991) who find no significant relationship between unemployment and depression as well as unemployment and lowered self esteem.

- **The rate of unemployment.** Winefield, Tiggemann and Winefield (1991), conducted their study when the unemployment rate was high in Adelaide. This might probably have influenced the perceptions of the unemployed subjects hence, there was no significant relationship found between unemployment and depression.
- **The educational background of the unemployed.** Most studies conducted focused on blue-collar workers and these workers are either semi-skilled or unskilled. With advancing technology and demand for people with specific qualifications, blue collar workers become aware that if there is any retrenchment planned, they are the ones to be mostly affected. The studies conducted by Kasl et al (1975), and Reynolds and Gilbert (1991), did not reveal any relationship between unemployment and self-esteem and unemployment and depression. In the study conducted by Kasl et al (1975), depression was related to financial pressures among the blue collar workers.

When assessing the relationship between self-esteem and unemployment and depression and unemployment one should consider the above mentioned factors which might have a moderating effect in the relationship between these variables. The impact of demographic variables remains unclear because most studies failed to determine a statistically significant relationship between unemployment and these variables especially gender and length of unemployment.

The rising rate of unemployment has direct implications for the counselling profession. Unemployment often results in moderate to severe emotional responses which may require therapeutic intervention. Counselling in general and career counselling can play significant roles in helping individuals cope with the emotional, psychological and interpersonal effects of unemployment.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

A cross-sectional design was used to survey both employed and unemployed subjects in order to obtain comparative data. The design was selected particularly for this study because it is practical, relatively easy to manage and economical in terms of time.

3.2 SUBJECTS

Research subjects were recruited from the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) offices in Johannesburg. They were informed that participation was completely voluntary and would not have any negative consequences, should they decide to withdraw. They were requested not to write their names on the questionnaires so as to remain anonymous. Questionnaires were distributed by the researcher to 100 Africans who were visiting the offices in order to register as unemployed and seek assistance in their job search process. Seventy eight (78) questionnaires were returned and were accurately completed.

The control subjects were recruited from Portnet in Richards Bay and Ngwelezane hospital at Empangeni. Subjects at Portnet were recruited during on-job training lectures and twenty five (25) questionnaires were distributed to them. At Ngwelezane hospital, twenty five (25) questionnaires were distributed to administrative personnel. All subjects from Portnet returned their accurately completed questionnaires. Only fourteen (14) accurately completed questionnaires were returned by the subjects from Ngwelezane hospital.

The sample for the study therefore consisted of subjects recruited from different regions with research subjects from Gauteng and the control group from KwaZulu-Natal. The researcher believes that the problem of unemployment in South Africa is a national one since it affects all the regions. Its impact should not be influenced by regional factors.

3.3 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instrument for the study consisted of a three-section questionnaire which attempted to determine the relationship between unemployment and

depression and low self-esteem. Section A consisted of such demographic data as age, gender, marital status, educational background, number of dependants, total income per month, source of income and duration of present unemployment.

Section B was a question requiring a brief qualitative description of the experience of being unemployed. This question was answered by both employed and unemployed subjects with the former referring to their past or previous experiences of being unemployed. Data was analysed through coding and categorization of the primary patterns in the data. Triangulation through reconciling qualitative and quantitative data was done (Patton, 1990).

Section C consisted of 30 items derived from a depressive affect scale and Self-esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965; Zung, 1967). The Guttman self-esteem and the Zung self rating scale were selected for this particular study because of the following considerations:

- ***Ease of administration.*** Both scales are simple to administer. They only require the respondent to check his answers to 10 self-esteem- and to 20 depression items.
- ***Economy of time.*** In order to obtain the cooperation of the respondents, it was necessary to use anonymous questionnaires which could be filled in within a short period of time.
- ***Face validity.*** The items on both scales belong to the dimensions measured i.e. depression and self-esteem.

The ten self-esteem items were derived from the Guttman scale which is known to have a satisfactory reproducibility and scalability. The items were:

- ▶ *I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on equal plane with others.
- ▶ *I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
- ▶ *I am able to do things as well as most other people.
- ▶ I feel that I do not have much to be proud of.
- ▶ Sometimes I feel I am not good at all.
- ▶ *I am a useful guy to have around.
- ▶ When I do a job I do it well.
- ▶ *I feel that I can't do anything right.
- ▶ I take a positive attitude toward myself.

- ▶ *I feel that my life is not very useful.
(* denotes positive responses)

Twenty depression items were derived from Zung's self rating Depression Scale devised to comprehensively quantify the symptoms present in a depressive disorder. The items of the scale were selected because the researcher's bias is minimized and the results are not likely to be affected by demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status, educational level, financial status or intelligence level. To determine the influence of such personal variables as age, gender and marital status, the Zung SDS was administered to 159 outpatients in the Duke psychiatric clinic. Correlation between SDS scores and age, using the Pearson product-moment correlation for the calculation of the coefficient r , resulted in a value of 0.06. The mean SDS scores for male and female patients tested were 52 and 55 respectively. P was found to be greater than 0.05 using a t -test. Mean SDS scores grouped by marital status as single, married, divorced and separated were 52, 54, 57 and 59 respectively. It was concluded that SDS scores are not influenced by the above mentioned personal variables (Zung , 1967). The items are:

- ▶ I feel down-hearted.
- ▶ *Morning is when I feel the best.
- ▶ I have crying spells or feel like it.
- ▶ I have trouble sleeping at night.
- ▶ *I eat as much as I used to.
- ▶ * I still enjoy sex.
- ▶ I notice that I am losing weight.
- ▶ I have trouble with constipation.
- ▶ My heart beats faster than usual.
- ▶ I get tired for no reason.
- ▶ *My mind is as clear as it used to be.
- ▶ *I find it easy to do the things I used to.
- ▶ I am restless and can't keep still.
- ▶ *I feel hopeful about the future.
- ▶ I am more irritable than usual.
- ▶ *I find it easy to make decisions.
- ▶ *I feel that I am useful and needed.
- ▶ *My life is pretty full.
- ▶ I feel that others would be better off if I were dead.
- ▶ *I still enjoy the things I used to do.

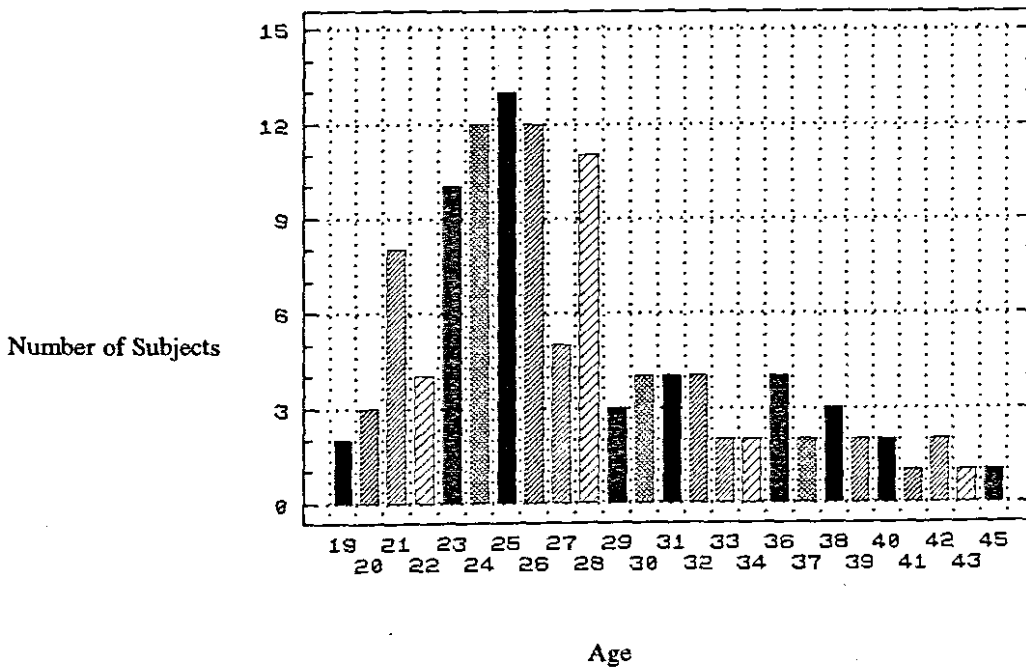
Positive and negative items were presented alternately in order to reduce the effect of respondent set. Positive responses are indicated by asterisks. Subjects were requested to respond by making a cross in one of the following responses which were written next to the items included in a scale: almost always true, always true, not true and never true.

A pilot study was done in order to establish the validity and reliability of the research instrument. Fifty questionnaires were distributed to first year University of Zululand students. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, correlation coefficients for inner category inter-item correlations were computed. The test statistics yielded 0.6 (Pearson correlation coefficient).

3.4 PRESENTATION OF DATA

3.4.1 Age of the subjects

3.1: Histogram - Age of the subjects



The histogram reveals that 44% of all the subjects were between the ages 19 and 25, 38.5% were between the ages 26 and 33 and 17.1% were between the ages 34 and 45. The mean ages for employed and unemployed subjects were 31.8 and 25.7 respectively and the mean age for the whole sample was 27.8.

3.4.2 Marital Status

Table 3.2 below reveals that 74.4% of the sample were single, 23% were married and 1.7% were divorced. Within the unemployed subjects, 87.2% were single, 10.2% were married and 2.6% were divorced.

Table 3.2: Marital Status and Employment Status

Marital status	Unemployed	Employed
Single	68 (87.2 %)	19 (48.7 %)
Married	8 (10.2 %)	20 (51.3 %)
Divorced	2 (2.6 %)	-
Totals	78	39
TOTAL (Unemployed + Employed)		117

3.4.3 Number of Dependants

Table 3.3 reveals that 51.3% and 15.4% of unemployed and employed subjects respectively have no dependants. 35.9% of employed subjects have more than four dependants and 38% of unemployed have dependants ranging between 1 and 4.

Table 3.3: Number of Dependants and Employment Status

Dependants	Unemployed	Employed
Nil	40 (51.3 %)	6 (15.4 %)
1 - 4	38 (48.7 %)	19 (48.7 %)
5 - 8	-	12 (30.8 %)
9 - 12	-	2 (5.1 %)
Totals	78	39
Total (Unemployed + Employed) =		117

3.4.4 Educational Background

Table 3.4: Educational Background and Employment Status

Educational Background	Unemployed		Employed	
0 Level	1	(1.3 %)	-	
B Admin*	1	(1.3 %)	1	(2.6 %)
Diploma	1	(1.3 %)	-	
Level 3	-		1	(2.6 %)
N1	-		1	(2.6 %)
N2	1	(1.3 %)	-	
NTC	1	(1.3 %)	1	(2.6 %)
STD 10	66	(84.6 %)	18	(46.2 %)
STD 10 + Cert	1	(1.3 %)	-	
STD 9	6	(7.6 %)	3	(7.6 %)
STD 8	-		5	(12.7 %)
STD 7	-		9	(23.1 %)
Totals	78		39	
Total (Unemployed + Employed) = 117				

*Degree

Table 3.4 reveals that 84.6% and 46.2% of unemployed and employed subjects respectively have standard 10 and this constitutes 71.8% of the total sample. Only 1.7% of the total sample have degrees.

3.4.5 Income

Table 3.5: Income and Employment Status

Income	Unemployed	Employed
Nil	73 (93.6 %)	-
R100 - R999.99	5 (6.4 %)	4 (10.3 %)
R1 000 - R1 999.99	-	16 (41.0 %)
R2 000 - R2 999.99	-	12 (30.7 %)
R3 000 - R3 999.99	-	6 (15.4 %)
R4 000 - R4 999.99	-	1 (2.6 %)
Totals	78	39
Total (Unemployed + Employed) = 117		

The above table reveals that 93.6 % of the unemployed subjects have no income. Out of 6.4 % of unemployed who receive some income, 5.1 % obtain their income from the UIF offices and 1.3 % obtain it from their parents estate.

3.5 METHOD OF SCORING AND PROCEDURES FOR ANALYSING DATA

The subjects were requested to indicate their feelings by making a cross in an appropriate column. Responses were in terms of four alternatives: almost always true, always true, not true and never true. The self-esteem scale items were scored 4 to 1 respectively for negative items. A high score thus indicates a favourable assessment of self worth in both cases. The depressive affect scale items were scored 4 to 1 respectively for negative items and 1 to 4 respectively for positive items. A high score thus indicates that the respondent is depressed. The total scores for each respondent were obtained by adding the values of the individual items. The total score for all respondents were added together and divided by the number of respondents to determine the mean score for the total sample ($\bar{x} = 21.0$). The median was 22 and the mode was 23. The mean for the unemployed subjects was 20.5.

The highest possible score for depression was 80 and the lowest possible score was 20. The mean score for the total sample was 46.4. The mean score for the unemployed subjects was 45.6. The mode and the median were similar to that of the total sample. Respondent's responses were categorized as follows: Group A (20 - 40) no depression; Group B (41 - 60) mild to moderate depression and Group C (61 - 80) severe depression.

The highest possible score for the self-esteem scale was 40 and the lowest possible score was 10. Respondent's responses were categorized as follows: Group A (10 - 20) low self-esteem, Group B (21 - 30) moderate self-esteem and Group C (31 - 40) high self-esteem.

3.5.1 The Group

To test the hypothesis that there is a relationship between unemployment and depression, and unemployment and lowered self-esteem, a chi square test was used to analyse data (Cramer; 1994). Respondents responses were grouped into three categories as stated in the previous section on method of scoring and procedures for analysing data. A chi square test was used to test whether significant differences exist between the observed frequencies and the expected frequencies based on the null hypothesis. It was decided that, if the null hypothesis was accepted, the self-esteem scores would be low and the depressive affect score would be high among the unemployed.

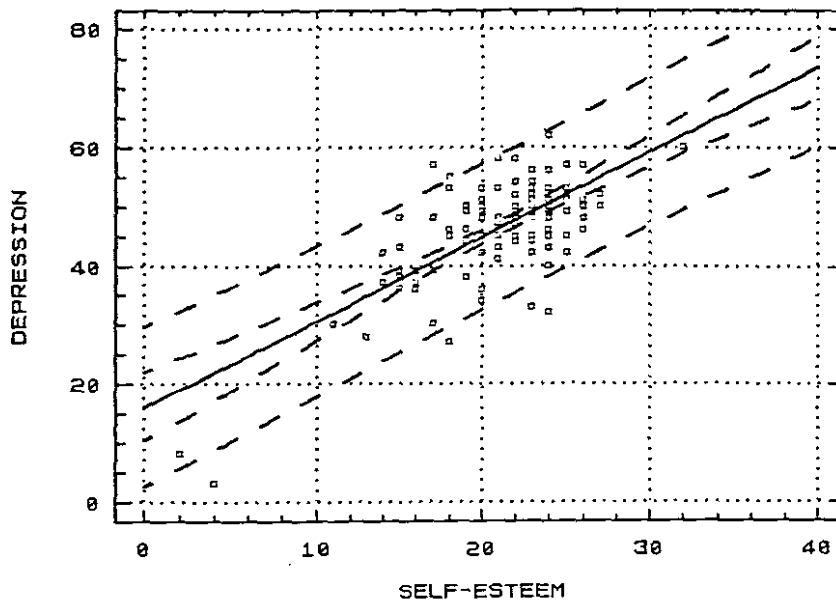
3.5.2 Personal Variables

To analyse and the effect of personal variables such as gender, age, duration of unemployment and marital status, a chi-square test for K independent samples was used (Cramer, 1994: 83). It was used to test the hypothesis that personal variables such as age, gender, number of dependents and duration of unemployment would be significantly associated with depression and lowered self-esteem of the unemployed respondents.

3.5.3 The Relationship among Variables

To analyse and describe the magnitude of the relationship between depression and self-esteem, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient (Pearson r) test was used.

3.6: A Scatter Diagram-Relationship between Depression and Self-esteem



The correlation coefficient obtained was 0,7 and the standard error of estimate was 6.18. The researcher was able to conclude that there is a statistically significant positive correlation between the two variables (Cramer; 1994).

3.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter the characteristics of the subjects, the instrument, the hypotheses and the method of scoring and the procedures for analysing data have been described. A large number of people seeking employment were between the ages 23 and 28. Unmarried unemployed constituted the largest number of job-seekers. The highest number of job-seekers did not have a tertiary qualification. The large number of unemployed respondents are dependent on significant others for support.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the analysis of data will be discussed with the intention of determining the relationship between unemployment and depression and low self-esteem. The influence of such personal variables as gender, age, marital status and the duration of employment on depression and low self-esteem scores obtained by the respondents will also be presented. Triangulation was done to reconcile quantitative and qualitative data. It should be noted that depression and self-esteem consist of three groups as mentioned previously in section 3.5. These groups are:

Table 4.1: Groups, Depression and Self-esteem

Groups	Depression	self-esteem
Group A	Not depressed	Low self-esteem
Group B	Mild to moderate	Moderate self-esteem
Group C	Severely depressed	High self-esteem

Group C was collapsed into group B because these cells had one frequency i.e. only one respondent obtained a severely depressed score and one other obtained a high self-esteem score. In the case of depression tables the subheadings "not depressed" and "mild to moderate depressed" will be used. In the case of self-esteem tables the subheadings "low self-esteem" and "moderate self-esteem" will be used.

4.2 THE VALENCE OF THE RELATIONSHIP IN THE SAMPLES.

4.2.1 Groups and Depression

To test the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between unemployment and depression, a chi square two sample test was used (Cramer, 1994: 79).

Table 4.2: Groups and Depression

Status	Not depressed	Mild to moderate
Unemployed	16 (20.5 %)	62 (79.5 %)
Employed	4 (10.3 %)	35 (89.7 %)
Totals	20	97
Total (Group A + B) = 117		

Table 4.2 shows the observed values for both unemployed and employed respondents. About 20.5 % of the unemployed respondents were not depressed, 78.2 % were mild to moderately depressed and 1.3 % were severely depressed. Among the employed respondents 10.3 % were not depressed, and 89.7 % were mild to moderately depressed. A chi square value of 1.5 at $df = 1$ was obtained for table 4.2.1. It was not significant at the chosen level of significance i.e. 0.05. Since $p > 0.05$ the decision was to accept the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no statistically significant relationship between unemployment and depression.

4.2.2 Groups and Self-esteem

Table 4.3: Groups and Self-esteem

Status	Low self-esteem	Moderate self-esteem
Unemployed	32 (41.0 %)	46 (59.0 %)
Employed	13 (33.3 %)	26 (66.7 %)
Totals	45	72
Total (Group A + B) = 117		

Table 4.3 above shows that among unemployed respondents, 41.0 % had a low self-esteem, 59.0 % had moderate self-esteem and none had high self-esteem. Among the employed respondents, 33.3 % had low self-esteem, 64.1 % had moderate self-esteem and 2.6 % had high self-esteem. To test the hypothesis that there is a relationship between unemployment and lowered self-esteem a chi square two sample test was used for table 4.2.2. A chi square value of 0.7 was obtained at $df = 1$. It was not significant at the chosen level of significance i.e.

0.05. Since $p > 0.05$ the decision was to accept the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no relationship between unemployment and lowered self-esteem.

4.3 THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL VARIABLES ON DEPRESSION.

4.3.1 Gender and Depression.

Table 4.4: Gender and Depression

Gender	Not depressed	Mild to moderate
Males	6 (7.8 %)	31 (39.7 %)
Females	10 (12.8 %)	31 (39.7 %)
Totals	16	62
Total (Group A + B) = 78		

Table 4.4 above shows that among the unemployed respondents, 7.8 % males were not depressed, 39.7 % males were mild to moderately depressed, 12.8 % females were not depressed and 39.7 % females were mild to moderately depressed. To test the hypothesis that unemployed male respondents would be more depressed than unemployed female respondents, a chi square test was used. A chi square value of 0.8 at $df = 1$ and contingency coefficient of 0.01 were obtained. The null hypothesis was accepted at 0.05 level of significance. Since $p > 0.05$ the researcher concluded that depression is not associated with gender.

4.3.2 Age and Depression

Table 4.5: Age and Depression

Age	Not depressed	Mild to moderate
19 - 25	10 (12.8 %)	33 (42.3 %)
26 - 33	5 (6.4 %)	26 (33.3 %)
34 - 48	1 (1.3 %)	3 (3.9 %)
Totals	16	62
Total Group (A + B) = 78		

Table 4.5 shows that among the unemployed respondents, 20.5 % between ages 19 and 48 were not depressed. About 42.3 %, 33.3 % and 3.9 % between the ages 19 and 25, 26 and 33 and 34 and 48 respectively were mild to moderately depressed. To test the hypothesis that unemployed subjects above the age of 25 years would be more depressed than those between the ages 19 and 25, a chi square test for independent K samples was used (Cramer, 1994: 83). A chi square value of 0,6 at $df = 2$ and the contingency coefficient of 0.02 were obtained. This indicates that there is no relationship between the age and depression. The obtained value of 0.6 was not significant at the chosen level of significance i.e. 0.05. Since $p > 0.05$ the decision was to accept the null hypothesis and conclude that depression is not associated with age.

4.3.3 Duration of Unemployment and Depression

Table 4.6: Duration of Unemployment and Depression

Months	Not depressed	Mild to moderate
1 - 21	10 (12.8 %)	39 (50.0 %)
22 - 42	3 (3.9 %)	14 (17.9 %)
43 - 63	3 (3.9 %)	5 (6.4 %)
64 - 84	-	4 (5.1 %)
Totals	16	62
Total Group (A + B) = 78		

Table 4.6 above shows that among the unemployed respondent 20.6 % unemployed for between 1 month and 7 years were not depressed. About 50 % of unemployed respondents for between 1 and 21 months, 17.9 % unemployed for between 22 and 42 months, 6.4 % unemployed for between 43 and 63 months and 5.1 % unemployed for between 64 and 84 months were mild to moderately depressed. To test the hypothesis that respondents unemployed for more than a year and a half would be more depressed than those unemployed for less than a year and a half, a chi square test for independent K samples was used (Cramer, 1994: 83). A chi square value of 2.5 at $df = 3$ and contingency coefficient of 0.2 were obtained. This indicates that there is no relationship between duration of unemployment and depression. Since $p > 0.05$ the researcher decided to accept the null hypothesis and conclude that depression is not associated with duration of unemployment.

4.3.4 Marital Status and Depression

Table 4.7: Marital Status and Depression

Marital Status	Not depressed	Mild to moderate
Single	14 (17.9 %)	54 (69.2 %)
Married	1 (1.3 %)	7 (8.9 %)
Divorced	1 (1.3 %)	2 (2.6 %)
Totals	16	62
Total Group (A + B) = 78		

Table 4.7 above shows that among the unemployed respondents, 17.9 % single, 1.3 % married and 1.3 % divorced were not depressed. About 69.2 % of single, 8.9 % married and 2.6 % divorced unemployed respondents were mild to moderately depressed. To test the hypothesis that married and divorced unemployed respondents would be more depressed than the single unemployed respondents, a chi square test for independent K samples was used (Cramer, 1994: 83). A Chi square value of 0.53 at $df = 2$ and contingency coefficient of 0.003 were obtained. This indicates that there is no relationship between marital status and depression. The obtained value of 0.53 was not significant at 0.05 level of significance. Since $p > 0.05$ the decision was to accept the null hypothesis and conclude that depression is not associated with marital status.

4.4 THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL VARIABLES ON SELF-ESTEEM

4.4.1 Gender and Self-Esteem

Table 4.8: Gender and Self-Esteem

Gender	Low self-esteem	Moderate
Males	14 (17.9 %)	23 (29.5 %)
Females	18 (23.1 %)	23 (29.5 %)
Totals	32	46
Total (Group A + B) = 78		

Table 4.8 shows that 17.9 % and 29.5 % of unemployed males had low and moderate self-esteem respectively. About 23.1 % and 29.5 % of unemployed females had low and moderate self-esteem respectively. To test the hypothesis that unemployed male respondents would have low self-esteem than unemployed female respondents, a chi square test for K independent samples was used (Cramer, 1994: 83). A chi square value of 0.2 at $df = 1$ and contingency coefficient of 0.06 were obtained. This indicates that there is no relationship between gender and self-esteem. Since $p > 0.05$ the decision was to accept the null hypothesis and conclude that self-esteem is not associated with gender.

4.4.2 Age and Self-Esteem

Table 4.9: Age and Self-esteem

Age	Low self-esteem	Moderate
19 - 25	14 (17.9 %)	29 (37.2 %)
26 - 33	15 (19.2 %)	16 (20.5 %)
34 - 48	3 (3.9 %)	1 (1.3 %)
Totals	32	46
Total (Group A + B) = 78		

Table 4.9 above shows that 17.9 %, 19.2 % and 3.9 % of unemployed subjects between the ages 19 and 25, 26 and 33 and 34 and 48 respectively had low self-esteem. About 37.2 %, 20.5 % and 1.3 % of unemployed respondents between ages 19 and 25, 26 and 33 and 34 and 48 respectively had moderate self-esteem. To test the hypothesis that unemployed respondents above the age of 25 years would have more lowered self-esteem than those between the age 26 and 48, a chi square test for independent K samples was used (Cramer, 1994: 83). A chi square value of 3.9 at $df = 2$ and contingency coefficient of 0.2 were obtained. This indicates that there is no relationship between self-esteem and age. Since $p > 0.05$ the decision was to uphold the null hypothesis and conclude that low self-esteem is not associated with age.

4.4.3 Duration of Unemployment and Self-esteem

Table 4.10: Duration of Unemployment and Self-esteem

Months	Low self-esteem	Moderate
1 - 21	20 (25.6 %)	29 (37.1 %)
22 - 42	7 (8.9 %)	10 (12.8 %)
43 - 63	4 (5.1 %)	4 (5.1 %)
64 - 84	1 (1.3 %)	3 (3.9 %)
Totals	32	46
Total (Group A + B) = 78		

Table 4.10 above shows that 40.9 % of the unemployed respondent with low self-esteem had been unemployed for a period ranging between 1 month and 7 years. About 37.2 %, 12.8 %, 5.1% and 3.9 % of respondents unemployed for a period ranging between 1 and 21 months, 22 and 42 months, 43 and 63 months and 64 and 84 months respectively had moderate self-esteem. To test the hypothesis that respondents unemployed for more than a year and a half would have low self-esteem than those unemployed for less than a year and a half, a chi square test for independent K samples was used (Cramer, 1994: 83). A chi square value of 0.6 at $df = 3$ and contingency coefficient of 0.1 were obtained. This indicates that there is no relationship between duration of unemployment and low self-esteem. Since $p > 0.05$ the researcher decided to accept the null hypothesis and conclude that low self-esteem is not associated with duration of unemployment.

4.4.4 Marital Status and Self-Esteem

Table 4.11: Marital Status and Self-esteem

Marital Status	Low self-esteem	Moderate
Single	26 (33.3 %)	42 (53.8 %)
Married	2 (2.6 %)	5 (6.4 %)
Divorced	2 (2.6 %)	1 (1.3 %)
Totals	30	48
Total (Group A + B) = 78		

Table 4.11 shows that 33.3 %, 2.6 % and 2.6 % of single, married and divorced unemployed respondents respectively had low self-esteem. About 53.8 %, 6.4 % and 1.3 % of unemployed single, married and divorced respondents respectively had moderate self-esteem. To test the hypothesis that married and divorced unemployed respondents would have lowered self-esteem than the single unemployed respondents, a chi square test for K independent sample was used (Cramer, 1994: 83). A chi square value of 1.44 at $df = 1$ and contingency coefficient of 0.03 were obtained. This suggests that there is no relationship between marital status and low self-esteem. Since $p > 0.05$ the researcher decided to accept the null hypothesis and conclude that low self-esteem is not associated with marital status.

4.5 EXPERIENCE OF BEING UNEMPLOYED

All unemployed and employed respondents were requested to describe their experience of being unemployed. They were neither disallowed to use their mother tongue nor encouraged to use it when responding to the question. About 98.7 % of respondents responded in English and 1.3 % responded in Zulu. Zulu responses were translated into English. Responses given were very short. The responses and their frequencies are presented in table 4.12 below.

Table 4.12: Experience of being unemployed for both employed and unemployed respondents

Experience	N	%
loss trust	1	1.3%
hopeless	5	6.4%
lonely and empty	3	3.9 %
helpless	3	3.9 %
loss of friends	3	3.9 %
moneyless	12	15.4 %
heart breaking	1	1.3 %
feel sorry	1	1.3 %

Experience	N	%
burden to husband	1	1.3 %
feel dependent like a child	3	3.9 %
cannot make an independent decision	3	3.9 %
hopeful	9	11.5 %
loss of self-confidence	3	3.9 %
frustrated	6	7.7 %
thought of stealing	3	3.9 %
world is splitting into two	1	1.3 %
inability to meet one's responsibility as a married person	1	1.3 %
stigma	2	2.6 %
optimistic	2	2.6 %
inability to support children	3	3.9 %
inability to pay rent	3	3.9 %
loss of love and dignity	2	2.6 %
borrow money	1	1.3 %
prostitution (thought)	2	2.6 %
no sense of identity	2	2.6 %
future planning impossible	3	3.9 %
inability to pay for children's tuition	3	3.9 %
displeasing	2	2.6 %
unable to buy food and clothes	6	7.7 %
sad	3	3.9 %
poverty	2	2.6 %
worried about not working	9	11.5 %
inability to meet job requirements	3	3.9 %

Experience	N	%
cannot live a fulfilling life	4	5.1 %
unhappy	3	3.9 %
patience required in job search	2	2.6 %
blame oneself	5	6.4 %
depression	2	2.6 %

Table 4.12 above shows the frequencies of experiences of both unemployed and employed respondents in terms of thoughts, feelings and actions. About 3.9 % and 2.6 % thought of criminal acts such as house breaking and theft and prostitution respectively. All respondents reported experiences ranging from loss of trust, hopelessness, loss of identity, frustration, sadness, poverty, unhappiness, helplessness, boredom, displeasure, depression to optimism and hopefulness. About 15.4 % of all respondents experienced financial strain and 3.9 % lost their friends. Only 6.4 % of all respondents blamed themselves for being unemployed. About 7.7 % and 3,9 % reported inability to meet the children's needs such as food and clothing as well as inability to pay children's tuition respectively. Only 3.9 % reported inability to pay rent. About 2.6 % realised that job-seeking requires patience.

4.6 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The aims of the study were to determine any statistically significant relationship between unemployment depression and low self-esteem and to determine whether self-esteem and depression were related to such personal variables as age, gender, duration of unemployment and marital status. The first hypothesis was: there would be a positive relationship between unemployment and both low self-esteem and depression.

The results of this study did not confirm the postulated hypothesis. Both unemployed and employed subjects obtained similar scores with regard to depression and self-esteem. The chi square values obtained suggest that there are no statistically significant relationships between unemployment and either low self-esteem or depression. The findings of Brand and Pullen (1991), Frost and Clayson (1991) and Winefield, Tiggemann and Winefield (1991) are confirmed by the present study. According to these studies there was no conclusive

evidence that unemployment weakens self-confidence and lowers self-esteem. The findings of the present research also correspond with those of Hartley (1980) and Rundquist and Sletto (1936). However Warr and Jackson (1983) and Perfetti and Bingham (1983) reported that unemployed respondents were found to have significantly more negative self-esteem than the employed. With regard to unemployment and depression, Feather and O'Brien (1986) and Winefield et al (1991) failed to find a significant relationship between these two variables. However, Klein, Amundson and Borgen (1992) reported significant relationships between unemployment and depression. They found unemployed respondents to be more depressed than the employed.

An analysis of the relationship between such personal variables as age, gender, marital status and duration of unemployment and depression and low self-esteem of unemployed respondents was performed considering the stated hypotheses which were as follows:

- unemployed male respondents would be more depressed with lowered self-esteem than female respondents.
- unemployed respondents above the age of 25 years would be more depressed with lowered self esteem than those between the ages 19 and 25 years.
- unemployed married and divorced respondents would be more depressed with lowered self-esteem than unmarried respondents.
- respondents unemployed for more than a year and a half would be more depressed with lowered self-esteem than those unemployed for a period less than a year and a half.

All the above hypotheses were rejected. This suggests that there is no statistically significant relationship between these personal variables and depression and self-esteem scores obtained by the unemployed respondents. Feather and Davenport (1981), support the findings of this study since they found no statistically significant sex differences between unemployed respondents with regard to depressive affect. Breakwell, Harrison and Propper (1984) also reported no significant sex differences in response to varying lengths of unemployment. However, Winefield and Tiggemann (1985) reported that men had generally less depression and higher self-esteem than women. Zung (1967), found no statistically significant differences in the scores obtained by the outpatients on whom the Self rating Depression Scale (SDS) was validated. Correlation between SDS scores and age using the Pearson product-moment

correlation (Pearson r) resulted in a low coefficient of 0.06. Statistical analysis using a t-test comparing mean SDS scores by sex and marital status indicated no significant differences in their values. Since the unemployed respondents in this study were mild to moderately depressed, they were generally able to view their thoughts with objectivity and their feelings of hopelessness had not paralysed their will as in line with Beck's theory of depression (Beck, Rush, Shaw and Emery; 1979).

Both employed and unemployed respondents reported similar unemployment experiences in the form of thoughts, feelings and acts. Experiences of unemployment reported by all respondents ranged from financial hardship, boredom, hopelessness, frustration, stigma, helplessness, dependency, loss of self-confidence and identity, sadness, loss of social contacts, unhappiness and depression and thoughts of criminal acts such as house breaking and theft to optimism and hopefulness. These findings are supported by the research work of Buss and Redburn (1983), Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938), Mallinckrodt and Bennett (1992), Kilpatrick and Trew (1985), Sheeran and McCarthy (1992), Rundquist and Sletto (1936) and Reynold and Gilbert (1991). Financial hardship was found to be a significant source of stress for about 15.4 % of the respondents. Daniel, cited by Harrison (1976), concluded that the chief source of deprivation in unemployment clearly remains economic. Thoughts of prostitution (2.6 %) as an experience which is not highlighted in the available literature on unemployment needs further investigation since it is linked to financial hardship. About 7.7 %, and 3.9 % of unemployed respondents reported inability to meet children's basic needs such as food and clothing and inability to pay children's tuition respectively. Only 6.4 % of unemployed respondents blamed themselves for being unemployed.

The experiences reported by both unemployed and employed respondents do not reconcile with the 20-item Zung Self rating Scale- and the 10-item Guttman Scale scores obtained by the respondents. About 78.2 % and 89.5 % of the unemployed and employed respondents were mild to moderately depressed respectively. About 41.0 % and 33.3 % of the unemployed and employed respondents respectively had low self-esteem. For both of the above comparisons a statistically significant difference was not found between the scores of employed and unemployed respondents. When applying the grieving model of Kubler-Ross (1969), used by Finley and Lee (1981), to describe the emotional reaction of loss of employment i.e. denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance, unemployed respondents in this study appear to be in different grieving stages

with some in the denial stage and others in the bargaining stage. These stages are characterized by ambivalent feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, boredom, frustration due to inability to meet job requirements and optimism and hopefulness, hence they perceived job searching as requiring patience.

This cross-sectional study has failed to identify a statistically significant relationship between unemployment and either low self-esteem or depression. A number of factors should be borne in mind when interpreting the present results:

- ▶ This study was limited to a small sample of Black South Africans and no attempt was made to match individual respondents across the experimental and control groups in terms of age, gender, educational level, marital status and occupational status.
- ▶ This study has been conducted in the era when the unemployment rate is generally high in the whole country because the South African political and economic context is in a state of transition. The few jobs that have been created are unable to meet the demands of groups of people who are seeking employment. The control group of employed respondents might also be affected by the current state in the country.
- ▶ With the continued retrenchment plan as a rationalisation strategy, even employed respondents are not fully secured in their jobs. When retrenchment is considered, the unskilled employees are the first ones to be affected. In this study 84.6 % of the unemployed respondents had standard 10 as the highest qualification and 23.1 %, 12.7 %, 7.6 % and 46.2 % of employed respondents had standard 7, 8, 9 and 10 respectively.
- ▶ About 93.5% of the unemployed respondents did not receive any income and this implies that they are supported by their parents or guardians. About 87.2 % of the unemployed respondents are unmarried and 51.3 % had no dependents. This shows that unemployed respondents have less family responsibility and more responsibility towards themselves as compared with employed respondents who have dependents.
- ▶ About 89,79 % of the unemployed respondents in this study have never engaged in a stable job, therefore they have never experienced the benefits

of employment such as shared experiences, a sense of status and identity. Their reaction to unemployment will not be similar to those who have lost their jobs.

The results of this study are similar to those reported by other researchers. There are other factors which were not considered in this study which may have an impact on the experience of unemployment. These factors are a person's activity level, social support, other recent negative events, socio-economic status and personal vulnerability to stress. The combined effects of these moderators require some attention.

4.7 CONCLUSION

This study has failed to determine a statistically significant relationship between unemployment and either depression or low self-esteem. These findings are not different from the findings of other researchers. The results of this study suggest that the psychological impacts of unemployment are by no means simple. Unemployed people should not be regarded as a homogenous group with regard to their reactions to joblessness. It should not be assumed that every unemployed person passes through a similar pattern of subjective experience. It is crucial to remember that unemployed individuals with their own distinct personalities, expectations, previous experiences and networks of relationships react to unemployment and its process differently.

4.8 SUMMARY

In this chapter the results were analysed and discussed in order to determine the relationship between unemployment, low self-esteem and depression and to analyse the effect of personal variables on depression and self-esteem scores obtained by the unemployed respondents. The valence of the relationship between the samples of employed and unemployed respondents was tested. Statistically significant relationships between the two samples in terms of depression and lowered self-esteem was not found. Personal variables such as gender, age, marital status and duration of unemployment were not found to be significantly related to depression and self-esteem scores obtained by the unemployed respondents.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the conclusions that have been drawn from the findings of the study. It also recommends areas which need further investigation and a plan of action in order to help the unemployed people in the community.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were drawn from the study:

5.2.1 The Valence of the Relationship between groups

This study failed to determine a statistically significant relationship between unemployment and either depression or low self-esteem. Both unemployed and employed respondents had similar depression and self-esteem scores. About 20.5 % and 10.3 % of unemployed and employed respondents respectively were not depressed. About 78.2 % and 89.5 % of unemployed and employed respondents respectively were mild to moderately depressed. Only 1.3 % of the unemployed respondents were severely depressed.

About 40.0 % and 33.3 % of unemployed and employed respondents respectively had low self-esteem. About 58.9 % and 64.1 % of unemployed and employed respondents respectively had moderate self-esteem. Only 1.3 % of the employed respondents had high self-esteem.

The findings of this study are confirmed by other studies conducted by Brand and Pullen (1991), Frost and Clayson (1991), and Winefield, Tiggemann and Winefield (1991), who found no statistically significant relationship between unemployment and depression and low self-esteem.

Personal variables such as age, gender, duration of unemployment and marital status were not found to be statistically significantly related to depression and self-esteem scores obtained by the unemployed respondents. This finding is confirmed by Zung (1967), Breakwell, Harrison and Propper (1984), and Feather and Davenport (1981), who also did not find a statistically significant relationship between the above mentioned personal variables and depression.

5.2.2 The Experience of Unemployment

Both unemployed and employed respondents gave their experiences of being unemployed in terms of thoughts, feelings and acts. Thoughts and feelings experienced by them ranged from loss of trust, hopelessness, helplessness, boredom, financial hardship, dependency, frustration, stigma, sadness, poverty, loss of confidence, unhappiness, inability to meet the children's need and to pay school tuition for children, loss of friends and thoughts of house breaking and stealing, to optimism and hopefulness are not different from those highlighted by other researchers such as Rundquist and Sletto (1936), Banks and Ullah (1988), Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938) and Rosenberg (1965). Thoughts of prostitution which were reported by 2.6 % of the respondents need further investigation as they are linked to financial hardship.

There is no reconciliation between qualitative data and quantitative data obtained because the non-parametric test used failed to yield a statistically significant relationship between unemployment and either depression or self-esteem . When applying the grieving model of Kubler-Ross (1969), unemployed respondents in this particular study appear to be in different stages, with some in the denial phase and others in the bargaining phase which is characterised by hope, optimism and enthusiasm to get a job. With prolonged unemployment, these respondents are likely to move to the depressive state and eventually, acceptance, since the chances of getting employment with standard 10 as a highest qualification without any further training in a specific field, are very limited to absent in South Africa.

It is not possible from the data reported to resolve issues of the cause and effect relationship between unemployment and self-esteem and between unemployment and depression. It cannot be argued that unemployment does not impact on self-esteem and depression and vice versa. The development of self-esteem which stems from the self image, is influenced by such social factors as family structure, authority in the family, child rearing values and group norms. The developed self esteem is unique for each individual and the contents of self image are not always consistent, stable, clear, and directional for some individuals though the opposite is true for certain individuals (Rosenberg, 1965).

With regard to depression, people become depressed for many reasons, for varying length of time and in varying degrees. According to the cognitive model of Beck, Rush, Shaw, and Emery (1981), depressed individuals have a tendency to interpret their ongoing experiences in a negative way and tend to attribute their

unpleasant experiences to a psychological, moral or physical defect. In this particular study all respondents highlighted their negative experiences and only 6.4 % of unemployed respondents blamed themselves for being unemployed. About 78 % of unemployed subjects were mild to moderately depressed and these respondents were generally able to view their negative thought with some objectivity. Unemployed individuals should be treated as a heterogenous group because unemployment as an unpleasant stressful situation will not necessarily produce depression unless the person is particularly sensitive to the situation and the process of unemployment because of his cognitive organisation.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The extent to which the findings of this study can be generalised to other population groups experiencing unemployment is unclear. However, given the nature of these findings the researcher recommends the following:

- Future longitudinal studies on the psychological effects of unemployment that include all racial groups should be conducted in South Africa. The suggested studies should be conducted when the subjects are still at school or in employment where retrenchment or closure of the institution is considered. The suggested studies should be extended by incorporating other variables that are associated with unemployment, depression and low self- esteem such as social networks or support, financial hardships, prostitution and coping skills.
- Although this study is descriptive rather than interventional in nature, it still seems obvious that prolonged unemployment is for most people a profoundly corrosive experience, to which some of the worst disadvantaged groups such as the unskilled, the pensioners, the disabled, mentally ill and inexperienced school leavers are vulnerable. Unemployment undermines personality and atrophies work capacity, therefore intervention programmes at a community level are a necessity. Intervention programmes may be in the form of self-help groups, vocational guidance, counselling and psychotherapeutic services.
- This study has identified the need to allow the subjects with a standard 7,8,9, and 10 as their highest qualifications, to use their first language when responding to open-ended questions so that self expression cannot be hindered by poor language ability. Responses given by the subject should

then be translated into the language in which the research is conducted; in this case, in English. This will enhance an understanding in both parties i.e. the researcher and the subjects though it might appear to be time consuming and expensive for the former.

5.3.1 Self Help Groups

Self-help groups should be designed in all communities in South Africa. These groups can be coordinated by mental health professional such as psychologists and social workers. These mental health professionals can in turn invite other professionals whose expertise can contribute to the primary, secondary and tertiary prevention of the negative psychological and social consequences of unemployment. Mental health professionals can design and advertise the programme after preliminary surveys have been conducted on the rate of employment, job opportunities available, skills that the individuals have in the community and other general community resources.

The mental health professionals should also design groups that are more educational than therapeutic in nature. Psychologists can lead groups which concentrate on basic information about social and psychological consequences of joblessness. A group is a good vehicle for preventive services because it permits an exchange of feelings, ideas and experiences. A group reduces the burden of being uncomfortable in the one-to-one relationship with a psychologist. The exchange of information and feelings with others in the same position is a good way of dealing with the negative experiences brought by unemployment and this in turn boosts self- esteem.

Unemployed people should be helped to understand that decrease in self-esteem, feeling of isolation, dependency, anxiety and depression are common reactions to stress. Unemployed people should be educated about the effect joblessness will have on their family relationships. The self-help programme can also include training in other areas that are linked to employment such as assertiveness training, expectations from an interview and business skills. In the latter area, the psychologist can invite business administrators. As the coordinator of self help programmes, psychologists can also provide unemployed people with information on the following:

- ▶ available training courses on basic business skills.
- ▶ organisations that offer advice and assistance to self-employment ventures.

5.3.2 Counselling and Psychotherapy

In addition to self-help programmes, psychologists should provide traditional, psychosocial services. These can be in the form of crisis intervention and brief short-term psychotherapy to help individuals and families with such debilitating symptoms associated with unemployment as suicidal ideation.

5.3.3 Vocational Guidance

The existing vocational guidance material should include material on job seeking skills. The material should include information on where to obtain training in various work skills, on exploration of options to formal wage employment and on training for self-employment as an option to formal wage employment.

5.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter the researcher has outlined conclusions drawn from this study on the psychological correlates of unemployment with specific attention to depression and low self-esteem.

Recommendations on certain areas that require further investigation on the relationship between unemployment and depression and lowered self-esteem, and the intervention strategies that can help unemployed people to cope with the negative psycho-social consequences on unemployment at primary, secondary and tertiary levels have been highlighted.

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APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A

Personal particulars

Encircle the response that indicates your personal particulars.

1. **Gender**
 - 1 Male
 - 2 Female

2. **Age in years**

.....

3. **Marital status**
 - 1 Single
 - 2 Married
 - 3 Divorced
 - 4 Widow/widower
 - 4 Co-habiting

4. **Number of dependants 9 specify e.g. none, 1,2 etc)**

5. **Employment status**
 - 1 employed
 - 2 unemployed

6. **Duration of present unemployment (specify e.g. 2weeks, 2months. 1year etc)**

.....

7. **Highest educational qualification (specify e.g. std 10, BA degree. Primary teacher's diploma etc)**

.....

8. Total income per month (specify gross and other income if any)

9. Source of income (specify e.g. unemployment insurance fund, salary, etc)

SECTION B

Briefly describe your experience of being unemployed in the form of thoughts, feelings and acts.

.....

.....

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SECTION C

Indicate how you feel by making a cross X in an appropriate column.

	almost always true	always true	not true	never true
1. I feel down-hearted				
2. I feel that I am a person of worth at on an equal plane with others.				
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.				
4. Morning is when I feel the best.				
5. I am able to do things as well as most other people.				
6. I have crying spells or feel like crying.				
7. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.				

8. I have trouble sleeping at night.				
9. Sometimes I feel I am no good at all.				
10. I eat as much as I used to.				
11. I am a useful guy to have around.				
12. I enjoy making love.				
13. When I do a job I do it well.				
14. I notice that I am losing weight.				
15. I feel that I can't do anything right.				
16. I have trouble with constipation.				
17. I take a positive attitude toward myself.				
18. I feel that my life is not very useful.				
19. I feel that my heart beats faster than usual.				
20. I get tired for no reason.				
21. I find it easy to make decisions.				
22. My mind is as clear as it used to be.				
23. I am restless and can't keep still.				
24. I find it easy to do things I used to do.				
25. I feel hopeful about the future.				
26. I am more irritable than usual.				
27. I feel that I am useful and needed.				
28. I am happy with my life.				
29. I feel that others would be better off if I were dead.				
30. I still enjoy the things I used to do.				