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Coping with economic deprivation during unemployment.

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Abstract

The negative impact of unemployment on psychological health is well known. Less is known of the ways that people cope with the problems associated with unemployment, one of which is economic deprivation. This study examined the interrelationships between employment status (200 unemployed participants and 128 employed participants), economic deprivation, coping-efforts and psychological health. It also examined the moderating effect of coping on the relationship between economic deprivation (restriction of spending for material necessities and restriction of spending for meaningful leisure activity) and psychological health. The results suggest that economic deprivation is experienced differentially in terms of material necessities and meaningful leisure activities with unemployed respondents differing from employed on levels of deprivation for meaningful leisure activities but not for material necessities. Employment status, economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity, solution-oriented coping and affective-based coping significantly predicted depressive affect and self-esteem. Depressive affect was also predicted by economic deprivation for material necessities. A number of significant two-way interactions show that the relationship between economic deprivation and psychological health was conditional upon the use of solution-oriented coping. Results also showed that the relationship between employment status and depressive affect was moderated by the use of affective-based coping. The incorporation of these findings into intervention programs for unemployed persons is discussed.

PsychINFO classification: 2910; 3365

JEL classification: I30; J64

Key words: Unemployment, economic deprivation, coping, psychological health, leisure activity.

Introduction

Economic deprivation, one of the most difficult and consistent problems that people experience during unemployment (Viinamaki, Koskela, Niskanen & Arnkill, 1993) has been strongly associated with psychological distress (Eales, 1988; Feather, 1997; Frese & Mohr,

1987; Jones, 1991; Liem & Liem, 1988; Vinokur, Price & Caplan, 1996; Winefield, 1995). During the initial period of unemployment, economic deprivation typically manifests itself as a reduction of spending on luxury items and meaningful leisure activities (Clarke, 1982; Kessler, Turner, & House, 1987). However, as unemployment continues, and financial re-

sources are depleted, research has shown that economic deprivation is often reflected in the cessation of spending on essential items so that unemployed people are forced to engage in subsistence spending/living (Clarke, 1982; Kessler et al., 1987; Whelan, 1992).

Despite the suggestion that economic deprivation is manifested in two separate ways: reduction of spending on material necessities and reduction of spending on luxury items/meaningful leisure activity, the literature is yet to investigate whether these two aspects of economic deprivation have a different impact upon psychological health during unemployment. Moreover, both Fryer (1992) and Whelan (1992) have argued that there has been little attempt in the literature to understand how unemployed people cope with economic deprivation. The aims of the current study are to overcome these deficiencies in the literature by investigating the impact of these two types of economic deprivation on psychological health during unemployment and, further, any moderating influence of solution-oriented coping and affective-based coping on the relationship between economic deprivation and psychological health.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined coping as “constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of a person” (p.14). Moore and Greenglass (1997) classified these efforts as either solution-oriented or affective-based. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and Billings and Moos (1984) solution-oriented coping is directed towards solving or reducing the problems that cause stress while affective-based coping aims to regulate the negative emotions associated with the stressful event. Empirical evidence in employed and general adult samples confirms that solution-oriented coping moderates the relationship between stress and psychological strain (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986; Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Leana & Feldman, 1995). With regard to affective-based coping, the evidence shows that, rather than regulating the negative emotions associated with a stressful event, affective-based coping is often associated with an increase in distress (Burke, 1998; Folkman et al., 1986).

Or, as suggested by Moore (1999), the use of affective-based coping during stressful times may actually reflect the amount of distress being experienced.

Research into the coping-efforts that unemployed people adopt to combat economic deprivation typically describes coping-efforts in terms of intensity rather than orientation and, as such, coping has been described as passive (low intensity) or active (high intensity) (Jahoda, Lazarfield & Eisenberg, 1933/72; Leana & Feldman, 1995; Vinokur & Caplan, 1987). For example, Jahoda et al. (1933/72) reported that economic deprivation was associated with a passive approach to coping as, in their study, people who were suffering from severe economic deprivation reduced their coping-efforts and avoided or ignored their financial problems. Hamilton, Hoffman, Broman and Rauma (1993) also observed that, during unemployment, threatening situations may cause some people to become so distressed that they adopt passive coping approaches and they may even become “incapacitated from action” (p.236).

In contrast, Vinokur and Caplan (1987) and Leana and Feldman (1995) found that the severity of economic deprivation was positively related to the intensity of coping strategies used. Leana and Feldman suggested that, in comparison to people with minimal economic deprivation, people experiencing high levels of deprivation would engage in a more intense job-search because they have to “replace their lost jobs more quickly” (p.1383).

Moving away from job-search activity, Kinicki, Prussia and McKee-Ryan (2000) investigated the relationships between economic deprivation, problem-focused/solution-oriented coping, emotion-focused/affective-based coping, and quality of re-employment. They found that, during initial stages of unemployment, economic deprivation was negatively related to the use of affective-based coping, but had no influence on the use of solution-oriented coping. This finding suggests that economic deprivation is related differentially to the coping efforts people adopt during unemployment. However, because Kinicki et al. measured economic deprivation as a global construct, it is not possible to determine whether coping ef-

forts varied as a result of the different forms of economic deprivation experienced. Moreover, because the outcome variable in Kinicki et al.'s study was quality of re-employment, their results cannot be used to clarify the relationships between economic deprivation, coping and psychological health *during* unemployment.

Given that the findings regarding the relationship between economic deprivation and coping-efforts during unemployment are equivocal, it follows that the relationship between these variables and their subsequent effect on psychological health is also poorly understood. This limitation may stem from a number of gaps that exist in the literature. Firstly, aside from Kinicki et al.'s (2000) research, the focus of past research in this area on 'intensity' rather than 'orientation' of coping means that the effectiveness of solution-oriented and affective-based efforts in dealing with economic deprivation remains unclear. Secondly, because researchers have generally operationalised coping using broad-based coping-efforts such as job-search intensity, the coping-efforts adopted to deal more specifically with economic deprivation have rarely been investigated. Finally, although past research has enhanced our understanding of the direct relationship between levels of economic deprivation and coping efforts, investigation into the potentially moderating role that coping plays in the relationship between economic deprivation and psychological distress is limited.

The current study aims to overcome these limitations by investigating the moderating role of coping on the relationship between economic deprivation and psychological health during unemployment. This aim will be tested in three stages where psychological health is operationalised as depressive affect and self-esteem. First, the impact of employment status, or more specifically unemployment, on economic deprivation, coping and psychological health will be determined. Second, the potentially different impact of economic deprivation for material necessities versus economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity on coping and psychological health will be assessed. Finally, the moderating roles of solution-oriented coping and affective-based coping on the impact of economic deprivations on psychological health

during unemployment will be investigated. The specific hypotheses are presented below.

Hypothesis One: Unemployment will have a positive relationship with economic deprivation for material necessities, economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity, affective-based coping and depressive affect, and will be negatively related to solution-oriented coping and self-esteem.

Hypothesis Two: Economic deprivation for material necessities and economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity will have an impact upon depression and self-esteem.

Hypothesis Three: Solution-oriented coping will moderate the impact of economic deprivation (both types) on depressive affect in that the positive relationship between economic deprivation and depressive affect will be weaker when the use of solution-oriented coping is high than when the use of solution-oriented coping is low.

Hypothesis Four: Solution-oriented coping will moderate the impact of economic deprivation (both types) on self-esteem in that the negative relationship between economic deprivation and self-esteem will be weaker when the use of solution-oriented coping is high than when the use of solution-oriented coping is low.

Hypothesis Five: Affective-based coping will moderate the relationship between economic deprivation (both types) and depression in that the positive relationship between economic deprivation and depression will be stronger when the use of affective-based coping is high than when the use of affective-based coping is low.

Hypothesis Six: Affective-based coping will moderate the relationship between economic deprivation (both types) and self-esteem in that the negative relationship between economic deprivation and self-esteem will be stronger when the use of affective-based coping is high than when the use of affective-based coping is low.

Method

A. Participants

Three hundred and twenty-nine people agreed to participate in this study. Two hundred

and one person were unemployed (49% female, 51% males; age $M = 32.41$, $SD = 10.18$ years) and one hundred and twenty-eight people were in full-time employment (59% female, 41% male; age $M = 35.00$, $SD = 11.73$ years).

The unemployed participants were recruited through the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES). At the time of data collection during 1997/1998 the CES (now obsolete) was a national Government service providing referrals to jobs and/or individually tailored case management for job seekers through network offices Australia-wide. The unemployed sample was recruited via offices in the southern area of Melbourne.

In an attempt to achieve consistency in financial situation among unemployed people, only those who were receiving the Federal Government unemployment benefit (Newstart Allowance)¹ were included in this study. In addition, only people who had been unemployed for at least six weeks participated. This criterion was adopted in order to overcome possible short-term confounding in relation to either extreme distress or apathy upon initially experiencing unemployment (Patton & Noller, 1990; Rowley & Feather, 1987; Shamir, 1986).

The employed sample was recruited by two means. Firstly, staff at the CES asked local employers to distribute questionnaires to employees. Secondly, employed people were enlisted through a convenience sample of the researchers' networks including the distribution of questionnaires to employees at a small factory. Employed participants received essentially the same questionnaire, plain language statement, and consent form as unemployed participants.

B. Materials

Respondents were asked to record their age, gender, occupational type², and education-

al level. Unemployed respondents were asked 'How long have you been without work?' while employed respondents were asked 'How long have you been in your current job?'

Self-esteem was measured via the six-item Global Self Worth sub-scale from Messer and Harter's (1986) Adult Self Perception Profile (eg, 'I am very happy being the way that I am'). Messer and Harter reported strong internal reliability ($\alpha = .92$).

Depressive Affect was assessed using the 15-item depression sub-scale from the Profile of Mood States (McNair, Lorr & Droppelmann, 1981). This scale provides an adjective checklist, for example, 'blue, unhappy, and miserable' and respondents rate the level they experienced these feelings during the past week. McNair et al.'s normative studies reported strong internal reliability ($\alpha = .95$).

Appraisal of economic deprivation was assessed using two author-constructed items. Item one stated 'I feel that I cannot provide for the material necessities of life' and this was answered along a four-point Likert scale from 1 'Strongly disagree' to 4 'Strongly agree'. The second item stated 'I do not have enough money to participate in meaningful leisure activities' and respondents answered along a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 'Strongly disagree' to 5 'Strongly agree'.

The Deakin Coping Scale (Moore & Greenglass, 1997) was used to assess the coping-efforts people use to deal specifically with economic deprivation. Respondents were asked to rate how often they used solution-oriented coping-efforts (eg, 'Came up with a couple of different solutions to the problem') and affective-based coping-efforts (eg, 'Wished I could change what had happened') when dealing with financial difficulties. Moore and Greenglass reported strong internal reliabilities for each sub-scale: solution-oriented coping ($\alpha = .83$) and affective based coping ($\alpha = .81$).

C. Procedure

In order to maintain confidentiality, CES staff generated a random sample of 500

¹ The benefit paid through Newstart Allowance ranges according to the age, marital status and number of dependents of the recipient, with the minimum amount being \$264.70 per fortnight and the maximum amount set at \$347.80 (Department of Social Security, 1998).

² Occupations were subsequently classified as blue-collar or white-collar according to the Australian

Standard Classification Index (Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, 1987)

unemployed people from their records who met the above inclusion criteria. The CES staff then mailed an outline of, and invitation to participate in, the study 'Coping with economic deprivation during unemployment' to these registrants. Unemployed people interested in taking part in the study were invited to collect a questionnaire from the CES office. The 40% response rate is similar to that obtained by Leana and Feldman (1995) and Wanberg, Watt, and Rumsey (1996) in unemployed samples. Employed participants were recruited with the support of their employers or directly via the researchers.

All questionnaires were completed in respondents' own time and returned to the university in a reply paid pre-addressed envelope. Unemployed participants who provided their name and address on a separate page received a ten-dollar payment and a thank-you letter upon return of the questionnaire.

2. RESULTS

A. Validity of the Study Measures

Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was used to determine the validity of the factors in the current data. Thirty-nine items: depressive affect (15 items), self-esteem (6 items), solution-oriented coping (9 items), and affective-based coping (9 items), were submitted to PCA; the two single items assessing different aspects of economic deprivation were not included. The Kaiser Meyer Oblim Measure of Sampling Adequacy (.91) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($F = 6629.33$, $p = .000$) both indicated the factorability of the correlation matrix (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1995). Four factors with eigenvalues greater than one were extracted (11.56; 3.41; 2.30; 1.37). Examination of the pattern matrix confirmed that each item loaded onto its a priori factor.

Comparability of Samples

Comparisons between unemployed and employed people revealed no difference on age ($t(326) = 4.48$, $p > .05$) and no associations between employment status and gender ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 3.04$, $p > .05$), or education level ($\chi^2_{(1)} = .10$, $p > .05$). Occupational type was significantly

associated with employment status ($\chi^2_{(1)} = 13.80$, $p = .000$). The unemployed sample contained a higher number of people whose previous occupation was classified as blue-collar compared with white collar (55% blue-collar; 45% white-collar), however, the strength of this association was not substantial (Cramer's $C = 21\%$).

Means and standard deviations for economic deprivation, coping-efforts and psychological health in unemployed and employed participants are presented in Table 1. One-way between subjects MANOVA revealed a global difference between the unemployed and employed participants on economic deprivation, coping-efforts, and psychological health (Pillai's $F(6,296) = 16.45$, $p = .000$). Unemployed participants reported higher depressive affect and lower levels of self-esteem than employed people. The unemployed cohort's appraisal of economic deprivation for leisure activities and their use of affective-based coping were higher than employed persons while their use of solution-oriented coping was lower. There was no difference between the groups on their appraisal of deprivation of money to buy material necessities.

*a) Insert Table 1
about here*

Tests of Relationships

The interrelationships between employment status (unemployed = 0; employed = 1), economic deprivation for material necessities, economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity, solution-oriented coping, affective-based coping, depressive affect and self-esteem were examined using Spearman's correlation (see Table 1). As suggested by the MANOVA, there is no relationship between employment status and economic deprivation for material necessities. However, being unemployed was related to economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activities, the use of affective-based coping, and depressive affect. In contrast, being employed was related to greater use of solution-oriented coping and higher self-esteem.

Ratings of economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity were related to de-

pressive affect, poorer levels of self-esteem, less use of solution-oriented coping, and greater use of affective-based coping. Economic deprivation for material necessities was weakly related to depressive effect.

Tests of the Hypotheses

Multiple Regression Analyses were used to test the study hypotheses using two separate dependent variables: depressive affect and self-esteem. The predictor variables were employment status, economic deprivation for material necessities, economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity, solution-oriented coping, and affective-based coping. Two-way and three-way interaction terms among these predictor variables were also entered into the regressions followed by the demographic characteristics of unemployment/employment duration, age, gender and marital status (see Tables 2 & 3).

Examination of the assumptions indicated that the interaction terms in the models were multi-collinear. These effects were controlled for by using a centre score approach whereby the data were transformed, or centered, into deviation score forms with means equal to zero (Aiken & West, 1991; Jaccard, Turrisi & Wan, 1990). After these linear transformations, examination of the variance inflation factor scores and tolerance scores showed acceptable changes in collinearity and the models were re-run using the centred scores.

Depressive Affect

Fifty-six percent of the variance in depressive affect was explained via the factors in the regression ($F_{(23,289)} = 15.70, p = .000$). As shown in Table 2, unemployment status, economic deprivation for material necessities, economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity, low use of solution-oriented coping, greater use of affective-based coping, and marital status, in this case being single, each exerted a main effect upon depressive affect. Greater use of affective-based coping and employment status, that is, being unemployed, were the most powerful predictors of depressive affect, however, the significant interaction between affective-based coping and employment status suggests that the joint effect of these variables

accounted for variance in depressive affect in excess of their separate effects.

There were also significant two-way interactions between economic deprivation for material necessities by solution-oriented coping and economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity by solution-oriented coping. These results indicate that the relationship between economic deprivation (for both material necessities and for meaningful leisure activities) and depressive affect is conditional upon the level of use of solution-oriented coping. There were no three-way interaction effects.

*b) Insert Table 2
about here*

The two-way interactions were probed following procedures recommended by Cohen and Cohen (1983). Median splits were used to divide the respective samples into high and low on affective-based coping, solution-oriented coping, economic deprivation for material necessities, and economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity. The interaction terms were then plotted (see Figures 1 to 3).

Figure 1 illustrates the moderating effect of affective-based coping on the relationship between employment status and depressive affect. The figure suggests that high use of affective-based coping is associated with higher depressive affect both when unemployed and employed, however high use of affective-based coping was more strongly related to depressive affect when unemployed. Post hoc probing of the slopes portrayed in Figure 1 confirmed the negative regression of employment status on depressive affect at high and low levels of affective-based coping. Moreover, the magnitude of the slope was stronger for high affective-based coping ($B = -12.25$) than it was for low affective-based coping ($B = -6.62$).

*c) Insert Figure 1
about here*

Figure 2 illustrates the moderating effect of solution-oriented coping on the relationship between economic deprivation for material necessities and depressive affect. This figure suggests that low use of solution-oriented coping is associated with higher depressive affect

under high levels of economic deprivation for material necessities than it is for low levels of economic deprivation for material necessities. In contrast, the plot indicates little change in depressive affect at high levels of solution-oriented coping, regardless of high or low economic deprivation for material necessities. Post hoc probing of the slopes confirmed the positive regression of depressive affect on economic deprivation for material necessities at low levels of solution-oriented coping ($B = 2.11$). Under conditions of high use of solution-oriented coping, analysis of the slopes of the simple regression lines did not support a change in depressive affect from high to low economic deprivation for material necessities.

*d) Insert Figure 2
about here*

Figure 3 illustrates the moderating effect of solution-oriented coping on the relationship between economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity and depressive affect. This figure suggests that low use of solution-oriented coping is associated with higher depressive affect under high levels of economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity than it is for low levels of deprivation. A similar relationship occurs when solution-oriented coping is low, however, the plot shows that the difference in depressive affect between low and high economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity is not as great. Post hoc probing of the slopes confirmed the positive regression of depressive affect on economic deprivation for material necessities at low levels of solution-oriented coping ($B = 4.10$) and high levels of solution-oriented coping ($B = 1.73$).

*e) Insert Figure 3
about here*

Self Esteem

When self-esteem was used as the dependent variable, 49% of the variance was explained by entry of the same predictor variables ($F_{(23,289)} = 12.20, p = .000$) (Table 3). Employment status, that is, being employed, and less use of affective-based coping were the most powerful predictors of self-esteem. Low ratings of economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity and high use of solution-oriented coping were also significant pre-

dictors of self-esteem. The interaction between economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity and solution-oriented coping also accounted for significant variance in self-esteem. There were no three-way interaction effects.

*f) Insert Table 2
about here*

The interaction between economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity and solution-oriented coping shows that low use of solution-oriented coping is associated with lower self-esteem under high deprivation for meaningful leisure activity than it is for low deprivation for meaningful leisure activity. In contrast, the plot shows only a minor change in self-esteem at high levels of solution-oriented coping regardless of whether economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity is rated high or low. These results suggest that high use of solution-oriented coping may help to alleviate the negative effect of economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity on self-esteem. Post hoc probing of the slopes confirmed the negative regression at low levels of solution-oriented coping ($B = -1.06$) and high levels of solution-oriented coping ($B = -5.42$).

*g) Insert Figure 4
about here*

Discussion

The aims of this study were to investigate the impact of economic deprivation for material necessities and for meaningful leisure activity on psychological health during unemployment. In addition, the moderating influence of coping efforts on the relationship between economic deprivation and psychological health were investigated. There was, overall, support for the differential impact of economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activities and for material necessities on aspects of psychological health during unemployment and for the mediating role of coping strategies.

Before formally testing the aims of the study, it was considered important to establish whether employment status was, in fact, related to psychological health in the current sample. Regression analysis confirmed that being unemployed significantly predicted high levels of

depression ($B = -8.75$, $p = .000$) and low levels of self-esteem ($B = 2.36$, $p = .000$). In addition, MANOVA revealed that, when compared with employed respondents, the unemployed participants in this study reported greater intensity of depression and lower self-esteem. The fact that the current samples of unemployed and employed participants did not differ systematically on age, gender, or education level suggests that differences in psychological health between these two groups is attributable to employment status rather than to other demographic characteristics. These results support hypothesis one with respect to the relationships between unemployment and economic deprivation, coping and psychological health, and are consistent also with previous reports in the unemployment literature (Creed, 1999; Goldsmith, Veum, & Darity, 1996; Muller, Hicks, & Winocur, 1993; Shams & Jackson, 1994; Winefield, Tigge-mann, & Winefield, 1992).

The classification of economic deprivation into two discrete dimensions: deprivation of money for material necessities and deprivation of money for meaningful leisure activities, was both novel to this study and informative. MANOVA revealed that the unemployed and employed participants did not differ in their appraisal of deprivation of money to buy material necessities. This finding is not particularly surprising when one considers that these unemployed participants were all receiving the Federal Government Newstart Allowance. This fortnightly payment is means and asset tested and is designed to allow recipients to purchase the material necessities required for daily living. That unemployed participants rated themselves as more deprived of money to engage in meaningful leisure activities than the employed group suggests that this allowance does not extend to expenditure for leisure activities. Further research is required in order to validate the current findings that economic deprivation is experienced separately in terms of material necessities and meaningful leisure activities.

Economic deprivation for material necessities and economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity both predicted the depressive component of psychological health. These results can be interpreted in terms of Frese's (1987) argument that, during unemployment,

the economic deprivation of material necessities contributes to depression by fostering perceptions of general helplessness and a loss of freedom in the market place.

In the current data, deprivation of money for meaningful leisure activity contributed to lower levels of self-esteem, however, deprivation of money for material necessities did not. The findings with respect to self-esteem can be interpreted in terms of the meaning leisure activities provide individuals such as, experiences, roles, and social interaction, which may be necessary for developing and maintaining identity and esteem (Deem, 1988). Material necessities, on the other hand, although potentially providing information about identity in terms of 'external' or 'superficial' domains (eg, type of food, clothes, possessions, etc.) are less likely to influence core aspects of esteem. These results provide some support for hypothesis two that there would be a diversity of effect of these types of economic deprivation on self-esteem and depression.

Hypotheses three and four, which proposed that solution-oriented coping would moderate the effect of economic deprivation on depression and self-esteem, were both supported. The interaction effects found in the current study suggest that when solution-oriented coping is high, the impact of economic deprivation (for both material necessities and meaningful leisure activity) on depression is reduced. The impact of economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity on self-esteem is also moderated by the high use of solution-oriented coping. These findings are particularly noteworthy as they indicate that solution-oriented coping can be used as an adaptive response to economic deprivation during unemployment. If the investigation had been confined to a method of differences or simple correlations, such as reported earlier, this interaction effect would not have been revealed.

Although low use of solution-oriented coping amongst the unemployed people is undesirable it may be understandable when considering that economic deprivation is often unalterable during unemployment. Even if unemployed people obtain casual or part-time employment, in Australia this results in their al-

lowance from the government being correspondingly reduced and, therefore, their overall financial situation is not improved. It would follow that, if unemployed respondents perceive themselves to have no viable solutions in this regard, they may use limited solution-oriented coping-efforts to reduce economic deprivation. These findings support Jahoda et al.'s (1933/1972) report that economic deprivation among unemployed people was associated with a passive approach to coping and Hamilton et al.'s (1993) observation that, being unable to find solutions to their economic deprivation, unemployed people may experience an 'incapacitation from action'. While an 'incapacitation from action' was not the case for all unemployed persons surveyed in the current study further research is required to determine the nature of their solution-oriented efforts (beyond, 'Did something about the situation') that acted as a buffer to protect their psychological health.

The interaction terms revealed in the current data allow us to suggest that professionals who provide assistance to unemployed people need to move beyond strategies that deal with feelings of esteem and of depression. It is also important to work towards increasing the use of solution-oriented techniques, such as short term budgeting, long term financial planning and alternative activities, in order to reduce a sense of economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activities among unemployed persons.

No support was found for hypotheses five and six as affective-based coping did not moderate the relationship between economic deprivation and psychological health. In contrast, affective-based coping intensified the negative impact of unemployment on depressive affect in the current data. In particular, the relationship between employment status and depressive affect was greater for people who used high levels of affective-based coping than for people who used low levels of affective-based coping. Moreover, this relationship was stronger in the unemployed cohort. These results suggest that an over reliance on affective-based coping during unemployment could be maladaptive. This relationship also lends weight to Moore's (1999) proposition that lev-

els of affective coping may be indicative of the person's level of distress being experienced in the situation and, to Billings and Moos' (1984) and Burke's (1998) findings that emotion-focused/affective-based coping-efforts are positively associated with depressive affect.

In summary, the present results demonstrate that economic deprivation for material necessities and economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity are experienced separately. Although the unemployed respondents in this study did not consider themselves to be more deprived of money to buy material necessities than were the employed participants, they did perceive themselves to be more economically deprived of money to engage in meaningful leisure activities. Moreover, this aspect of economic deprivation differentially impacted upon psychological health as seen in the regression analyses. The results of the current study have shown also that the negative impact of both types of economic deprivation on psychological health can be partially alleviated through the use of solution-oriented coping. As such, interventions developed for people who are unemployed must encourage the use of solution-oriented coping techniques to deal with economic deprivation. Furthermore, such interventions should discourage the use of affective-based coping during unemployment given that this coping orientation appears to increase levels of depressive affect.

In conclusion, economic predictions show that unemployment rates will remain high over the next decade (Dawkins, 1996; Gregory & Sheehan, 1998; Layard, Nickell, & Jackman, 1994; Lerner, 1994) suggesting that a substantial number of people will experience unemployment, and hence economic deprivation. The current results suggest that the psychological impact of economic deprivation on unemployed persons may be reduced by instituting programs that promote an increase in the use of solution-oriented coping and the reduction of affective-based coping.

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Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations for Economic Deprivation, Coping-efforts and Psychological Health in Unemployed B. and Employed Participants

Variables		Unem- ployed (0)	Em- ployed (1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. EMPLOYMENT STATUS										
1. Unem- ployed/employed		–	–	1.000						
4. PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH										
2. Depressive affect	M	17.11	8.09***	-.42**	1.000					
	SD	14.07	6.83							
3. Self-esteem	M	15.99	18.83**	.48**	-.51**	1.000				
	SD	3.27	* 2.67							
5. ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION										
4. Material necessities	M	2.63	2.61	-.01	.12*	.05	1.000			
	SD	.71	.76							
5. Meaningful leisure activity	M	3.40	2.45***	-.31**	.40**	-.42**	.08	1.000		
	SD	1.36	.14							
6. COPING EFFORTS										
6. Solution-oriented	M	20.63	22.32**	.17**	-.22**	.23**	.02	-.19**	1.000	
	SD	3.94	* 4.03							
7. Affective-based	M	27.87	25.96**	-.12*	.48**	-.41**	.02	.32**	.01	1.000
	SD	7.18	5.45							

N= 312

*p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

Table 2: Variables Predicting Depressive Affect

	B	Beta	t	Sig.
<i>Main effects</i>				
(Constant)		11.37		1.97 .049
Employment status		-8.75	-.33	-7.17 .000
Economic deprivation for material necessities		.86	.10	2.19 .029
Economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity		1.54	.10	2.27 .024
Solution-oriented coping		-.68	-.20	-4.02 .000
Affective-based coping		.92	.46	9.74 .000
<i>Two-way interactions</i>				
Employment status x economic deprivation for material necessities		-.44	-.03	-.56 n.s
Employment status x economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity		-2.33	-.07	-1.6 n.s
Employment status x solution-oriented coping		-.44	-.06	-1.3 n.s
Employment status x affective-based coping		-.58	-.13	-2.91 .004
Economic deprivation for material necessities x solution-oriented coping		-.24	-.11	-2.20 .029
Economic deprivation for material necessities x affective-based coping		-.12	.08	1.99 .048
Economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity x solution-oriented coping		-.45	-.10	-2.07 .039
Economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity x affective-based coping		8.20	.01	.07 n.s
Economic deprivation for material necessities x economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity		.54	.05	.97 n.s
Solution-oriented coping x affective-based coping		-3.38	-.01	-.15 n.s
<i>Three-way interactions</i>				
Employment status x economic deprivation for material necessities x solution-oriented coping		-.30	-.06	-1.34 n.s
Employment status x economic deprivation for material necessities x affective-based coping		1.75	.01	.14 n.s
Employment status x economic deprivation meaningful leisure activity x solution-oriented coping		.37	.04	.85 n.s
Employment status x economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity x affective-based coping		-.33	-.06	-1.34 n.s
Duration of employment/ unemployment		-1.35	-.01	-.17 n.s
<i>Demographic characteristics</i>				
Age		-7.14	-.06	-1.34 n.s
Gender		1.10	.05	1.11 n.s
Marital status		-1.69	-.20	-4.98 .000
				R = <u>.75</u>
				R ² = <u>.56</u>
			Adj. R ² = .52	
			=	

N = 312

*p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

Table 3: Variables Predicting Self-esteem

	B	Beta	t	Sig..
<i>Main effects</i>				
(Constant)	15.39		9.92	.000
Employment status	2.47	.36	7.51	.000
Economic deprivation for material necessities	3.01	.01	.16	.869
Economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity	-.45	-.20	-4.17	.000
Solution-oriented coping	.17	.20	3.91	.000
Affective-based coping	-.17	-.34	-6.77	.000
<i>Two-way interactions</i>				
Employment status x economic deprivation for material necessities	-.18	.04	.85	n.s
Employment status x economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity	-.33	-.04	-.84	n.s
Employment status x solution-oriented coping	7.87	.04	.87	n.s
Employment status x affective-based coping	9.15	.08	1.71	n.s
Economic deprivation for material necessities x solution-oriented coping	-2.65	.02	.46	n.s
Economic deprivation for material necessities x affective-based coping	5.93	.01	.18	n.s
Economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity x solution-oriented coping	-6.81	.12	2.28	.024
Economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity x affective-based coping	-2.56	.07	1.63	n.s
Economic deprivation for material necessities x economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity	-.36	-.13	-2.44	n.s
Solution-oriented coping x affective-based coping	9.42	.08	1.53	n.s
<i>Three-way interactions</i>				
Employment status x economic deprivation for material necessities x solution-oriented coping	-.18	.07	1.49	n.s
Employment status x economic deprivation for material necessities x affective-based coping	-6.13	-.05	-.93	n.s
Employment status x economic deprivation meaningful leisure activity x solution-oriented coping	8.75	.07	1.45	n.s
Employment status x economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity x affective-based coping	-1.77	.03	.52	n.s
Duration of employment/ unemployment	-1.45	-.03	-.69	n.s
<i>Demographic characteristics</i>				
Age	8.15	.01	.06	n.s
Gender	.26	.05	.96	n.s
Marital status	4.58	.02	.50	n.s
			R =	.70
			R ² =	.49
			Adj. R ² .	.45
			=	

N = 312

*p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

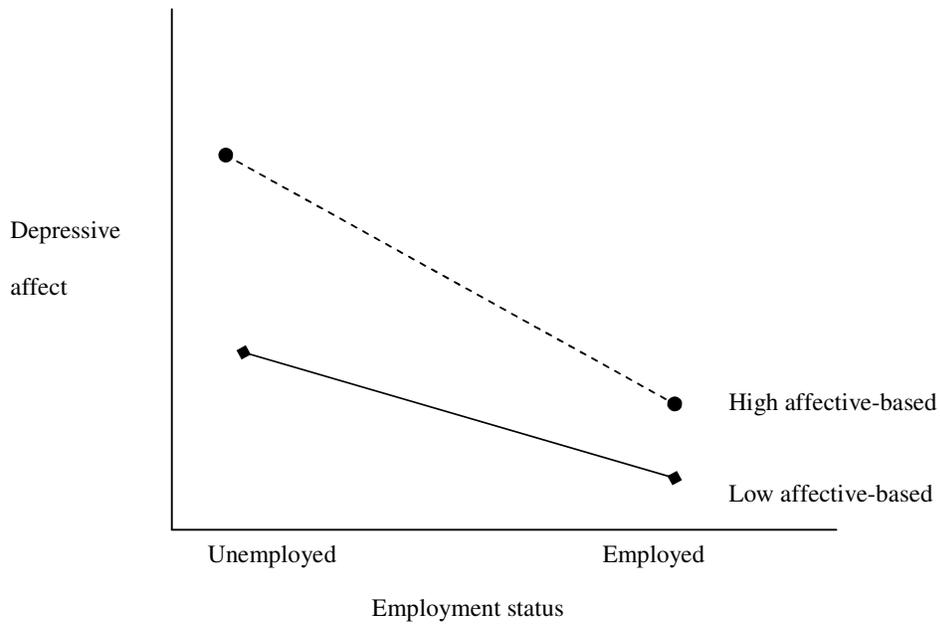


Figure 1: Interactive effects of employment status and affective-based coping on depressive affect

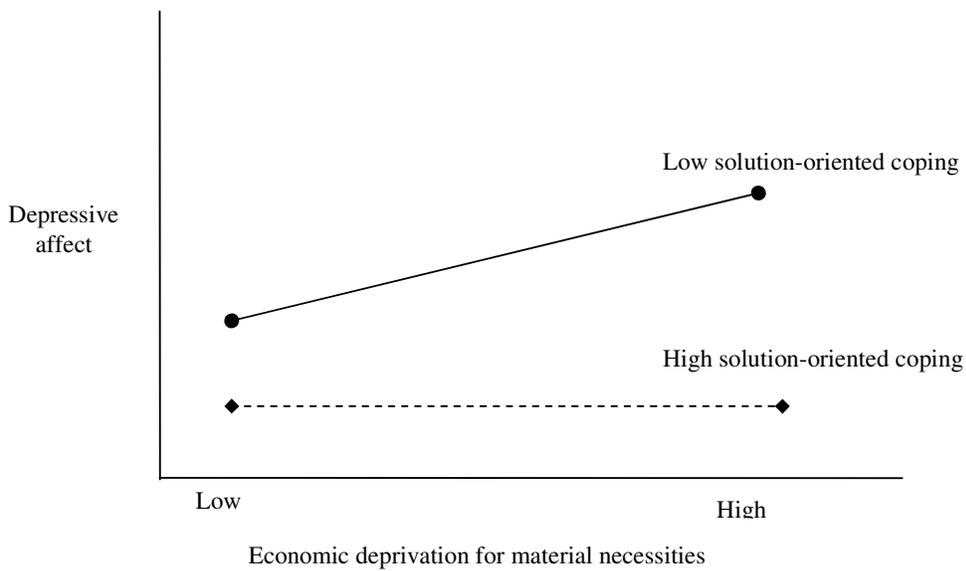


Figure 2: Interactive effects of economic deprivation for material necessities and solution-oriented coping on depressive affect

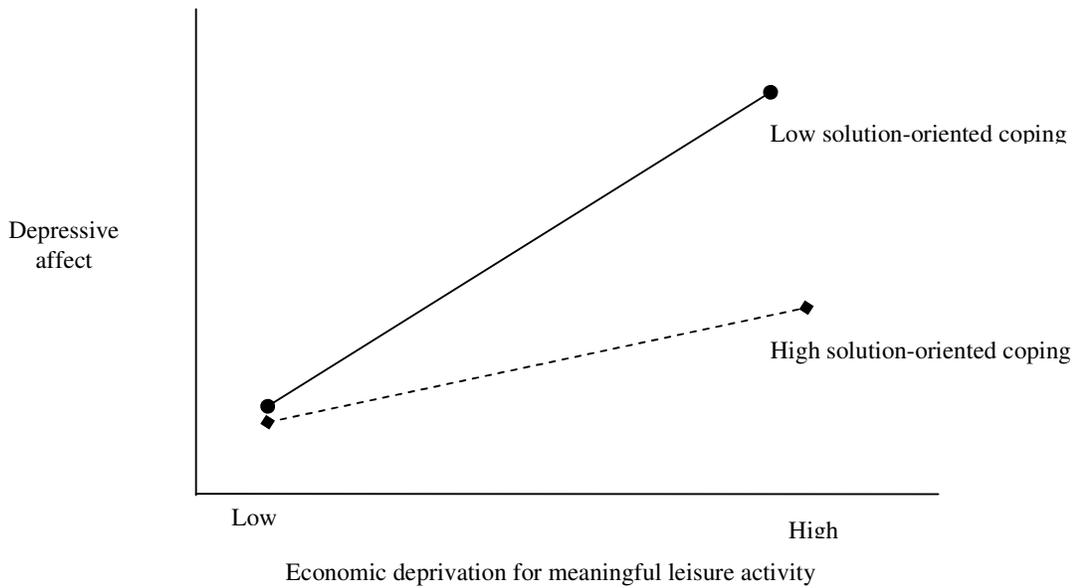


Figure 3: Interactive effects of economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity and solution-oriented coping on depressive affect

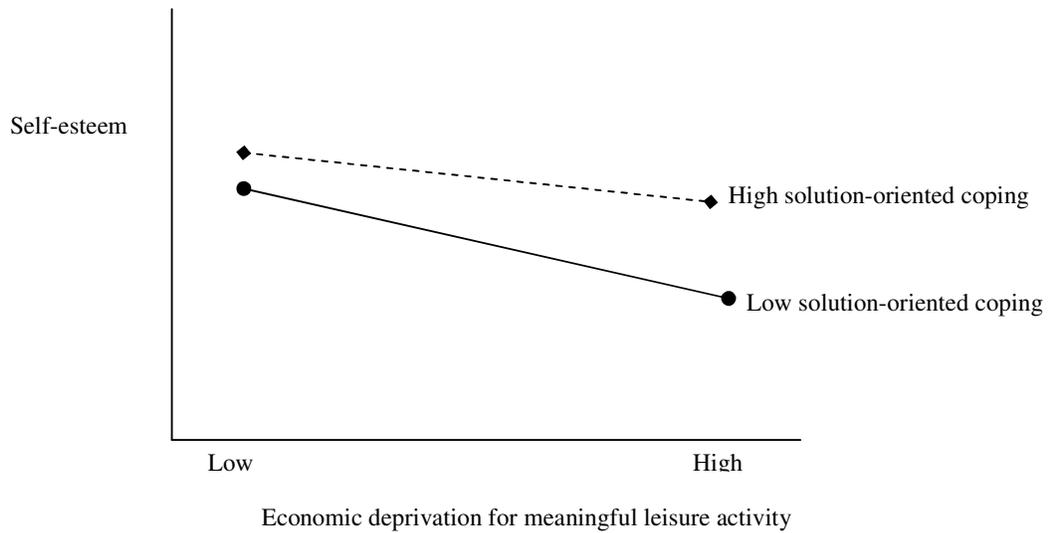


Figure 4: Interactive effects of economic deprivation for meaningful leisure activity and solution-oriented coping on self-esteem