THE EXPERIENCE OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN PRIMARY WAGE EARNERS

by

David Edwards

B.Sc., University of Victoria, 2006

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(Counselling Psychology)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

September, 2017

Abstract

This study investigated, through a phenomenological mode of inquiry, the experience of unemployment amongst primary wage earners who have experienced non-performance related, involuntary job loss. This study also sought to determine if the experience of unemployment had changed over the preceding thirty years by comparing its findings from figurative illustrations to those of Borgen and Amundson (1987). The association between unemployment and negative mental health, coupled with changes in cultural and work-related attitudes and the absence of studies similar to Borgen and Amundson (1987), provided the rationale for this study. Participants were six adult men and women who had lost their jobs through no fault of their own. Individual interviews, followed-up by post-analysis member checks, were conducted with each participant. Six main themes, and 12 subthemes, emerged from data analysis. The main themes were: (1) anticipation of and immediate response to job loss; (2) positive emotional responses to job loss; (3) negative emotional responses to job loss; (4) job search and financial challenges; (5) support; and (6) emergent optimism and problem solving. Three trends were found to the figurative illustrations, with elements that were both similar to and different from those in Borgen and Amundson (1987). Of note, all of the participants' initial responses to job loss differed from the 1987 comparison group. This was attributable to participants either being accustomed to job loss, or to having initial post-employment plans in place. This study contributes to the understanding of the experience of unemployment, and provides suggestions for those in the helping profession who work with those who are currently, or at risk of becoming, unemployed. Implications for future research are also discussed.

Lay Summary

This study sought to understand, through interviewing six adults, the psychological experience of unemployment for those people who were the primary wage earners in their household and who lost their jobs through no fault of their own. It also aimed to compare this experience to a similar study conducted 30 years ago by Borgen and Amundson (1987) to see if responses have changed with time. Common themes of the experience of unemployment were sought, and participants also created figurative illustrations of their emotional trajectories over the course of their unemployment. Six themes with 12 subthemes were found, and three patterns to the illustrations were identified. The figurative illustrations shared similarities with, and all participants had initial responses to their job loss that differed from, the Borgen and Amundson (1987) group. This study contributes to the understanding of the experience of unemployment, and provides suggestions for those in the helping profession.

Preface

This thesis is an original, unpublished, and independent work conceived of by its author, David Edwards, who completed all work, including design, participant recruitment, data collection, analysis, and manuscript write-up.

Ethics approval for this research was received from the University of British Columbia's Behavioural Research Ethics Board. The certificate number of the ethics certification obtained for this study was H17-00473, using the project title Experience of Unemployment.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter I: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Unemployment can be conceptualized as a challenging and stressful transitional event that can result in erratic changes in affect that accompany an increasingly despondent attitude about prospects for reemployment (Amundson & Borgen, 1987; Kokko & Pulkkinen, 1998; Schlossberg, 1984). Unemployment often results in psychological distress, depression, and anxiety, and societies do not appear to habituate to the effects of unemployment as it becomes more common (Paul & Moser, 2009). Furthermore, the physical health effects of unemployment have been well documented, and can result in an increased susceptibility to disease, hypertension, high blood pressure, ulcers, heart disease, and other stress-related illnesses (Kokko & Pulkkinen,1998). These effects can increase as the time of unemployment increases (Warr, Jackson, & Banks, 1998).

For those in the helping professions to be best positioned to help individuals who are struggling with the psychological challenges of unemployment, it is advantageous to have a clear understanding of what the dynamics of the unemployment experience are and to work through a theoretically and empirically informed practice (Emily Bullock-Yowell et al., 2014). Indeed, the dynamics of the experiences of unemployment over time have already been mapped by Amundson and Borgen (1982, 1987) (Borgen & Amdunson, 1987); unfortunately, this work has not been revisited since the 1980s (Amundson & Borgen, 1987).

Dynamics of unemployment. Amundson and Borgen (1982) were the first to describe the experience of unemployment over time as a "roller coaster" in which the initial stages resembled the five stages of grief outlined by Kübler-Ross (1969), and after which began a job-

search with initial optimism and hope. This hope is eventually replaced by feelings of stagnation, frustration, and apathy as the job search proves to be more difficult than anticipated. This is also the time when substance abuse can surface. Further work refined these results to include multiple subsequent trajectories that differentiated amongst subgroups, as well as mini-oscillations in affect that followed a general downward trend, with consecutively lower highs and lower lows that was termed a yo-yo effect (Amundson & Borgen, 1987; Borgen & Amundson, 1987). Borgen and Amundson (1982) hypothesized that because work is so closely tied to self-esteem and is a major source of personal validation, unemployed individuals still identify themselves in relation to their working identity; that is, they see themselves in relation to what they value, which in this case is as unemployed *workers*. They later found that some groups of unemployed individuals felt a lack of meaning, a loss of status, and worthlessness, insofar as they felt as though they were not contributing meaningfully to society and were excessively engaging in unproductive activities (Amundson & Borgen, 1987; Borgen & Amundson, 1987). Waters and Moore (2002a) demonstrated that the negative impact to self-esteem that results from financial deprivation can be particularly debilitating to men, who may still relate to their primary role as the breadwinner.

Generational changes. Lyons, Duxbury, and Higgins (2007) studied how the values and beliefs of individuals have shifted across generations. They found that there has been a tendency towards openness to change and self-enhancement when comparing those born after 1965 to earlier generations. The Generation Xers, born between 1965 and 1979, and Millennials, born after 1980, were both born in times of economic and social instability, and reduced prosperity when compared to older generations, which could account for their more liberal values that shy away from tradition. Smola and Sutton (2002) extended this work to examine how generational

differences are reflected in workers' attitudes, and found a decrease in company loyalty and centrality of worker identity amongst the younger generations. They posit that this shift in loyalty is likely, at least in part, attributable to the decreasing loyalty and security offered to employees by employers.

Employment changes. The context of work has also shifted since the 1980s, with people generally working longer hours, with more unpaid overtime, and experiencing higher rates of work-related stress. Furthermore, decreases in job satisfaction and work-life balance are being reported by workers (Health Canada, 2009). This data is augmented by reports from Statistics Canada (1975, 2015) which show increases in part-time employment and multiple job holdings that are paired with decreases in wages amongst younger demographics (Morissette, Picot, & Lu, 2013). Furthermore, workers are operating in a climate of declining job security and power (Buchholz, Blossfeld, 2012; Schmidt, 1999).

Psychological contract of work. Related to this is the concept of the psychological contract of work, to which Smissen, Schalk, and Freese (2013) argue that changes in the reciprocal obligations between employees and employers are have been born from this new employment climate. Such changes involve new expectations about job security, or lack thereof, and employee flexibility, which they posit may fit quite well with the values and beliefs of newer generations. These changes to the employee-employer relationship have been recognized by the International Labour Office, which argues that the traditional long-term labour contract is essentially now obsolete (Auer, 2005).

Clearly, the context of work, with respect to generational attitudes, hours spent working, job stress and satisfaction, wages and stability, and the psychological contract has shifted since Amundson and Borgen first mapped the dynamics of unemployment in the 1980s. Despite this,

no follow-up comparison studies have been conducted since to explore how, if at all, the experiences of unemployment have changed in response. Given this shifting context, in addition to the detrimental psychological and physical health effects that can be brought on by unemployment, it seems an appropriate time to revisit the work done by Amundson and Borgen in the spirt of both comparing it to, and understanding further, the modern-day experiences of unemployment (Amundson and Borgen 1982; Amundson and Borgen, 1987; Borgen & Amundson, 1987; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Kokko & Pulkkinen,1998).

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions: what is the unemployment experience of men and women between the ages of 25 and 55 who were primary wage earners, and who have been unemployed for at least three months? What does this emotional experience look like when changes in affect are represented figuratively? And how is the modern figurative representation of unemployment similar to, or different from, the figurative representation of unemployment as originally drawn by Borgen and Amundson in 1987?

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

In reviewing the literature on unemployment, particular attention was paid to seeking out studies that described the holistic experience of unemployment, as done by Borgen and Amundson (1987). The literature in this area is sparse and is dominated by in-depth examinations of particular aspects of unemployment, such as its relation to self-esteem (Frost & Clayson, 1991;Hartley, 1980) or the efficacy of interventions on its management (Hoare and Machin (2009); Paul & Moser, 2009). Though some studies were found that approached this topic with a wider lens (Goldenberg and Klein, 1997; Warr & Jackson, 1987), none were found that mirrored the figurative illustration that was produced by Borgen and Amundson (1987). The most similar contribution was from Menninger (1988) who, through his work in helping Peace Corps volunteers to readjust to returning home, created the morale curve. This simple curve, which moves through a high, low, and then high, detailed four common periods of crisis that an individual's sense of self moves through when responding to the process of change. He termed these periods: the crisis of arrival, the crisis of engagement, the crisis of acceptance, and the crisis of reentry. This review of the literature examines several discrete components of the psychological and emotional experiences associated with unemployment, finding interrelated areas amongst them.

The Dynamics of Unemployment

Because this study seeks to partially compare its findings to the work of Borgen and Amundson (1987), a discussion of their original paper, and their related work (Amundson & Borgen 1982, 1987), is a logical place to begin this review. In their efforts to develop a group-based employment training program, Amundson and Borgen (1982) noted the absence of literature describing the dynamics of employment; that is, what the emotional and psychological

experience of an unemployed individual is from the moment that they either find out that they are about to lose their job, or actually lose their job. Incorporating aspects of grief theory, with an understanding of self-esteem and job search related burnout, they developed a theoretical model of the unemployed individual's emotional experience that they termed "an emotional roller coaster" (Amundson & Borgen, 1982, p. 563). The proposed trajectory is one that dips into a grief-related low, following the stages outlined by Kübler-Ross (1969) of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and finally the acceptance of a new identity as an "unemployed worker" (Amundson & Borgen, 1982, p. 563). It is after this point that individuals can generate enthusiasm for their job search, channeling their newfound energy into an effective job search that hopefully leads to reemployment. However, if their expectations of job-search success prove to have been unrealistic when confronted with reality, particularly during an economic slowdown, the unemployed worker can follow the process of a burnout that was described by Edelwich and Brodsky (1980). In such a circumstance, they move from a state of initial enthusiasm to stagnation, then frustration, and finally apathy. This is a period when substance abuse risks becoming a coping mechanism (Amundson & Borgen, 1982).

It was in 1987 that Amundson and Borgen were able to test this theory when they undertook a large study involving 93 unemployed workers who were recruited as volunteers from Canada Employment Centres in the Greater Vancouver area. Their research findings were divided into two studies that sought to understand the participants' experience of unemployment (Amundson & Borgen, 1987; Borgen & Amundson, 1987), what factors were helpful and hindering to them (Amundson & Borgen, 1987) and, of particular interest to this current study, what the figurative illustration of the emotional experience of unemployment looked like (Borgen & Amundson, 1987).

Borgen and Amundson (1987) used a subset of their total sample size, comprised of 56

men and women with an average unemployment time of 9.2 months, who were interviewed for

45 to 60 minutes. Though the interview format was phenomenological, they employed a non-

standard data analysis wherein they made use of participant drawings of timelines of emotional

experiencing, and researcher use of custom-created rating sheets that tracked emotions and

changes in emotions. This approach allowed Borgen and Amundson to meaningfully divide their

sample into three groups, and create figures of each group's patterns of emotional experience

through their unemployment process. Their largest group, containing 16 men and 13 women, was

labelled as Group A. It contained all men and women in the study over the age of 25, who were

primary wage earners (see Figure 1).

Within Group A, participants experienced a decline in affect from either the time that

they found they were going to lose their job, or the time they lost their job, which was analogous

to a grieving period. This is in some agreement with Goldenberg and Klein (1997), who reported

that 31 percent of their sample of unemployed individuals reported being upset or depressed

upon initially losing their jobs; however, 15 percent of their participants reported feeling okay,

and another 11 percent excited. Over a third of their participants felt it likely that they would find

a new job within 90 days, demonstrating a high degree of optimism (Goldenberg and Klein,

1997).

Upon completion of the reported grieving period in Borgen and Amundson's (1987)

Group A, participants entered into a job-search phase with renewed energy and optimism. If they

failed to find a job, then their affect showed a general decline that was punctuated by alternating

highs and lows, which the researchers termed a "yo-yo effect" (Borgen & Amundson, 1987, p.

182). This oscillation resulted from participant's often unrealistic expectations of job-search

JOB SEARCH

RE-EMPLOYMENT

RE-EMPLOYMENT

(NEG.) EMOTION (POS.)

A₁ JOB LOSS

A₁. Initial negative reactions to job loss (shock, anger)
B₁. Reflection upon job loss (worry, anxiety)
A₂. Anticipation of job loss (anxiety, apprehension, denial)
B₂. Initial reaction to job loss (relief)
C. Acceptance of job loss (determined, in-control)
D. Anticipation of job search (hopeful, optimistic, proud)
E. Initial reactions to stress associated with job search (pressure, discouragement, fear, anger, desperation)

F. Insulation from job search related stress (apathy)
G. Internalization of rejection (worthless, isolated, lonely, drifting)
H. Support/retraining (hopeful, understood, encouraged)
I. Maintenance of job search (committed, confident)
J. Slippage to stress related reactions (discouraged, angry)
K. Re-assessment of self, values
L. Levelling (positive, changed)

Figure 1: The affective experience of unemployed individuals from Borgen and Amundson (1987) Group A participants.

success meeting with a reality wherein job prospects and interviews did not yield successful outcomes. As opportunities failed to generate jobs, their mood sank. It would then be pulled back up by social supports; however, over time the lows got lower, and the highs became less pronounced. Ultimately, this led to decreased job-search behaviour and increased feelings of worthlessness. Over time, this would result in apathy, and hopelessness. This low would typically be reversed by either an acceptance of new career goals and retraining, accompanied by a renewed sense of self-worth, or a re-evaluation of intrinsic self-worth that led to an assessment of self-esteem independent of work status. This renewed self-esteem and affect would persist with all participants except those who found reemployment, only to go through a second job loss,

and those who had retrained but had subsequently still not found employment. These participants would return to a downward affective trend that would be accompanied by discouragement and anger.

The related paper from this study, Amundson and Borgen (1987), examined data from the entire sample of 93 participants to find what factors were helpful and hindering to unemployed individuals. Their analysis divided the participants into 6 broad group, and a total of 13 subgroups. Those hindering factors that shifted affect from positive to negative are, in order of most to least reported: job rejections, financial pressures, unproductive contacts with the government employment agency, an unknown or negative future, ineffective job search strategies, negative thinking, and spouse or family problems. Conversely, helpful factors that either slowed or reversed a downward dive in affect were found to be: support from family, support from friends, positive thinking/self-messaging, career changes or plans for retraining, part-time or temporary work, job search support groups or vocational counselling, the initial job search and making contacts, and physical activity. The authors note that participants emphasized the importance to them of having emotional support from their family and friends. A particularly interesting outcome of this study was the finding that those factors which hindered were different from, and not simply opposite to, those that helped. That is, an elimination of the hindering factors would not lead to an improvement in affect (Amundson & Borgen, 1987).

Generational Changes

Generational values have shifted throughout the 20th century, and certainly since these unemployment dynamics were mapped in the 1980s. Lyons, Duxbury, and Higgins (2007) describe how generational values have moved since the 1940s. Generation Xers, or those were born between 1965 and 1979, and Millennials, who were born after 1980, show an increase in

openness to change and self-enhancement values when compared to their counterparts in the earlier generations. Openness to change values include seeking stimulation and excitement, novelty, and challenges in life, as well as a propensity for independent thought and action. Self-enhancement values revolve around power, achievement, and hedonism, in which social status, achievements, and pleasure are valued. As Lyons, Duxbury, and Higgins (2007) discuss, generation Xers were born in a period of relative economic instability and diminished prosperity, as well as increased divorce rates, making it unsurprising that they measure lower on conservative values and place less emphasis on tradition, than earlier generations. Although both Generation Xers and Millennials are considered to be independent, adaptable, and change-oriented, Millennials were, surprisingly, found to be more Conservative than Generation Xers (Lyons, Duxbury, & Higgins, 2007).

These Generation X findings are reflected in Smola and Sutton (2002) research which examined generational differences in workers by comparing data from 1974 and 1999. They found that Generation Xers' work values vary significantly from those of Baby Boomers, who were born from 1945 to 1964. The younger generation is less loyal to the company, more self-oriented, and less likely to believe that work should be an important part of life. Furthermore, they are less likely to believe that how well a person does their job is reflective of their self-worth, or that hard work will increase one's self-worth. That is to say, work is being given a lower priority amongst the younger generation. The diminished loyalty that younger generations are giving to companies could be explained by the diminished loyalty that companies are giving younger generations. That is, downsizing has become a regular occurrence. Smola and Sutton (2002) argue that although many companies still discuss notions like the company family and

employee loyalty, the reality is that employees are often treated as disposable assets who are merely a means to an end (Smola & Sutton, 2002).

Employment Changes

In addition to these broad generational trends, workers in the 1980s also had more material reasons to be committed to their jobs than do modern workers. The change in workers' relationships to jobs over time has been matched by changes in statistical measures of employment. Data from Statistics Canada and Health Canada show that the context of work has certainly changed since Amundson and Borgen first studied the dynamics of unemployment in 1982. A Health Canada (2009) report paints a telling, and somewhat bleak, picture of how work-life conflict has intensified during the 1990s. Data from 1991 to 2001 shows that people are working longer hours, and struggling with more work-related health challenges. For instance, only one in ten respondents in 1991 reported working 50 or more hours per week, as compared to one in four in 2001. Over the same time period, the number of employees who are working unpaid overtime has doubled, to one in two in 2001. The report also found that conditions in Canadian workplaces had declined in the 1990s to the point where high job stress and absenteeism due to health problems became more pronounced, with almost three times as many workers reported high job stress in 2001. Furthermore, job satisfaction and commitment declined over this period, from 62 to 46 percent and 66 to 53 percent, respectively, while workloads and work-life conflicts increased. Given this, it is not surprising that perceived stress and depression also increased during the same period (Health Canada, 2009).

Data from Statistics Canada continues the narrative of a changing work context. For instance, more people are working in part-time employment in 2015 than compared to 1975, up to 19 percent from 13 percent. And this increase exists despite the reclassification of part-time

11

work to be under 30 hours per week, rather than 35 (Statistics Canada, 1975; Statistics Canada, 2017). Similarly, the number of people working more than one job has quadrupled from 1976 to 2007, up to 5.3 percent from 2.1 percent (Statistics Canada, 2015). From 1981 to 2011, median wages for men between 17 to 24 and 25 to 34 decreased by 14.2 percent and 3.3 percent, respectively, while wages for older demographics grew with age by up to 17.3 percent for the oldest workers, aged 55 to 64. Women's wages fared better, with median wages decreasing by 6.5 percent in only the 17 to 24 age group. Workers in the 25 to 34 age group saw median wages rise by 13.3 percent, while all other age groups saw increases between 23 and 31 percent. Women between 17 and 64 also experienced stronger increases in job tenure than compared to men of the same age range, with women increasing tenure by 32.1 months, and men 1.2 months, between 1981 and 2011. However, both men and women experienced declines in unionized employment over this period (Morissette et al., 2013). As globalization of the economy has brought an increase in cross-border business over the past at least 35 years, workers are finding themselves in an asymmetric relationship with employers, in which they face contract and fixed-term work that places them at an increased risk of being terminated (Buchholz, Blossfeld, 2012). Not surprisingly, many workers perceive a decline in job security (Schmidt, 1999). Indeed, Leana and Feldman (1990) argue that job loss does not simply represent a loss of income; rather, it "represent[s] a violation of the employment contract, and thus a violation of employee trust" (Leana & Feldman, 1990, p. 1178). They posit that the act of being laid off could very well permanently negatively alter an individual's level of commitment and job involvement.

Psychological Contract of Work

Smissen et al. (2013) argue that these changes between the employee and employer have resulted in a new psychological contract of work, which is defined as "the individual beliefs in

reciprocal obligations between employees and employers" (Rousseau, 1990, p. 389). In their

review of the literature, Smissen et al. (2013) remark that modern employees are expected to

work on flexible contracts, and in changing teams and roles, to the extent that there has been a

decline in mutual loyalty between the employee and employer. They expect that Millennials will

cohere very strongly with this new psychological contract, though acknowledge that this remains

to be definitively proven. While realizing that there are and will be a range of psychological

contracts, they do argue that the employee will only be retained for as long as they add value to

the organization and that they are responsible for finding new ways to add this value.

A report by Auer (2005) from the International Labour Office attributes these contractual

changes to globalization. He remarks that globalization is essentially a double-edge sword, in

that it has not only brought opportunities for growth and employment, but also challenges like

job displacement and loss. Auer says that the employment relationship has become more volatile

and short term as employers learn to react to the flow of global markets, stating that "The long-

term employment relationship (and the employment contract) is seen as being part of the defunct

Fordist and industrial model, which is being replaced increasingly by a much more

heterogeneous and volatile service sector economy" (Auer, 2005, p. 5).

Job Loss and Physical Distress

Of course, to understand the modern experience of unemployment we must discuss more

than its changing societal context; we must also unpack the impacts of unemployment on the

individual. In a study of 954 unemployed men who had worked semi-skilled or unskilled manual

jobs, and who had been unemployed for at least three months, Warr and Jackson (1984) studied

the psychological and physical effects associated with unemployment. Participants were drawn

from volunteers who were registered at 41 Unemployment Benefit Offices in the United

Kingdom. Using individual interviews with five-point Likert-type scales, respondents were asked how their health had changed in comparison to when they were employed. Their responses were later coded into physical or psychological changes, thereby providing these two measures in addition to the original response reported by the participants.

13 percent of participants reported a deterioration in physical health, while five percent reported an improvement. Of all participants, 82 percent no change in physical health. The reported deterioration in physical health was viewed as a range of worsening conditions, comprised of angina, arthritis, back problems, bronchitis, dermatitis, eczema, headaches, high blood pressure, and ulcers. Conversely, improvements were related to removal of physical stressors like being away from chemicals or stopping harmful activities at work (Warr & Jackson, 1987). Additionally, Bosque-Prous et al. (2015) found that job loss during a recession in individuals aged 50 to 65 was positively correlated with becoming a hazardous drinker.

Warr and Jackson's (1984) work was followed up longitudinally by two more studies of members of this sample, first at nine months, and then again at ten months after this (19 months after the first study). The third study had dwindled to a participant group of 222 men who had been unemployed continuously since the first study interview 19 months earlier. Their mean duration of unemployment was 25 months. Reported general health was again measured at the final interview with a five-point self-rated scale, and was found to have not deteriorated since the previous second interview 10 months prior. Rather, the greatest deterioration in overall health was seen around the 6 months mark of unemployment, with some evidence of a levelling off in this deterioration after this. This observed levelling off, at lower levels than the initial measurement, was theorized to be a result of adaptation to unemployment (Warr & Jackson, 1987).

Job Loss and Psychological Distress

Unemployment has been correlated with several indicators of poor mental health, including increases in anxiety and depression and decreases in well-being, whose effects can increase as the time of unemployment increases (Warr, Jackson, & Banks, 1998). As mentioned, Warr and Jackson (1984, 1987) examined both the physical and psychological correlates of unemployment. Psychological distress was observed in the form of increased anxiety, depression, insomnia, irritability, lack of confidence, listlessness, and nervousness. In all cases, respondents blamed deterioration of these symptoms on their job loss, and this psychological deterioration greatest amongst middle-aged members of the sample. Somewhat contradictory to this, Hahn, Specht, Gottschling, and Spinath (2015) analyzed life satisfaction data from the German Socio-Economic Panel which showed age to not correlate with life satisfaction as a function of unemployment. Their findings showed that although age had a negative effect on overall life satisfaction, age itself did not moderate changes in life satisfaction in response to a job loss. Finally, as with physical deterioration, Warr and Jackson (1987) found a levelling off of psychological deterioration occurred after around six months of unemployment.

In Warr and Jackson's 1987 follow up to their 1984 study, psychological health was this time measured with the 30-item General Health Questionnaire (GHQ). Though still showing psychological health well below their employed counterparts, GHQ scores had improved between the second and third interviews over the intervening ten-month period. That is, as with physical distress, psychological distress had increased to six months, then stabilized. Interestingly, psychological distress began decreasing after 15 months of continuous unemployment with a small, but significant, decline. However, it must still be noted that GHQ scores were much higher, or worse, that comparable samples of employed people. The authors

conclude that the participants in their sample must have adapted, to some degree, to their unemployed role (Warr & Jackson, 1987).

This is somewhat in line with the findings of Cassidy (2001), who in a study of 148 unemployed white collar males showed that individuals who had been unemployed for more than a year experienced a greater amount of psychological distress than the short-term unemployed. Furthermore, he observed that individuals who have previously been unemployed experience more psychological distress than those who have not. This fits well with the observations made in Borgen and Amundson (1987), wherein those individuals who experienced a second unemployment generally embarked on a sharp downward trend in affect after their previous rebound from a trough.

In a study of 58 employed and 177 unemployed 36-year-old Finnish people, Kokko and Pulkkinen (1998) addressed the mediators and moderators between unemployment and psychological distress. Psychological distress was defined as psychological ill-health, and measured with the (GHQ), as well as depression, which was measured with the General Behavior Inventory. Anxiety was also measured, with administration of the Karolinska Scales of Personality. Their findings showed psychological distress to be higher, in terms of anxiety and depression, in the long-term unemployed than the employed.

Paul and Moser (2009) corroborated these results. They reviewed 237 cross-sectional and 87 longitudinal studies to analyze the effect of unemployment on mental health. Unemployed people displayed poorer mental health than employed people, with an average overall effect size of $d = 0.51$, or half a standard deviation lower than employed people. Mental health, being a broad term, was measured from many indicators, and included mixed symptoms of distress, depression, anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, subjective well-being, and self-esteem. Of

particular relevance to the current study, their findings indicated that the effects of

unemployment seemed to be stable over the 30 years of data they analyzed, indicating that

societies do not "habituate to high unemployment rates" (Paul & Moser, 2009, p. 278).

Furthermore, 34 percent of unemployed people had psychological problems, compared

with 16 percent of employed individuals. Significant moderators in the effects of unemployment

were gender, occupational status, and unemployment duration. Men and blue-collar workers

were more distressed by unemployment than woman and white-collar workers, and effects on

mental health were larger on the long-term unemployed. Similar to the levelling off observed by

Warr and Jackson (1984, 1987), a stabilization of mental health at a reduced level was identified

during the second year of unemployment. This was followed by a renewed deterioration amongst

those were remained unemployed (Paul & Moser, 2009). The negative effect on mental health

was also found to be stronger in economically weak countries and those with unequal income

distribution, as well as those with poor unemployment support programs.

Finally, and importantly, Paul and Moser's (2009) meta-analysis of longitudinal studies

showed that job loss is associated with a diminishment in mental health, while reemployment is

associated with an improvement in mental health. This supports the assumption that

unemployment, in fact, causes psychological distress, rather than simply being correlated with it.

This is reinforced through the work of Pelzer, Schaffrath and Vernalekena (2014), who in a study

of 30 unemployed individuals found evidence to support the notion that depressive syndromes

result from, rather than cause, unemployment.

Well-being and Life Satisfaction. McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, and Kinicki (2005)

studied the impact of unemployment on workers using data from 104 empirical studies. Their

findings were highly supportive of the notion that there is a causal relationship between

unemployment and negative mental health; however, they are careful to state that this is not a definitive finding. Certainly, they did show that unemployed individuals have lower physical and psychological well-being than those who are employed. They also noted that responses to unemployed are not homogenous. For instance, duration of unemployment and life stage and status seem to be related to the magnitude of the effect that unemployment has, and those who have been unemployed for longer seem to be more negatively impacted. Interestingly, no relationship was found between an individual's mental health and their ability to obtain reemployment. Their work also showed that work-role centrality is associated with lower mental health and life satisfaction during unemployment, and that coping resources, be they self-messaging, interpersonal, or financial, are helpful for promoting well-being when unemployed. Finally, actively engaging in job seeking behaviour was found to correlate with lower mental health for unemployed individuals because of its stressfulness and the inevitability of facing rejections (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005).

The significance of work-role centrality in predicting emotional responses to job loss found in this work mirrors the findings of Leana and Feldman (1990). Leana and Feldman (1990) examined responses and coping strategies to layoffs and unemployment from two separate samples. One was a sample of 198 former industrial workers, and the other was 163 managerial, clerical, and technical employees. Within these two samples, 88 and 80 percent, respectively, were still unemployed at the time of data collection. Data were collected through self-report mail-out questionnaires that made use of Likert-type scales that assessed job loss characteristics, career attachment, cognitive appraisal, emotional reaction, physiological reaction, and coping strategies, amongst other metrics. Attachment to job, along with financial distress, were found to be the strongest indicators of negative reactions to job loss. With respect to job attachment,

losing a job that is both valued, but also interesting, appears to provoke more intense negative reactions. Interestingly, and in opposition to McKee-Ryan et al.'s (2005) results, Leana and Feldman (1990) found little evidence to suggest that the length of unemployment was related to perceptions or emotional responses to the job loss.

Hahn, Specht, Gottschling, and Spinath (2015) used data from 908 individuals obtained from the German Socio-Economic Panel to investigate differences in trajectories of life satisfaction over a six-year period in individuals who had lost their jobs. In seeking to understand the causes of these differences, they accounted for persistence of unemployment, pre-event personality, and age. The sample was divided into 128 people who were classified as long-term unemployed, or who had been unemployed for at least 3 years, and the remaining 780 individuals who were classified as short-term unemployed. The latter group included 251 people who had been unemployed for only one year, 208 people for two years, and 49 who were re-employed after three years. It also included 272 individuals who had found sporadic employment within one and two years of becoming unemployed (Hahn et al., 2015).

Life satisfaction was measured through respondents' responses to the question 'How satisfied are you with your life, all things considered?', which was answered on an 11-point scale from completely dissatisfied to completely satisfied. Not unlike the Borgen and Amundson (1987) study, the authors produced a plot of the changes that occurred over time; however, in this case the plot was derived from quantitative data and could therefore be given measurable x and y axes: years since unemployment, and life satisfaction, respectively. The two visual representations of data cannot therefore be directly compared, as Borgen and Amundson's (1987) data is a qualitative representation of positive and negative affect, and without axis units, whereas Hahn et al.'s (2015) figure is a plot of measured life satisfaction. However, Hahn at al.

19

(2015) combined the short and long-term unemployed data into a single trend, which can be subjectively compared against that of Borgen and Amundson (1987). Interestingly, both illustrations show an initial increase, followed by a subsequent slide downwards in both life satisfaction and affect. This is followed by a slight upswing in Hahn et al.'s (2015) combined data plot, which is fueled by a more dramatic upswing in their plot of the short-term unemployed; this more dramatic upswing is mirrored in Borgen and Amundson's (1987) illustration.

Hahn et al.'s (2015) data showed that individuals who lost their jobs already displayed lower life satisfaction in the preceding year before job loss. Furthermore, they found that people did not seem to return to their initial, pre-unemployment levels of job satisfaction, within a three-year period, regardless of whether or not they found new jobs. That being said, those who did become re-employed displayed a greater rebound in life satisfaction compared to those who did not. The latter group showed almost no bounce back.

Identity. As discussed earlier, Borgen and Amundson (1987) observed that unemployed individuals would often reach an emotional low following a prolonged unsuccessful job search, after which some people would develop a renewed sense of self-worth associated with a self-esteem independent of their worker identity. Amundson, Borgen, and McVicar (2002) expanded the discussion on the role of identity in unemployment dynamics through a study of 53 critical incident interviews of Newfoundlanders in the fishing industry. These fisheries workers came from stable communities, where fishing has been a central identity for over 500 years. They observed that when the participants left the fishing industry, they were reporting losing more than just their job; rather, "they lose a way of life that has existed for centuries" (Amundson, Borgen, & McVicar, 2002, p. 124).

Indeed, Amundson (1994) argues that some of the psychological dynamics that comprise the unemployment experience can be explained by viewing unemployment as a period of identity negotiation during a time of transition. Amundson believes that doing so can be advantageous for counselling, in so far as it provides an identifiable target for the therapeutic work: identity negotiation. Action plans and interventions can then be organized around this target construct. Amundson notes that within three to six months of the onset of unemployment, many people develop a negative filter that negates or forgets about their past accomplishments, and instead focuses on self-doubt and their life's purpose.

Though, according to Amundson, identity negotiation is an ongoing process for all of us, it becomes particularly central during times of transition such as unemployment. Amundson (2004) believes that a number of therapeutic tasks can be helpful during this time, and that "establishing self-worth apart from the work role is an essential part of the renegotiation process, based on personal capacities and attitudes rather than on a traditional working relationship" (Amundson, 1994, p. 103). Amundson (1994) argues that an examination of personal interests, independent of job roles, can be a helpful endeavor. Furthermore, developing knowledge of the labour market is valuable, and developing contacts with a professional and social network can help to define one's identity. Augmenting this with a supportive social support network, as well as supportive internal self-talk, and strategic self-marketing, are also all constructive actions for the unemployed job-seeker (Amundson, 1994).

Using a narrative thematic, as well as a positioning analysis, Pederson (2013) examined 50 stories from online websites of people's experiences of job loss in the United States. He found that few narratives constructed redemptive identities, wherein stories of suffering were transformed into positive discourse about the future, with "optimistic, fighter-type identities that

brought redemption out of a bad situation" (Pederson, 2013, p. 316). To the contrary, most of the storytellers presented despondent attitudes that showed little hope for redemption. Story themes were grouped into five identities: victim, redeemed, hopeless, bitter, and entitled and dumbfounded. Pederson believes his results show a shift in attitudes in American culture to a belief in societal responsibility for achieving progress, wherein individual redemption is replaced with collective redemption. That is, there is a movement towards social responsibility for success, rather than the traditional individualistic responsibility than underlies the American Dream (Pederson, 2013).

Depression. Heubeck, Tausch, and Mayer (1995) found that a sample of 94 unemployed youth in Liverpool, Australia reported significantly more depression, and loss of behavioural and emotional control than their employed counterparts. The level of distress was not dependent on the unemployed individual attributing their employment to internal versus external factors, and the findings did not support a learned helplessness model. That is, participants who blamed the economy for their unemployment did not experience less depression than those who did not. Similarly, individuals who blamed themselves for their unemployment were also not less depressed than those who did not. Regardless of their causal attributions, those individuals with internal attributions for finding solutions to their unemployment were significantly less depressed and experienced significantly less loss of emotional control than their counterparts. No significant differences in depression or feelings of loss of emotional control between males and females were found in this sample.

Using data from the US Health and Retirement Study, Mandal, Ayyagari, and Gallo (2011) examined whether an individual's expectations of job loss effects the impact of actual job loss on mental health. Interestingly, they found that subjective expectations of job loss amongst

22

workers aged 55 to 65 can be just as important as actual job loss in predicting depression. That is, those who have a higher expectation of losing their jobs end up exhibiting approximately twice the number of depressive symptoms than those who have a lower expectation of job loss. This is a particularly salient finding in the context of the work being undertaken in this thesis, in that if employees feel less secure in their employment now than in previous decades, we might be able to expect more depressive reactions to job loss. Individuals in this study between the ages of 45 and 54 who actually experienced job loss showed a fourfold increase in depressive symptomatology than those who did not.

Similarly, in Kokko and Pulkkinen's (1998) aforementioned study of 58 employed and 177 unemployed 36-year-old Finnish people, depressive symptomatology was shown to be higher in the long-term unemployed than the employed. Furthermore, this relationship was moderated by both self-esteem and economic situation. That is, the length of unemployment was directly linked to self-esteem, only. Low self-esteem, in turn, explained both depressive and anxious symptoms, as well as poor psychological health. However, economic situation explained only depressive symptoms. Montgomery, Cook, Bartley, Wadsworth (1999) further showed that unemployment is "a significant risk for depression and anxiety, resulting in medical consultation" (p. 99). They find it unlikely that the relationship between unemployment and anxiety and depression could be the result of poor mental health causing unemployment, as the longitudinal nature of their study allowed for the measures of unemployment to predate the onset of symptoms.

Anxiety. Kokko and Pulkkinen (1998) found an increase in anxious symptomatology in the long-term unemployed than the employed, as measured with the Karolinska Scales of Personality. The relationship between unemployment and anxiety was found to be moderated by

23

self-esteem. That is, the length of unemployment was directly linked to self-esteem, only. Low self-esteem, in turn, explained both anxious and depressive symptoms, as well as poor psychological health (Kokko & Pulkkinen, 1998). Paul and Moser's (2009) meta-analytic study of 237 cross-sectional and 87 longitudinal studies also found an increase in anxiety in the unemployed when compared to the employed.

Anxiety has also been shown to be mediated by job search self-efficacy. In a 2013 study of 30 individuals who had been laid off from the same organization, Rusu, Chiriac, Sălăgean, and Hojbotă measured both anxious symptomatology and job search self-efficacy over a three-month period. Not only did their results show that people who remained unemployed had a higher level of anxious symptomatology than did the reemployed, but that there was also a significant negative association between job search self-efficacy and symptoms of anxiety. Evidence was found for the mediating role of job search self-efficacy in the relationship between unemployment and anxious symptomatology. Not surprisingly, those individuals who had become reemployed during the three-month study period showed lesser anxious symptoms than those who remained unemployed. It also seems as though those people who had become reemployed had a greater confidence in their job search self-efficacy than those who did not, as they reported higher levels of this efficacy after three-months. The authors are careful to note that this study is limited by its relatively small size, and also by conclusions being unable to verify causal connections.

Self-Esteem. Hartley (1980) examined the impact that unemployment can have on self-esteem, operating from the proposition that self-esteem would be lower in this group when compared to employed individuals. She measured self-esteem through a self-report questionnaire amongst 87 unemployed managers, and 64 employed managers from a wide range of job

functions, using a longitudinal and cross-sectional analysis. The participants were principally male, and self-esteem was also measured through interviews with some of the managers, as well as their wives. Hartley did not find support for decreased self-esteem amongst the unemployed, but rather found a range of reactions, including a feeling of respite from stressful positions that had adversely affected family life (Hartley, 1980).

Hartley (1980) believes the relationship between self-esteem and employment status to be more complicated than initially posited; this is a view supported by the findings of Shamir (1986). Shamir (1986) found that while employment status effects depressive and anxious symptomatology, as well as morale, self-esteem appears to be unaffected by either employment status or changes in employment status. Rather, evidence points to a more complicated relationship in which the relationship between employment status and psychological health is moderated by self-esteem. That is, people who have lower self-esteem seem to be more impacted by their employment status than people with higher self-esteem (Shamir, 1986). This is somewhat similar to the findings from Kokko and Pulkkinen's (1998) work, which showed self-esteem to function as a mediator between length of unemployment and psychological distress. A slightly poorer fitting model showed depression to mediate self-esteem (Kokko & Pulkkinen, 1998).

These findings are also in general agreement with Frost and Clayson (1991) who used a systematic random sampling procedure of 562 participants to investigate the effects of unemployment on, amongst other factors, self-esteem. They began with the hypothesis: being unemployed decreases an individual's self-esteem. Again, their results did not support this hypothesis, and no significant difference in self-esteem was found between the employed and unemployed groups. Frost and Clayson offered three possible explanations for this unexpected

result. First, most individuals in this study had been laid off and rehired several times in the past, making it plausible that they viewed their current unemployment as a temporary and normal event. This would clearly be in contrast to the hypothetical individual who has never been, nor was expecting to be, laid off, and who experienced a great deal of shock or fear at such an occurrence. Secondly, it is possible that unemployment might be initially received as a welcome respite from work that brings with it rest and recreation time. And finally, the profile of their sample made it possible that participants may have still been in the anger and denial phase of unemployment, wherein they may have been denying their circumstances (Frost & Clayson, 1991). However, this is somewhat tenuous, as the average unemployment time in their sample was 6.9 months, which falls well outside of the timespan for denial as observed by Amundson and Borgen (1988) (Frost & Clayson, 1991).

Somewhat contrary to these findings, Waters and Moore (2002a) found evidence supporting the notion that unemployment can negatively impact self-esteem. In their study of 100 women and 101 Australian men, they measured number of alternate roles, financial deprivation, and use of social support as independent variables against the dependent variable of self-esteem. Alternate roles are considered as identities that can compensate for the loss of the role of employee, and may include roles such as spouse, parent, or community worker. They found that the independent variables interacted with gender in different ways to influence self-esteem. Men showed a greater negative association between financial deprivation and self-esteem than did women; conversely, women had a stronger positive relationship between alternate roles and social support and the dependent self-esteem variable than men (Waters and Moore, 2002a).

There was a stark difference in self-esteem between women who accessed social support and those who did not, while very little difference existed in men. Similarly, turning to an alternate role, such as one that is more domestically rather than employment oriented, was helpful to the self-esteem of women, but not to men. Interestingly, even though women reported a higher level of financial deprivation than men, their self-esteem was not as affected. This could be because men still dominantly identify themselves as the breadwinner, and the loss of this primary role obligation might deal a crippling blow to a man's self-esteem (Waters and Moore, 2002a). Interestingly, and contrary to Waters and Moore (2002a) work, Maddy, Cannon, and Lichtenberger (2015) found that social-support actually had a stronger influence on men than women. However, their findings also showed that the self-perceptions of both genders were helped, or hindered, by the attitudes of someone who the unemployed individual is in a close relationship with, such as a spouse.

Perhaps the lack of clarity in assessing the relationship between employment status and self-esteem can best be summarized through the findings of Goldenberg and Kline (1997). In their interviews with 144 displaced mostly white collar workers from Calgary, Alberta, 80 percent of the sample reported that their self-confidence had changed since being laid off; however, these changes were quite varied. For instance, 19 percent reported a steady decrease in self-confidence, while almost 25 percent reported a steady increase. Another 25 percent reported a series of highs and lows in self-confidence, while a further 25 percent reported an initial low, followed by an increase that came with adjustment (Goldenberg & Kline, 1997).

Grief. Amundson and Borgen (1982) theorized that a job loss would be similar to any other significant loss, and the unemployed individual would initially experience a period of grieving before beginning their job search. Their follow-up work demonstrated that this was the

case for the majority of participants in their study, although the duration of the grieving period was generally shorter than anticipated, lasting from a few weeks to a few months (Borgen & Amundson, 1987). This trend did not hold for those individuals who had anticipated their job loss; in this case, it seemed as though people move through their grieving prior to their termination of employment.

Archer and Rhodes (1993) examined in more detail the relevance of the grief process to job loss. Grief and attachment to job were assessed for 60 unemployed men through the use of structured interviews and three separate measures of job attachment, as well as measures for anxiety and depression. They found that 27 percent of the men within their sample met the criterion for a grief response. Furthermore, a significant correlation between job attachment and grief, as well as depression and anxiety, existed. The results showed that the more central a job is to the individual's identity, the more severe the grief response is. Additionally, the grief response within the sample appeared to be unrelated to the length of unemployment. For example, many members of the sample experienced a grief response, depression, and anxiety several years after their job loss. The authors posit that this could counter the widespread assumption within grief and bereavement literature that people will necessarily adapt to and recover from significant loss. They also note that a dissimilarity to bereavement is that job loss is often followed by the busyness of the job search, which might delay an identification with the unemployed identity (Archer & Rhodes, 1993).

Social Stigma. Using a semi-structured interview format, Goldenberg and Kline (1997) interviewed 144 mostly white collar displaced workers in Calgary, Alberta to understand their perceptions of the downsizing experience. Roughly half of their respondents believed that there was no negative social stigma associated with their job loss. Furthermore, 80 percent of

respondents believed that any past stigmas surrounding job loss that may have existed has changed in recent years. Participants described a normalization of job loss, resulting in the conclusion that job loss was not perceived to relate to personal abilities (Goldenberg & Kline, 1997).

Goldenberg and Kline's (1997) data is in contrast to the speculations of Karren and Sherman (2012). The latter argue that unemployment stigma can have individual, organizational, and societal implications, and is a matter worth studying due to the "sheer magnitude of the problem as layoffs have become more common than they were decades ago" (p. 858). Because organizations can use layoffs as either a genuine means of downsizing, or a method to remove lower performers, a laid off individual can carry with them an uncertainty and potential hiring risk. This impediment, they argue, can be more problematic for those workers who already face increased discrimination, such as minority or older workers (Karren & Sherman, 2012). Interestingly, a study of Japanese workers and unemployed individuals demonstrated that unemployed individuals have a stronger stigma against the unemployed people in general than do their employed counterparts; that is, "unemployed individuals stigmatize themselves more strongly than does the general public, at least in Japan" (Takashashi, Morita, & Ishidu, 2015, p. 26).

At an individual level, the job loss can result in lower self-esteem and increased depression and anxiety, all of which negatively impact a job seeker's performance throughout the hiring process and can reflect negatively in the eyes of the hiring manager or team (Karren & Sherman, 2012). There is some disagreement surrounding how job-search activities are impacted by self-esteem, in particular; Waters and Moore (2002b) argue their results indicate that "cognitive appraisals and coping efforts, rather than self-esteem, had the greatest influence on re-

employment" (p. 603). Nonetheless, stigmatization seems to act as an obstacle to reemployment (Karren & Sherman, 2012). Furthermore, at the organizational level, the large pools of candidates that now routinely respond to job postings, combined with the negative attitudes towards unemployed individuals, can drive employers to exclude the currently unemployed from consideration. This can be done as a crude method of narrowing down a pool of applicants. Finally, Karren and Sherman (2012) believe that there are societal implications to the stigmatization of the unemployed. That is, as the number of unemployed individuals in a society grows, a new underclass of people is created who have diminishing hope of regaining their former social status.

Ayllón's (2013) study of 4160 men from the European Community Household Panel provides evidence to support the existence of unemployment stigma. Discouragement amongst the unemployed was inferred from a question asking how good they felt their prospects were for reemployment over the next 12 months. Their data showed that as length of unemployment increases so does discouragement amongst the unemployed, and that discouragement increases the chances of remaining unemployed. For instance, those who believe their chance of finding a new job to be very bad had a 7.4 percent probability of still being unemployed in the following year, compared to 4.7 percent for those who believe their chances were very good. These results were independent of one's motivation to find a job (Ayllón, 2013).

From this data, Ayllón (2013) confirmed the existence of unemployment stigma in Spain. Interestingly, the effects of stigmatization are dependent on the individual's level of discouragement, and only affect those people who are discouraged. That is, people who feel positive about their chances of reemployment show no evidence of stigmatization. She posits that

this may be because "they might show greater enthusiasm for themselves in job interviews, which may avoid stigmatization" (Ayllón, 2013, p. 70).

While stigmatization and negative judgement from others can negatively impact the job search process, it seems as though an anticipation of being stigmatized can affect the unemployed in even more core ways. Following their statement that "unemployment leads to an unwanted new social identity that is stigmatizing" (p. 1), O'Donnell, Corrigan, and Gallagher (2015) studied 48 adult men and women between the ages of 18 and 65 in a small city in Ireland to determine if the anticipation of being stigmatized increased psychological and physical distress. Anticipated stigma was measured using an adapted version of the Day-to-Day Discrimination scale. They found that anticipated stigma had a direct effect on both psychological and physical distress, and that as anticipated stigma increased, so too did the dependent variables.

Coping with Job Loss

Kinicki and Latack (1990) define coping as "cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage the internal and external demands of person-environment transactions appraised as stressful" (p. 340). Petrucci, Blau, and McClendon (2015) note that coping can be either problem or emotion-focused, while Kinicki and Latack (1990) add that coping is a process that can change over time. In their 1987 study of 93 unemployed volunteers in the Greater Vancouver area, Amundson and Borgen identified several factors that slowed or reversed an unemployed individual's descent into negative affect. These developmental factors, as they were termed, could be considered coping factors and included from most to least reported: family support, support from friends, positive thinking, career change or planning for career retraining, part-time or temporary work, job search support groups or career counselling, the beginning of the job search and its

associated networking and creation of contacts, and physical activity. The importance of the first two factors, support from family and friends, was emphasized by the participants. Conversely, remedial factors that instigated a downward slide in affect were identified as: job rejections, financial stress, unhelpful government employment assistance, a negative or unknown future, poor job search strategies, negative thinking, and spouse or family problems (Amundson & Borgen, 1987).

A 2001 study by Cassidy focused more narrowly by seeking to understand the relationship between self-categorizing oneself as unemployed, as opposed to identifying with their occupation or something else, and coping and psychological health. Using a questionnaire, Cassidy (2001) examined the responses from 148 unemployed males who were clients at a recruiting agency. All participants were university educated, between 35 and 55 years old, and had white collar careers before becoming unemployed. The self-categorization measure showed 43 of the participants to identify themselves as unemployed, while 56 identified in terms of their occupation and the remaining 49 identified in a way other than through unemployment or their occupation.

The findings clearly showed that those people who identified themselves as unemployed experienced a greater amount of psychological distress than those who identified with their occupational identity, lending evidence to the suggestion that adopting an unemployed identity will influence an individual's coping. Cassidy (2001) also found that those who had been previously unemployed utilized more negative problem-solving styles, exhibited a more external locus of control, and felt as though they received less social support. It was unclear to Cassidy if this results from a causal relationship, precipitated by unemployment; however, he postulates that those people who have already been unemployed in the past are more vulnerable to the

stresses of a second unemployment, and their coping resources are already weakened. These resources could be further weakened by the renewed unemployment, and they may be more likely to accept an unemployed self-categorization. In contrast, those who have never before been unemployed have less psychological distress, and better coping styles with respect to social support, locus of control, and problem solving behaviour. The people who had the worst coping resources actually identified with their occupational identity, possibly out of denial or unrealistic optimism and expectations (Cassidy, 2001).

Christensen, Schmidt, Kriegbaum, Hougaard, and Holstein (2006) examined the association between an individual's attained educational level and their coping strategies. They collected data from a random sample of over 1600 37 to 56-year-old Danish men and women who had been unemployed for at least 70 percent of a three-year period. Coping was measured with custom created scales for problem-solving and avoidance, borrowing a similar format from the 66-item Ways of Coping Questionnaire. Education level was measured simply by years of vocational training. The authors found a significant association between low educational attainment level and a low use of problem-solving coping strategies for both sexes. Furthermore, a high use of avoidant coping was associated amongst men with low education levels; there was a significant association amongst women between medium educational attainment and low use of avoidant coping strategies. The authors therefore conclude that there is indeed an association between educational attainment and coping strategies (Christense et al., 2006).

In Hahn et al.'s (2015) previously discussed study into the difference in trajectories of life satisfaction over a six-year period in individuals who had lost their jobs, one of their main interests was in better understanding differences in coping. They found that unemployment caused a large drop in life satisfaction that persisted in the measures three-years following a job

loss. Even those who became re-employed did not return to their original base level of life satisfaction. They discovered that variability in coping with unemployment can be, at least partially, explained by personality traits. For instance, for those people who were unemployed over a short-term, most of whom had found re-employment within two years of their job loss, extroversion seemed to be protective against the negative effects of unemployment. Highly extroverted people experienced a much smaller drop in life satisfaction after losing their jobs when compared to introverted people. Conversely, conscientiousness reinforced the negative effects of job loss, with highly conscientious people experiencing greater negative reactions when compared to less conscientious people. This might be explained by these people placing a great value on the importance of work, which magnifies their perception of failure at unemployment (Hahn et al., 2015).

Job Search Behaviour

Kanfer, Wanberg, and Kantrowitz (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of total of 73 empirical studies to investigate the relationship between multiple variables and job search behaviour and employment outcomes. Not surprisingly, job search behaviour was significantly positively related to finding employment. Furthermore, several antecedents to job search were also correlated with employment success, though to a lesser degree. Their results suggest that job search behaviour is more closely related to positive, rather than negative, psychological variables, such as extroversion, conscientiousness, self-esteem, and job search self-efficacy. This is in contrast to variables such as neuroticism and agreeableness. In distinguishing between job search behaviour and employment outcomes, motives, such as perceived financial need and employment commitment, were more related to the former; in contrast, social support and biographical variables were related to both. Finally, Kanfer et al. (2001) speculated that the way

an individual presents themselves during the job application and selection process may be just as important as their job search behaviour. Furthermore, trait variables that may help job search, such as conscientiousness, may also be of benefit during the selection process. They conclude by stating that simply increasing job search activity may not increase the chance of re-employment if no consideration is given to how one presents themselves during selection (Kanfer et al., 2001).

Burger and Caldwell (2000) conducted a longitudinal study aimed at investigating early career experiences, with an initial sample size of 134 participants, and a follow-up return sample size of 99. Three areas of social behaviour in relation to trait positive affect and extroversion were studied, using the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule and the extraversion scale from the NEO-Personality Inventory, respectively. The social behaviours examined were: the extent to which people engage in organized activities; job search strategies employed by recent college graduates; and success in obtaining follow-up interviews. They found that high trait positive affect predicts a greater use of social resources during a job search, as well as more success in obtaining a follow-up interview. Additionally, positive affect better accounted for the variance seen in these three social behaviours than did extraversion.

Social Support

Mallinckodt and Bennett (1992) investigated the direct and buffering effects of social support on 41 long-term employed individuals who had recently lost their jobs. The average unemployment time in this sample was seven months. Their aim was to examine two stressors, length of unemployment and financial concerns, and six varieties of social support on four stress symptoms that are commonly associated with job loss. The social support factors to be investigated were: attachment, or a feeling of safety and security obtained through emotional

connection; social integration, which is a knowing that interests and concerns are shared; reassurance of worth; reliable alliance, or a belief that others will help them if needed; guidance, or a sense of access to advice if needed; and opportunity for nurturance, defined as the feeling of responsibility for another's well-being. Conversely, the stress symptoms of interest were: low self-esteem, depression, externalized locus of control, and global symptoms of distress (Mallinckodt & Bennett, 1992).

Similar to other studies (Leana & Feldman, 1990; Warr & Jackson, 1984), length of unemployment was not found to be significantly related to stress symptoms (Mallinckodt & Bennett, 1992); however, financial stress was significantly correlated with overall stress symptoms. Results indicated that financial stress was significantly buffered by reassurance of worth support, which protected against the effects of depression that can result from financial struggles. Indeed, social support accounted for 30 percent of the variance in depression and 31 percent of the variance in self-esteem. Astonishingly, every type of social support was related to lower level of both depression and self-esteem (Mallinckodt & Bennett, 1992). This aligns well with the findings of Amundson and Borgen (1987), wherein participants identified social support, more than any other factor, as being helpful in shifting their affect from negative to positive.

Slebarska, Moser, and Gunnesch-Luca (2009) expanded this discussion by investigating the relationship between social support and job search behaviour for 104 unemployed individuals using questionnaires that assessed four types of social support: emotional, valuable, informational, and tangible. The sources of support could be from spouse or partner, parents, children, friends, or acquaintances. Their findings demonstrated that social support and self-esteem both correlated with job search behaviour, but that they did not correlate with each other.

36

Rather, the relationship between these two variables was mediated by the perceived adequacy of received social support and, interestingly, was negative. In instances where people receive less perceived social support, the adequacy of this support contributes to an increase in self-esteem; however, when the adequacy of the social support is perceived to be low in cases of more social support, an increase in self-esteem is observed. The authors theorize this could result from a perception of inadequate social support amongst those people who have high self-esteem and a strong level of social support. People with high self-esteem can feel threatened by attempts from others to help them, leading them to devalue social support (Slebarska et al., 2009)

Of less surprise, the authors found positive correlations between social support and resilience, as well as optimism about the job search. This resilience and optimism seems to translate into active job search behaviour, which is mediated by resilience and optimistic expectations of finding a job. Slebarska et al. (2009) conclude that social support is an important factor for unemployed individuals, and it helps them to be more resilient and effective in their job searches. This is in-line with Goldenberg and Klein's (1997) findings, who found that many unemployed individuals reported social support to be the most valuable component of support groups.

Interventions as a Helping Resource

In their review of 237 cross-sectional and 87 longitudinal studies, Paul and Moser (2009) found that that intervention programs for the unemployed were moderately effective in reducing unemployment-related distress, with an average effect size of $d = -0.35$. Goldenberg and Kline (1997) reported from their sample of 144 displaced workers that 90 percent of those who attended a support group found it to be helpful, with social support being the most valuable asset attained from the group, and job contacts the second most. Amundson and Borgen (1988) dove

deeply into identifying helpful factors in unemployment group interventions through their study

of 77 individuals from Greater Vancouver who had participated in job-search groups. Identified

helping incidents were broken into two broad categories that were composed of 19 sub

categories. The broad category factors were divided into those that promoted support and self-

esteem, and those that were more task-oriented. In the case of the former, these were factors that

focused on interpersonal relations and self-concept development, and included items such as

belonging and mutual support within the group. The latter broad factor encompassed job-search

skills training, including interview preparation, and finding job prospects (Amundson & Borgen,

1988).

Although participants followed the emotional roller coaster trajectory (Borgen &

Amundson, 1987) and were in the low affect and stagnation fueled trough that occurred after two

to six months of their job search, the group intervention resulted in a significant upswing in

emotion that was independent of finding a job. Participation in the job-search group occurred

after an average of eight to nine months of unemployment. The increase in positive affect

appeared to remain with participants after the group had terminated, even if no employment had

been found. Participants reported more effective job-search behaviour and improve self-image

upon completing the group. They also expressed a belief that it would have been more beneficial

to take part in the group within one to three months of job loss. Indeed, this could have helped

protect them from such a significant downward slide in affect (Amundson & Borgen, 1988).

Furthermore, the authors noted similarities in the helpful factors found in this group and those

identified by participants in their earlier work, which included providing a sense of community

and purpose, as well as structure (Amundson & Borgen, 1987). It should, of course, also be

noted that participants in Amundson and Borgen's (1987) study explicitly identified job-search

support groups and vocational counselling as helpful factors in bringing about positive affective changes.

Borgen (1999) reinforced some of these findings in his study of a needs assessment group program for unemployed individuals, offered over two half day sessions. The group was designed to help participants identify what assistance they needed to successfully be able to attain re-employment. As before (Amundson & Borgen, 1988), participants identified helpful factors to be both interpersonal and self-worth, as well as task-oriented in nature. That is, it was helpful to members to have their feelings normalized, and focus a light on their strengths; however, it was also helpful for them to identify specific barriers, build action plans, and receive customized information for their specific needs. The program had a positive effect on participant's sense of optimism, and helped them to feel more resourced: an important protective factor against feelings of frustration. Examples of resources provide include linking participants to government ministries, contractors, and other community resources (Borgen, 1999).

Waters and Moore's (2002a) observation of gender differences in self-esteem resulting from unemployment led them to suggest that counselling interventions could benefit from being "tailored to the different reactions of men and women" (p. 184). Because they found that men in their sample did not respond well to social supports or identifying with new roles to replace their employee identity, they suggested that men might benefit from vocational training programs that incorporate personal development training. The authors go on to suggest that interventions which help men to understand how their identity relates to the labour market are needed, and that in line with Amundson's (1994) suggestion, a period of identity negotiation would be helpful. This would allow men to expand their identity to encompass more than simply their job (Waters & Moore, 2002a). Maddy, Cannon, and Lichtenberger (2015) share similar sentiments, and believe

that "Career intervention counseling should incorporate a holistic approach by examining the various life roles of those counseled and should fully realize the importance of family and social support" (p. 93). Finally, Waters and Moore (2002a) believe that effective interventions should include financial planning and budgeting training, as well as connections with organizations and services that can immerse unemployed individuals into alternate roles that can facilitate a finding of one's purpose.

Hoare and Machin (2009) report that Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) approaches have been effectively utilized in groups to improve the well-being of unemployed individuals. Specifically, the behavioural component of CBT, like what is targeted in the Brief Behavioural Activation Treatment for Depression (BATD), can be helpful in reducing negative emotions and cognitions. The BATD incorporates behaviour monitoring, activity scheduling, and positive reinforcement through several areas of life, ranging from social activities to career. It helps to provide meaningful structure to an otherwise empty schedule, which can provide the unemployed individual with a feeling of effectiveness and mastery, thereby leading to improved mental health and positive affect. As unemployed individuals with low affect may have more difficulty engaging in effective job search strategies, any intervention that can improve affect has the potential to translate into a more effective job search (Hoare & Machin, 2009). Indeed, Creed, Bloxsome, and Johnston (2001) found that unemployed people who attended community-based occupational skills and personal development training courses benefited from both improved self-esteem and job search self-efficacy.

Financial Distress

In Kokko and Pulkkinen's (1998) previously discussed study, it was found that, in addition to self-esteem, economic situation functioned as a mediator between length of current

unemployment and psychological distress and depressive symptoms, except for anxiety. Anxiety appeared to only be moderated by self-esteem. The authors hypothesized that this could be attributed to the reactive nature of depressive symptoms, such as what might be expected during a job loss, whereas anxiety is conceptualized as a more stable trait feature. Furthermore, Waters and Moore (2002a) found that financial deprivation can have a considerably negative impact on self-esteem, particular amongst men. They posit that this might result from men still feeling an identity obligation to be the primary provider in a relationship; the loss of this central role can be devastating to a man's self-esteem (Waters & Moore, 2002a).

These findings are generally in agreement with Leana and Feldman (1990) who, in their study of former industrial and white collar workers, demonstrated that attachment to job, along with financial distress, were found to be the strongest indicators of negative reaction to job loss. Indeed, their data showed that the magnitude of the loss of money that resulted from job loss had a greater influence on an individual's negative reactions to unemployment than did the length of unemployment. Warr and Jackson (1984) showed financial strain to be significantly increase as time of employment increases, with a possible levelling off after three to six months. They found financial strain was greatest amongst 20 to 39 year olds, and lowest amongst those approaching retirement; however, income change since job loss was highest in 40-59 year olds.

The Current Study's Place in the Literature

Clearly, disagreement exists within the literature on the experience of unemployment with respect to details of certain aspects. For instance, questions remain about the relationship between the time of unemployment and physical or mental health (Feldman, 1990; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005), as well as how unemployment interacts with self-esteem (Frost & Clayson, 1991; Hartley, 1980; Waters & Moore, 2002a). Nonetheless, one conclusion remains obvious: job loss

has a clear negative association with general health, which is often compounded by financial stress. As counsellors, we can be most effective in ameliorating these stresses when working through an informed lens, part of which involves understanding what the dynamics of unemployment are (Emily Bullock-Yowell et al., 2014). As this literature review demonstrates, the research is lacking in data that captures the high-level view of what affective changes occur over the course of unemployment, and what events precipitate these changes. The literature also lacks descriptive illustrations of the experience of unemployment; Hahn et al. (2015) provided a plot of life satisfaction over time, but, again, this is only one component of the unemployed individual's overall experience. This study aims to help fill this void, as well as provide a limited comparison of how this experience has changed, if at all, over the past thirty years.

This study therefore seeks to answer the following research questions: what is the unemployment experience of men and women between the ages of 25 and 55 who were primary wage earners, and who have been unemployed for at least three months? What does this emotional experience look like when changes in affect are represented figuratively? And how is the modern figurative representation of unemployment similar to, or different from, the figurative representation of unemployment as originally drawn by Borgen and Amundson in 1987?

Chapter III: Research Methodology

The purpose of this study was to understand the psychological and emotional experience of unemployment through a broad lens, and also to shed light on how, if at all, this experience has changed over the past 30 years. To this end, the present study sought to answer the following research questions: what is the unemployment experience of men and women between the ages of 25 and 55 who were primary wage earners, and who have been unemployed for at least three months? What does this emotional experience look like when changes in affect are represented figuratively? And how is the modern figurative representation of unemployment similar to, or different from, the figurative representation of unemployment as originally drawn by Borgen and Amundson in 1987? To answer the questions, a phenomenological method that is grounded in a post positivist paradigm was employed to understand the constructed subjective meanings of participants' experiences (Creswell, 2014). This standard phenomenological method was augmented with an unconventional data collection, in the form of a participant-generated figurative illustration of emotional trajectory, that mirrors the method employed by Borgen and Amundson (1987).

Research Design

A great deal of both qualitative and quantitative research has been conducted into narrow and focused aspects of unemployment. This high resolution data provides helpful, but disparate, insights into what unemployment is; however, it can be valuable to step back and examine this phenomenon through a broader, integrative viewpoint to see the forest from the trees. A phenomenological approach is helpful in providing such a vantage point and is well suited to answer the first research question, as it seeks to understand the lived experience of the phenomenon of unemployment. As stated by Giorgi and Giorgi (2003), "The whole purpose of

the method is to discover and articulate the psychological meanings being lived by the participant that reveal the nature of the phenomenon being researched" (p. 252). Though originally developed as a philosophical mode of inquiry, phenomenology was adapted in the 1960s and 70s into a more specific approach for use in the field of psychology (Giorgi & Girogi, 2003).

In addition to a conventional phenomenological inquiry that began with a question posed to the participants, data was collected by having the participants draw a time line to depict their emotional experience (see Appendix A for Time Line Template). As in the earlier study, the time lines were amalgamated to create a figurative illustration of changes in affect that reflected general patterns in the participants' experiences (Borgen & Amundson, 1987).

Phenomenology. According to Moutsakas (1994):

Evidence from phenomenological research is derived from first-person reports of life experiences. In accordance with phenomenological principles, scientific investigation is valid when the knowledge sought is arrived at through descriptions that make possible an understanding of the meanings and essences of experience. (p. 84)

Moustakas (1994) explains that within the phenomenological mode of inquiry, it is necessary to set aside suppositions, preconceived notions, and biases in an attempt to separate our observations from our past knowledge to allow us to see things as though for the first time. This process is referred to as bracketing, or epoché, which describes the process of bracketing off of one's own natural attitude (Langdridge, 2008). Though this is clearly an ideal, it can still be helpful and need not be abandoned. Langdridge (2008) explains that since most people can have

the self-awareness to be critical of their world views, phenomenological researchers should "attempt to bracket off their own preconceptions as much as is possible" (p. 1130).

Phenomenological reduction is a central component of this research approach, and involves "describing in textural language just what one sees, not only in terms of the external object but also the internal act of consciousness" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90). This reduction is also dependent on being mindful of the relationship between the phenomenon and ourselves so that we remain unbiased by our previous experiences, reducing us back to our experience of the way the phenomenon actually is. The aim is to be able to analyze and understand in detail that which is considered to be the essential nature of the phenomenon of interest. This is achieved by viewing the phenomenon from varying angles, and taking stock of, and reflecting on, what stands out to the observer as being meaningful. The reflective nature of this inquiry can go on endlessly, as Moustakas (1994) explains that "We can never exhaust completely our experience of things no matter how many times we reconsider them or view them. A new horizon arises each time that one recedes" (p. 95).

Phenomenological reduction is followed by the process of imaginative variation, wherein the observer seeks to understand the "how" that underlies the experience and which describes the essential structures of it. Moustakas (1994) describes imaginative variation as the following:

> The task of Imaginative Variation is to seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination, varying the frames of reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions. The aim is to arrive at structural descriptions of an experience, the underlying and precipitating factors that account for what is being experienced. (p. 97-98)

Imaginative variation allows for the emergence of themes from the descriptions that emerge within phenomenological reduction. "The thrust is away from facts and measurable entities and toward meanings and essences" (Moustakas, 1994, p.98), wherein a reflection on many different possibilities and explanations takes place. It is understood that many paths of reflection can lead to an understanding of the phenomenon's essence. Ultimately, the textural descriptions resulting from phenomenological reduction, and the structural understanding obtained within imaginative variation, are integrated through a synthesis to achieve "a unified statement of the essences of the experience of the phenomenon as a whole" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 100).

It follows from this approach that an individual's experience is understood to be accurate for themselves; however, it is not assumed that their conscious experience is representative of the way a phenomenon actually exists. That is, they may experience the phenomenon in a way that is subjectively unique to themselves, and which does not explicitly describe its core essence. This is accounted for within the phenomenological reduction, and protects against a bias of assuming that an experience is exactly how it was perceived to be (Giorgi & Girogi, 2003). Perceptions may be either inaccurate, or only reflect one's own interpretation of a phenomenon. This is why a phenomenological researcher strives to observe from a naïve standpoint, as though they are observing the phenomenon for the first time (Giorgi & Girogi, 2003).

Participants

A phenomenological study cannot begin with a calculated determination of the required number of participants. "Rather, deliberation and critical reflection considering the research problem, the life-world position of the participant(s), the quality of the data, and the value of emergent findings with regard to research goals" (Wertz, 2005, p. 167) must be taken into

account when considering an appropriate sample size. That being said, this study focused on only a subset of the participants in the Borgen and Amundson (1987) study. It was hoped that the narrower focus of inclusion criteria would facilitate the need for no more than eight participants, as this is a typical sample size for descriptive phenomenological research (Langdridge, 2007). This study ultimately interviewed six participants on their experiences of unemployment.

Approval was received from the Behavioural Research Ethics Board of the University of British Columbia (UBC), after which recruitment commenced through online advertisements on Craigslist, (see Appendix B), a Facebook UBC Counselling Psychology student and alumni group (see Appendix C), and through posters placed at a WorkBC Centre in downtown Vancouver (also see Appendix C). Additionally, WorkBC management was briefed on this study and their counsellors were asked to mention this study to participants who fit the inclusion criteria. Three participants were recruited from Craigslist, two from word of mouth connections through the Facebook group, and one from a WorkBC client via their career counsellor. A seventh participant, the first to be interviewed, was also recruited via Craigslist. However, this participant's data was deemed not usable and led to modifications of the inclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria. In the spirit of comparing the figurative illustrations that are generated by participants, inclusion criteria were matched as closely as possible with those of Borgen and Amundson (1987). Two notable differences from their inclusion criteria came from adaptations that followed the exclusion of data from the first participant who was interviewed, and were: participants must *consider* themselves to have been unemployed for at least three months prior to the entering the study, and participants must be between the age of 25 and 55. This first criterion replaced the original criterion which stated only that participants must have been unemployed for at least three months prior to entering the study. The rationale came from

the understanding that though participants may be unemployed with respect to traditional

employment, they may receive minor sources of income from side jobs to which they have

adapted their lifestyle to survive on. In this sense, they cannot technically be considered to be

unemployed as this income can be psychologically and materially meaningful to them. As with

Borgen and Amundson's (1987) study, the three-month unemployment requirement provided

participants with an adequate amount of unemployment to comment on. The second criterion

change also came in response to data from the first participant, and was the result of attempting

to screen out participants who had reached a traditional age of retirement, considered themselves

to be retired, and were no longer seeking employment. Such individuals could not reasonably be

expected to share a similar experience to those who were still mid-career and actively seeking

employment. This first participant's data was also excluded based on their report at the end of

the interview that they had unintentionally provided inaccurate data, but were unable to rectify it.

The remaining inclusion criteria were unchanged. Participants must have been the

primary wage earners in their household before losing their jobs. Participants were also limited

to those who had lost their jobs through layoffs, be it from downsizing, restructuring, or any

other reason not obviously related to poor performance; that is, although it can never be entirely

clear if a layoff decision was influenced by job performance (Karren & Sherman, 2012), those

people who were terminated for performance related reasons were excluded from the study.

Finally, participants were drawn only from people who were born in Canada. This aided with

consistency and comparison to the Group A participants in Borgen and Amundson (1987), as

Amundson and Borgen (1987) found that immigrants in their participant group had a different

response to job loss than non-immigrants. These criteria served to provide enough consistency to

the sample to yield themes and patterns that were distilled from the data analysis, while also mirroring as closely as possible the participants from Borgen and Amundson (1987).

Exclusion criteria. In keeping as closely in-line as possible with the inclusion and exclusion criteria used in the study that this research was partially comparing itself to, individuals who had not been unemployed for a minimum of three months were excluded from this study (Borgen & Amundson, 1987). Though not explicitly stated in Borgen and Amundson's 1987 study, it should be made explicit here that individuals who were not legally allowed to work in Canada were also excluded. This helped to eliminate unequal challenges and opportunities amongst participants.

Study participants. Six participants were included in this study, and were between the ages of 30 and 53, with a mean age of 40. Two of the participants worked in information technology, with a third having worked as a business analyst in a technical support role. One participant worked in the engineering field, one in the science field, and one in film. Two participants had obtained bachelor's degrees, with one of these currently pursuing a master's degree. Two more participants had obtained master's degrees. One participant had a technical diploma, and one had a high school education. Though all participants were born in Canada, one had left Canada as a child and returned 10 years prior to this study. He identified similarities in his experience of unemployment with those who are immigrants to Canada.

Role of the Researcher and Bias

Having been laid off three times over the course of my professional careers, the experience of unemployment is one that is familiar and unpleasant to me. It is also an experience that, to me, was dominated by a negative affective experience and a sense of isolation. I therefore

recognized that I held an assumption that participants would be in a similar place, and that they too would be amid an undesirable and unpleasant experience. However, I recognized this as an assumption on my part, and not a truth. I embraced the process of bracketing, and did my best to set aside my expectations and biases (Moustakas, 1994). I deliberately chose the wording "do my best", as I agree with Langdridge (2008) that bracketing is an ideal; however, I also agree with Langdridge (2008) that it still provides a great deal of value, and can serve as a goal to aim for.

I believe that my self-awareness, and tendency to question that which I believe, served me well in this process. I also acknowledged that my participants were not all of the same socioeconomic background as myself, and had disparate levels of education and job-skills and job-search training. Furthermore, only four of the six participants were male. These differences helped to remind myself that there can be significant variations in how we each experience unemployment (Warr & Jackson, 1984, 1987). Again, the process of bracketing helped me to hear and analyze these unique experiences from a naïve perspective.

Data Collection

The phenomenological method begins with a description of the experience that is desired to be understood. This description is usually provided by means of an interview, wherein the contents are recorded and transcribed (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). In this study, participants met with the researcher at the University of British Columbia for an individual interview that generally lasted 90 minutes. These interviews took place in a conference room on the university campus. Before the interviews proceeded, the participants were provided with a $25 gift card to London Drugs. One participant requested a Gift Card to Safeway, which was provided. The participant and researcher together then reviewed and signed the consent paperwork (see Appendix D), and any questions from the participant were answered.

Participants were asked the same question as was used in Borgen and Amundson's 1987 work:

Please describe in as much detail as possible your experience of being unemployed. I would like you to include how you came to be out of work, what you thought about when it happened and your thoughts since, any feelings you have had during the time you have been out of work, and job search activities that you have tried. (p. 181)

Remaining questions in the interview were neutral probes that encouraged participants to clarify or expand on what was said. These questions were guided by the responses provided, while maintaining a focus on the phenomenon of unemployment (Englander, 2012). Participants' interviews were audio recorded, and the recordings transcribed by the researcher. Notes were taken during the interview to record thoughts or observations not covered by the audio recording.

After participants had responded to the aforementioned question, and the remaining questions that arose from the researcher had been answered, a custom developed data collection, as originally developed by Borgen and Amundson (1987), was employed. The participants were asked to plot on a time line what they have perceived to be the emotional high and low points in their story (see Appendix A for Time Line Template). The time line figures were discussed with the participant to ensure a connection between the interview content and their figures (Borgen & Amundson, 1987). At the end of the interview, participants were thanked and reminded that the researcher would contact them in the future to review the themes that emerged from data analysis.

Data Management and Analysis

After each interview, the audio recording was transcribed by myself, and stored on a password protected USB drive. This USB drive, along with all figures, charts, and other paper notes were kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home. Participant names were replaced with the codes P1, P2, P3, etc.

The phenomenological component of this data analysis followed the process outlined by Giorgi and Giorgi (2003). The written transcription of the interview was considered the raw research data, and the transcription process accounted for the first step of the data analysis. The second step of this process involved the transcript being carefully read and then divided into meaning units by marking with a slash wherever the researcher observed a shift in the experience of the participant regarding their unemployment.

These meaning shifts were places in the participant's story where the researcher considered a psychologically relevant shift to have occurred with respect to the phenomenon that was being investigated (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). The researcher then worked with these identified meaning units as parts of a whole and transformed them using language that was, as much as possible, free from jargon and theory-laden terminology while still being psychologically oriented. As Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) explain, "Ordinary language twisted toward psychologically heightened revelations is the recommended strategy" (p. 253). Meanings were sought, so long as they were helpful in clarifying the context within which the phenomenon was manifested. That is, meanings that were relevant only to the personal existence of the participant were not pursued. The goal for the end of this step was to have transformed the identified meaning units into the psychological language that is guided by the phenomenon of interest (Giorgi & Girogi, 2003). Finally, these meaning units that were converted into the

language chosen by the researcher were used as the basis for describing the psychological structure of the phenomenon in a manner that was informed by the experience's "essential details" (Giorgi & Girogi, 2003, p. 256). Understanding the structure is important for generalizing the experience from a psychological perspective and deepening the understanding of it (Giorgi & Girogi, 2003). Transformed meaning units were grouped first within individual participant narratives, and then across participants, to find overarching themes of shared meaning.

Participants were asked to plot their emotional trajectories as they related to all events of their life, not just to those that they perceived were relevant to work and unemployment. The individual participant timelines were discussed in detail with the participants during the interview to ensure they accurately represented the participants' experiences and aligned with the content discussed in the interview. This data was then examined to find general trends between the participants, while striving to factor out data and events that were unlikely to be representative of unemployment at large.

Only these figurative patterns were compared to Borgen and Amundson's (1987) data; that is, the underlying psychological structure of the experience of unemployment that is found in this study could not be formally compared, as Borgen and Amundson (1987) did not conduct a conventional phenomenological analysis on their data set. Although they sought out meaning units from their interviews, they used these meaning units as information to populate custom-designed rating forms that informed the construction of their illustrative figures.

Trustworthiness and Rigour

Trustworthiness and rigour were sought throughout the data analysis using several methods. After completing the figurative illustrations that were generated by the participants, the participants were asked if the figures accurately represented their emotional trajectory, to which all participants answered in the affirmative. The process of creation involved the researcher routinely asking participants what had precipitated the change, and if the change was higher or lower than other events. This helped to maintain accuracy and focus throughout the process.

Each participant's final thematic structure derived from the phenomenological analysis was checked individually with its respective participant. This was done to assess if the structural themes capture participants' perceived experience of unemployment, and to incorporate any modifications, if needed. This check was done via email, and the participant was invited to clarify any areas of disagreement that they had through the following questions: (1) Do these themes accurately represent what you told me? (2) Is there anything that you told me that is missing in what I summarized in these themes? (3) Is there anything inaccurate in these themes? Responses from the four participants who responded were: a unanimous "yes" to question (1), a unanimous "no" to question (2), and a unanimous "no" to question (3).

This thesis' results were also reviewed by a subject matter expert, who is a registered psychologist and university professor with expertise in vocational psychology. This individual agreed that this study's findings could reasonably be expected to represent what individuals from this group might experience in unemployment. A final and important check on trustworthiness and rigour came from the final defense of this research in front of its academic research committee. The members of this committee are experienced with the subject matter and research

methods being utilized in this study and had a responsibility to ensure research standards and best practices are being followed.

Ethical Considerations

All research was conducted according to guidelines set forth and approved by the Behavioural Research Ethics Board of the University of British Columbia. Participants were provided with the consent form via email at least three days in advance of the interview, and were then walked through the consent form in person by the researcher before the interview. This form discussed potential risks and benefits, and the option to opt out of the study at any time with no risk of penalties of any sort was stressed to participants. Participants were also informed that they could choose how much to disclose, and that they could refuse to disclose anything which made them uncomfortable.

As this study encouraged participants to describe, in detail, a period of their life which is often associated with psychological distress (Paul & Moser, 2009), it had the potential to trigger negative emotional affect. The researcher was nearing completion of his training in a graduate counselling psychology program, and had experience working with clients in a counselling setting. As such, he was reasonably well suited to identify shifts in client affect over the course of the interview that might be concerning. The researcher was prepared for the eventuality where a participant reported, or was observed to be experiencing, any negative emotional affect that was arising as a presumed result of the interview. Though the researcher was prepared to provide the Primary Investigator's contact information, as well as contact information for local crisis lines and subsidized counselling services, only the first participant, whose data was subsequently excluded based on several unrelated factors, accepted the resource list. In this participant's case,

this list was accepted to disseminate amongst people she had contact with, rather than for her

own needs or in response to the activation of negative affect.

Chapter IV: Research Findings

A phenomenological inquiry which followed the framework described by Giorgi and Giorgi (2003), augmented by the creation of figurative illustrations that mirrored the process used in Borgen and Amundson (1987), was used to answer the following research questions: what is the unemployment experience of men and women between the age of 25 and 55 who were primary wage earners, and who have been unemployed for at least three months? What does this emotional experience look like when changes in affect are represented figuratively? And how is the modern figurative representation of unemployment similar to, or different from, the figurative representation of unemployment as originally drawn by Borgen and Amundson in 1987? The phenomenological and figurative illustration results of the study, as derived from individual interviews with six research participants, are described below.

Results of the Phenomenological Analysis

In addressing this study's first research question, data analysis revealed six main themes, and 12 subthemes. The six main themes are: Anticipation of and Immediate Response to Job Loss; Positive Emotional Responses to Job Loss; Negative Emotional Responses to Job Loss; Job Search and Financial Challenges; Supports; and Emergent Optimism and Problem Solving. All themes except for Theme 1 were endorsed by all six participants. Theme 1 was endorsed by four participants. Five of the themes contained two or more subthemes, with the sixth containing none. For subthemes to be included in the findings, two or more participants had to endorse them. Most subthemes were endorsed by at least three participants. Individual variations on these subthemes are also described. This study was intended to be a first look, and the level of detail included in these results was chosen to strike a balance between being broad enough to capture general trends, and fine enough to be helpful in informing future research. Participant names

have been replaced by codes to preserve their anonymity (P2, P3, P4 etc), and they will be referred to herein as Participant 2 for P2, Participant 3 for P3, etc. Note that Participant 1 was excluded from data analysis due to not meeting the inclusion criteria. The overall theme and subtheme structure is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Theme structure of the experience of unemployment

Theme 1: Anticipation of and Immediate Response to Job Loss
> Suspecting a Termination and Surprise
> Awkwardness

Theme 2: Positive Emotional Responses to Job Loss
> Relief and Looking Forward to Time Off
> Initial Optimism and Hope

Theme 3:Negative Emotional Responses to Job Loss
> Shame
> Anger and Betrayal
> Attachment to Job and Loss of Identity
> Decreased Hope and Mood

Theme 4: Job Search and Financial Challenges
> Job Search Challenges
> Financial Concerns

Theme 5: Support
> Financial Support
> Social Support

Theme 6: Emergent Optimism and Problem Solving

Theme 1: Anticipation of and Immediate Response to Job Loss

Three participants in this study reported having suspicions that their job was in jeopardy, but still felt surprised when they were finally notified. A fourth participant had no such suspicion, and felt only surprise. Two of these participants expressed feeling awkward during their final meeting where they were notified of their job termination. Two other participants worked on a contract basis, and therefore were not in a position to be surprised by their end of employment as their contracts had end dates.

Suspecting a termination and surprise. Participant 3 held suspicions that she might lose her job, as she had been moved between multiple supervisors who did not want to take responsibility for managing her and who claimed that they were unable to obtain funding for her position. This left her feeling as though she was "drifting" at work, with no place where she belonged. Additionally, her contract was approaching its renewal date. When she received an invitation to a meeting with HR, she did not initially suspect that the purpose of it was to provide her with layoff notice; however, she developed suspicions of its nature, which she was able to confirm with her director beforehand. Despite having suspicions of the precariousness of her job prior to this meeting invitation, she still felt some surprise when her termination was confirmed.

Participant 5 described working through two large layoffs at his company prior to his own termination. He described the second mass layoff as being the most challenging for himself, as he lost many members of his team that he had helped to build, all of whom were close with one another. He also held suspicions that his response to this layoff may have marked him for termination in the third layoff, as he described not handling it well and making his feelings well known. He had felt a sense of unfairness and disregard from the company after the second round of layoffs, which pushed him into a state of depression and hopelessness that he believed was

apparent to others. In addition to his product of expertise being downgraded, this participant described his suspicions of his termination as follows:

> And I think that was the point at which I knew my time was coming to an end, because you've got the guy that's been there for 16 years seniority, paying him a lot, he's got six weeks of vacation, you know. It's like when you trim the tree, you tend to trim the old branches…There was a period of stress prior to the dismissal because I could see it and feel it coming. So there was this anxiety of, you know, everyday coming in and wondering is this the day. Until it finally was the day.

Although he anxiously suspected a termination as far as one year prior to his layoff, and began saving more money accordingly, he also maintained hope that his seniority and product expertise would protect him. He described believing that he would work at the company until the day that it ran out of business. He described his anticipation of, and response to, his termination as:

> Initially the, you know [sighs], I could see the writing on the wall. I could see that this was coming down the pipe. Even so there was still a part of me that was like, oh, you know they're not going to get rid of me…So when the axe finally fell, there was a kind of a disbelief moment in there.

Participant 7 described his suspicions of a termination growing as his company engaged in global downsizing:

> And I guess even before that I kind of had a feeling it was coming, just because the work was slow and even though, you know, before the announcement I'd asked and said I've got capacity to work on some new projects…and then [they] never came back with

anything. So even a month before I was talking to a friend and had just said, it feels like

something's happening. And so I think I was already prepared kind of for the notice.

Despite his suspicion, he had also felt that he would be relatively safe given that he did

not consider himself to be an expensive asset and was doing good quality work. Once his

workload began to decrease, and he began to suspect that he would be targeted in a layoff, he

reported feeling nervous. When this participant was finally notified of his termination, he

reported simultaneously not feeling surprised, but also feeling a slight sense of shock.

Due to the importance of his role in his facilitating the outsourcing of his department

after the layoffs occurred, he was given three months of notice to help the company facilitate the

outsourcing transition. Upon receiving his notice, his workload decreased even more, and no one

appeared to be concerned with how much he accomplished at work so long as the key tasks

required of him were completed. He used this time to increase the amount that he worked from

home. He expressed understanding the logic behind his layoff.

Participant 2 was the only participant of these four who had no suspicion of an impending

layoff. He described how he was completely surprised by his layoff, and how prior to his layoff

he had held a curiosity about how he would react should he ever be laid off. He described the

suddenness of the layoff as:

I was completely blindsided by it. Completely blindsided by it…The crazy thing was that

I had to turn my phone in. I wasn't allowed to go back to my desk or anything. So I lost

my phone, lost my contacts. All my social media passwords were tied into there...So that

was kind of a brutal thing…And so my manager then, he walked me out, right away, and

it was just (snaps fingers), done.

Awkwardness. Two of the aforementioned four participants described awkward interactions during final meetings with their employers. Both described a perception of the interaction as being inauthentic and uncomfortable. Participant 2 had to reluctantly return to his place of work several weeks after he was terminated to complete the signing of paperwork. He described this encounter as awkward, as he had an unpleasant relationship with the manager he was meeting with. Adding to the discomfort of the meeting was the manager's perceived disingenuous offer of assistance, which the participant felt was comical. He felt as though this meeting was mechanical, dehumanizing, and lacked trust:

> I would have made the person feel a little more of a human. Not a prisoner, or a victim, or someone that you didn't trust. That's exactly the feeling. I felt like he didn't trust me, at all. Yeah, like right down to "Is that your calculator?"

Participant 3 described discomfort in her termination meeting resulting from the professional distance and formality with which her boss, with whom she had a strong relationship, conducted himself:

> It was uncomfortable. It was incredibly formal. I had to read this document with [the Human Resources employee], this legal document, and she walked me through it and while my clinic director basically he had to, he was there for 5 minutes or something, and he said he had to say the spiel of you are not being fired. It is not because of your job performance. It is because there is no funding for you.

Furthermore, she suspected that the real cause of her termination resulted from a personality conflict between her and a supervisor, despite this not being addressed in the

meeting. She described feeling as though she had to "save face" during her termination meeting, and that she found herself focusing on how terrible the HR representative's job must be.

Theme 2: Positive Emotional Responses to Job Loss

All six participants expressed some form of a positive response to losing their jobs, though the types of these responses varied widely. Three participants felt relief upon receiving notification. Five participants felt initial optimism and hope. These responses involved being excited about new opportunities, and having a familiarity, and therefore lack of concern with, a job ending, with three participants falling into each of these categories.

Relief and looking forward to time off. The three participants in this subtheme all shared an appreciation for no longer having to work. Two of these three simply no longer liked their work, while all three shared a feeling of looking forward to time off following their exertion while employed. For Participant 2, he felt relief upon being notified of his termination, as he both did not enjoy his job and had an available opportunity to pursue an entirely new field of work in the form of a paid acting contract of great interest to him. He described how he would have left his job eventually because of his dislike for it, and how these feelings, combined with his upcoming acting opportunity, helped to buffer more difficult feelings in response to his job loss. He added:

> I think it was very unique because I came from such a structured environment, and I had never had time off. I had always been going to school or working, since high school…So this was all new to me.

Participant 3 was given four months notice prior to her last day of work, as required by her contract, and she described feeling relief at knowing that she did not have to return to work

after her job ended. This relief at least partly stemmed from her having fought to assert herself and to protect her coworkers, and the realization that she no longer needed to do this. Immediately after finishing work, she went on a silent retreat to help process her thoughts and emotions related to the job loss. She subsequently chose to not look for work for the next several months, as she felt as though she deserved a break from working.

Participant 4 knew that her contract would be ending during a slow period of the year for her industry, and she intended to relax for a couple of months before commencing her job search. She therefore put no effort into looking for work immediately after her contract ended:

> I was actually quite happy to have time off, you know. I have been going since, I don't know when. Like I said, it's probably been about 6 or 7 years since I've just been working straight. So I was really looking forward to having some time off.

Initial optimism and hope. Five participants described optimistic or hopeful affects and thoughts following their layoff. Three participants described varying degrees of excitement about the possibility to undertake new ventures of interest to them. One participant reported feeling appreciative of having some downtime, which was coupled with her expectation that finding new work would not be problematic. A fifth participant described how he was so used to working on a contract basis, that the end of a contract no longer distressed him.

Participant 2 felt as though his layoff was destined to happen and that his hard work in his past training for acting would now pay off and allow him to transition from his past career into acting. He described his hope and excitement that followed the layoff:

> I felt so relieved and excited and kind of like the world is my oyster. And, I felt free, also knowing that I had a gig lined up. I was going to be working on a movie for three

months. It was going to be starting later in March. I think I started on the [redacted] of March. And it was funny, because, I was going in that very day – I'm not even lying about this – I was gonna go in that afternoon and ask for a three month leave of absence. I'm not even joking. This is what's so crazy about it. Yeah. So, they did the work for me I guess [laughing].

Although further paid acting projects did not materialize, this participant described an additional benefit of his free time to be connecting with other artists, and pursuing creative opportunities with a freedom that he was unable to have before.

Though Participant 4 was experienced with the contract nature of her employment, she described herself as having been fortunate over the previous six years because she had a steady stream of contracts that presented themselves to her with relatively little effort on her part. At the time of her contract ending, she was classified as an employee on contract. She was not initially worried when her contract ended and she did not have another, as she understood that it was a slow time of the year for her industry and she expected opportunities to increase a few months later in the Spring. Rather, she described feeling hopeful that she would find another contract when she chose to begin searching:

Traditionally in my kind of production… the winter is a slow period. So by the time I finished in November, it was already a little bit late [to look for work]. I was actually quite happy to have time off…I know I'm not going to get anything starting in December anyways, so…January came long, and it was like yeah, still kind of enjoying this. And then progressively it has gotten worse in terms of the sense of panic.

She expected that she may have to put in some effort to find her next contract, but did not expect that her unemployment would last for six months or that her job search would be as difficult as it had been. Her initial expectations and hope were bolstered by encouragement and agreement from others.

Participant 5 initially felt hope and possibility for the future that resulted from his ambitions to undertake a personal creative project that might yield income while working under the financial security that came with his severance package. He described having a clear vision for this project, and how part of his ambition to undertake this independent venture stemmed from the betrayal that he felt at his job loss. He had been an independent artist since he was a teenager, and felt like this was an opportunity for him to pursue his interests as a source of income. Additionally, this participant described how he secured a short-term contract in his field after his layoff, and how this gave him confidence and hope that he could find more work in the future with relative ease should he need to.

Participant 6 described how his familiarity with working on fixed term contracts had influenced his experience:

Most of my work has been contract based. That's not an issue for me anymore, because contracts are contracts. If a company wants you to do a certain job for them…and they don't have anymore work for you, that's fine. I've learned to deal with that. That's not an issue for me anymore. That's something that I put behind me. Of course I would have liked for the contract either to be asked, or better yet be transferred into a full time position. But when I take the contract, I psychologically look at it as this a 12 month contract, I'm going to work for 12 months, and that's about it. After 12 months I'll have

to look for another contract. So, when I reach the end of the contract, I don't have too

many expectations. So that's less of an issue for me.

Because he was eligible to receive Employment Insurance (EI), Participant 7 described

feeling as though being laid off was an excellent opportunity to go travelling, enjoy the outdoors,

and start his business. He explained that if he had quit, rather than be laid off, he would have felt

as though he would have to work at a faster pace on his business plan because he would not have

had a source of income from EI. He described receiving EI as allowing him to not worry about

having no income. He also reported that beginning his business plan in the spring, when the

weather was improving, made it easier for him to deal with a lack of structure in his day. He felt

as though he could enjoy the outdoors and play more sports outside with the increased daylight.

He planned to spend until the end of the summer working on his business plan, rather than

applying for jobs. He appreciated how the flexibility of this approach would allow him to

capitalize on his enjoyment of the summer.

Theme 3: Negative Emotional Responses to Job Loss

All six participants also expressed some form of a negative response to losing their jobs.

Again, there was a wide variety in responses, with three reporting shame, two anger and betrayal,

five discussing their attachment to their former jobs, and five expressing a decrease in their hope

or mood following their job loss. This final subtheme could be divided into three trends, as two

participants experienced decreases in mood only after pursuing creative ventures that did not

proceed as they had hoped. Two other participants experienced an increase in distress as their job

search difficulties mounted, and a final participant had only a relatively minor sense of

apprehension.

Shame. Three participants described feeling shame about being unemployed, with two of them being particularly concerned about possible encounters with former coworkers. Participant 2 described a sense of shame and embarrassment stemming from his job loss and unemployment, and a sense of trepidation about running into old coworkers and discussing what he was currently doing in his life.

Participant 4 described feeling shame about her being unemployed, despite her acknowledgement that her unemployment was not performance related:

> There is I think still a little bit, for me, anyways, a little bit of shame in not working…But at the same time, I know that it's the nature of my industry. Of where I'm at. It's nothing that I did, it's not that I was a bad worker or lazy or anything like that, it's just sort of I'm a victim of circumstance.

Participant 3 described feeling shame as being the hardest part of her job loss. Though she was given four months of notice prior to her termination, she did not tell even her closest coworkers that she had been terminated because of the pride that she had felt at having been a strong voice at work:

> But I didn't say it was because I lost job, I said I'm moving onto grad school. That was how I worded the email. And I think at the time I didn't want to admit, but looking back now it was definitely shame at having lost a job. And I didn't – well, what are you going to say in an email? I lost my job, they let me go because they didn't want to fund me [laughing], see you guys later? What are you supposed to say? So I think to this day people actually, there are some who think that I voluntarily left.

She also believed that she tried to convince herself that the real reason she did not tell her coworkers was because she did not want to create discord in the office. She described the four months following her notice as being painful and awkward. Additionally, she felt as though she were a failure, and was defeated by her job loss. This stemmed from her efforts to speak out in the past to make positive changes at work and instead losing her job. Similarly, she felt shame at her perception of having been replaced by a younger employee who was less assertive. When she did inform people that she was leaving, she framed it to sound as though it was a choice that she had made to allow her to attend graduate school. She would occasionally have to return to her place of work for personal reasons after she finished working there, and described still feeling shame on these occasions and wanting to leave as quickly as possible.

This participant also described feeling shame and guilt about not working once she entered her graduate program, in addition to believing that she should be taking a higher course load. She would compare herself to others who were taking higher course loads, and would criticize herself as "not being a real adult" since she was not actively seeking employment while in school. Conversations with other students regarding course loads were said to activate her shame, while their attempts at assuring her that her workload was high enough were not effective at consoling her. Furthermore, she compared herself unfavorably to her sister who works full time, is completing her own graduate work, and is also a mother. Though she attempted to console herself by considering her financial security and acknowledging that other students were also not working, she found that her acceptance of remaining unemployed shifted back and forth over time.

Anger and Betrayal. Two participants felt feelings of anger and betrayal towards their former employer. The reasons for feeling betrayed differed between the two. Participant 3

69

described feeling anger, and having a sense of betrayal and of being "kicked in the gut very hard" that resulted from her termination. She was also disappointed, and believed that her hard work had been unappreciated by her supervisor. Because her two supervisors had refused to obtain funding for her, her termination felt personal and like a rejection of her self. This worked to amplify her feeling of betrayal. She described it as "[feeling] like…it was this betrayal. All that time and energy and passion that I'd put in, and just like, you're no longer relevant. You're no longer, you're not really needed here."

Despite the formality of her termination meeting, she believed that she was really losing her job because she was not liked or wanted. Her anger was also partly driven by her perception of being replaced by a younger person who would always do what was asked of her, without question. This is in contrast to this participant's efforts to stand up for what she believed was right, and her tendency to only do what made sense to her.

Participant 5 described feeling anger, frustration, and a sense of betrayal resulting from his termination:

I left the building with a reasonable severance. It was enough to keep me going for a while. But there was still a sense of betrayal. The role that I had within that company was critical, especially at that juncture in the early days…So that business, a lot of its success in being able to develop its own software, hinged on the fact that they had me there. So that really fueled that sense of betrayal. It's like I helped build this bloody company.

This feeling of betrayal was bolstered by his long tenure, and the company's messaging to its employees that it was a family.

Attachment to job and loss of identity. Five participants described varying degrees of attachment to their work which stemmed from combinations of deep personal connection and motivation, long tenure, dedication to prior relevant training and education, love of the work, and the amount of time spent working in general. While only one of these participants explicitly described her employment in relation to her identity, the remaining four participants implicitly described their attachment to their work in a way that gave a sense of it intermingling with their identity.

Participant 3 described her personal identity as being closely tied to her job, and having pursued her field of work since childhood. She had a strong personal connection to, and motivation with, her work and was well qualified for it. She described the impact of her job loss on her identity as:

> My identity was very much bound by this [work]. And then I get into this job. This dream job, again, centered around this [work]. And then I lose that job. When I say I was barely holding it together, it was that identity was crumbling.

She felt as though she invested more of herself into her job than she should have, as her supervisor would manipulate and take advantage of her to get her to work harder. This experience with him ultimately made her determined to establish limits and boundaries, with respect to how much of herself she commits to a job in the future. Similarly, her experience at this position led her to question if it is healthy to work in a field where she has strong personal motivations, as the work can become all-consuming for her. She described the importance of beginning her first class of her graduate program while still working:

I think that class saved me…It was the best class I've ever had. And I think part of that was because I was so grateful to have a new experience away, apart from that, and to start maybe rebuilding a new identity outside of my experience in my clinic.

Participant 4 described how she was unable to envision herself doing anything else for work:

It's again just thinking that what I've spent the last ten years doing is going to end. I liked – there's a lot about my job that I didn't like, but there was a lot that I did like. It afforded me opportunities, even just travel opportunities that I wouldn't have had normally. I get to meet interesting people. People that also are a pain in my ass, but still are really interesting. I'm around a lot of really creative people. A lot of my job is at a desk, but I also get to go out to the field. And I usually found that right about the time where I was kind of like okay, I'm kind of over this, that's when a new contract would start. And so it's always something new.

In the past, when she was between contracts, her father would pressure her to find any kind of job; however, she would refuse on the grounds that she went to school for her profession and enjoyed it. She felt that working in another field would be a waste of the hard work that it took for her to build her profession. She described the thought of having to find new work to generate income to be very difficult to accept, and reiterated that she did not want to find a new career in something that she was not happy with.

Similarly, Participant 6 was unwilling to give up his search for employment within his field, and would rather consider moving elsewhere for work than taking an unrelated job:

I invested way too much time and money, both in my academic and professional training, as well as in terms of the work that I've done, to simply throw it away. You can't do that. Well, let's put it this way, you can put it this way, you can do that, I'm not willing to do that.

Participant 5 felt as though the impact of his job loss was magnified by his long tenure at his company. He believed that he had played a pivotal role in helping the company reach the level of success that it had, and described the company promoting its work culture as that of a family, where he had several close working relationships:

I still have dreams about working for this company. It's like, a regular occurrence for me to dream about working for them still. Because there's still a part of me that just, I mean after 16 years, and that kind of emotional investment in helping to build a business and thinking that you're part of the fixtures and fittings.

Participant 7 stated that work is a large part of what defined his life. He described how his attachment to his company had declined over the years prior to his own layoff because of prior layoffs that depressed morale and which saw many of his friends leave or be terminated. Seeing their departure had removed his passion to work at the company, and he became content with there being limited work to do. Nonetheless, he would have preferred to have been busy. Like Participant 5, he described the company as having initially been a fun place to work, where he could develop relationships with coworkers:

You know, it used to be a fun young company. A lot of young people. Everyone kind of got along, and there was a lot of activities and a lot of events that the company would put on – put together. A lot of fun things to do. And obviously those costs get caught pretty

quickly when you're cutting costs. And at the started, fine, you deal with it. But you kind

of hope that there's some sort of way out. Or some light at the end of the tunnel where

you can kind of start doing those fun events again. I mean even if it started to come, there

wasn't as many people around.

Though he was initially willing to work for a lower salary than he liked because of this,

the cost cutting and reduced fun activities fueled his financial discontent and he described feeling

frustrated at not having received pay increases.

After his termination, he found that working towards his own business plan helped him to

fill the part of his life that would normally have been filled by work. It also gave him the sense

that he was using his time valuably, and it provided him with personal growth and learning.

Decreased hope and mood. Five participants reported that their job loss eventually

resulted in a deterioration of their mood. In all cases, this effect was delayed and only grew to

significance for the participants after a sufficient time of unemployment had occurred. A minor

deviation from this trend occurred with Participant 7 who did describe feelings of apprehension

about his unemployment that followed his termination, but who also felt minor anxiety

immediately prior to his final days at work as he had been given advanced noticed of his

termination:

I think [my anxiety] was just mostly around you know, you can always plan for what

you're gonna do, and there's severance afterwards, so I knew I was gonna still get paid.

And [EI] after that. So I knew I was gonna be okay. I think it's mostly around okay, I

guess I'm actually losing my job. And you know, even though it wasn't my dream job, it

was very flexible in terms of like I was talking about the hours worked were flexible.

And if I needed to work from home, or if I had other things I needed to do, that job

allowed me to move around...So in that sense it was a very flexible and accommodating job. So I think it was mostly around okay I'm actually just losing a job.

His pre-termination anxiety was described as disappearing quickly once he finished his job and went travelling for pleasure.

Participant 2 described a sense of irony at being busy with acting opportunities while he was still employed at his previous job, and a subsequent dearth of acting opportunities now that he was unemployed with much more free time. After several months of no opportunities, his initially high hopes for a busy acting season were dashed. He described these circumstances as being very difficult to accept, and subsequently felt a sense of being trapped that stemmed from his desire to find a new job, but his sense that doing so would limit his ability to pursue any future acting opportunities. Furthermore, he was confident that he did not want to return to his previous career, as he identified very strongly as an artist.

As his length of unemployment increased, this participant experienced a very low mood after a Christmas season that resulted from losing his physical fitness that he had trained hard for. This was exacerbated by poor weather, and the combination of these two factors in addition to his ongoing unemployment led to his feeling as though he had accomplished no notable achievements in his life and that he had no purpose. He reported that "January was really low because I felt like I was just existing with no purpose. Absolutely zero purpose. And that's a tough thing."

It was at this point that he began to question where he was at in his life, particularly at his age, and he began to experience suicidal ideation. He described how not spending his time

productively worsened his mood, made him feel "gross", and he became uncomfortable spending long periods of time indoors at home, explaining his experience as:

> Very displaced. Very uneasy. Not comfortable. Some days I'd spend, you know, eight or nine hours watching TV and movies. And then the next day you don't wanna do that because you just feel gross. But what should I do? Go work out, and I'm done. What should I do now? Let's make some calls.

Similarly, he described a danger of having lots of free time and disposable income as spending more time than he wanted to drinking at bars. He noted that this experience was contrary to his earlier belief that doing nothing would make him happy:

> I always, when I was working, I thought that you know, I'd be very content with doing nothing and being a lazy bum. But that is not the case. Not the case at all [chuckling]. You need to do something. You need to have purpose. It's crazy.

He expressed regret about not starting his job search for non-acting related job opportunities earlier in his unemployment, despite knowing that this decision was an intentional choice to allow him to remain more able to respond to acting opportunities. He also described having ideas for how to use his free time productively, and expecting these plans to be fun but discovering that they actually felt like work. Resultantly, he did not follow through on these plans. Finally, he described a sense of fear about the uncertainty in his future work.

Like Participant 2, Participant 5 described a sharp decrease in mood after his high hopes for success in a creative venture were not met. After two years of pursuing his independent creative musical venture, he conceded that it was not going to be successful in generating an income for himself. It was at this point, when he felt as though his venture had failed, that he

began to experience depression. Additionally, he felt frustration towards people that he had collaborated with who he believed were not motivated enough to allow the project to succeed. Furthermore, it was at this time when his savings began to ran out, that he reflected on his past 30 years:

> I looked back, and I said I went through all that and I've got nothing. I've spent the past 30 [years]. I thought I had a career. I was pulling in some decent coin. It was a great setup. I had managed to negotiate myself into a 4 day work week, which is unheard of. I had the perfect job, I thought. And it was two years later, I was looking at it and it's all gone.

This reflection contributed to his depressive symptoms. Concurrent with his depressive symptomatology, this participant reported that he began to experience significant health problems. He described being so depressed that he was not concerned about these health problems.

As his length of unemployment continued, he described feeling disconnected from society and had a sense of being unseen by others. Similar to Participant 2's discontent with excessive free time, he felt frustrated at his inability to demonstrate his abilities:

> Because that's another component of unemployment, is feeling like you can't contribute to anything. You don't have a function, you don't have a use. That's been the most frustrating for me because I know what I'm capable of.

He explained that he used to believe that the universe would provide opportunities to him as they were needed, such as job opportunities:

So, my point being, is that it feels like those opportunities just aren't happening. And I'm like, where are they? I've been standing at the bus stop for a long time, and there's no bus coming. Where is that bus?

Although Participant 4 did initially enjoy her time off work, she began to panic after a couple of months when she engaged more fully in her job search. This panic was bolstered by changes in her industry, such as the amalgamation of some companies, and departure of others, that have decreased the number of open positions. Additionally, she described attending an industry event where she was expecting the leaders to provide an optimistic output; rather, they informed the participants to expect the industry to be very slow for the next 18 months. This message confirmed her fears, and increased her feelings of fear and panic. She also described being unhappy with having so much spare time, and how she would have preferred to be working and making money.

Participant 6, like Participant 4, also described an increase in negative affect resulting from job search difficulties. He explained how after many months of unemployment and receiving rejections from potential employers, he became increasingly disappointed, sad, frustrated, negative, and emotionally volatile when compared to the beginning of his job search. He reported that the intensity of these emotions increased over time, as the number of job rejections increased. Similarly, he reported experiencing depressive symptomatology with low motivation:

You have low energy, sometimes you simply say well the hell with it, I'm not doing anything, I'm just going to sit in front of the computer, watch a sports event, or listen to music, or whatever.

Furthermore, he felt that he had become more susceptible to negative and depressive emotional reactions from negative news, and that this response could sometimes make being active difficult for him. He described his mood as being more volatile than when he was employed:

And it's enough for one bit of bad news to trigger [laughing] an entire collapse in your mood system…Like if you have a bad interview, and you realise these guys aren't going to call you anymore, it simply compounds the entire process. More than it would have been otherwise.

The feelings of negativity that he experienced with each job rejection compounded over time and became more damaging to himself by accumulating. He described this process as being similar to taking successive doses of cyanide. He felt that his professional training did not prepare him for that level of ongoing negative evaluation. His doubt had also increased over time, as the number of job rejections increased:

And it also puts doubts in your mind. Because any negative answer that you receive, if you compound it…for a long period of time, it creates doubt and negativity. And you need to break the mold of not allowing that compoundment to affect you. Because if you hear 'no' a thousand times, you know the first time, the second time, the tenth time, really doesn't bother you. But if you hear a no a thousand times, well, the thousandth time and one [laughing], you can actually start screaming right? Because everybody has their breaking point.

This participant further described how cumulative job rejections contributed to his low mood and emotional volatility. As he would progress through hiring stages, his hopes for employment would increase:

> Look, there were a few companies here that I've been to two or three interviews, and was dropped after the second or third interview. So imagine how frustrating that was. So, you know, you build your expectations and then they simply drop you like an elevator, right? [Laughing] Imagine you go up in an elevator, and then, boom, they drop it.

Theme 4: Job Search and Financial Challenges

Again, all six participants were represented in this theme. They all reported various job search challenges, and three discussed financial concerns. Job search challenges varied considerably between participants, and ranged from having to adopt a personal image to match with a new industry to being unfamiliar with how to engage in a modern job search. The two oldest participants both discussed their perception of being discriminated against for their age. Financial concerns also varied, but a general trend was the concern about depleting savings, or in one case, depleted savings.

Job search challenges. Participant 2 expressed surprise at his difficulty in finding jobs in his new field of interest working as a beer service and knowledge specialist, or cicerone. Furthermore, he described a sense of discrimination in applying for many of these jobs which he believed resulted from his personal image not fitting with the culture of many of the establishments he applied to. He described changing the way he dressed in an attempt to match with the particular style that he believed dominated in the industry.

Participant 3 described her biggest impediment to finding a new job as being an exhaustion that resulted from her job loss experience. This exhaustion caused her to not be motivated to look for new work. As her job loss occurred near the beginning of the summer months, she decided at the time to commence her job search in the fall; however, she realized in the fall as her graduate school course load increased that she was still not ready for a job hunt:

> I still was so exhausted from my experience that I could not bring myself to look for work…I was so crushed by that experience that I just, I didn't want to even try looking. I wasn't ready to engage, or start that process again.

Similarly, this exhaustion impacted her ability to take on an increased course load beyond what she was already doing. She described her energy level as being lower than before her job loss, when she could work full time while taking some academic courses.

Participant 4 described how changes in her industry, namely the amalgamation of some companies, and departure of others, have reduced the number of job opportunities available. Furthermore, she reported that industry leaders forecasted a decline in her industry over the next 18 months. Though she began to consider, and look for, opportunities in new fields, she described difficulty in leaving her industry due to her attachment to it. Related to this, she described being unable to generate ideas for any other careers or industries that might interest her, explaining that "looking at switching careers, it's like, well am I going to end up in the desk job for the next 30 years? That's not really what I want." Similarly she had financial concerns about changing industries:

> Looking at what those jobs make, you know compared to what I was making…I always said I didn't want the money to be that important, but I think that when you get used to a certain level, how do you then cut it in half, or, by a quarter, or whatever it is?

Though this participant had begun to explore available opportunities outside of her field, she felt uncertain about how to succeed in a job search within a new industry. She believed that she had transferrable skills, but did not know how to market and showcase these skills to employers on a resume. She felt as though she could sell herself to new employers were she to meet them in person during an interview, but was doubtful that she could craft an application that would advance her to the interview stage of a job application. Most of her job search activities had involved using job search websites, though the only two interviews that she had secured had both resulted from connections through friends. She also reached out to her university's alumni career services for help in tailoring her resume, but was deterred by the cost of these services.

Participant 5 experienced significant health issues that required hospitalization and interfered with his job search, making it more difficult. He described how after recovering from his first hospitalization, he had almost secured a job when he again fell ill. Having almost completed his recovery, he felt as though he were starting his job search again from the beginning. He indicated that he intended to reconnect with a potential employer from before he was hospitalized, but indicated uncertainty about how he would explain his health-related lack of communication.

He described a strong sense of disconnection from the labour market, wherein he no longer knew how to find a job. He also believed that the job-search process had changed considerably since when he had to last look for a job two decades ago, and that personal connections were no longer prioritized::

When I started that job in 1994 there were no computers. I mean, there were computers, but a handful of people had them and they weren't integrated into the process of job searching…So I started to see the difference in approach. It wasn't personal anymore. A

resume would land on our table only after it passed certain algorithms. And now when I go to WorkBC and they talk to you about creating your resume, they're like, okay, you need to have keywords. If you don't understand keywords on your resume, no one is ever going to see your resume…So, at this point, it's like I've described it like, there's this – the employment lane is the super highway up there. And I'm down on the ground and there's no on-ramp. I don't know where that on ramp is. I don't know how to get on it. I can't appeal to people on a personal level because they're only looking at what their algorithms say. If the computer doesn't like me, that's it. I don't have a chance.

Though he dismissed personal contact with employers as being a valid job-search approach in the modern market, he also admitted that he had not attempted more personal means of contact as it made him uncomfortable. Because of this, his dominantly online job-search approach left him feeling a sense of powerlessness and confinement at submitting resumes and hoping that he would be contacted:

Now it's like you're basically going through this gauntlet of okay, here's my resume, I'm going to deposit it into this system that is now going to filter it and hopefully if I get past the filter, someone will actually use it. But then they'll use some kind of a – it will go through an HR department which will do a personality analysis to see whether you're the right fit for the company, according to the company's culture, because now it's about company's culture. And if you're not part of that culture, you're not welcome, right [laughing]? So you have to fit into this whole thing. And I call it a gauntlet because at every step they're looking for, okay give me a reason to ping this guy off.

He felt as though there must be job opportunities, but did not know how to connect with them and was uncertain about how to search for work. His experience with job search services had proved frustrating to him, as he found that most were simply trying to sell services.

This participant felt confident that he could succeed in many different types of jobs, but also felt unsure about how to undertake his job search from such a position. He believed that if he does not target his job search then it will not be successful, but also that targeting it will cause him to miss opportunities. He felt frustration resulting from his belief that employers prefer candidates who are already employed, as well as his belief that his long tenure at his previous company is interpreted by employers as his being inflexible. Rather, he stated, he had to work through many different projects and had to be quite flexible in his past employment. He compared his long tenure of 16 years to modern employees' often much briefer tenures.

Additionally, this participant felt discriminated against based on his age, which he believed made him undesirable within the tech industry. He felt as though his experience working in the industry since its inception had made him to be an asset. He also believed that his debt load and poor credit rating were causes of discrimination against him by potential employers, and was certain that credit checks had led to several unexpected rejections from potential employers.

Participant 6 had been attempting to find work opportunities through networking with professionals, and described this process as difficult for him since he felt as though he were a shy person. This difficulty was compounded by English being a second a language for him. He tried, whenever possible, to bypass a company's Human Resources (HR) department and speak directly to the hiring manager. He felt as though an application would be unlikely to progress far should it be handled by an HR department. He had also been searching for work through his

university's career center, and had attended some targeted job fairs. He described his job search as having been frustrating, since companies were not willing to take a risk in hiring him. He believed that his prior Canadian work experience was relevant enough to allow him to easily do the work he had applied for, even if the technical modules he had specialized in were slightly different from those that were more commonly used. He also expressed frustration and anger towards his own inability, and what he described as failed efforts, to find employment. He described how he had to deal with this frustration on his own, as he had no support network.

This participant, having been unemployed for 18 months, also described feeling pressure to find work:

True, there are many companies and there are many positions, but if you look at most professionals, if they have relatively speaking good professional skillsets they would be able to find a job within 9 to 12 months. If you go above that, then something bad is happening.

He noted that even if he moved to a new location to find work, it would still take him time to secure employment.

Like Participant 5, this participant also felt that he had been discriminated against by employers for his age:

Of course there are biases based on age. Like, you won't say your age on your resume, but if you meet them and they look at you and say, hmmm, this guy is in his mid or late 40s, do I really want to bring him in? I prefer something in his late 20s, or early 30s.

He also believed that he was being discriminated against for his training and some of his work experience having been from overseas. Though he was born in Canada, he had spent a

considerable portion of his adult and working years abroad. He perceived Canadian employers to not trust the standards for work and skills training from foreign sources, even though his training and experience were conducted in English and similar to Canadian standards and practices:

> So if I look at certain technological positions objectively, it shouldn't matter where I come from. I understand that you may not be familiar with the company, and it would be harder for you to trust the references from that country, but that comes down to the psychology of your recruitment, right? Because then you're saying, well, everybody's a liar. And rather than say, well, I caught him cheating. There's a difference in whether or not you believe that somebody in front of you is a liar or is telling you the truth as the principle of how you communicate with them or how you interact with them. So many companies here tend to prefer to look at a candidate who comes overseas as somebody that I'm going to doubt or put a smaller value on his qualifications in comparison to a candidate that is sending me a resume and worked for a company in Toronto…And even if he has good references, I don't care, I don't know these people, why should I bother to begin with?

Despite this perceived discrimination, he stated that when applying for jobs he would focus on the fit of the job with his skill sets and making the best impression possible in interviews, rather than on what biases might be working against him.

Though Participant 7 was not actively looking for employment, due to his focus on his business plan, he was remaining mindful of potential challenges in the future should he look for work. Namely, he indicated giving consideration to how he would explain his time unemployed to potential employers, and indicated that working on his business plan would provide a good explanation for his use of time.

Financial concerns. Participant 2 described initially feeling confusion at navigating the EI system, as well as panic when he believed that he might not be eligible for EI. He also felt irritation resulting from limitations on travelling for pleasure while receiving EI payments. He recalled how socially active he was and how good he felt when he was making money, and he described his financial concerns resulting from unemployment:

And one thing that I notice now is that my funds, instead of always [getting a] paycheque, [now it's] tick tick tick. [And] I just had a pool [of money] that's constantly shrinking. And you're [used to] always getting another cheque that makes it grow a little more, and [now] you really gotta do your own work now.

Though not currently struggling financially, Participant 4 described occasionally feeling panic when considering the financial uncertainty of her future. Her panic, in addition to fear and a reported negative psychological impact, were bolstered by dipping into savings. Her financial concerns had led her to begin considering, with great difficulty, other employment options. Because of this financial uncertainty, she felt as though her life was on hold:

And, you know, having to start dipping into savings that I worked hard for that I had a goal in mind, which was property…Yeah, it's just feeling like I can't do anything. I can't go on vacation because that screws up your EI, and also do I want to be taking the money that I had saved for vacation and go – cause now is the time. Now I don't have to take time off of work or anything like that. But it's sort of on the flipside, you're using money that you could be using for rent and groceries and things like that. And wanting to have kids and feeling like right now, like how do you even look at that when you don't have a job. It's all these big purchases, you know, none of which are pressing. But I would like to get a new car at some point. Can't do that because I don't have a job. Everything

hinges on a job. And whether money's coming in. So that for me is where it's starting to panic.

Participant 5 experienced financial difficulty after approximately two years of unemployment once his savings ran out. He was in credit card debt, and did not navigate the EI system in a way where he was eligible to receive payments after his severance. He subsequently began receiving welfare, and described his ongoing financial struggles:

So now I'm at the point where I've been treading water in terms of surviving, like I say selling of my possessions, my gear, my music collection, CDs, my vinyl collection, you know that has all kept food on the table for the past three years. But those resources are running low.

Once his existing finances were drained, he moved in with his partner, who was laid off at the same time as this participant. He described the financial difficulties associated with socializing or engaging in activities while being unemployed, as everything seems to cost money. "You don't have money to do things. Stepping out the door practically costs money. Just to take a bus somewhere. You know, I can't afford to take busses anywhere."

Theme 5: Support

Environmental supports were divided into financial and social, with four participants endorsing the former and five the latter. Combined, all six participants endorsed this theme. Financial supports shared some similarities amongst participants, with four listing government funding in the form of EI or welfare as being helpful, and three discussing their severance packages. Two participants were grateful to have had savings to rely on. Social support was somewhat more varied; however, three participants indicated that professional support from

either a psychologist or their WorkBC caseworker was beneficial. Two participants each mentioned support from friends, and from coworkers, as also being helpful.

Financial support. Participant 2 described not feeling financial pressure, and not having to worry about how he would pay for his rent. This was partly attributable to his severance, his income from his post-layoff acting contract, and his eligibility for EI. He stated that EI and financial support from his family were both helpful, and how he began to feel hope for the future once his EI payments commenced.

Severance and EI were also mentioned by Participant 7. He described having appreciated receiving severance money, in addition to a retention bonus that he received for completing his final three months at his company. He felt financially comfortable at the time of his layoff, as he was given three months of severance, in addition to the three months of working notice that he received. Furthermore, he received EI payments following his severance, which he described as being helpful:

> So when I got laid off, it really seemed like a great opportunity to kind of run with this other business idea…You know obviously you're still getting laid off, but it was important to take opportunities as they present themselves…And now having this chance to kind of work on this at my own pace, knowing that I still have EI to kind of cover the basics… I think I can do it more at a slow pace. Give me the chance to learn and succeed and fail as I go, without the kind of overhead okay there's just no money coming in.

He also mentioned that not having had any dependents to support, and having had a relatively low cost of living, helped to make his experience of unemployment easier than it might otherwise have been.

Though Participant 4 also received EI, she felt that it was small when compared to her previous income. Nonetheless, she described it as being helpful. Participant 4 described the savings that she accumulated during her previous well-paying employment as currently protecting her from financial distress. Because of this, she did not feel the need to be selling possessions or considering options to move. Like Participant 4, Participant 5 was also grateful for his savings. He began to save more money one year before he was laid off, as he suspected that his job could be in jeopardy. This money, in addition to the severance package that he received, allowed him to initially feel financially secure. When his savings ran out, he began to receive welfare, which he described as a small amount of money.

Social support. Participant 2 described several sources of social support that were helpful to him. He expressed surprise and appreciation at some of his former coworkers, specifically the older men, who reached out to him to express condolences and support following his layoff. He was surprised that men from their generation would make such a gesture, as he considered them to be stoic, and was pleased that their efforts demonstrated evidence of his having had connected with them while working.

He also described a family trip as helping to elevate his mood after it had fallen, and talks with his sister and fiancé specifically as being particularly helpful in refreshing him. He described wanting to emulate his sister's success in her profession, and a discussion he had with her in being helpful to clarify his career interests. He also described the helpfulness of his fiancé's presence in his life:

There was this couple of weird times where I was like, if it wasn't for my fiancé I'd probably just say fuck everything and move to South America and never speak to anyone

ever again, or something like that. But she was my anchor, unknowingly, she doesn't'

know that. But, if it wasn't for her I don't know what I would have done…She gave me a

reason to get up in the morning. And she supports me. I really trust her opinion…I just

wanna make her smile.

Her support and belief in him, as well as love, helped to counter his feelings of confusion

and negative affect. He also mentioned that driving her to and from work daily provided a

helpful structural framework to his day. He stated that his mother's career as an artist helped to

validate his own career ambitions and his desire to place importance on being happy. Her

surprise gifts of small amounts of money for dinners with his fiancé were also helpful. Finally,

this participant described the helpfulness of professional supports from both his psychologist,

who helped him to identify his passions and terminate unhelpful behaviours and friendships, and

also his accountants, who helped to mitigate his financial worries through financial management.

Participant 3 described various instances of social support as being helpful, including

crying and commiserating with a coworker and feeling encouraged by friends when she shared

her experience of job loss with them. She felt as though the support from her friends was a

positive factor in her life at the time, and that the feeling of being understood by her group of

friends outside of work lessoned the shame that she felt. She described feeling such support

during a summer party to celebrate her acceptance into a graduate program, after she received

her termination notice:

I think part of me wondered if, you know, maybe I could have done something

differently. Maybe if I'd been more compliant. Maybe if I'd been passive, or kept my

mouth shut. But there was always this group of people that was like no, you did the right

thing, or encouraged me in speaking up…There was one person who was at work

who…was huge in helping me through that process too…Every time I felt like I couldn't be in that space, she would take me out and give me a pep talk and then go back and face the next few hours. Yeah, so there were quite a few people who supported me during that time.

Participant 4 felt comfortable sharing her feelings related to unemployment with others, which she attributed to her six years of counselling therapy. She believed that the frequent nature of her sharing with others prevented her from building up large amounts of unexpressed emotion. She had recently begun discussing these feelings even more with her friends and stated that discussing her unemployment with myself, the researcher, as having helped to understand her experience. She reported that she did not often discuss her feelings with her partner, as he did not generally discuss emotions. She found interactions with other unemployed individuals in her industry to be supportive:

> Everybody's in the same boat. And so that's kind of comforting to know that I'm not the only one. There is a whole bunch of people out there that are in the same situation…I think it's probably just a bit of validation that it's not a reflection of who I am or what my skills are.

 She described that some people would attempt to reassure her that she would find work by reminding her that she was historically never unemployed for long periods of time.

Participant 5 found it helpful to have support from a case worker at WorkBC, as it helped him to understand the modern job-search process. He also found workshops offered by WorkBC to be valuable and appreciated being able to discuss his job search with other employees at WorkBC in addition to just his case worker. Like Participant 2 and Participant 4, he also found

benefits to working with a psychologist. He briefly met with a psychologist, who was made available to him through the hospital as part of his recovery from illness, and whom he described as being helpful in that their work together identified some of his negative thought patterns.

He also found volunteer work to be helpful, and allowed him to practice his social skills and realize that they were not as bad as he thought:

> Just being in an environment where I get to interact. Because one of the biggest things that you deal with when you're unemployed, when you're on social assistance, is your socializing dwindles to almost nothing… And [volunteering] helped me feel like a little bit useful.

Participant 6 described not having a support system, as all his family was overseas, and therefore he had to accomplish everything in his life, and manage his job search and unemployment, on his own. He remarked that a support system would have helped him by providing people to speak with and receive sympathy and advice from, and would also have been helpful in managing difficult emotions related to his unemployment, such as frustration. He differentiated between personal and professional support systems, noting that he had neither. He believed that a professional support system would have been helpful in generating job leads or providing job-search advice:

> So basically I'm, yeah, I'm pretty much on my own 100 percent. Which, you know, if you're very young, it's very hard. If you're more mature and a bit more experienced and have a bit more life experience, you learn how to deal with it and it makes it more tolerable. But still, I'm at a disadvantage if you're comparing me to another person who comes here and does have a support system.

Though he perceived there to be benefits to having a support system, he also believed he had more mobility and felt less pressure to take an unrelated job outside of his field to support dependents:

> At the end of the day I don't have people that count on me and I'm putting them in danger. So, I can transition out of here if I need to move out in terms of accommodating a situation where I would be able to find a job in the field that I'm working in a different country or in a different city.

Theme 6: Emergent Optimism and Problem Solving

All participants endorsed this theme, which contains no subthemes. Emergent optimism and problem solving is a broad theme that takes on many forms. While Participant 2, Participant 3 and Participant 7 had found inspiration, optimism, or excitement in new directions, Participant 4, Participant 5, and Participant 6 were taking practical steps to expand their options to simply find employment through expanding their job searches. Participant 2 and Participant 3 had begun creating new employment opportunities. Participant 3 had been admitted into graduate school shortly after her termination notice, but before her last day of work, which provided her with an immediate entry into a new career path. Though not all participants were of an excited or optimistic mindset, all had found paths to move in a constructive direction towards securing new employment.

After finding inspiration from other artists that he met with during his unemployment, Participant 2 described his perspective as having shifted from a traditional career approach with only one career, to a concept that encompassed multiple careers and interests:

Because I figure I can do multiple things. I'm not just going to be an artist. I'm not just

going to be a cicerone, or a brew master, or something like that. I can do both…Some of

the relationships I met over the past year, these people were like a photographer, a reality

TV producer, a musician – all the same person. They did all these things. And that's all

revenue streams for them…So I'm just gonna follow my interests from now on, and trust

that they lead me to happiness, and won't fail me as far as generating income. That was

the biggest, sort of, shift in the last year, was trusting in my interests, following my

interests, and making decisions that I want to do.

Once his EI finished, he began an active job search within his new field of interest as a

cicerone with an expectation and acceptance of likely having to make sacrifices in the short term.

He appreciated how this job choice will still allow him to maintain a flexible ability to respond to

acting opportunities. He began talking to companies and managers in person, and enjoyed these

conversations and environments much more than in his previous employment. He

enthusiastically described possibly securing a job in this field, and is optimistic about his

prospects for having secured this opportunity.

Participant 3 described being accepted into graduate school approximately one month

after receiving her termination notice as giving her a sense of moving towards something that

was better to her than her job. She felt a sense of moving from feeling rejected to feeling

accepted, and described having a direction in her life after the one month of feeling directionless

that followed her termination notice:

It shifted things for me. Finding out that I got into grad school I felt like there was

something to move towards, and it was something much better. Yeah. I knew that I didn't

want to be in that [office] forever.

Though she felt excitement at beginning the graduate program, this was coupled with trepidation that stemmed from her negative experiences at her previous job. That is, she was also initially excited for that job, and found herself drawing parallels between the two and fearing that her new excitement would also ultimately lead to unhappiness. Through a similar bridging, she felt apprehension about meeting her academic supervisor. She described taking her first course of her graduate program while still working as making her feel as though she was already actively constructing a new identity for herself, and also as alleviating some of the discomfort of having to work the last two months of her job. As she described, "having that class as a distraction from being at work, I think that class saved me…because it was just brutal being there."

Participant 4 described how because she was not finding opportunities within her industry, she had recently widened the spectrum of work that she was applying for. She was considering alternative career options that would still make use of her professional skills, and had also started thinking creatively about ways to leverage past work experiences. For example, she secured a brief a voice advertisement role, which related to similar work she had done in the past. She had also branched out into looking for unrelated gig work, such as paid surveys:

> So that's where for me I have to look at okay, is it time to actually get out of this business and go into something else. So, it's, you know just looking at any kind of job at this point, where my skills might be transferable.

Upon realizing that his creative venture would not generate income, Participant 5 decided to start looking for employment. He described knowing that there must be many different opportunities that he could fill, even though he was uncertain how to connect with him. He planned to reconnect with a potential employer once he finished recovering from his illness, and was continuing to stay in touch with his WorkBC case worker.

Though Participant 6 was nearing the point of giving up on finding job opportunities in Vancouver, he described not being willing to give up his search for employment within his field. Subsequently, he was considering moving elsewhere in Canada, or to another country, if he continued to be unable to find work locally. He placed a strong emphasis on practicality in his job search, which led to his consideration of moving locations.

Participant 7 placed a strong emphasis on the importance in goal setting of helping him to manage his unemployment, stay focused on his business plan, and feel as though he was using his time productively. Similarly, setting a date to review his business plan also helped to reduce his apprehension, as he felt as though it held him accountable and helped to advance his plan:

> So I think it's just important for me to make sure that my time is still valuable and part of that is making sure that I have goals that I'm setting and meeting. And I think that for me lessens the apprehension about not having a job right now, because I know I'm working towards a career even while I'm not working specifically.

With respect to goal setting, he described the importance of setting both micro and macro goals. Examples of the former included sleeping at regular hours, getting up in the mornings by 8;30, putting on work-appropriate clothing, and getting out of the house. Examples of the latter include setting deadlines for his business plan, such as committing to review it and decide on its feasibility by the end of the summer:

> By August [or] September, I need to have a specific decision about if this business is going to work out, or it's not. Because otherwise you kind of just say okay let's take it slowly. And if you don't have a future goal, then you just end up going nowhere with it. So I think that's part of why I'm less apprehensive now as well, is that I've made my own

goals for how I want to live each day and what I want to achieve each month by the end

of the summer.

He explained that he practiced setting deadlines at his last job, which entailed working in

a flexible and often self-directed environment. He also described to-do lists as having been

helpful in managing his goals and priorities, and how the progression and accomplishments that

came with both adding to and removing items from these lists felt good. This participant

emphasized his enjoyment of working on this plan, since it was a project that was ultimately for

himself. In particular, he enjoyed the learning that came with it.

He also emphasized his belief in the importance of staying busy and keeping his mind

engaged, and the importance for him of viewing his layoff as an opportunity on which he can

capitalize. He felt it important to not spend all of his spare time watching television, and would

rather read interesting books if he was not engaged in his business plan. However, he also

acknowledged the need for occasional rest days, where his productivity was lower.

Figurative Illustration of the Experience of Unemployment

As mentioned, a second component of data analysis, and the second research question of

this study, seeks to understand what the emotional experience of unemployment looks like when

changes in affect are represented figuratively. The six participants' figurative illustrations of

their emotional experience were analyzed to identify common trends. Illustrative figures were

created by each of the six participants at the end of the phenomenological interview, with

questions being asked by the researcher to clarify what was being represented. From these

figures, three general trends emerged, each of which was informed by two participants'

illustrations. Participants were asked to plot their emotional trajectories as they related to all

events of their life, not just to those that they perceived were relevant to work and unemployment. As such, the general trends that emerged are just that: general. An attempt was made to find "big picture" patterns that ignored blips which might result from personal events like the end of a relationship, or a family emergency. That is not to say that personal events were ignored. Rather, the mindset brought forward by the researcher was that it is reasonable to assume that a job loss could precipitate behavioural and emotional responses related to both professional and personal realms. Therefore, trends of any kind were noted and factored into these results.

Trend 1. This trend was generated with data from Participants 3 and 7, and can be seen in Figure 2. These were the only two non-contract employee participants, who were given advanced notice of their termination. Both participants were given approximately four months of working notice.

Point A represents their drop in affect immediately following their job loss notification. Both participants had expected to lose their jobs, and both experienced a quick upturn in the mood (Point B) within a month that resulted from the development of future plans that excited them, be it travelling or graduate school. As their final day of work approached, these participants had a decrease in mood that was attributable to negative feelings about their upcoming end of work. These feelings related to shame and awkwardness related to remaining at work while having been terminated, or to having experienced mood oscillations (Point C) resulting from a combination of nervous and excited feelings. The final day of work coincided with the bottoming out of a trough (Point D), after which a sharp upswing in affect occurred (Point E) that was fueled by feelings of freedom and the pursuit of pleasurable leisure activities

such as travelling or a silent retreat. At Point F, participants described enjoying life, and feeling

permission "to be" and to not have to look for work. The drop that follows (Point G) marks the
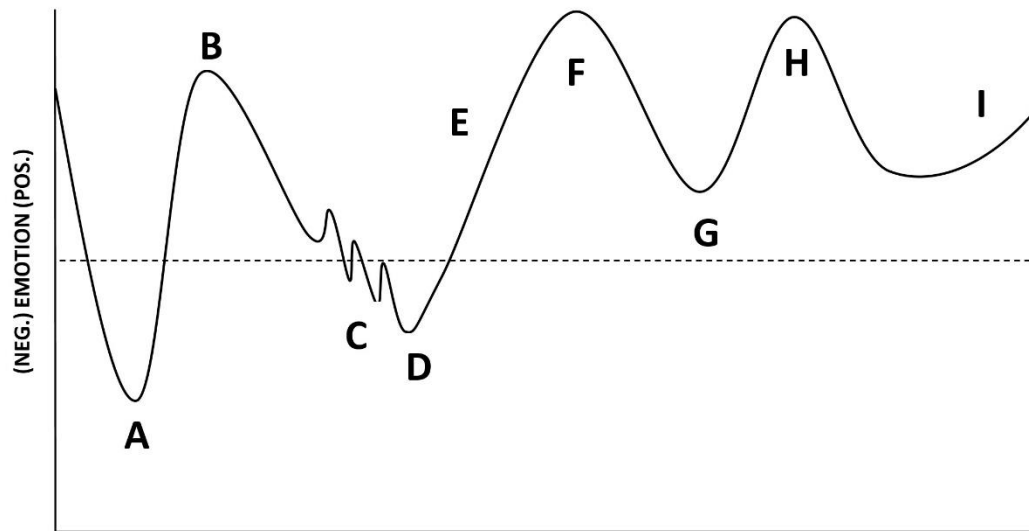

Figure 2: Trend 1 Figurative illustration. This figure illustrates the trajectory of the emotional

experience of Participants 3 and 7.

end of these leisure activities (the beginning of school, or the return from vacation) and were

followed by another upswing (Point H) that in both cases resulted from positive personal events

(family visits or receiving an academic award). As the impact of these events diminished, a

decrease in affect followed that ended in a gradual dovetailing upwards in affect (Point I). This

upswing was tied to beginning a business plan and trying to set regular hours, or life being

"boring" in an enjoyable way wherein the participant was preoccupied with school.

Trend 2. This trend was generated with data from Participants 2 and 5 and can be seen in

Figure 3. These participants were the only two who did not receive any kind of prior notice to

their termination, though Participant 5 suspected it. Although this trend was similar in shape to

Trend 1 when considered from the final day of employment onwards, it had different drivers

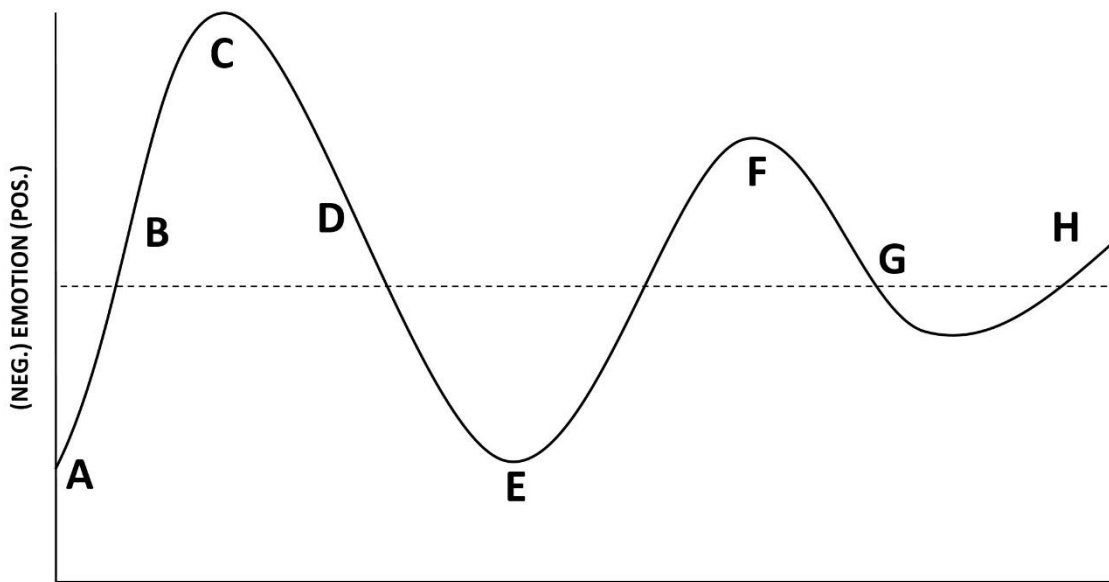behind its trajectory and had an overall lower affect.

Figure 3: Trend 2 Figurative illustration. This figure illustrates the trajectory of the emotional

experience of Participants 2 and 5.

Though Participant 5 reported enjoying his work, and Participant 2 did not, both were

already experiencing relatively low affect at Point A when they were notified of their job loss.

This was because of (for Participant 5) the expectation of an imminent job loss and the

associated emotional toll of surviving two previous layoffs or, (for Participant 2), simply not

enjoying his work. As a result, the terminations were followed by an upswing in affect through

Point B related to a sense of purpose and excitement for creative ventures. At point C,

participants were at their emotional high points as they were engaged in their creative ventures

and felt the possibility of "something big". The downslope that follows through Point D resulted

from the perceived failure of creative pursuits, and a sense of feeling lost and having "nothing to

show" for their time and effort. This is also the time when alcohol abuse became problematic for Participant 2.

This decline was reversed through Point E by beginning efforts that were related to positive health or career construction, and included: having some new work leads, generating new career ideas, resuming physical training and healthy eating, and connecting with resources from WorkBC. This upslope was also bolstered by being invited for some job interviews. At Point F participants were actively engaged in a new job search, and had also resumed creative efforts. They reported feeling of a sense of purpose at this time. The second downslide through Point G was smaller than the first, and was associated with further obstacles, such as a feeling of "limbo" after the end of a creative project, and job rejections or the loss of job-search momentum following an illness. Affect again rebounded through Point H, and was dominantly driven by feeling hope for the future. Participants reported having clarity on a new career direction, feeling connected through volunteer work, continuing creative pursuits as a hobby, and improved physical health.

Trend 3. This trend was generated with data from Participants 4 and 6, and can be seen in Figure 4. These participants were the only two from this study who had been working on a contract basis, and therefore expected their work to end when it did.

Point A represents the time immediately following their end of work, which is a period of three to four months with fairly stable affect. These participants were either enjoying having some time off, and feeling relief and "breathing space", or were used to having a contract end and were hopeful for finding a new one. At Point B, their affect begins to decrease as they begin to realise that finding new work may not be as easy as they expected, either because of a slow
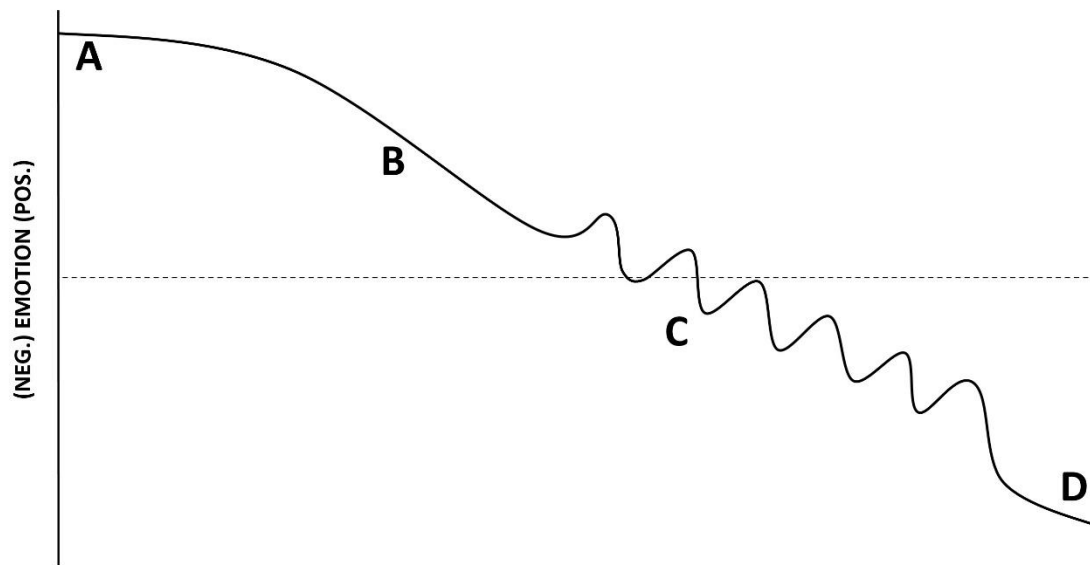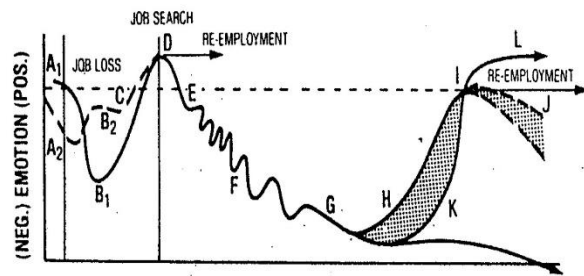
Figure 4: Trend 3 Figurative illustration. This figure illustrates the trajectory of the emotional experience of Participants 4 and 6.

industry or multiple rejections. At Point C, a feeling of hopeless starts to become embedded. Participant 6 described his mood oscillating up and down during this period. The peaks were caused by feeling hopeful whenever he had two or more interviews with a potential employer, while the subsequent valleys followed his rejection. He noted that the overall trend in mood was downwards during this time. At Point D, participants were experiencing dwindling hope and financial distress. Participant 6 stopped experiencing emotional oscillations at Point D as a result of his no longer progressing beyond initial interviews.

Comparison of the Figurative Illustrations to Borgen and Amundson (1987)

In addressing this study's third research question, meaningful similarities were found between this study's figurative illustrations of participants' psychological experiences, and those found in Borgen and Amundson's (1987) Group A participants, Pattern A (see Figure 5). A subset of Borgen and Amundson's (1987) participants were notified in advance of their
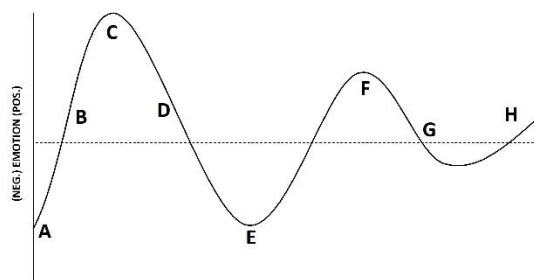
Borgen and Amundson (1987) Pattern A   Trend 1
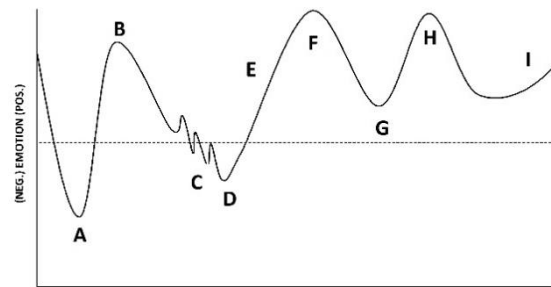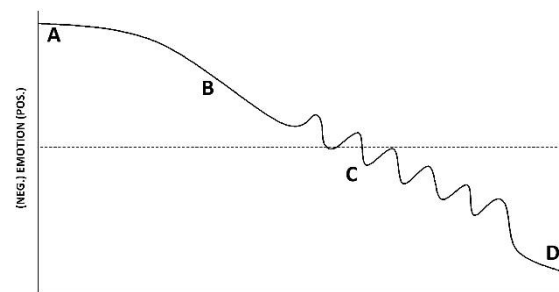

Trend 2   Trend 3

Figure 5: A comparison of figurative illustrations between the present study's three trends, and

Pattern A from Borgen and Amundson (1987).

termination, and experienced anxiety and grieving reactions prior to their last day of work, after

which they felt relief and went on brief vacations. This study found that the two participants

(Trend 1) who were notified in advance of their termination displayed a similar grieving

response, with negative affect preceding termination, and vacation and relief following.

     The notable difference in this group between the two studies is that Borgen and

Amundson (1987) illustrated participant affect dropping steadily prior to the last day of work,

while the current study found an emotional rollercoaster ensued during the same period, with

rapid emotional oscillations between nervousness and excitement immediately prior to the final

day of work. These oscillations are visually similar to the "yo-yo" pattern seen between Points E

and F in the 1987 Pattern A; however, their context and origin are of a different nature, and they are therefore not considered to be a repetition of the data. Similarly, although Trend 1 participants had an increase in affect following this trough at Point D that looks similar to the increase in the 1987 Pattern A (point B1), the drivers were different. The increase in Trend 1 resulted from feelings of freedom from work and excitement for vacation, while the 1987 Group A participants' mood increased from an acceptance of their job loss and hopefulness for their job search. Though there is evidence to point towards the implicit acceptance of job loss in both Trend 1 participants during this time, it did not appear to be the primary driver of this increase. Furthermore, the rest of the trajectory diverges from the 1987 Pattern A as a result of neither Trend 1 participant actively seeking work. Subsequent oscillations in Trend 1 participants resulted primarily from responses to travelling, personal events, and engaging in new career endeavors such as graduate work and building a business plan. Conversely, Borgen and Amundson's (1987) Pattern A was dominantly tied to work and job-search related events.

Following their job loss, Trend 2 participants both moved through an excitement driven high increase, and equally opposite decrease, in affect (Points A through E) related to their pursuit of, and disappointment with, creative projects with which they strongly identified. It is after this initial excitement and disappointment response, at the bottom of the emotional trough, that the current study's Trend 2 trajectories match very well with the 1987 Pattern A. While Group A participants experienced a trough at point B1 related to grieving and their reflection on their job loss, with associated anxiety and worry, Trend 2 participants also experienced a trough at Point E related to their reflection on their perceived failure of their creative pursuits. This trough also appeared to be a grieving response; however, its context and origin differed from that of Group A participants. It is after this point that both groups moved towards the final stage of

grief of acceptance, which was followed by enthusiasm for a job search. These participant groups share a nearly identical path beyond this, with similar elements driving the trajectory, namely hope, job rejection, and a renewed upswing and hope tied to ideas for new career considerations.

The entirety of Trend 3 is best conceptualized as mirroring a shared segment of Trend 2 (between Points F and G) and the 1987 Pattern A (between Points E and G). Its trajectory captures a snapshot of this larger trajectory from the beginning of the job search phase's high affect to its low affect ending. Presumably, enough time had not yet passed for these participants to have entered an identity renegotiation of their values and self-worth, or a consideration of new career options or training. Though Participant 4 had begun to consider exploring new career options, she was still resistant to this idea due to her attachment to her career, and its high pay. As such, Trend 3 captures only a steady decline in affect that follows a period of relatively emotionally stability wherein participants were still hopeful they would secure a new contract with relative ease. Trend 3 was partitioned into its own group because these participants also did not share the initial decrease and then rebound in affect seen in the other groups. This is because these participants were both so used to working on fixed-term contracts that they were expecting their end of work date, and did not have emotionally loaded responses tied to such things as perceived rejection, failure, or shock.

Of particular note in Trend 3 is the finding of the "yo-yo" effect that was observed by Borgen and Amundson (1987). Only one of the two participants in this group reported this phenomenon, but he did so with great clarity and detail. The drivers behind these mood oscillations were similar to those found in the1987 Group A participants. That is: a buildup of hope from a job prospect followed by a disappointment-driven drop that left the participant lower in mood than before. One notable exception in this study's pattern is that Participant 6, who

reported the pattern, noted that he had no social support network to help his mood rebound upwards. This was a factor noted in the 1987 figure.

In summary, each of the three trends presented in this study mirror, with varying degrees of closeness, different segments of Borgen and Amundson's (1987) Pattern A. Trend 1 is the most divergent of the three trends from the 1987 Pattern A because its participants represent a group that did not exist within the 1987 Group A. That is, these were people who already had their future plans in place by the time they worked their final day. As such, further oscillations in mood beyond this point were primarily reported to result from either personal events or the managing of their new endeavors. Trend 2 captures most closely the entirety of the 1987 Pattern A, with a notable deviation of a significant exciting period at the beginning of the trajectory, and the absence of reemployment, or further stress related slippage, at the end of the trajectory. Presumably, not enough time had yet passed to reach either of these outcomes. Trend 3 captures a snapshot within the downward slope of the job search phase, and is noteworthy in that it also represents a group not captured in the 1987 Pattern A. That is, people who were so accustomed to job loss that they experienced an initially neutral response. It thus becomes clear that a key difference in emotional responses in this study as compared to Borgen and Amundson (1987) is that none of this study's participants shared an initial response to job loss that mirrored the participants in 1987.

Chapter V: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to better understand the psychological experience of individuals who become unemployed through no fault of their own, and to create and compare figurative illustrations of the modern emotional experience of unemployment to a 30-year-old figurative illustration. This chapter will situate the study's findings within the existing research base and discuss unique contributions brought forth by the results. Additionally, the relevance of this study for practice, implications for future research, and strengths and limitations of this study will be discussed.

Situating the Findings Within Previous Research

Four of the themes in this study are well corroborated within the existing literature base that was reviewed, while the remaining three have only very few supporting references available. Not surprisingly, the most well documented theme within the research base is Negative Emotional Responses to Job Loss. Though less strongly represented, the themes Job Search and Financial Challenges, and Support also have an extensive existing research base. The theme Emergent Optimism and Problem Solving is corroborated by only one study; however, it mirrors this study very closely, and has therefore been chosen to be included in this section.

Negative emotional responses to job loss. The two subthemes of Decreased Hope and Mood, and Attachment to Job and Loss of Identity, are the most well represented subthemes within this theme amongst the existing literature that was reviewed. The subtheme of Anger and Betrayal was not represented within the reviewed literature, and is therefore considered to be a unique finding that is not discussed here. Five participants in this study discussed both their experiencing of a decrease in their hope and mood, as well as their attachment to their former

jobs and ensuing struggles with their identity. These participants all experienced a decrease in mood that was related to their employment, with depressive and various descriptions of anxious symptomatology (fear, panic, apprehension) being described. This drop in affect, and accompanying symptomatology, that can occur for individuals as a result of unemployment has been thoroughly researched and established elsewhere in the literature (Borgen & Amundson, 1987; Cassidy 2001; Heubeck, Tausch, & Mayer 1995; Kokko & Pulkkinen,1998; McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki 2005; Leana and Feldman 1990; Paul & Moser, 2009; Warr & Jackson 1984, 1987; Warr, Jackson, & Banks, 1998). As such, it was not surprising to encounter such reports from all but one of this study's participants.

Hopelessness and doubt also appear to be a common experience of unemployment. Four of these five participants described feeling hopeless or experiencing doubt at various points in their unemployment. Pederson (2013) had found that most unemployed individuals in his study had created narratives that were of a despondent tone, with hopelessness being one of the five commonly created identities. Amundson (1994) believed that unemployed people often focus disproportionately on their own doubts, or their life's purpose. This resonates strongly with these four individuals, and particularly so with Participants 2 and 5 who, upon the end of their creative endeavours, had questioned what they had accomplished in, and what they were doing with, their lives.

The importance of work to an individual's sense of identity has been discussed throughout the unemployment literature (Amundson, Borgen, & McVicar, 2002; Cassidy, 2001; Leana & Feldman, 1990; Maddy, Cannon, & Lichtenberger, 2015; Pederson, 2015; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Waters & Moore, 2002a), and was corroborated by data from five of this study's participants. Participants generally described this subtheme in implicit terms such as being

unable to envision themselves doing any other type of work, or having invested too much in their education to give up a particular profession. Participant 3 was the most explicit with her description of feeling as though she was losing her identity. The centrality of work identity to these participants disagrees with Smola and Sutton's (2002) research which argued that Generation Xers and Millennials believe work to be a less important part of life and are less loyal to company's than Baby Boomers. Of course, this study has no Baby Boomer control group to which these results can be compared; nonetheless, they suggest that work, and loyalty to the company, are both important concepts for these participants.

When considering Leanna and Feldman's (1990) work, it is not surprising that most of the same participants in this subtheme who described their attachment to work also described a decrease in their mood. Leanna and Feldman (1990) found that attachment to work was one of the strongest indicators of a negative reaction to losing a job.

Indeed, Participant 5 had a long tenure and strong attachment to his work, and also experienced severe depressive symptomatology that led to his ignoring serious health concerns. Smola and Sutton (2005) had made the point that employers often tout their work environments as company families, despite treating their employees as disposable assets. This rang particularly true for Participant 5, who having been employed with the same organization for 16 years that explicitly promoted the message of being a workplace family, stated "there is still a part of [him]" that is emotionally invested in the company.

Shame can also be an important part of the experience of unemployment. Fewer participants, three, described having feelings of shame. This subtheme is only partially supported by the reviewed literature. It is therefore considered to partly be a unique finding of this study, and partly situated within the existing literature. Though the reviewed literature did not discuss

shame, it did have several references to social stigma (Ayllón, 2013; Goldenberg & Kline, 1997; Karren & Sherman, 2012; Takashashi, Morita, & Ishidu, 2015). The choice of the word shame is intentional in this study, as it makes clear that this is the feeling and perception of the unemployed individual, rather than a judgement cast on them by others. Interestingly, all three of these participants acknowledged that they had performed a good quality of work. This understanding did not seem to buffer their feelings of shame, or fears of encountering old coworkers and having to explain how they were using their time. Similarly, none of these participants described a negative encounter related to stigmatization or shaming. Perhaps, as Takashashi, Morita, & Ishidu (2015) noted, these unemployed individuals were stigmatizing themselves to a greater degree than the general public, or their former coworkers, ever would. In fact, of the studies cited here which pertain to social stigma, only Karren and Sherman's (2012) postulated that unemployed individuals might be negatively assessed by others due to a questioning of the employer's motives for the layoff. Goldenberg and Kline (1997) found that half of their participants did not feel stigma as a result of their layoff; however, they do not indicate if this means that the other half did.

Job search and financial challenges. Job search challenges were a common subtheme amongst this study's participants, with all six encountering various job search challenges. The reviewed literature discussed job search challenges in relation to unemployment (Amundson & Borgen, 1987; Borgen & Amundson, 1987; Burger & Caldwell, 2000; Kanfer et al., 2001). As seen with Participant 6, and to some degree with Participant 4, Amundson and Borgen (1987) reported job rejections as being the most reported factor in changing affect from positive to negative. Borgen and Amundson's "yo-yo" oscillation in affect was evident in Particpant 6's

111

figurative illustration of his experience, but he also alluded to this when he described successive job rejections as increasing his emotional volatility.

Declining affect itself can be a job search challenge. Burger and Caldwell (2000) observed that high trait positive affect is predictive of having more success in obtaining a second interview, as such individuals tend to use more social supports. Participants 2, 4, 5, and 6 had all engaged in job search efforts while having had low affect, and none of them was reporting success. It was only when Participants 2 and 5's affect began to rebound upwards that they began having more promising leads and engaged job searches. Additionally, and in line with Burger and Caldwell's findings, Participants 5 and 6 described feeling socially isolated and alone. Participant 6, whose mood was reported as being very low, indicated obtaining several follow-up interviews initially, but fewer as his job search progressed and his mood continued to decline. Similarly, Kanfer et al. (2001) suggested that job search behaviour is more closely related to positive psychological variables such as extroversion and self-esteem, than it is to negative ones. Though extroversion and self-esteem were not explicitly discussed with the participants, the tone and nature of the participants' stories lead the researcher to be of the opinion that participants were not likely to have been high in either during their periods of low mood; however, this is just a guess. Kanfer et al. (2001) also found that job search behaviour was related to financial need, which aligns well with one of Participant 3's reasons for not engaging in a job search: her lack of financial need.

Financial concerns arise amongst some unemployed individuals, with three of this study's participants reporting them. The reviewed literature discusses the relationship between unemployment and finances, with mention of some mediators and correlates between the two (Amundson & Borgen, 1987; Kokko & Pulkkinen, 1998; Leanna & Feldman, 1990; Mallinckodt

& Bennett, 1992; Waters & Moore, 2002a). Amundson and Borgen (1987) reported that financial pressures were the second most reported hindering factor amongst the unemployed, while Mallinckodt and Bennett (1992) found that depression could result from financial stress and that financial stress was significantly correlated with overall stress. Though it is worth noting that the times during which these participants reported financial stress and depressive symptoms did correlate with relatively high periods of stress during their unemployment, it is beyond the ability of this study to identity a correlation.

Leana and Feldman (1990) also reported financial distress to be one of the strongest indicators of reacting negatively to a job loss. It is difficult to align this finding with this study's participants, as two of the three in this subtheme had either a sizeable severance or savings that left them comfortable for two years, or a short-term paid contract that started immediately after the job loss. These periods also involved the pursuit of new career projects. For these two participants, their financial concerns followed after this. If the ending of these periods were to be conceptualized as the true beginning of unemployment, then Leana and Feldman's (1990) findings would fit somewhat better. However, one of these participants still had considerable savings to rely on at this point. Similarly, the third participant of this subtheme described experiencing financial concerns, despite also acknowledging that she was currently, and for the foreseeable future, financially secure. For both of these financially secure participants, they described financial concerns arising from their forecasting into the future and "what if" scenarios rather than immediate financial distress.

Support. Four of this study's participants described social support as being helpful in improving mood, and a fifth mentioned that it would be helpful had he had such support. These findings are very well corroborated within the literature, which has shown social support to

improve mood (Amundson & Borgen, 1987; Borgen & Amundson, 1987), be an important component of support groups (Amundson & Borgen, 1988; Goldenberg & Klein, 1997; Paul & Moser, 2009), be a protective factor against depression (Mallinckodt & Bennett, 1992), and improve job search behaviour (Burger & Caldwell, 2000; Slebarska, Moser, & Gunnesch-Luca, 2009). Participants in this study reported the benefits of social support to be an improvement or stabilization in their mood, a validation of worth or a countering to shame, and an aid with job search approaches and career exploration.

Four participants mentioned the benefits of financial support. The reviewed literature did not directly discuss the effects on unemployed individuals of receiving financial support, or of having financial resources; however, as already discussed, the negative effects of financial distress have been documented (Amundson & Borgen, 1987; Kokko & Pulkkinen, 1998; Leanna & Feldman, 1990; Mallinckodt & Bennett, 1992; Waters & Moore, 2002a). As such, this discussion does not consider the determination that the absence of financial distress as being a helpful factor to be a unique contribution to the literature.

Emergent optimism and problem solving. This theme was endorsed by all six participants. Although corroborated well by Borgen and Amundson (1987), this was the only study in the reviewed literature that supported it. As such, it is considered to be weakly represented within the reviewed literature. Borgen and Amundson (1987) identified an upwards trend in affect that served to reverse a job-search, and failure, related decrease. This upswing resulted from an acceptance of a new career direction, and training, or a re-evaluation of self-worth that was independent of work identity. This theme largely agreed with Borgen and Amundson's (1987) results. Participants 2, 3, and 7 had all settled into new career directions, while Participants 4 and 5 were likely at the early stages of considering new career options. If

this was the case, then Participant 4 was too early on in this stage to have reported an increase in affect. Participant 6 was slightly exceptional when compared to the other participants, in that although he had not decided to consider new forms of work, he was considering moving to new locations to accommodate his profession. As such, he is considered the only participant to not be reflected in Borgen and Amundson's (1987) work, as he was neither considering a new career direction nor re-evaluation his self-worth. It is, of course, possible that Participant 6 had not yet reached this point, but this would again enter the realm of guessing.

Figurative illustrations. As discussed in Chapter IV, there was a good deal of fit between the figurative illustrations in this study, and those generated by Borgen & Amundson's (1987) Pattern A. This discussion will briefly focus on comparisons from this study's figurative illustrations and the remainder of the literature. The downward drivers of negative emotional responses, and job search and financial challenges, have already been addressed above and show that these components of the figurative illustrations are well corroborated elsewhere in the literature. Though support has also already been addressed, it is worth noting that this factor was most evident in Trend 1, for Participant 7, at Point H, when he emphasized the helpfulness of visiting with his family.

Similarly, but in the opposite direction, Amundson and Borgen (1987) found that spousal or family problems were a factor that was commonly contributed to a decrease in mood amongst unemployed individuals. Sharp decreases, followed by rebounds, in mood that resulted from both relationship and family stressors were apparent for Participant 3. These shifts have been adapted into the illustration of Trend 1 at Point G.

The initial excitement driven increase in affect that occurred in Trend 2 participants is corroborated by Goldenberg and Klein's (1997) findings, in which 11 percent of their

participants also had such a response. Furthermore, the initial period of stability visible in Trend 3 was mirrored by 15 percent of Goldenberg and Klein's (1997) participants. The downward trajectory captured in Trend 3, which is tied closely to feelings of hopelessness with a job search, aligns with McKee-Ryan et al.'s (2005 findings) that actively engaging in job seeking behaviour correlated with lower mental health for those people who were unemployed. They attributed this correlation to the stressfulness of accumulated job rejections. Pederson (2013) also observed that hopelessness was the most common narrative created by unemployed individuals. This downward trend in Trend 3, and also Trend 1 between points F and G, corresponds well with the burnout process that Amundson and Borgen (1982) adopted from Edelwich and Brodsky (1980) to apply to the declining affect that can occur in a job search process.

Unique Findings of the Study

Two themes, and one subtheme, had no, or only minor, corroboration within the reviewed literature: Anticipation of, and Immediate Response to, Job Loss Notification; and Immediate Positive Emotional Responses to Job Loss. The figurative illustrations also yielded unique findings.

Anger and betrayal. Although the theme containing this subtheme was situated within the reviewed literature, this particular subtheme was not represented. Anger and betrayal were reported by two participants. In both cases, the anger and betrayal stemmed from believing to have committed generously to the job, be it in the form of hard work or tenure. Feelings of not being appreciated or of having been lied to about the nature of work being a "family" seemed to bolster this response. As with the discussion of identity, this contrasts with Smola and Sutton (2002), who argued that Generation Xers and Millennials display less loyalty to their company, and believe that work should be a less important part of life, than the Baby Boomer generation.

116

For these participants, at least, their work was something important to them and which they appeared to have feelings of loyalty towards.

Anticipation of and immediate response to job loss. The subtheme Suspecting a Termination but Still Surprised contained three of this study's participants, yet the closest reference to it within the literature came from Mandal, Ayyagari, and Gallo (2011). They found that older individuals, between the ages of 55 and 65, who were expecting a termination were twice as likely to be depressed as those who were not. Hahn et al. (2015) showed that workers who had lost their jobs had already displayed lower life-satisfaction in the years preceding their job loss. A decrease in affect was certainly reported by participants 3, 5, and 7 before their actual termination, or termination notification, occurred. However, no other references to the topic of anticipation were found, and the literature did not discuss feeling surprise while simultaneously expecting a termination.

It would seem as though many workers can "see the writing on the wall", as it were. In fact, only one of the four participants in the study, Participant 2, who was a non-contract worker was surprised by his layoff. Two of the other non-contract workers had both observed previous layoffs within their organization that had led them to consider, and ultimately expect, their own layoff. The third non-contract worker, Participant 3, had seen evidence of her supervisors being reluctant to fund her, and had also come to the conclusion that her termination was imminent. In all three cases, termination was by no means considered a distant, unlikely, or even abnormal event. Indeed, even Participant 2, who was caught by surprise, expressed having held a curiosity of what it must be like to lose a job, as he had seen it happen to so many others. These stories all lend weight to the notion that the normalization of job loss and layoffs in our society has increased.

The awkwardness of the final meeting, wherein employees were notified of their termination, was another subtheme that was not represented in the reviewed literature. Both Participant 2 and 3 expressed a sense of the employers being inauthentic, and the overall interaction being uncomfortable. Though this is likely the result of management being careful to legally protect themselves, neither participant expressed anything resembling an appreciation or perceived helpfulness of this approach. Rather, this left Participant 2 feeling like a "a prisoner, or a victim, or someone that you didn't trust", while Participant 3 felt a "discomfort" that resulted from the formal presentation of her supervisor that was incongruent with her hitherto strong relationship.

Immediate positive emotional responses to job loss. Despite all six participants endorsing this theme, the subthemes within this theme were both very sparsely represented within the reviewed literature. This theme is therefore considered to be a unique finding. Hartley (1980) found that some unemployed individuals could feel respite resulting from their freedom from stressful positions, while Goldenberg and Klein (1997) found that 11 percent of their unemployed participants reported feeling excited. Three participants in this study felt a sense of relief that stemmed from either not enjoying their work, or wanting to enjoy some time off. Five participants felt optimism or hope that stemmed from either new and exciting opportunities, or a familiarity with contracts ending and having confidence in finding a new one. These responses suggest that participants all felt some comfort, in different ways, within the experience of losing their jobs.

Figurative illustrations. The figurative illustrations generated in this study have shown that the emotional trajectory of the experience of unemployment remains largely similar to what was mapped 30 years ago by Borgen and Amundson (1987). There are differences with the past

work, but these are largely considered to be variations from a dominantly common trend. Of particular note, none of the participants in the study shared an initial response to job loss with those participants in the 1987 Pattern A group. This resulted from several reasons: Trend 1 and 2 participants already had post-work plans in place that bolstered their mood, while Trend 3 participants were accustomed to job loss. The fact that these factors were not present in the 1987 Pattern A data could represent an increased flexibility, or preparedness, that is seen in modern workers. This interpretation is bolstered by Trend 3, wherein participants had an initially neutral response that resulted from their being accustomed to contracts ending. While the emotional troughs at Point A and D in Trend 1 and Point E in Trend 2 can be seen as part of a grief response, there is no indication of a grief response for Trend 3 participants. This contrasts with what Amundson and Borgen (1982) hypothesized, and what Borgen and Amundson (1987) observed, and again likely results from the anticipation of, and familiarity with, a contract ending.

A more minor finding from Trend 1 is a pattern of oscillations prior to the last day of work, which are visually similar to the "yo-yo" pattern seen between Points E and F in the 1987 Pattern A. The cause of this pattern differs between the two studies, and is attributable here to alternating nervousness and excitement. This pattern was drawn by Participant 7 only; however, Participant 3 described a similar emotional experience at this point in that she felt both excitement and shame. To generalize, these participants felt both positive and negative affect and a decrease in overall affect in the time prior to their last day of work. Similarly, Trend 1, as mentioned, differs the most from the 1987 Pattern A since it represented people who already had their future plans in place by their last day of work. Subsequent changes in mood were therefore driven primarily by non-job search-related drivers. As such, it is not possible to generalize these

119

findings beyond stating that travelling, beginning school or career development plans, and positive family events coincided with improved mood, while returning from vacation, and negative family events coincided with decreased mood.

Implications of the Findings for Practice

Four of the participants had developed plans either before or after their termination that were not related to their past work, and in every case they contributed to an improvement in affect. These findings suggest that counsellors can help clients to adopt a flexible, creative, and curious to approach to life when job loss is a either imminent or a possibility. As Krumboltz (2011) argues with his Happenstance Learning Theory approach to career exploration, the goal during such times should not be on decisiveness, but rather on helping people to create more satisfying lives for themselves. This can be done through encouraging clients to take constructive actions to explore the world in ways that can inform their intuition and sense of what interests them (Krumboltz, 2015). The very act of engagement in new exploration can help to build a new identity for a client facing job loss, as it did for Participant 3 when she began her first course of her graduate program. As Krumboltz (2011) suggests, simply having the client brainstorm with the counsellor about possible actions and choosing one to begin with can be a helpful starting place.

The Happenstance Learning Theory provides practical and effective suggestions for career exploration that are reliant on constructive, exploratory actions that generate skills, knowledge, and contacts (Krumboltz, 2015). Similarly, Krieshok, Motl, and Rutt (2011) argue that humans are "less rational and more intuitive than our earlier understanding" (Krieshok et al., 2011, p. 228). They believe that since our brains are particularly poor at synchronizing our "likes" and our "wants", the best way to explore career options is through experiential activities,

such as job shadowing or informational interviewing, that help to feed our intuitive "liking" brain (Krieshok et al., 2011).

As this and other studies have shown, the anticipation of job loss can lead to a decrease in mood. Beginning the process of career exploration pre-emptively when anticipation arises, in a curious and exploratory way might help to mitigate the uncertainty, anxiety, and struggles with identity that otherwise often ensue. Normalizing this anticipation, or occurrence, of job loss within the Chaos Theory of careers might also be helpful. Pryor (2010) believes that "that the world is complex and, although ordered in a general sense, at the individual level it is often messy, surprising and at times quite unpredictable" (Pryor, 2010, p. 33). Discussing world views and expectations about stability and predictability of career paths might be particularly helpful for those who assume that "traditional middle-class trajectories of onward and upward on the career ladder to the top of the organisation" (Pryor, 2010, p. 34) are still the norm. Indeed, building familiarity with the unpredictable, while still rightfully validating feelings of anger and betrayal might help to evoke positive responses to job loss, as it did for some of this study's participants.

Implications for Future Research

This study provides a general look at the psychological experience of unemployment; however, it is limited by its small sample size of six participants. Repeating all or part of this study with more participants would possibly help to corroborate themes, or delineate them along different lines. Similarly, as each figurative illustration was only supported by the experiences of two people, it is possible that more resolution, or different trends, would emerge from working with the stories of more people.

Although all participants in this study were required to have been born in Canada, one participant shared some experiences with immigrants. Notably, he described the impacts of having no social or professional network, and of his perceived discrimination. As immigrants face unique challenges in the Canadian workforce, and typically earn considerably less than native Canadians with comparable experience and education (Ferrer & Riddell, 2008), it would be helpful to better understand their experiences of unemployment so as to allow those in the helping professions to be the most effective.

Strengths and Limitations of the Methodology and Study

As with all phenomenological investigations, interpretations and organizations of participant experiences ultimately depend on the researcher's understanding and reasoning. Although these interpretations are guided by a systematic process, there is still an unavoidable subjective element to this process. Furthermore, as Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) state, the criteria of science are met when "the knowledge obtained is systematic, methodical, critical, and general" (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003, p. 258). To be critical, procedures and knowledge must be challenged and replicated (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). As noted, no studies were found in the reviewed literature between the time of Borgen and Amundson (1987) and this study that examined unemployment using such an approach. Clearly, more studies are needed in this area.

Conclusion

This study used a phenomenological mode of inquiry, augmented with figurative illustrations borrowed from Borgen and Amundson (1987), to investigate the psychological experience of unemployment and to compare the findings to those of Borgen and Amundson (1987). Six themes and 12 subthemes were identified from the data analysis of six adult

participants, and three trends were identified from the figurative illustrations. Four of the themes were largely situated within the existing literature, while two other themes and one subtheme were considered unique findings of this study. The figurative illustrations aligned well with those of Borgen and Amundson (1987), with a notable exception that all of the participants' initial responses to job loss differed from the 1987 comparison group. This was attributable to participants either being accustomed to job loss, or to having initial post-employment plans in place. The findings from the figurative illustrations suggest that some components of the experience of unemployment appear to have not changed over the past thirty years, while some elements such as flexibility and preparedness, or responding to job-loss positively, may have changed. Those in the helping profession might benefit when working with those currently, or at risk of becoming, unemployed by encouraging clients to embrace the exploration of new plans, with an emphasis on open mindedness rather than decisiveness. The finding of themes that are weakly supported in the literature, combined with the small sample size of this study, highlight the need for future research to investigate themes and experiences of unemployment.

References

Amundson, N. E. (1994). Negotiating identity during unemployment. *Journal of Employment*

Counseling, 31(3), 98-104. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1920.1994.tb00178.x

Amundson, N. E., & Borgen, W. A. (1982). The dynamics of unemployment: Job loss and job

search. *Personnel & Guidance Journal, 60*, 562-564. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2164-

4918.1982.tb00723.x

Amundson, N. E., & Borgen, W. A. (1987). Coping with unemployment: What helps and what

hinders. *Journal of Employment Counseling, 24*(3), 97-106. doi:10.1002/j.2161-

1920.1987.tb00222.x

Amundson, N. E., & Borgen, W. A. (1988). Factors that help and hinder in group employment

counseling. *Journal of Employment Counseling, 25*(3), 104-114.

https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1920.1988.tb00910.x

Archer, J. & Rhodes, V. (1993). The grief process and job loss: A cross-sectional study. *British*

Journal of Psychology, 84(3), 395-410. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8295.1993.tb02491.x

Auer, P. (2005). Protected mobility for employment and decent work: Labour market security in

a globatized world. *Journal of Industrial Relations, 48*(1), 21-40.

doi:10.1177/0022185606059312

Ayllón, S. (2013). Unemployment persistence: Not only stigma but discouragement too. *Applied*

Economics Letters, 20(1), 67-71. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504851.2012.681020

Baum, A., Fleming, R., & Reddy, D. M. (1986). Unemployment stress: Loss of control, reactance and learned helplessness. *Social Science & Medicine, 22*(5), 509-516. doi:10.1016/0277-9536(86)90016-X

Borgen, W. A. (1999). Implementing "Starting Points": A follow-up study. *Journal of Employment Counseling, 36*(3), 98-114. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1920.1999.tb01012.x

Borgen, W. A., & Amundson, N. E. (1987). The dynamics of unemployment. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 66*(4), 180-180. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6676.1987.tb00841.x

Borgen, W. A., Amundson, N. E., & McVicar, J. (2002). The experience of unemployment for fishery workers in newfoundland: What helps and hinders. *Journal of Employment Counseling, 39*(3), 117-126. doi:10.1002/j.2161-1920.2002.tb00843.x

Bosque-Prous, M., Espelt, A., Sordo, L., Guitart, A. M., Brugal, M. T., & Bravo, M. J. (2015). Job loss, unemployment and the incidence of hazardous drinking during the late 2000s recession in europe among adults aged 50– 64 years. *Plos One, 10*(10). https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0140017

Burger, J. M., & Caldwell, D. F. (2000). Personality, social activities, job-search behavior and interview success: Distinguising between PANAS trait positive affect and NEO extraversion. *Motivation and Emotion, 24*(1), 51-62. doi:10.1023/A:1005539609679

Cassidy, T. (2001). Self-categorization, coping and psychological health among unemployed

mid-career executives. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly, 14*(4), 303-315.

https://doi.org/10.1080/09515070110102800

Christensen, U., Schmidt, L., Kriegbaum, M., Hougaard, C. Ø., & Holstein, B.E. (2006). Coping

with unemployment: Does educational attainment make any difference? *Scandinavian*

Journal of Public Health, 34(4), 363-370. https://doi.org/10.1080/14034940500489339

Creed, P. A., Bloxsome, T. D., & Johnston, K. (2001). Self-esteem and self-efficacy outcomes

for unemployed individuals attending occupational skills training programs. *Community,*

Work & Family, 4(3), 285-303. doi:10.1080/01405110120089350

Edelwich, J., & Brodsky, A. (1980). *Burn-out: Stages of disillusionment in the helping*

profession. New York: Human Sciences Press.

Englander, M. (2012). The interview: Data collection in descriptive phenomenological human

scientific research. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 43*(1), 13-35.

doi:10.1163/156916212X632943

Ferrer, A., & Riddell, W.C. (2008). Education, credentials, and immigrant earnings; Education,

reconnaissance des acquis et revenus des immigrants. *Canadian Journal of*

Economics/Revue Canadienne d'Économique, 41(1), 186–216. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-

2966.2008.00460.x

Frost, T. F., & Clayson, D. E. (1991). The measurement of self-esteem, stress-related life events, and locus of control among unemployed and employed blue-collar workers. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 21*(17), 1402-1417. doi:10.1111/j.1559-1816.1991.tb00478.x

Giorgi, A. P., & Giorgi, B. M. (2003). The descriptive phenomenological psychological method. In P. Camic, J. E. Rhodes, & L. Yardley (Eds.), Qualitative research in psychology (pp. 242-273). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Goldenberg, S., & Kline, T. (1997). Canadian white-collar workers' views of their experience with downsizing or job loss. *Psychological Reports, 80*(3), 707-719. https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1997.80.3.707

Hahn, E., Specht, J., Gottschling, J., & Spinath, F. M. (2015). Coping with unemployment: The impact of unemployment duration and personality on trajectories of life satisfaction. *European Journal of Personality, 29*(6), 635-646. doi:10.1002/per.2034

Hartley, J. F. (1980). The impact of unemployment on the self-esteem of managers. *Journal of Occupational Psychology, 53*(2), 147-155. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.1980.tb00019.x

Health Canada. (2009). *Work-life conflict in Canada in the new millennium: Key findings and recommendations from the 2001 national work-life conflict study (Report 6).* Retrieved from http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/occup-travail/balancing_six-equilibre_six/index-eng.php

Heubeck, B. G., Tausch, B., & Mayer, B. (1995). Models of responsibility and depression in

    unemployed young males and females. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology,*

    5(5), 291-309. https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2450050502

Hoare, P. & Machin, M. A., (2009). Some implications of the psychological experience of

    unemployment. *Australian Journal of Career Development, 18*(3), 57-61,

    https://doi.org/10.1177/103841620901800308

Kanfer, R., Wanberg, C. R., & Kantrowitz, T.M. (2001). Job search and employment: A

    personality-motivational analysis and meta-analytic review. *Journal of Applied Psychology,*

    86(5), 837-855. doi:10.1037//0021-9010.86.5.837

Karren, R., & Sherman, K. (2012). Layoffs and unemployment discrimination: a new stigma.

    Journal of Managerial Psychology, 27(8), 848-863. doi: 10.1108/02683941211280193

Kinicki, A., & Latack, J. (1990). Explication of the construct of coping with involuntary job loss.

    Journal of Vocational Behavior, 36(3)*,* 339–360. https://doi.org/10.1016/0001-

    8791(90)90036-2

Kokko, K., & Pulkkinen, L. (1998). Unemployment and psychological distress: Mediator effects.

    Journal of Adult Development, 5(4), 205-217, doi:10.1023/A:1021450208639.

Krieshok, T. S., Motl, T. C., & Rutt, B. T. (2011). The evolution of vocational psychology:

    Questions for a postmodern applied discipline. *Journal of Career Assessment, 19*(3),

    228-239. doi:10.1177/1069072710395530

Krumboltz, J. D. (2011). Capitalizing on happenstance. *Journal of Employment Counseling,* *48*(4), 156-158, doi:10.1002/j.2161-1920.2011.tb01101.x

Krumboltz, J. D. (2015). Practical career counseling applications of the happenstance learning theory. *APA Handbook of Career Intervention, 2*, 283-292, http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/14439-021

Kübler-Ross, E. (1969). *On death and dying.* New York: Macmillan.

Langdridge, D. (2007). *Phenomenological psychology: Theory, research and method.* New York: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Langdridge, D. (2008). Phenomenology and critical social psychology: Directions and debates in theory and research. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 2*(3), 1126-1142. doi: 10.1111/j.1751-9004.2008.00114.x

Leana, C. R., & Feldman, D. C. (1990). Individual responses to job loss: Empirical findings from two field studies. *Human Relations, 43*(11), 1155-1181. doi:10.1177/001872679004301107

Lyons, S. T., Duxbury, L., & Higgins, C. (2007). An empirical assessment of generational differences in basic human values. *Psychological Reports, 101*(2), 339-352. doi:10.2466/PR0.101.6.339-352

Maddy, L. M., Cannon, J. G., & Lichtenberger, E. J. (2015). The Effects of Social Support on Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, and Job Search Efficacy in the Unemployed. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, *52*(2), 87-95. https://doi.org/10.1002/joec.12007

Mallinckodt, B., & Bennett, J. (1992). Social support and the impact of job loss in dislocated

    blue-collar workers. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 39*(4). 482-489.

    https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-0167.39.4.482

Mandal, B., Ayyagari, P., & Gallo, W. T. (2011). Job loss and depression: The role of subjective

    expectations. *Social Science & Medicine, 72*(4), 576-583.

    doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2010.11.014

Menninger, W. W. (1988). Adaptation and morale: Predictable responses to life change.

    Bulleting of the Menninger Clinic, 52(3), 198-210. Retrieved from

    https://search.proquest.com/openview/cb42125331a11bd4f879ac8b955f6e25/1?pq-

    origsite=gscholar&cbl=1818298

Montgomery, S. M., Cook, D. G., Bartley, M. J., & Wadsworth, M. E. J. (1999). Unemployment

    pre-dates symptoms of depression and anxiety resulting in medical consultation in young

    men. *International Journal of Epidemiology, 28*(1), 95-100.

    https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/28.1.95

McKee-Ryan, F. M., Song, Z., Wanberg, C. R., & Kinicki, A. J. (2005). Psychological and

    physical well-being during unemployment: A meta-analytic study. *Journal of Applied*

    Psychology, 90(1), 53-76. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.90.1.53

Morissette, R., Picot, G., & Lu, Y. (2013). The evolution of Canadian wages over the last three

    decades. *Statistics Canada: Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series.*

    http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2013347-eng.pdf (accessed July 23,

    2017).

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods.* Retrieved from http://methods.sagepub.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/book/phenomenological-research-methods

O'Donnell, A., Corrigan, F., & Gallagher, S. (2015). The impact of anticipated stigma on psychological and physical health problems in the unemployed group. *Frontiers in Psychology, 6,* 1-8. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01263

Paul, K. I., & Moser, K. (2009). Unemployment impairs mental health: Meta-analyses. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 74*(3), 264-282. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2009.01.001

Pederson, J. R. (2013). Disruptions of individual and cultural identities: How online stories of job loss and unemployment shift the American Dream. *Narrative Inquiry, 23*(2), 302-322. doi:10.1075/ni.23.2.05ped

Pelzer, B., Schaffrath, S., & Vernalekena, I. (2014). Coping with unemployment: The impact of unemployment on mental health, personality, and social interaction skills. *Work, 48*(2), 289-295. doi:10.3233/WOR-131626

Petrucci, T., Blau, G., & McClendon, J. (2015). Effect of age, length of unemployment, and problem-focused coping on positive reemployment expectations. *Journal of Employment Counseling, 52*(4), 171-177. doi:10.1002/joec.12022

Pryor, R. G. L. (2010). A framework for chaos theory counselling. *Australian Journal of Career Development, 19*(2), 32-39. doi:10.1177/103841621001900205

Rusu, A., Chiriac, D., Sălăgean, N., & Hojbotă, A. (2013). Job search self-efficacy as mediator between employment status and symptoms of anxiety. *Romanian Journal of Applied Psychology, 15*(2), 69-75.

Schlossberg, N. K. (1984). *Counseling adults in transition.* New York: Springer.

Shamir, B. (1986). Self-esteem and the psychological impact of unemployment. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 49*(1), 61-72. https://doi.org/10.2307/2786857

Slebarska, K., Moser, K., & Gunnesch-Luca, G. (2009). Unemployment, social support, individual resources, and job search behavior. *Journal of Employment Counseling, 46*(4), 159-170. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1920.2009.tb00079.x

Smissen, S., Schalk, R., & Freese, C. (2013). Contemporary psychological contracts: How both employer and employee are changing the employment relationship. *Management Revue, 24*(4), 309-327. doi:10.1688/1861-9908_mrev_2013_04_Smissen

Smola, K. W., & Sutton, C. D. (2002). Generational differences: Revisiting generational work values for the new millennium. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 23*(4), 363-382. doi:10.1002/job.147

Statistics Canada. 1975. *Table D449-454 Civilian employment, by full-time and part-time status and by sex, annual averages, 1953-1975.* http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-516-x/sectiond/4057750-eng.htm (accessed June 7, 2017).

Statistics Canada. 2015. *Multiple job holding, by age.* http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/71-222-x/2008001/sectionl/l-age-eng.htm (accessed June 7, 2017).

Statistics Canada. 2017. *Full-time and part-time employment by sex and age group.*
http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/labor12-eng.htm (accessed
June 7, 2017).

Takashashi, M., Morita, S., & Ishidu, K. (2015). Stigma and mental health in Japanese
unemployed individuals. *Journal of Employment Counseling, 52*(1), 18-28.
doi:10.1002/j.2161-1920.2015.00053.x

Warr, P., Jackson, P., & Banks, M. H. (1984). Men without jobs: Some correlates of age and
length of unemployment. *Journal of Occupational Psychology, 57*(1)*,* 77-85.
doi:10.1111/j.2044-8325.1984.tb00150.x

Warr, P., Jackson, P., & Banks, M. H. (1987). Adapting to the unemployed role: A longitudinal
investigation. *Social Science & Medicine, 25*(11), 1219-1224. doi:
https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(87)90369-8

Warr, P., Jackson, P., & Banks, M. H. (1988). Unemployment and mental health: Some british
studies. *Journal of Social Issues, 44*(4), 47-68. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4560.1988.tb02091.x

Waters, L. E., & Moore, K. A. (2002a). Predicting self-esteem during unemployment: The effect
of gender, financial deprivation, alternate roles, and social support. Journal of Employment
Counseling, 39, 171–189. doi:10.1002/j.2161-1920.2002.tb00848.x

Waters, L. E., & Moore, K. A. (2002b). Self-esteem, appraisal and coping: A comparison of
unemployed and re-employed people. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 23, 593–604.
doi:10.1002/job.156

Appendices

Appendix A: Time Line Template

(NEG.) EMOTION (POS.)

Appendix B: Online Recruiting Advertisement

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

UBC

Online Advertisement

Post Title: The Experience of Unemployment in Primary Wage Earners

Main body: We are currently seeking research participants for a study that aims to better understand the experience of unemployment in adults who were the primary wage earner in their household. This study will provide these individuals with an opportunity to describe their experience of their time while unemployed.

Individuals must meet the following criteria in order to be eligible to participate in this study:

- You are aged 25 years or older; and

- You earned the majority of the income (greater than 50%) in your household before becoming unemployed; and

- You have been unemployed continuously for at least the past 3 months; and

- Your job loss was the result of a layoff or other **non-performance related reason**; and

- You were born in Canada

You will receive a gift card of $25 to thank you for your participation.

If you know of anyone who may be interested in participating in this study, you are invited to share this page or the study information with them. Individuals who are interested in participating are asked to contact the graduate student researcher, David Edwards, by email at ████████████████. The principal investigator for this study is Dr. Bill Borgen, UBC.

v.3 March 24, 2017

Appendix C: Poster Recruiting Advertisement

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Experience of Unemployment in Primary Wage Earners

The purpose of this research project is to give unemployed adults who were the primary wage earners in their household an opportunity to describe their experience of unemployment.

The Principal Investigator for this study is Dr. Bill Borgen, Professor in Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia, ███████. The researcher for this study is David Edwards, graduate student in Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia.

We would be interested in hearing your experience of unemployment IF:

- You are aged 25 years or older; and
- You earned the majority of the income (greater than 50%) in your household before becoming unemployed; and
- You have been unemployed continuously for at least the past 3 months; and
- Your job loss was the result of a layoff or other non-performance related reason; and
- You were born in Canada

You will receive a gift card of $25 to thank you for your participation.

If you would like to participate, or would like further information about this study, please contact David Edwards by email at ███████████

v.3 March 24, 2017

Appendix D: Participant Consent Form

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Faculty of Education

Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education
2125 Main Mall
Vancouver, BC Canada V6T 1Z4

Phone 604 822 0242
Fax 604 822 3302
www.ecps.educ.ubc.ca

Code Number: _____

CONSENT FORM

"The Experience of Unemployment in Primary Wage Earners"

Principal Investigator:	Dr. William Borgen, Professor University of British Columbia Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology, and Special Education ████████
Graduate Student Researcher	David Edwards University of British Columbia Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology, and Special Education ████████

This research is being conducted as part of our work as professors in Counselling Psychology at the University of British Columbia. The results of this research will be included in doctoral dissertations and/or masters theses that will become public documents in the University library once completed. The results of this research may also be published in appropriate professional and academic journals. This study is funded through a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Purpose

The purpose of this research project is to better understand the experience of unemployment in adults who were the primary wage earners in the household prior to their unemployment. It will also provide these individuals with an opportunity to describe their experiences.

Procedures

The interview will last from 45 to 90 minutes. During the first part of the interview, you will be introduced to the purpose of the study and upon giving your signed consent for participation, you will be asked to describe in as much detail as possible your experience of being unemployed. You will be asked to include how you came to be out of work, what you thought about when it happened and your thoughts since, any feelings you have had during the time you have been out of work, and job search activities that you have tried. You may be asked additional questions that are guided by your responses. Following this,

you will be asked to plot on a time line what you have perceived to be the emotional high and low points in your story. These time line figures will then be discussed with you to ensure a connection between the interview content and the figure. This interview will be audio recorded, transcribed and given a code number to ensure confidentiality. Upon completion of the study these tapes will be erased.

There will also be an e-mail contact, wherein you will be asked to review the research assistant's interpretation of your experience of unemployment and your feedback will be sought. Reviewing the data will likely take between 10 and 20 minutes. If you wish to add anything to, or discuss, the interpretation, then a telephone discussion will be arranged. This will help the research assistant to achieve a full understanding of the areas in which you disagree, and the conversation will take between 10 and 30 minutes. Your total participation time will be approximately 1 hour and 5 minutes to two hours and 20 minutes over a three to six-month period.

Confidentiality

Any information identifying individuals participating in this study will be kept confidential. Only trained Research Assistants on the research team will have access to the data. Upon signing the informed consent you will be given a code number to ensure the maintenance of confidentiality. Participants will not be identified by the use of names or initials in any reports of the completed study. All research documents will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office at the University of British Columbia or at the researcher's home. Computer data files will be encrypted and password protected.

Compensation

You will be provided with a $25 gift card prior to the beginning of the first interview, regardless of whether you complete the interviews.

Contact for Information About the Study

If you have any questions or would like more information about this study, you may contact Dr. William Borgen (Principal Investigator) at ████████████ or David Edwards (Research Assistant) at the ████ ██████████████████████████████████ at ██████████.

If you would like to be contacted with the results of the study once the study is complete, please check this box ☐

Contact for Concerns About the Rights of Research Subjects

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598

Consent

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice of any kind.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

_____   _____

Participant Signature   Date

_____

Printed Name of the Participant signing above

I agree to be contacted in the future for research participation in similar studies by the same researcher.

Initials:_____Date: _____

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.