

JOB LOSS AND MOOD

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Using the method of time sampling diary, this study explores the well-being of unemployed people during the first six months. At randomly selected points of time 30 subjects indicated their current mood, their predominant needs, their attribution of mood and their perceived freedom during the first, second, third and sixth months of unemployment. Furthermore, the actual situation was to be described by the respondents, and the subjects answered the 16-PF test and interview questions. The results show that, during the period of unemployment, well-being was worse than while being employed. Furthermore, the data suggest that there exists a cycle of psychological adjustment to unemployment. Unemployed persons indicated bad mood when they felt needs for physical comfort, power, affiliation, sentience, and achievement were actualized. Also, bad mood was frequently attributed internally, or to family members, or to the economic situation.

Job loss threatens psychological well-being. In a review, Warr (1983) refers to studies confirming that unemployed, looking for work, report lower positive and higher negative affect, less pleasure and more health problems in comparison with people with jobs. Furthermore, self-depreciation was found to be correlated with unemployment. However, there is no doubt that these general effects of job loss are mediated by some variables. Warr (1983) depicts 14 variables with the duration of unemployment as the most crucial (cf. Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld 1938; Jahoda 1983; Wacker 1983). As evidenced by Warr et al. (1982), immediately after job loss unemployed persons' well-being continues to

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ment facilitates gratification of needs, feelings of pleasure result. Knowing a person's motives and the possibilities for their satisfaction, the quality of emotions can be predicted.

Whereas emotions are continuously changing, well-being or mood "relates to the basic tuning of the person, to a diffuse and global evaluation of the situation, an evaluation that integrates and preserves the emotional experiences of the past" (Brandstätter 1983: 871).

Departing from Lersch's and Brandstätter's conceptualization of emotions, the analysis of well-being of the unemployed should consider motives involved, cognitive processes, such as attributions of mood, and major environmental characteristics.

Traditionally, psychological well-being is assessed by questionnaires asking respondents to rate their satisfaction/dissatisfaction with specific aspects of life. Brandstätter (1977), however, points to serious shortcomings of these techniques, e.g., subjects frequently are prompted to give a summary judgement of a variety of experiences over a long period of time. The categories in the questionnaire usually do not meet the subject's personal structuration scheme. Memory processes and response sets may lead to serious distortions of results. In an attempt to avoid these shortcomings, Brandstätter (1977) has designed a time-sampling diary to measure both mood states and a representative sample of situations to which the moods are related. The diary method provides information about both the subject's activity performed at the moment of recording the environment and the social contacts. Furthermore, information about predominant motives, attributions and the quality of mood is provided. With repeated registrations in the diary, self-awareness and precision of introspection increase (Rehn 1981).

Although the diary has some advantages compared to conventional techniques, the method implies one restriction: Due to the complexity of the method and the longitudinal measurement, the number of respondents who can be studied is limited. In the present study, 30 respondents participated. Due to the small number of subjects in the analysis no demographic data such as gender, age, education, vocational training, family status, and frequency of job loss could be taken into consideration. Therefore, the results will be interpreted more in a descriptive than in an inferential way.

participants were instructed to indicate whether their current mood derived from the past, present and/or future events); (4) attribution of mood (the participants had to indicate the source(s) of their current mood-state, e.g., friends, spouse, outcome of work, economic situation); (5) motives (the subjects had to choose up to three different motives from a list of 19 motives, e.g., physical comfort, need for autonomy); (6) locality or room (the participants had to identify where they were at the recording time); (7) activity performed at the time (e.g., doing housework, doing nothing, watching TV); (8) other persons present (the participants had to mention the persons present at the time); (9) perceived freedom in choosing a preferred activity (5-point scale); and (10) freely chosen adjectives describing the mood-state (e.g., satisfied, depressed).

Questionnaires

The German version of Cattell's 16-PF test was used to measure participants' personality structure (Schneewind et al. 1983). Furthermore, questionnaires were used to assess general life satisfaction (Borg 1978) and self-esteem (Stafford et al. 1979). Finally, the participants were interviewed about their personal situation.

Procedure

The participants were informed about the goal of the study and were instructed how to complete the diary. They had two days in which to become familiar with it. At the beginning, they also answered the questionnaires. At a subsequent meeting, the subjects had an opportunity to ask technical questions about the diary method. In this session, the experimenter also explained the content analysis of the two-day recording period. Subsequently, the participants started with the first ten-day recording period. Twenty days later, the second period started; and 20 days later, the third period took place. Three months later, the fourth period followed. After each recording period, the diary notes were coded by the subjects themselves. After the third wave all questionnaires were to be filled out again.

Altogether, collecting the data took 7 months, from March 1983 to September 1983. At the end, each subject was paid AS 2,000 (about \$100) for participation.

gories according to Brandstätter (1983). In the further analyses, these categories were considered.

Classification of subjects

A one-way analysis of variance with the subjects as independent variable confirmed the mood score as highly determined by individual differences ($F(29,3653) = 24.77$; $p < 0.01$). In the following analyses, the subjects could not be considered as a single factor, due to the limited number of observations on different occasions. Therefore, personality differences were taken into account by classifying the participants through a cluster analysis based on the subject's 16-PF data (Ward-algorithm; cf. Rollett and Bartram 1976). Three subject clusters emerged: (1) Nine participants turned out to be highly "sensitive and socially dependent" (The German version of the 16-PF test revealed high scores on the factors I, L, Q1, Q4, and low scores on the factors G, N, Q3 as compared to the other clusters of persons); (2) Thirteen participants were found to be "self-assured and dominant" (F, H, Q1 factor scores were high; I, O factor scores were low); (3) Eight participants were found to be highly "insecure and submissive" (O, Q4 factor scores were high; C, E, H factor scores were low). The second-order factor scores (extraversion = sum of factors A, F, H, -Q2; max = 72, min = -24; neuroticism = sum of factors -C, -H, L, O, Q3, Q4; max = 96, min = -48; cf. Cattell 1965) were significantly different between the three clusters (cluster 1: extraversion $M = 28$, neuroticism $M = 32$; cluster 2: extraversion $M = 40$, neuroticism $M = 15$; cluster 3: extraversion $M = 23$, neuroticism $M = 49$). A multivariate analysis of variance with the two second-order factors as dependent variables revealed a result of $F(4,52) = 5.92$; $p < 0.01$; the discriminant analysis of the two second-order factors resulted in one significant function ($p < 0.01$) picking up 99% of the total variance existing in the discriminating variables.

Mood by employment status, duration of lay-off, and personality

A 2(employment status) by 4(duration of lay-off) by 3(personality) Anova was performed with the mood score as dependent variable. Note that, although the mood scores are related between the single events (cf. Brandstätter 1978), this dependence could not be considered in the

analysis. Each registration in the diary was taken as an independent realization. The three-way interaction effect was not significant ($F(1,3654) = 1.87$; $p = 0.17$). All two-way interaction effects were significant: Personality by employment status: $F(2,3654) = 4.19$; $p < 0.02$; personality by duration of lay-off: $F(6,3654) = 2.66$; $p < 0.01$; employment status by duration of lay-off: $F(2,3654) = 6.37$; $p < 0.01$. Also, the single effects were found to be significant ($p < 0.01$). As confirmed by a Duncan test, "self-assured dominant" participants felt not as bad during unemployment ($M = 0.87$) as "insecure submissive" ($M = 0.50$) and "sensitive socially-dependent" subjects ($M = 0.61$). After becoming reemployed, subjects of cluster 3 reported highest amelioration of the average mood ($M = 1.16$), whereas "self-assured dominant" ($M = 0.97$) and "sensitive socially-dependent" participants ($M = 0.91$) felt slightly better as compared with the unemployed period. It should be noted that clusters 1 (5 women, 4 men) and 3 (5 women, 3 men) subsumed

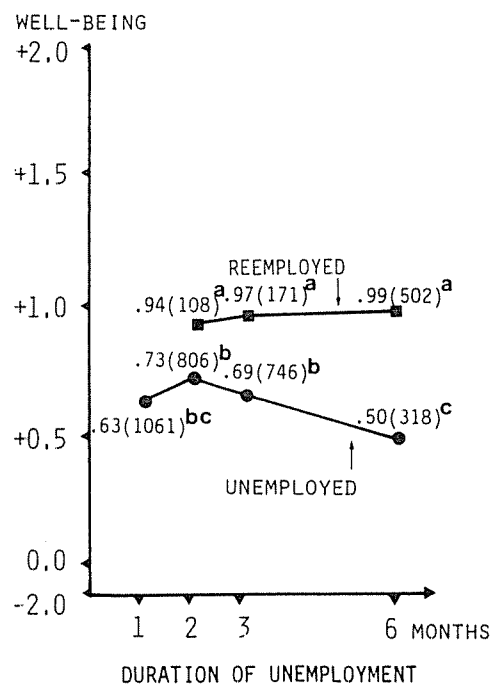


Fig. 1. Average mood scores by employment status and duration of unemployment. Figures in parentheses indicate frequencies of observations. Different superscripts (^{a, b, c}) indicate significant differences in mood ($p < 0.05$).

The interaction effect personality by attributions confirms that "self-assured dominant" participants attributed bad mood less frequently to internal factors and less frequently to economic failure than did subjects who belonged to the personality clusters 1 and 3.

Mood of unemployed people during their six months out of work depending on motives and attribution

Now, only the recordings during the period of unemployment were considered. A 4(duration of lay-off) by 3(personality) by 6(categories of motives) Anova (random model) revealed a significant interaction effect

Table 1

Average mood score by employment status and motives. Figures in parentheses indicate relative frequencies.

Motives	Status of occupation	
	Unemployed	Employed
Physical comfort	0.78 (0.17)	0.98 (0.18) ^a
Power motives	0.41 (0.21)	0.71 (0.13) ^a
Revenge	-0.59 (0.01)	-0.25 (0.01)
Self-assertiveness	0.69 (0.04)	1.12 (0.03)
Self-esteem	-0.05 (0.04)	1.30 (0.01) ^a
Autonomy	0.74 (0.10)	0.15 (0.04) ^a
Prestige	-0.30 (0.02)	1.78 (0.02) ^a
Power	0.20 (0.01)	0.85 (0.02)
Affiliation	1.06 (0.21)	1.33 (0.19) ^a
Affiliation	1.00 (0.12)	1.22 (0.10) ^a
Sex	1.23 (0.02)	1.33 (0.02)
Love	1.30 (0.04)	1.50 (0.05)
Nurturance	0.95 (0.03)	1.47 (0.02) ^a
Sentience	0.43 (0.20)	1.02 (0.25) ^a
Experience	0.23 (0.09)	0.98 (0.12) ^a
Activity	0.60 (0.11)	1.06 (0.13) ^a
Achievement	0.63 (0.07)	0.97 (0.13) ^a
"Higher"-order motives	0.64 (0.15)	0.61 (0.14)
Order	0.52 (0.02)	1.33 (0.02) ^a
Understanding	0.33 (0.03)	0.33 (0.02)
Ethical values	0.14 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.06)
Religious values	-0.20 (0.02)	2.00 (0.00)
Esthetic values	1.22 (0.05)	1.24 (0.04)
Absolute frequency	(2926)	(783)

^a indicates significant differences ($p < 0.05$).

subjects blamed themselves as the source of their present mood. During the second, third, and sixth months, internal attributions were found in 29%, 23%, and 28% of the cases. The frequencies of internal and external attributions of good, indifferent, and bad mood are shown in table 4.

Table 3

Average mood scores by length of unemployment and motives. Figures in parentheses indicate relative frequencies.

Motives	Length of unemployment			
	1 month	2 months	3 months	6 months
Physiological comfort	0.78 (0.17)	0.94 (0.18) ^a	0.60 (0.19) ^b	0.83 (0.11)
Power motives	0.44 (0.21)	0.52 (0.21)	0.26 (0.21)	0.41 (0.27)
Revenge	-0.78 (0.01)	-0.56 (0.01)	-0.44 (0.01)	-0.50 (0.01)
Self-assertiveness	0.86 (0.03)	0.64 (0.05)	0.39 (0.04)	1.14 (0.02)
Self-esteem	-0.08 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.16 (0.04)	0.29 (0.04)
Autonomy	0.91 (0.09) ^a	0.89 (0.09)	0.51 (0.09) ^b	0.52 (0.16) ^b
Prestige	-0.30 (0.02)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.20 (0.01)	-0.80 (0.02)
Power	-0.25 (0.01)	1.22 (0.01)	0.46 (0.02)	0.20 (0.02)
Affiliation	1.04 (0.20) ^a	1.11 (0.20) ^a	1.18 (0.21) ^a	0.75 (0.22) ^b
Affiliation	1.04 (0.13)	0.99 (0.11)	1.07 (0.12)	0.71 (0.13)
Sex	1.06 (0.02)	1.24 (0.02)	1.24 (0.02)	1.35 (0.03)
Love	1.18 (0.03)	1.40 (0.04)	1.50 (0.04)	0.50 (0.03)
Nurturance	0.81 (0.02)	1.08 (0.03)	1.00 (0.02)	0.88 (0.05)
Sentience	0.36 (0.22) ^a	0.39 (0.19) ^a	0.66 (0.18) ^a	0.32 (0.21) ^b
Experience	0.17 (0.11)	0.19 (0.07)	0.55 (0.07)	0.00 (0.10)
Activity	0.56 (0.11)	0.52 (0.12)	0.72 (0.11)	0.63 (0.11)
Achievement	0.65 (0.06)	0.68 (0.07)	0.62 (0.09)	0.40 (0.08)
"Higher"-order motives	0.54 (0.15) ^a	0.70 (0.14)	0.85 (0.13) ^a	0.33 (0.13) ^b
Order	0.16 (0.02)	0.52 (0.03)	1.00 (0.02)	0.55 (0.04)
Understanding	0.49 (0.04)	0.50 (0.02)	0.21 (0.02)	-0.44 (0.03)
Ethical values	0.03 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.04)	0.56 (0.03)	0.00 (0.02)
Religious values	-0.50 (0.00)	-	1.00 (0.00)	-
Esthetic values	1.19 (0.05)	1.37 (0.05)	1.20 (0.06)	0.91 (0.04)
Absolute frequency	(1061)	(801)	(742)	(317)

^a and ^b indicate significant differences ($p < 0.05$)

lower, as compared to that of reemployed people. Respondents scoring higher on neuroticism and introversion factors were hurt more by job loss, and were more satisfied when they could find a new job than were stable and extraverted respondents.

Many scholars suggest that the duration of unemployment strongly affects well-being (e.g., Jahoda 1981; Warr 1983; Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld 1938). The analyses described in this article have shown that the mood deteriorates immediately after lay-off. During the second and third months, well-being recovered, and, consistent with the findings reported by Warr et al. (1982), between the fourth and sixth months a significant decline occurred.

These findings support the hypothesis that psychological adjustment to unemployment follows a cycle: Initial shock, a period of optimism, and the experience of depression. Furthermore, the results of this study indicate that this cycle holds for unemployed people independent of their personalities.

The present study was designed to explore processes underlying emotional responses to unemployment. As shown in table 1, needs for power and affiliation were most often salient during unemployment. As compared to experiences during employment, needs for self-esteem were recorded more frequently but could not be satisfied. This result confirms the findings of other recent investigations reporting threatened self-esteem of people out of work (cf. Warr 1983; Kieselbach and Offe 1979). Unemployed persons also frequently felt the need for prestige, which could not be satisfied. Also, needs for nurturance, activity, experience, achievement, and order were frequently associated with bad mood during the period of redundancy. It is interesting to note, however, that unemployed persons often experienced the need for autonomy, which was associated with a good mood. Also, table 3 shows that, only during the first month, did motives of autonomy lead to well-being. With continued joblessness, the associated mood deteriorates significantly.

Immediately after job loss, bad experiences were associated with the needs for revenge, prestige, power, and self-esteem. Therefore, the respondents may have experienced feelings of powerlessness, worthlessness, and injustice. If striving for freedom and autonomy became salient, the subjects felt satisfied.

The results displayed in table 3 indicate that lowering of well-being over time went hand-in-hand with increased needs for autonomy,

The descriptive results of the present study show that the crucial difference between employed and unemployed persons is determined by differential motive structure and attributional processes. It is also shown that the length of unemployment affects psychological well-being. The time sampling diary proved to be a useful method by which to assess the individual meaning of unemployment and the impact of both personality characteristics and environment on coping strategies.

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