

# Psychological well being of job seekers social work essay



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## Contents

### **Topic:**

An Exploration of impact the denial of supports has on the physical and psychological well-being of job seekers not on the live register. In today's economy many households in Ireland have to cope with the knock on effects of the Irish recession such as redundancies, reduced working hours, higher taxes, lower incomes and unemployment; more importantly these effects are impacting on the well-being of unemployed individuals. This impact is often prolonged for jobseekers who are not on the live register through the denial of both financial supports and employment supports; which are clearly evident in the Irish Governments implementation of several programmes such as the Short-Term Enterprise Allowance, Tús, The Work Placement Programme and the National Internship Scheme whereby participants on these programmes must come from the live register. Moreover this denial is becoming more evident since FÁS Community and Employment Services were merged with the Department of Social Protection (DSP) and commenced the rollout of their new initiative Intreo. Since the rollout of Intreo individuals who are not on the live register are being told to go online for information whilst individuals who are in receipt of a jobseekers payment are being called into a group meeting where supports are offered to them; more importantly it is becoming more difficult for Local Employment Services to deal with individuals not on the live register due to high volumes of referrals from the DSP (INOUE, 2013). This denial of supports affects a wide variety of individuals such as self-employed individuals who pay a class S PRSI which has no entitlement to Jobseekers benefit, the homemaker whose

partner is working drawing an income which disqualifies them from the live register and the under twenty fives living at home with their parents and are means tested on their parents income often disqualifying them from the live register. For the purpose of this proposal this group of individuals shall be referred to as the 'unregistered jobseekers'. To quantify individuals who possibly fall into the category of unregistered jobseekers this paper has utilised the CSO database on persons aged 15 years and over by principal economic status with the following results for the second quarter of 2012 (Central Statistics Office, 2012)

Individuals in the labour force	2,096,400
Employed individuals	1,187,900
Unemployed individuals	308,500
Individuals engaged in home duties, unemployed and seeking full time work	6,800
Individuals engaged in home duties, unemployed and seeking part-time work	8,900
Total engaged in home duties, unemployed and seeking work	25,700
Individuals employed yet seeking new employment	4,100

When investigated further these numbers show that 1.4% of the overall labour force who are currently seeking employment or a change in career and currently unregistered jobseekers; however more startling is the statistic that 8.3% of unemployed individuals are unregistered jobseekers highlighting a need for Government intervention. This proposal intends further highlighting the need for Government intervention through the exploration of data and research relating to unemployment and establishing what effects unemployment has on a jobseekers physical and psychological well-being; moreover it will highlight the implications of prolonging these effects through the denial of supports to unregistered jobseekers.

**Questions:**

What are the effects unemployment has on an individual's psychological and physical well-being? (This is a relational question) What supports are available to the unemployed in Ireland to combat these effects? (This is a descriptive question) What impact do these supports have on unemployed individuals? (This is a relational question) Does the denial of supports exacerbate the effects unemployment has on unregistered jobseekers? (this is a relational question)

**Type of research study:**

Case studies are deductive in their approach and allow for the exploration and description of social issues (Geraghty, 2006), therefore this category of study design is best suited to this project as it intends to explore and investigate the effects unemployment has on an individual's well-being; moreover a key focus of this research will be on the exacerbation of these effects caused by the denial of supports to a key group in Irish society namely the unregistered jobseeker.

**Principal forms of information sought:**

Reports: Such as the FAS annual report. The Central statistics office (CSO) survey on Income and Living Conditions: Preliminary, results and the CSO - Quarterly national household survey Academic books/Journal articles: These will be used to highlight theoretical and empirical findings relating to the effects unemployment has on an individual's well-being and the benefits of employment supports. Websites: CSO for statistics on unemployment, Jobbridge website for details on the National Internship Scheme, The Paul

Partnership website for progression details on the Back to Work Enterprise Allowance.

## **Quantitative qualitative or both'?**

This project intends to utilise both research strategies. It intends deriving quantitative data highlighting the relationship between unemployment and an individual's well-being in Ireland. It will also utilise qualitative research to investigate the perceived levels of well-being amongst the unemployed with a key focus on the unregistered jobseekers.

## **Specific methods to be used:**

Primary data in the form of questionnaires will be utilised. It is envisaged that internet links to the online questionnaires and cover page will be dispensed electronically to the ten Job Clubs in the Department of Social Protections Midlands catchment area. It is then further envisaged that the Job Club leaders will go through the cover page with job seekers and offer them the opportunity to complete the said questionnaire. Job Clubs to be utilised: Midlands North - Roscommon Job Club, Athlone Job Club & Meath Job Club; Midlands South - Kilkenny Job club, Roscrea Job Club, Nenagh Job Club, Portlaoise Job Club, Portarlinton Job Club, West Offaly Job Club and Tullamore Job Club. Secondary data relating to unemployment's relationship to an individual's well-being will be sought from academic sources such as journal articles, previous case studies, news articles and internet material.

**Research Schedule:****Apr 13****May 13****Jun 13****Jul 13****Aug 13**

Prepare Literature Review 26th April Lit Review Complete Devised & Approved by 10th May Data Analysed between the 3rd and 7th June Report to be written up by 5th July Feedback implemented and final draft drawn up by 2nd August Link research questions to literature review Contact 10 Job Club Leaders by phone and forward links to cover note and questionnaire by E-mail 13th to 17th May Report to be reviewed and feedback received by 19th July Final draft drawn up by 9th August Gather additional data Proofread by 16th August Final report drawn up by 23rd August

**Research Budget:**

Online questionnaire development & hosting €50 Phone calls to the 53 Job Club Leaders € 20 Total €76

**Any issues, ethical considerations?**

Personal Interest In my role as a Job Club Leader I am working with the unemployed on a daily basis. In the process of this role I have developed my own preconceived opinions on the research topic therefore extra care must be taken to ensure that opposing views and negative findings are highlighted in contention to my views. Author bias Care must be taken when utilising websites such as the INOU, The Paul Partnership and Jobbridge sites which <https://assignbuster.com/psychological-well-being-of-job-seekers-social-work-essay/>

may have a particular bias on the information they provide. Again the same applies to reports by agencies such as the Department of Social Protection and FAS. Appropriate sources must ensure that all sources are genuine and reliable. This can be achieved by checking any authors' credibility and by consulting their references. Questionnaire Cover Note The planned distribution of the questionnaire is reliant on the 53 Job Club leaders firstly dispensing the cover note of the questionnaire to potential participants in the survey. A copy of the cover note outlining a full description of the proposed research will also have to be placed online on page one of the questionnaire. Literacy & Computer Skills This issue will need to be discussed with the Job Club leaders and assistance put in place for jobseekers with poor literacy or computer skills so as not to exclude them from the research.

## **Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The survey on income and living condition (SILC) has shown that the equivalised disposable income of individuals has been decreasing since 2008 (Central Statistics Office, 2011), whilst on the other hand ' according to the latest Consumer Price Index the cost of living is rising: 2% in the year to August 2012 (Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed, 2012). These stats appear to have a relational effect on increased rate of risk of poverty, deprivation and Consistent poverty as shown in the ' Table A Summary of main results' of the aforementioned SILC report. In an effort to combat many of these effects many household members without an entitlement to social welfare (unregistered jobseekers) are now seeking some form of employment so as to provide as a second income in order to provide a

higher overall income for the household. The key purpose of this literature review is to highlight linkages between unemployment and the deterioration of an individual's physical and psychological well-being; moreover it will highlight how this deterioration is exasperated for unregistered jobseekers through the denial of support services. This will be achieved firstly by highlighting previous case studies and research into the relationship between unemployment and an individuals' physical and psychological well-being, moreover it will demonstrate how this deterioration is exasperated over time. Once this relationship between unemployment and an individuals' physical and psychological well-being is established this review will identify three interventions sponsored by the Irish Government that are not available to unregistered jobseekers; the interventions examined will highlight three key areas of assistance namely work experience, assistance in starting a business and finally training or up-skilling. In line with this the paper intends utilising case studies and reports to highlight how support services offered to the unemployed often combat the deterioration of an unemployed individual's well-being; thus underpinning a positive relationship between these support services and sustaining an unemployed individual's well-being. Finally the review will highlight how the denial of supports services to unregistered jobseekers exasperates the deterioration of their well-being thus warranting further research and intervention.

## **Unemployment and psychological well-being**

Kinderman & Tai (2009, p. 15) cited the Social Exclusion Unit (2004) as stating ' not having a job is perhaps the single most important cause of social exclusion among adults of working age, most obviously because it is



usually associated with low income. It also contributes to social isolation, loss of confidence and lowered self-esteem'; moreover this viewpoint was compounded by the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2009, p. 3) when citing Danzon (2009) who pointed out that ' some countries are probably already seeing the repercussions of the economic crisis on people's health in the form of increases in mental health problems (stress, anxiety and depression)'. In an effort to comprehend the impact unemployment has on an individuals well-being McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg and Kinicki (2005) correlated a selection of academic literature on unemployment and utilised meta-analytic techniques across 104 empirical studies with 437 effect sizes. The findings from this research by McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg and Kinicki (2005) is three tiered, firstly they highlighted a lower level of well-being in unemployed individuals as compared to individuals in employment, secondly they highlighted the deterioration in an individuals' well-being as they move from employment to unemployment and finally in contrast they highlighted how a move from unemployment to reemployment was beneficial and promoted and improvement of an individuals' well-being. When considering the evidence of this research the authors stopped short of affirming a causal relationship between unemployment and mental health when they stated ' It is unrealistic for us to claim we can prove a causal relationship between unemployment and mental health as there are limitations to the causal interpretation of each type of study that has examined this relationship; moreover they stated ' the evidence is strongly supportive of a causal relationship because there is consistency in results across multiple kinds of studies and hundreds of data points' (McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005, p. 67). This perspective stemmed from their view that while

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unemployed there are several extended factors such as financial concerns and work-role centrality that are responsible for reduced well-being during unemployment; moreover they collaborated this viewpoint by citing Price, Friedland, and Vinokur (1998) suggestion that ' job loss and unemployment bring about a " cascade" of secondary stressors such as worry, uncertainty, and financial, family, and marital difficulties' (McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005, p. 67). These findings are further collaborated by Jackson, Stafford, Banks, & Warr (1983) who implemented a longitudinal study over three years whereby they focused on two groups of young individuals in their first three years of their working lives. This research again highlighted higher levels of psychological distress for the unemployed when compared to the employed; whilst also presenting empirical evidence that changes in employment status lead to changes in distress scores. The extent of this psychological distress caused to individuals can be further linked to prolonged unemployment with Kinderman & Tai (2009, p. 15) stating ' prolonged unemployment is linked to worsening mental and physical health, including an increased risk of suicide and premature death'.

## **Unemployment and physical well-being**

When researching physical well-being Dooley, Fielding, & Levi (1996) found that unemployment can be linked to an increase in unhealthy behaviours such as increased alcohol and tobacco consumption, poor diet and reduced exercise which further leads to the increase of risk for disease and mortality; moreover they stated ' suspected physical health responses to unemployment have ranged from self-reported physical illness to mortality, especially suicide' (Dooley, Fielding, & Levi, 1996, p. 451). This viewpoint of

an increased risk of disease was highlighted by Arnetz, et al. (1991) in a Swedish longitudinal study of 354 working class men and women which revealed 'marked effects during the anticipatory and early unemployment phase on mental well-being, serum cortisol, prolactin, total cholesterol, HDL cholesterol, and phytohemagglutinin reactivity of lymphocytes' (p. 76); however they also emphasised that most of these effects only last for a short period of time with the exception of the cardiovascular risk factors which were still prevalent two years after an individual becomes unemployed. The WHO (2009) raised their concerns on this viewpoint when they cited Danzon (2009) who pointed out that many countries are presently seeing physical symptoms such as cardiac disease and disorders of the digestive system due to the downturn in the global economy. This was further collaborated by The Institute of Public Health when their research showed that frontline services viewed health issues in men 'as being directly related to the recession, to unemployment or to the threat of unemployment' (2011, p. 3); more importantly they highlighted a Danish study which utilised census-generated data which found a '40%-50% excess death rate among the unemployed, with suicides and accidents being prominent contributors to this' (The Institute of Public Health, 2011, p. 4). In an effort to underline the relationship between mortality and the loss of employment or early retirement Morris, Shape, & Cook (1994) instigated a study of 6191 men aged between the ages of 40-59 and in stable employment. The findings of this research showed that men who became unemployed within five years of the initial screening were twice as likely to die within the ensuing five and a half years when compared to men who had remained in employment. More recently a Swedish study by Garcy and Vågerö (2012) complemented this

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viewpoint finding that mortality was closely related to unemployment; furthermore they also highlighted a relationship between risk of mortality and the accumulated levels of unemployment. Evidence presented pointed to cancer, circulatory and alcohol related diseases in relation to mortality peaked with mid-level accumulated unemployment and declines the longer an individual is unemployed. Moreover, they also found that excess mortality effects were low in relation to women; however they found increases in alcohol disease related mortality and external causes of death which did not encompass suicides or transport accidents. These findings led Garcy & Vågerö (2012, p. 1919) to state their research provides ' additional support for a causal interpretation of the association between unemployment and mortality. The all-cause mortality effects of unemployment, especially long-term unemployment, were more pronounced among men than among women'.

## **Employment Supports and their Impacts**

One intervention the Irish Government instigated in recent times is the national internship scheme with an aim 'to assist in breaking the cycle where jobseekers are unable to get a job without experience, either as new entrants to the labour market after education or training or as unemployed workers wishing to learn new skills' (Jobbridge, no date, [online]). To date this scheme appears to be working with an independent report stating 'the Programme has been an effective labour market intervention in achieving movement off the Live Register'; moreover they stated their preliminary results surpass the Governments statistic of 37% indicating that they found 52% of past interns are now in employment (Indecon International Economic

Consultants, 2012). Another intervention strategy being used by the Department of Social Protection (DSP) is the back to work enterprise allowance (BTWEA). The BTWEA is an initiative which encourages individuals in receipt of certain social welfare payments for a period exceeding 12 months to become self-employed; this initiative runs for two years and allows the participant to retain 100% of their social welfare entitlement for the first year they are starting the business and 75% for the second year. As of February 2012 there were 8, 399 individuals availing of the scheme (Department of Social Protection, 2011). In 2011 the Paul partnership in Limerick conducted a phone survey of their 160 enterprise clients who started their businesses in 2008.-2009 in an effort to see how the businesses were performing (The Paul Partnership, 2012). The results of this survey showed that 71% of the businesses were still trading with 0% performing extremely well, 20% performing reasonably well, 48% getting by, 20% struggling a little and 12% struggling a lot. When examined these results show that the BTWEA is a positive government intervention for the unemployed with a high success rate. The final intervention to be examined is the Back to Education Allowance (BTEA), this scheme focuses on encouraging and facilitating ' people on certain social welfare payments to improve their skills and qualifications and, therefore, their prospects of returning to the active work force' (Department of Social Protection, 2011, p. 123). A working group set up by the Department of Social and Family Affairs in 2005 utilised the results of the Lansdowne Market Research (LMR) survey of past BTEA participants and found ' 63% were found to be in full-time or part-time employment while at the time of the survey 9% were pursuing further education' (Department of Social and Family Affairs, 2005, p. 48) thus <https://assignbuster.com/psychological-well-being-of-job-seekers-social-work-essay/>

showing this intervention to be extremely successful. Unfortunately at present to qualify for any of these three aforementioned interventions an applicant must have a live claim and be in receipt of a specified social welfare claim for a specified period of time; thus disqualifying the 8.3% of unregistered jobseekers from partaking in the programmes. Moreover this denial of service shows that unregistered jobseekers are deprived of the benefits of these programmes thus exacerbating the effects of unemployment. When examined further the aforementioned interventions appear to have impacted positively on individuals with high numbers in each case returning to the workforce; however the evidence does not encompass the impact on the physical and psychological well-being of the individual. In an effort to comprehend the impact an intervention programme has on an individuals' psychological well-being Vinoku, Schul, Vuori, & Price (2000) conducted a study on 2,005 workers in Michigan who had recently become unemployed and availed of a Government intervention programme, namely the JOBS Program. Through their research they found that two years after engaging with the programme the 'experimental group had significantly higher levels of reemployment and monthly income, lower levels of depressive symptoms, lower likelihood of experiencing a major depressive episode in the last year, and better role and emotional functioning compared with the control group' (Vinoku, Schul, Vuori, & Price, 2000, p. 32). This viewpoint on a positive relationship between Government intervention and healthier psychological well-being was also highlighted by The Institute of Public Health (2011) when they noted the JOBS programme in the UK promoted positive mental health and prevented the onset of depression. In relation to the physical well-being and the benefits of intervention such as <https://assignbuster.com/psychological-well-being-of-job-seekers-social-work-essay/>

job agencies, Schuring, Burdorf, Voorham and Mackenbach (2010) instigated a study of 2754 unemployed individuals who were job ready and referred to a re-employment agency. This study found that individuals who had utilised the re-employment programmes and found employment saw ' general health, physical functioning, social functioning, vitality, mental health, bodily pain and role limitations due to emotional or physical problems improved' (p. 639). These findings were collaborated further by Freyer-Adam, Gaertner, Tobschall, and John (2011) research whereby job-seekers who were recruited at three job-agencies in north-eastern Germany provided information on health risks such as physical inactivity, smoking and risky drinking; the findings of this research found ' that approaching unemployed individuals at job agencies may be a promising approach for prevention efforts'. When these evidences are considered a conclusion can be drawn that the denial of supports to the unregistered jobseeker is the denial of supports that diminish the negative impact unemployment has on an individuals' physical and psychological well-being.

## **Conclusion**

In Conclusion this review has shown clear linkages between unemployment and the deterioration of an individual's physical and psychological well-being; moreover it has shown that this deterioration is exasperated for unregistered jobseekers through the denial of support services. This will be achieved firstly by highlighting the relationship between unemployment and the deterioration of an individuals' psychological wellbeing utilising studies such as McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg and Kinicki's 2005 correlation and analysis of academic material on unemployment; moreover the review

highlighted a relationship between the duration of unemployment and the exasperation of the deterioration of an individuals psychological well-being utilising research such as . The review then progressed to highlight the relation ship between unemployment and the deterioration of an individuals' physical wellbeing. This was achieved by highlighting research and case studies such as Dooley, Fielding, and Levis' 1996 research; moreover this review highlighted further research such as that of Garcey and Vågerö which surmised longterm unemployment increased the risk factors. Once the link was established between unemployment and the deterioration of an individuals physical and psychological well-being the review focused on three government interventions aimed at assiting jobseekers return to the workforce, namely the National Intership Scheme, the BTWEA and the BTEA.; moreover the review further presented evidence of the success of these interventions in assisting jobseekers return to the workforce. However it was also noted that these interventions are not avilable to the unregistered jobseeker thus depriving them of the benefits leading to the exasperation of the effects of unemployment. The final evidences presented in this review showed how participation on an employment programme had a benifical affect on a job seekers physical and pscologilal well-being; this was achieved by by highlighting research and case studies such as the research conducted by Vinoku, Schul, Vuori, and Price in 2000 and the 2010 study instigated by Schuring, Burdorf, Voorham and Mackenbach. However at this stage again the review argued that the denial of supports to the unregistered jobseeker is the denial of supports that diminish the negative impact unemployment has on an individuals' physical and psychological well-being. When the evidences are combined this review clearly illustrates firstly a linkage

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between unemployment and the deterioration of an individuals' physical and psychological well-being. Secondly it has highlighted the positive relationship between an individual partaking on an employment programme and their physical and psychological well-being; finally this review has shown that the denial of services to the unregistered jobseekers is the denial of the physical and psychological well-being gained by registered jobseekers thus exacerbating the effects of unemployment for the unregistered jobseeker. When these points are considered it is imperative that further study to be carried out on alternative supports that will alleviate the affects unemployment has on the unregistered jobseekers' physical and psychological well-being.