

UNEMPLOYMENT STIGMA AND THE SELECTION PROCESS

by

Morgan Pearn

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Industrial/Organizational Psychology

Middle Tennessee State University
August 2015

Thesis Committee:

Dr. Mark C. Frame, Chair

Dr. Judith Van Hein

Dr. Richard Moffett

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Mark Frame, for his dedication to getting me to my August graduation date. His help in navigating tough situations and coaching through the analysis phase has developed me both personally and professionally. I would also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Judith Van Hein and Dr. Richard Moffett, for making themselves available to guide me. Their quick responses and willingness to step in was key in my thesis progress. Lastly, I would like to thank my undergraduate advisor, Dr. Satoris Culbertson, for helping me reach my study's participant requirements. Her willingness to put Dr. Frame and me in contact with her colleagues at Kansas State University was critical to my data collection process. To all of these individuals, I want to express my greatest gratitude for making the thesis process such a rewarding learning experience. Thank you for your dedication.

ABSTRACT

The 2007- 2009 recession resulted in the largest proportion of long-term unemployed people in U.S. history (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). In the recovery of such a deep recession, the labor market now faces the task of placing a high volume of unemployed applicants back into the workforce. It is therefore important to consider the perceptions that employers may have of the unemployed when reviewing these applicants in the selection process. Recent research has shown that unemployed individuals are viewed as being chiefly responsible for their unemployment, either because they lack skills or motivation (Oberholzer-Gee, 2008). This study further examines unemployment stigma. Specifically, how third variables such as an applicant's age, gender, and length of unemployment affect the applicant's ability to get hired. Results indicate the unemployed are viewed as less hireable than the currently employed, regardless of unemployment length.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	vi
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	3
Faulty Decision-Making.....	3
Impact on Out-Groups.....	4
Types of Stigma.....	5
Unemployment as a Stigma.....	6
Perceptions of the Unemployed.....	7
Effects of Unemployment.....	9
Impact of Other Variables.....	10
CHAPTER III: METHOD.....	13
Participants.....	13
Method.....	13
Measures.....	14
Hireability.....	14
Assumptions Questionnaire.....	14
Big Five Personality Inventory.....	15
Demographics and Personal Characteristics.....	15
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS.....	16
Quality Assurance Check.....	16

	Page
Support of Hypotheses.....	17
Additional Exploratory Analyses.....	21
Assumptions Questionnaire.....	21
Big Five Personality Inventory.....	21
Demographics.....	22
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION.....	23
General Discussion.....	23
Limitations and Future Research.....	24
Conclusion.....	25
REFERENCES.....	27
APPENDICES.....	31
APPENDIX A: CONDITION TABLE.....	32
APPENDIX B: HIREABILITY SCALE.....	34
APPENDIX C: ASSUMPTIONS QUESTIONNAIRE.....	36
APPENDIX D: BIG FIVE PERSONALITY INVENTORY.....	40
APPENDIX E: DEMOGRAPHIC ITEMS.....	42
APPENDIX F: IRB APPROVAL LETTER.....	45

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Descriptive Statistics by Condition.....	18
Table 2. Analysis of Variance (Age x Gender x Employment Status).....	19
Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Employment Status.....	20
Table 4. Pairwise Comparisons for Employment Status.....	20

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the most critical decisions an organization can make is to select the right person for the right job during the hiring process. In order to do so, the organization must have the ability to ascertain each candidate's skills and personal attributes accurately and then compare those qualifications to what the job requires. When this process is done effectively, there is said to be good person-job fit; that is, the new hire's attributes will match the needs of the job and the job will fulfill the needs of the new hire (Carless, 2005). When an organization hires an employee that fits the job well, both the organization and the employee benefit from the selection process (Gatewood, Feild, & Barrick, 2011). Thus, it is important that organizations gain an *accurate* depiction of what the candidates have to offer, in order to ensure the best candidate is chosen.

Unfortunately, organizations face many challenges in forming unbiased perceptions of job candidates. One such challenge concerns the stigma related to long term unemployment, which is of particular relevance today, as the United States recovers from one of the deepest recessions in its history (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, one of the most highly recognized indicators of a recession is an increase in unemployment rates. In the most recent recession (2007-2009), the U.S. unemployment rate was especially jarring, as the decline in employment was more rapid than it had been in any other recession in recent decades. Furthermore, by the end of this recession, the United States had a higher unemployment rate than many other industrialized countries (9.5%). Still, one of the most notable characteristics of the

recent recession was that it had a higher proportion of long-term unemployed people (unemployment lasting more than 27 weeks) than in any other recent recession (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). In the recovery of such a deep recession, the U.S. job market now faces the task of placing a high volume of unemployed individuals back into the work force. This means that organizations are starting to see an influx of job candidates that are currently unemployed, and may have been so for a long period of time.

In this way, the recession has changed the nature of the selection process. Employers must sift through application materials in which candidates have a wide variety of employment histories and employment statuses (currently employed, unemployed for some time). Thus, it is important to consider how employers perceive those that have been out of work and to examine the impact those perceptions have on whether or not a candidate is hired. The following paper will outline the antecedents of stigma, the research that has been done on unemployment stigma specifically, and possible contributing factors of unemployment stigma in the selection process.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Faulty Decision-Making

Although selection is one of the most critical organizational processes, organizations do not always select the best candidate for a given position. This is partly because the selection of employees may rely heavily upon the judgment of employers themselves, which may be influenced by personal biases and unreasonable decision-making “short-cuts”, or heuristics (Kahneman & Tversky, 1973). When faced with decisions marked with uncertainty (such as selecting a new hire), people have a tendency to rely on these heuristics to fill in the gaps (Landy, 2008), thus allowing the decision to be made more quickly. According to Kahneman and Tversky (1973), the availability heuristic is one of the most commonly used heuristics in judgment decisions. The availability heuristic operates off of the assumption that the more available an event is in our memory, the more likely we are to think it is representative of the event’s availability in the real world (Kahneman & Tversky, 1973). For example, if a hiring manager had a vivid memory of a woman performing poorly in a particular position, he or she might generalize this event to be indicative of *any* woman performing in the same role and, consequently, be reluctant to hire women applying for the position in the future. Beyond the legal ramifications of overlooking a qualified candidate belonging to a protected class, the organization would also suffer if this caused a less qualified male candidate to be hired for the position.

Decision-making can also be distorted by confirmation bias; a tendency for people to seek to confirm their previously held beliefs (Snyder & Swann, 1978).

Although this is a concept typically discussed in terms of day-to-day cognitions, there has been evidence that it may impact the hiring process as well. For instance, Dougherty, Turban, and Callender (1994) found that interviewers who had positive first impressions of candidates (based on candidate applications and test scores) used more positive language in that candidate's interview and used language eluding to a job offer. With these "pre-approved" candidates, interviewers also spent more time "selling" the company and less time asking questions of the candidate. Thus, candidates who made good first impressions generally had a significantly different interview experience than those who did not make good first impressions. Specifically, those who came in as "top candidates" were encouraged, reassured of their potential, and experienced fewer attempts to have their aptitude assessed (Dougherty, Turban, & Callender, 1994). In an effort to confirm their first impressions, interviewers made the process easier for those they wanted to succeed. Not only does this keep the interviewer from more accurately assessing preferred candidates' aptitude during the interview (by not asking as many questions), it also makes the non-preferred candidates actively work to un-do the interviewer's initial perceptions. Thus, the tendency to seek to confirm previously-held beliefs can make it more difficult to ensure the best candidate is hired for the job.

Impact on Out-Groups

In order to avoid relying on biases in the decision-making process, it is important to first understand how biases enter into judgments. Hughes (1962) suggested that some biases stem from the notion of in-groups and out-groups (an "us" vs. "them" distinction). According to Hughes, we tend to feel a greater obligation to in-groups, which consequently leads us to marginalize anyone without an in-group "membership". This

tendency is sometimes clearly illustrated, but can also be more subtle. For example, criminals would generally be considered a societal “out-group” and it is clear how they are marginalized – even after undergoing punishments (prison, parole, service hours), there are further laws in place to keep them in societal outskirts (cannot attain certain jobs, advertisement of their residence). Although most would agree that criminals should be punished in some way, society may force them to remain a separate entity even after their penance. This same sentiment can be observed in more subtle types of marginalized groups. For example, people with physical handicaps are not often blatantly punished; showing outwardly disdain for this group is not generally socially acceptable. This does not mean that the physically handicapped do not suffer negative societal consequences. In fact, it has been shown that those with physical disabilities often experience social distance, discrimination, and feel devalued by society (Green, 2003; Louvet, 2007; Lucas & Phelan, 2012;). In this way, even if we do not actively marginalize certain groups, they still can experience punishment. Hughes (1962) argues that the greater the social distance is between an in-group and an out-group, the more we feel comfortable allowing the out-group to be ostracized. In other words, the less similar the out-group is to us, the easier it is to disregard them or discriminate against them.

Types of Stigma

Goffman (1963) identified these out-groups as “stigmatized”, meaning that they are marked by society as somehow possessing shortcomings, handicaps, or failings. According to Goffman, there are three categories of stigma that an out-group can fall under: abominations of the body (physical deformities, disabilities), tribal stigmas (race, religion), and blemishes of character (prisoners, exotic dancers, the unemployed). While

bodily abominations and tribal stigmas are generally viewed as being outside of an individual's control, possessing a blemish of character is seen as the result of an individual's conscious *choice*, and a poor one at that (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). Thus, being able to pin a shortcoming on an individual's personal attributes (blemishes of character) makes it more admissible for society to stigmatize out-groups comprised of these qualities.

To illustrate the implications of possessing a blemish of character, consider individuals who engage in dirty work; that is, work that people would rather not engage in because it is disgusting, degrading, or otherwise distasteful in nature (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999; Hughes, 1962). Dirty work can include jobs interacting with physically dirty things (garbage collector, mortician), jobs interacting with stigmatized individuals (working with alcoholics, the mentally ill), or jobs which require tasks that are considered sinful or dubious in nature (exotic dancer, bill collector; Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). In a recent study, Pearn (2012) found that even when applicants were equally qualified, those with a history of performing dirty work were rated as less moral and less hireable than a non-dirty working applicant. These findings demonstrate that a perceived blemish of character can lead to discrimination and negative perceptions, which in turn can detrimentally affect the hiring process.

Unemployment as a Stigma

With the recent recession, another perceived blemish of character is especially relevant to the workforce today: the stigmatization of the unemployed. As previously mentioned, the 2007-2009 recession produced a larger proportion of long-term unemployed people (unemployment lasting longer than 27 weeks) than had ever existed

in the United States (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). Even though the proportion of these individuals is great, research has shown that they continue to carry a stigma, based on the assumptions others make about them. For example, Furaker and Blomsterberg (2003) found that survey respondents generally blamed unemployment on the individuals themselves and believed the unemployed could get a job if they really wanted to. This perception implies that being unemployed is a result of one's lacking dispositional attributes (low ability and motivation), as opposed to being a result of one's circumstances (being laid-off, family issues). Discriminatory actions have also been demonstrated in research with the unemployed. Oberholzer-Gee (2008) found that when reviewing administrative assistant applications, few firms were willing to even interview a non-employed applicant, had they been jobless for a very long period of time (more than 30 months).

Perceptions of the Unemployed

Discrimination against the unemployed has been evidenced in the popular press as well. In her article in the Huffington Post, Bassett (2011) identifies language in help-wanted ads requiring applicants to be "currently employed" in order to be considered. According to Bassett, even though many of the companies deny specifying this preference, their respective staffing agencies confirm their clients only want employed applicants. As described by one-such company's human resources representative, excluding the unemployed from advertisements helps to minimize the volume of unqualified applicants, as many people who don't have jobs do not have necessary skills (Bassett, 2011).

The idea that unemployed people are characteristically unqualified seems to be a widely-held belief. It has been theorized that employers perceive these individuals to be unemployed for a reason (lack of ability or motivation), to have experienced significant skill decay since the onset of their unemployment, and to not be trying very hard to re-enter the workforce (Delaney, 2012; Ho, Shih, Walters, & Pittinsky, 2011; Oberholzer-Gee, 2010). As one recruiting firm executive explains, an individual who is currently employed is desirable because this individual would be moving for the right reasons (e.g. better benefits, more growth opportunities), as opposed to just because he or she needs a job (Delaney, 2012). In this way, employers do not consider unemployed applicants on a case-by-case basis, but lump them together as “unskilled”, even if this is not an accurate depiction of each. By doing this, employers cannot observe redeeming qualities the unemployed applicants might possess, further propelling the unemployed into longer bouts of joblessness, which in turn, strengthens their stigma of being unskilled.

With the prevalence of job ads and recruiters purposefully screening out the unemployed in recent years, the Obama administration sought to place a ban on discriminating against this group (Delaney, 2011). Although this ban would not make the unemployed a protected class (as is the case with sex, race, disability, etc.), it would ban companies from using discriminatory language in ads and discriminating against the jobless in the hiring process. According to the proposal, discriminating against the unemployed in the hiring process “undermines the nation’s economic stability” and wastes valuable human capital (Delaney, 2011). Although the proposal did not pass in Congress, its existence makes an important statement about the effects of unemployment stigma: this type of discrimination hurts both the jobless *and* the economy. By not

assessing the redeeming qualities of unemployed applicants, organizations may miss out on valuable human capital.

Effects of Unemployment

Thus far, most of the literature surrounding unemployment has focused on the negative psychological effects of being unemployed and how the unemployed manage their stigma (Ho et al., 2011; Letkemann, 2002). For example, Blau, Petrucci, and McClendon (2013) found that as an individual's length of unemployment increases, they become less satisfied with life, less comfortable in networking situations, and have lower reemployment expectations. These individuals also experience increased unemployment stigma, financial strain, and depression (Blau, Petrucci, & McClendon, 2013).

Oberholzer-Gee (2008) also found that reemployment probabilities sharply decline as one's spell of unemployment lengthens.

These findings suggest that unemployment stigma can be exacerbated the longer someone is unemployed. This seems to be a vicious cycle, considering that any bout of unemployment makes candidates less desirable, thus preventing them from getting hired time and time again. As the length of an individual's unemployment increases, the stigma becomes more potent, keeping the individual jobless even longer. Beyond the implications that the individual faces (depression, financial strain, decreased life satisfaction), organizations may miss out on qualified applicants.

To illustrate the latter point, Ho and colleagues (2011) investigated the effect of varying levels of applicants' control in their unemployment (laid-off, quit job, employer went into bankruptcy) on employers' willingness to hire the applicant. They found that when applicants were unemployed because they were either laid-off from a previous job

or had quit their job, they were largely dismissed from the running among other candidates. Only when the applicant was unemployed due to their former company's bankruptcy were they alleviated of their unemployment stigma. Ho and colleagues suggest that being laid-off is seen as an indicator of low ability and quitting is seen as an indicator of low motivation. Employer bankruptcy, on the other hand, is so external to an individual's control, that the employer relieves the applicant of his/her negative dispositional attribution (Ho et al., 2011). In this way, it is evident that unemployment stigma does exist and can lead to hiring discrimination. It is also clear that unemployment stigma can be difficult to alleviate, which can possibly contribute to the stigma's perpetuation.

Impact of Other Variables

Although it is clear that unemployment stigma can negatively impact individuals and their ability to get hired in the future, there may be other variables at play. For example, there has been extensive evidence that older workers are also often discriminated against in the hiring process (Bal, Reiss, Rudolph, & Baltes, 2011). In their meta-analysis, Bal and colleagues found that across studies of the older workforce, age has a negative impact on being selected, advancing in an organization, and quality of performance evaluations. Across these negative consequences, the strongest correlation existed for older workers' ability to get selected (Bal et al., 2011). Thus, it would seem that older workers' stigma in the workforce also keeps them unemployed.

When the stigma of being older is combined with the stigma of being unemployed, it is possible that the applicant's overall stigma is exacerbated. This is the proposition laid forth by Karen and Sherman (2012). These authors suggest that the

negative stereotypes associated with older age (being less productive, less creative, less flexible, less ambitious, harder to train, etc.), coupled with the stereotypes associated with being unemployed (unskilled, low motivation, etc.) would create more discrimination for these “doubly-stigmatized” individuals.

Thus, the current study sought to expand our understanding of discrimination against the unemployed by adding the variable of age into employers’ evaluation of applicants. Based on the findings of Bal et al. (2011) and the proposal of Karen and Sherman (2012), we hypothesized:

H1: The 45-year old unemployed applicants will be selected for hiring less than the 25-year old unemployed applicants.

Another variable that should be considered is the effect of gender. Although there is no specific research about employer perceptions of unemployed men and women, there is a fair amount of research demonstrating men and women’s self-perceptions associated with bouts of unemployment. Correlational studies have shown that men tend to view unemployment as a defeat, while women see it as more of an opportunity (Forret, Sullivan, & Mainiero, 2010; Kulik, 2000). Kulik (2000) argues that this trend might stem from traditional gender roles and expectations in society. Specifically, joblessness might not be as traumatizing to women as it is to men because of men’s societal expectation to be primary breadwinners (Kulik, 2000). This logic could also be applied to women – since women are expected to be primary caregivers, they may not feel the societal pressure to always be employed; they are more “allowed” to serve the role of homemaker. For these reasons, we hypothesized that these societal expectations will generalize to employer perceptions of men and women who are unemployed, such that:

H2: Unemployed male applicants will be less likely to get hired than unemployed female applicants.

As previously mentioned, length of unemployment can also affect an individual's probability of being hired, such that longer stints of joblessness decrease reemployment opportunities (Blau, Petrucci, & McClendon, 2013; Oberholzer-Gee, 2008). Thus, we further hypothesized that:

H3: Applicants with longer bouts of unemployment will be less likely to be hired than applicants with shorter bouts of unemployment, such that those unemployed for 18 months will be less likely to be hired than those unemployed for 7 months, who will be less hireable than those unemployed for 3 months, who will be less hireable than those currently employed.

These lengths of time were chosen based on their proximity to the “long term unemployment mark” of 27 weeks identified by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012). Applicants unemployed for 7 months (28 weeks) corresponded to the long-term unemployment mark. Applicants unemployed for 18 months served as an extreme length of long-term unemployment, and 3 months served as a mark of unemployment that is not yet considered “long-term”. Applicants who are currently employed served as a baseline to compare unemployed applicants against.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Participants

A total of 414 participants completed the full survey. Additional participants completed portions of the survey; only those who completed the main manipulation items were included in the analyses. When including partially completed surveys, the total increased to 421 participants. Participants were recruited using a variety of methods including undergraduate students at Middle Tennessee State University (76% of total participants), Kansas State University (6%), University of Texas at Arlington (11%), and via social media (7%). The sample was 31% male, with ages ranging from 18-68 (with the majority falling between 18-22 – about 75%), and a range of ethnicities (62% White, 18% Black, 6% Latino, 14% Other).

Method

The survey was administered via Qualtrics, and randomly assigned participants to one of sixteen survey conditions, creating a between-subjects design. Each condition began with a vignette describing the qualifications of an applicant applying for a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) position. Participants were asked (as the hiring manager) to assess candidates for hire. The sixteen conditions differed in that each vignette described one out of sixteen fictional qualified job applicants. The applicant descriptions varied the gender (male/female), the age (25/45 years old), and the employment status (currently employed, unemployed for 3 months, unemployed for 7 months, unemployed for 18 months) of each applicant. See Appendix A for a list of condition vignettes. After reading their randomly assigned vignette, participants

completed a measure assessing applicant hireability (previously developed by Pearn, Machus, & Culbertson, 2012), a questionnaire about participant assumptions, a personality measure, and several demographic items.

Measures

Hireability. Participants evaluated the quality of the applicant based on their perception of applicants' likelihood of being hired and ability of doing essential employee functions. This 17-item hireability scale was on a 7-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Agree, 7=Strongly Disagree) and was previously developed by Pearn (2012) with $\alpha = .91$. (Sample items: "This person could be held responsible for completing daily tasks"; "I would hire this person for the position".) An additional seven items were added to the scale based on a similar hireability scale (Frame, Rippy, Van Hein, Tate, & Rigdon, 2013). Embedded in the questionnaire were also two "quality assurance" items meant to determine participants' quality of response (sample quality assurance item: "For quality assurance purposes, please select 'Strongly Agree' for this item). These items were used to exclude inattentive participant data from analyses. See Appendix B.

Assumptions Questionnaire. In order to better understand participants' motives when evaluating applicants, a questionnaire surveying assumptions made about certain groups of people was developed. This questionnaire included one question asking participants the length of time it would take *them* to find a job if they were ever unemployed. The remainder of the questionnaire consisted of 64 statements about different groups of applicants included in the vignettes (i.e. about women, men, 45-year-olds, 25-year-olds, those currently employed, those unemployed for 3 months, etc.) with

which participants selected their level of agreement (1= Strongly Disagree, 7=Strongly Agree). For example, participants are asked their level of agreement with statements such as, “Those who have been unemployed for 18 months are lazy.” Included in the questionnaire were also four statements meant to determine participants’ quality of response, as the statements have obvious answers (sample items: “45 year-olds are older than 25 year-olds”, “people who are unemployed do not have jobs”). See Appendix C.

Big Five Personality Inventory. John, Naumann and Soto’s (2008) 44-item Big Five Personality Inventory was used to assess participants’ levels of each of the big five personality traits: conscientiousness, extraversion, emotional stability, agreeableness, and openness to experience. These subscales has been shown to have high internal consistency, α 's = .72-.78. Two quality assurance items were also embedded in this inventory. See Appendix D.

Demographics and Personal Characteristics. Demographic items were included after the hireability scale in the survey. Demographic items were related to age, gender, race, education, occupation, parental occupation, and if the participant had been unemployed (and if so, the number of time he/she had been unemployed, and the length of unemployment each time). Placing these items near the end of the survey was meant to help reduce demand characteristics related to the unemployment vignettes. See Appendix E.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Quality Assurance Check

The current study surveyed 421 participants, with the total reduced to 414 when partial survey completions were excluded. These participant counts were cut down from an original 487 participants because of a failure to answer the specified proportion of quality assurance questions accurately. Throughout the survey, there were a total of ten quality assurance items which either asked participants to select a specific response options for quality assurance purposes, or asked specific “obvious answer” questions (e.g. “45 year olds are older than 25 year olds”). After further examination of participants’ responses to the quality assurance questions, it was determined that a couple of “obvious answer” questions may not have had such obvious answers. Specifically, the items, “Women are female,” and “People who are unemployed do not have jobs” could be either misconstrued or be a matter of opinion to some respondents. Therefore, these two “quality assurance” items were excluded from the quality assurance check, leaving the survey with eight quality assurance items.

After examining the frequencies of responses for each of the eight quality assurance questions, the cut off was set at having at least six out of eight questions answered correctly. The nine participants who only partially completed the survey were examined individually for quality assurance item correctness since they may not have completed the specific areas requiring quality assurance answers. Each of these participants’ number of correct answers to quality assurance questions was divided by the total number of quality assurance questions answered to yield a percentage of correct

responses. If the percentage was at least 75% correct (the same percentage as getting six out of eight quality assurance questions correct), then the participant's responses were kept. If the percentage was below 75%, the participant was excluded from analyses. When both the partially and fully "complete" participants were filtered by percent of quality assurance items correct, 64 participants were excluded from analyses, which yielded the total number of participants at 423 (414 fully complete).

Additionally, two participants who partially completed the survey, did not respond to the Hireability scale and were not assigned a condition. These two participants completed the rest of the survey items, but were not useful for comparisons with the study's main analyses, so they were also excluded. This brought the total number of participants to 421 (414 fully completed).

Support of Hypotheses

The 421 participants were randomly assigned to one of the 16 conditions. For the most part, participation was spread relatively evenly across conditions, but two conditions had somewhat less even spread. Specifically, the condition with the 25 year old male applicant who had been unemployed for 3 months only had 19 participants, whereas the average across conditions was about 26 participants. Additionally, the condition with the 25 year old female who had been unemployed for 3 months had 36 participants. Since the assignment was random, this could not be avoided, but should still be taken into consideration when examining the main effects between conditions. See Table 1 for the number in each condition.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics by Condition

Employment Status	Age	Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Currently Employed	25	Male	5.63	0.76	27
	45	Male	5.62	0.88	26
3 Mo Unemployed	25	Male	5.16	0.81	19
	45	Male	5.44	0.71	32
7 Mo Unemployed	25	Male	5.19	0.76	23
	45	Male	5.10	0.97	32
18 Mo Unemployed	25	Male	5.03	0.70	25
	45	Male	5.27	1.01	23
Currently Employed	25	Female	5.70	0.81	27
	45	Female	5.48	0.65	22
3 Mo Unemployed	25	Female	5.27	0.73	36
	45	Female	5.40	0.65	31
7 Mo Unemployed	25	Female	5.35	0.85	22
	45	Female	5.51	0.76	27
18 Mo Unemployed	25	Female	5.21	1.00	28
	45	Female	4.98	0.86	22

Initially, a 2 x 2 x 4 ANOVA (age, gender, employment status) was conducted to determine any significant main effects or significant interactions were present between the three independent variables on applicant hireability ratings. No interactions were significant and the only main effect that was significant was that of employment status (hypothesis 3). Thus, neither hypothesis 1 (which hypothesized unemployed applicant age predicted hireability) nor hypothesis 2 (which hypothesized unemployed applicant

gender predicted hireability) were supported. Hypothesis 3, however, warranted further exploration. See Table 1 and 2 for the 2 x 2 x 4 ANOVA descriptive statistics and F table, respectively.

A univariate ANOVA was run to determine whether hireability differed by employment status (currently employed, 3 months unemployed, 7 months unemployed, and 18 months unemployed). Using an alpha of .05, the ANOVA revealed a significant difference in hireability predicted by employment status, $F(3, 1) = 6.18$, $MSE = 4.00$, $p < .001$. As a result, pairwise comparisons were conducted to compare employment status levels against one another. Pairwise comparisons revealed that the currently employed applicants were significantly more hireable than the 3 month unemployed applicants ($p = .012$), the 7 month unemployed applicants ($p = .004$), and the 18 month unemployed applicants ($p < .001$). No other comparisons were significantly different at the .05 alpha level. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was partially supported. See Tables 3 and 4 for descriptive statistics and pairwise comparisons, respectively.

Table 2
Analysis of Variance (Age x Gender x Employment Status)

Source	Type III Sum of Sq.	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	0.11	1	0.11	0.17	.68
Gender	0.35	1	0.35	0.54	.47
Employment Status	11.77	3	3.92	5.94	.00
Age*Employment Status	1.32	3	0.44	0.67	.57
Age*Gender	0.50	1	0.50	0.75	.39
Employment Status*Gender	1.92	3	0.64	0.97	.41
Age*Employment Status*Gender	1.67	3	0.56	0.85	.47

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Employment Status

Employment Status	Mean Hireability	Standard Deviation	N
Currently Employed	5.61	.77	102
3 Mo Unemployed	5.34	.71	118
7 Mo Unemployed	5.28	.85	103
18 Mo Unemployed	5.13	.89	98

Table 4
Pairwise Comparisons for Employment Status ^a

(I)	(J)	Mean Difference (I-J)
Currently Employed	3 Mo Unemployed	.27*
	7 Mo Unemployed	.33*
	18 Mo Unemployed	.48*
3 Mo Unemployed	Currently Employed	-.27*
	7 Mo Unemployed	.06
	18 Mo Unemployed	.20
7 Mo Unemployed	Currently Employed	-.33*
	3 Mo Unemployed	-.06
	18 Mo Unemployed	.15
18 Mo Unemployed	Currently Employed	-.48*
	3 Mo Unemployed	-.20
	7 Mo Unemployed	-.15

^a Dependent Variable = Applicant Hireability

* The mean difference is significant at the $p < .05$ level

Additional Exploratory Analyses

Assumptions Questionnaire. After discovering that the scale on a whole (which tests participants' assumptions about the different applicant groups) did not co-vary with the main analyses, an exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted on the Assumptions Questionnaire items to find subscales that may co-vary with the main effects. A total of 18 of the items on this measure were found to load into the same factor—Unemployment Attitudes subscale. None of the other 46 items loaded into a one-factor solution. The 18 items consisted of participant assumptions about people who have been unemployed for either 3 months or 18 months (sample items: *The majority of people who have been unemployed for 3 months lack job skills, Those who have been unemployed for 18 months are generally not very motivated*). These 18 items do not contain all of the unemployment-related items on the Assumptions Questionnaire; these are a specific subset that refer specifically to inferred personal traits of the unemployed. This subscale does not include the unemployment items related to whether the unemployed have difficulty finding good jobs, whether they are trying to find work, and whether or not their unemployment is the fault of the economy. A composite score of the Unemployment Attitudes subscale was created and then run as a 2 x 2 x 4 ANCOVA with the primary analyses. However, the Unemployment Attitudes subscale was found to be non-significant.

Big Five Personality Inventory. As outlined by John, Naumann and Soto's (2008) guidelines, the Big Five Inventory was broken down into five subscales (Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, Openness to Experience, and

Agreeableness). Each of these subscales was then added as a covariate into the 2 x 2 x 4 ANOVA. Of the five subscales, only Agreeableness was found to be significantly related to applicant employment status and applicant hireability. However, upon further exploration, the Agreeableness relationship appeared to be an independent correlation with hireability, as opposed to being related to employment status' relationship with hireability. This implies that those who are more agreeable are more likely to rate everyone as more hireable, regardless of their employment status.

Demographics. Several demographic variables were considered to see if they had an influence on primary results. Because gender of applicant was a factor, participant gender was added as another factor to the ANOVA, but was non-significant. Likewise, participant age was considered, but since the data was primarily college age (75% of participants were less than 23 years old), this variable could not be tested as the data was too skewed. Whether participants had a family member who had been unemployed for more than 7 months was also considered as a possible factor. It, too, was non-significant. Finally, the number of hours per week participants worked was added to the ANOVA as a covariate. Although the covariate was significant ($F(3, 1) = 9.58, MSE = 5.89, p = .002$), the main effects did not change.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

General Discussion

As it currently stands, there are no laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of employment status alone, while discriminating on the basis of age or gender can leave organizations with serious legal consequences. The results of this study, on the other hand, suggest that it is actually the *unprotected* class (the unemployed) who may face real employment discrimination. As Hypotheses 1 and 2 were not supported, it would seem that neither gender nor age of applicants exacerbates the unemployment stigma; just being unemployed (regardless of length of time unemployed) has significant detrimental effects on an applicant's ability to be hired.

It could be that society has become so trained to avoid discriminating against protected classes that the discrimination shows up in stigmatizations that have fewer legal ties, like employment status. It could also be the case that being unemployed says something more direct about an applicant's skills and motivation, as suggested by previous literature (Delaney, 2012; Ho, Shih, Walters, & Pittinsky, 2011; Oberholzer-Gee, 2010) than do gender or age.

The finding that length of unemployment did not predict hireability somewhat contradicts previous literature which has found that the long term unemployed experience more employment discrimination than the short term unemployed (Blau, Petrucci, & McClendon, 2013; Oberholzer-Gee, 2008). In the present study – which categorized the length of time an applicant was unemployed – the currently employed applicants were significantly more hireable than each of the time lengths associated with unemployed

applicants, but hireability did not differ among the 3 month, 7 month, and 18 month unemployed applicants. This suggests that it may not matter how long someone is unemployed; if there is a current career gap in a person's resume, this is enough for the unemployment stigma/discrimination to exist and will likely make the person appear less desirable to hiring managers.

Limitations and Future Research

One potential limitation of this study is that it did not contain manipulation check variables. While the absence of these variables makes it difficult to be certain whether differences between conditions were noticed by participants, because the difference between applicants currently employed and applicants who were unemployed was significant, it is relatively likely that participants did notice the difference between conditions. On the other hand, the subtleties in gender, age, and unemployment length (which did not reach significance) may be easier to navigate in future replications with manipulation check variables. Specifically, these variables would help indicate whether participants understood and remembered their applicants' gender, age and unemployment length and thus considered it when making hireability ratings.

Although no differences were found between applicants who had been unemployed for 3 months, 7 months, and 18 months, this does not mean that unemployment length has no effect. In this study, when participants were asked the length of time it would take *them* to find another job if they became unemployed, the average response was around 2 months. Thus, it may be that participants might have a discrimination "tipping point" closer to the 2 month or 1 month mark. It would be interesting to examine these more fine-tuned unemployment lengths, perhaps adding an

even more extreme unemployment length at around 2 years. These adjustments might yield different hireability results than were found in this study.

Conclusion

The current study has identified the strong relationship between applicants' employment status and their perceived hireability. Since this effect was not found to be exacerbated by gender, age, or unemployment length, there is still work to be done to determine the moderating factors. It could be that more fine-tuned lengths (1 or 2 months unemployed) or more extreme lengths (2 years unemployed) would more significantly affect hireability. There could even be additional factors to consider, such as applicant race, or type of job, which might impact an unemployed applicant's ability to get hired. These are avenues that can be explored in future iterations of this study.

The overarching suggestion from these results is that being currently employed is significantly preferred by hiring managers than for an applicant to be unemployed for *any* length of time. This supports the advice often given to those who are looking to change jobs—is better to start looking before quitting. This will increase the likelihood that job seekers will be taken seriously and also likely assuage hiring managers' concerns about the applicants' skill level.

This finding also has implications for job searchers who are already unemployed. The negative self-perceptions, lowered re-employment expectations, and increased experienced stigma that have been shown to develop in the unemployed over time (Blau, Petrucci, & McClendon, 2013) can turn into a vicious cycle. The longer individuals are unemployed, the less they feel comfortable networking/job searching, which results in these individuals remaining unemployed even *longer*. The combination of being

chronically unemployed and hiring managers' preference for the currently employed can make it extremely difficult for the unemployed to re-enter the workforce. Add to this the lack of legal protection for the unemployed in hiring situations, and the effect is even more pronounced and difficult to overcome.

This study has demonstrated that unemployment stigma is not just felt by the unemployed; it is actually demonstrated by those making hiring decisions. Awareness of the practice of unemployment discrimination is important, but creating solutions to manage the discrimination and the stigma is essential. It is through the continued exploration in understanding this stigma that solutions will become clearer and the unemployed can be reintegrated into the workforce.

REFERENCES

- Ashforth, B. E., & Kreiner, G. E. (1999). How do you do it? Dirty work and the challenge of constructing a positive identity. *Academy of Management Review*, *24*, 413–434.
- Bal, A. C., Reiss, A. E., Rudolph, C. W., & Baltes, B. B. (2011). Examining positive and negative perceptions of older workers: A meta-analysis. *The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, *66*, 687–698. doi:10.1093/geronb/gbr056
- Bassett, L. (2011, May 25). Disturbing job ads: ‘The unemployed will not be considered.’ *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>
- Blau, G., Petrucci, T., & McClendon, J. (2013). Correlates of life satisfaction and unemployment stigma and the impact of length of unemployment on a unique unemployed sample. *Career Development International*, *18*, 257-280. doi: 10.1108/CDI-10-2012-0095
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012). BLS spotlight on statistics: The recession of 2007–2009. doi:10.1108/CDI-10-2012-0095
- Carless, S. A. (2005). Person-job fit versus person-organization fit as predictors of organizational attraction and job acceptance intentions: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *78*, 411-429. doi: 10.1348/096317905X25995
- Delaney, A. (2011, November 13). American jobs act would ban discrimination against jobless. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>

- Delaney, A. (2012, November 8). Stigma of long-term unemployment boosts jobless rate: CBO. *The Huffington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>
- Dougherty, T. W., Turban, D. B., & Callender, J. C. (1994). Confirming first impressions in the employment interview: A field study of interviewer behavior. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 79*, 659-665. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.79.5.659
- Forret, M. L., Sullivan, S. E., & Mainiero, L. A. (2010). Gender role differences in reactions to unemployment: Exploring psychological mobility and boundaryless careers. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 31*, 647-666. doi:10.1002/job.703
- Frame, M. C., Rippy, M. R., Van Hein, J., Tate, J. C., & Rigdon, W. D. (2013, May). *The relationship between Extraversion, stigma against tattoos, and job recommendations*. Poster presented at the 25th annual Association for Psychological Science Convention, Washington D.C.
- Furaker, B. & Blomsterberg, M. (2003). Attitudes towards the unemployed: An analysis of swedish survey data. *International Journal of Social Welfare, 12*, 193-203. doi:10.1111/1468-2397.t01-1-00005
- Gatewood, R., Feild, H., & Barrick, M. (2011). An introduction to selection. In M. Acuna, M. Rhoades, & E. Lowry (Eds.), *Human Resource Selection* (pp. 3). Mason, OH: South-Western, Cengage Learning.
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Green, S. E. (2003). "What do you mean 'what's wrong with her?' ": Stigma and the lives of families of children with disabilities. *Social Science & Medicine, 1361-1374*. doi:10.1016/S0277-9536(02)00511-7

- Hughes, E. C. (1962). Good people and dirty work. *Social Problems, 10*, 3–11.
- Ho, G. C., Shih, M., Walters, D. J., & Pittinsky, T. L. (2011). The stigma of unemployment: When joblessness leads to being jobless. *UCLA: The Institute for Research on Labor and Unemployment*. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7nh039h1#page-3>
- John, O. P., Naumann, L. P., & Soto, C. J. (2008). Paradigm shift to the integrative Big Five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and conceptual issues. In O. P. John, R. W. Robins, & L. A. Pervin (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (pp. 114-158). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Kahneman, D. & Tversky, A. (1973). On the psychology of prediction. *Psychological Review, 80*, 237-251. doi:10.1037/h0034747
- Karen, R. & Sherman, K. (2012). Layoffs and unemployment discrimination: A new stigma. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 27*, 848-863. doi:10.1108/02683941211280193
- Kulik, L. (2000). The impact of gender and age on attitudes and reactions to unemployment: The Israeli case. *Sex Roles, 23*, 85-104. doi:10.1023/A:1007091729187
- Landy, F. J. (2008). Stereotypes, bias, and personnel decisions: Strange and stranger. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 1*, 379-392. doi:10.1111/j.1754-9434.2008.00071.x
- Letkemann, P. (2002). Unemployed professionals, stigma management and derivative stigma. *Work Employment Society, 16*, 511-522. doi:10.1177/095001702762217461

- Louvet, E. (2007). Social judgment toward job applicants with disabilities: Perception of personal qualities and competences. *Rehabilitation Psychology, 52*, 297-303. doi:10.1037/0090-5550.52.3.297
- Lucas, J. W. & Phelan, J. C. (2012). Stigma and status: The interrelation of two theoretical perspectives. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 74*, 310-333. doi: 10.1177/0190272512459968
- Oberholzer-Gee, F. (2008). Nonemployment stigma as rational herding: A field experiment. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, 65*, 30-40. doi: 10.1016/j.jebo.2004.05.008
- Pearn, M. (2012, August). *Effects of physical, moral, and social taint on hiring decisions*. Poster presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Orlando, FL.
- Snyder, M. & Swann, W. B. (1978). Behavioral confirmation in social interaction: From social perception to social reality. *Journal of Experimental and Social Psychology, 14*, 148-162. doi:10.1016/0022-1031(78)90021-5

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Condition Table

- 16 Conditions (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P)
- 4 Unemployment lengths (Currently employed, unemployed for 3 months, unemployed for 7 months, unemployed for 1.5 years)
- 2 Ages (25 years old, 45 years old)
- 2 Gender categories (Female, Male)
- Directions given: You are the hiring manager for a local business needing to hire a Certified Public Accountant to budget, audit, and analyze the company's financial status year-to-year. You have identified all of the applicants that have the required education and work experience. On the following screens, you will be asked to read a brief profile about one of the applicants, and answer questions about the applicant. Please read the following information carefully and complete the questions that follow.

	Employment Status	Gender	Age
A	Currently Employed	Female	25
	Mary is 25 years old and is a certified public accountant with a Bachelor's degree in finance. She currently works for an international financial group and has been employed there for the last four years.		
B	Currently Employed	Male	25
	James is 25 years old and is a certified public accountant with a Bachelor's degree in finance. He currently works for an international financial group and has been employed there for the last four years.		
C	Currently Employed	Female	45
	Lisa is 45 years old and is a certified public accountant with a Bachelor's degree in finance. She currently works for an international financial group and has been employed there for the last four years.		
D	Currently Employed	Male	45
	John is 45 years old and is a certified public accountant with a Bachelor's degree in finance. He currently works for an international financial group and has been employed there for the last four years.		
E	3 Mo. Unemployed	Female	25
	Jennifer is 25 years old and is a certified public accountant with a Bachelor's degree in finance. She has been unemployed for the last 3 months, but has four years' experience working for an international financial group.		
F	3 Mo. Unemployed	Male	25
	Robert is 25 years old and is a certified public accountant with a Bachelor's degree in finance. He has been unemployed for the last 3 months, but has four years' experience working for an international financial group.		
G	3 Mo. Unemployed	Female	45
	Elizabeth is 45 years old and is a certified public accountant with a Bachelor's degree in finance. She has been unemployed for the last 3 months, but has four years' experience working for an international financial group.		
H	3 Mo. Unemployed	Male	45

Michael is 45 years old and is a certified public accountant with a Bachelor's degree in finance. He has been unemployed for the last 3 months, but has four years' experience working for an international financial group.

I	7 Mo. Unemployed	Female	25
Sarah is 25 years old and is a certified public accountant with a Bachelor's degree in finance. She has been unemployed for the last 7 months, but has four years' experience working for an international financial group.			
J	7 Mo. Unemployed	Male	25
William is 25 years old and is a certified public accountant with a Bachelor's degree in finance. He has been unemployed for the last 7 months, but has four years' experience working for an international financial group.			
K	7 Mo. Unemployed	Female	45
Laura is 45 years old and is a certified public accountant with a Bachelor's degree in finance. She has been unemployed for the last 7 months, but has four years' experience working for an international financial group.			
L	7 Mo. Unemployed	Male	45
David is 45 years old and is a certified public accountant with a Bachelor's degree in finance. He has been unemployed for the last 7 months, but has four years' experience working for an international financial group.			
M	1.5 Years Unemployed	Female	25
Kimberly is 25 years old and is a certified public accountant with a Bachelor's degree in finance. She has been unemployed for the last 18 months, but has four years' experience working for an international financial group.			
N	1.5 Years Unemployed	Male	25
Richard is 25 years old and is a certified public accountant with a Bachelor's degree in finance. He has been unemployed for the last 18 months, but has four years' experience working for an international financial group.			
O	1.5 Years Unemployed	Female	45
Emily is 45 years old and is a certified public accountant with a Bachelor's degree in finance. She has been unemployed for the last 18 months, but has four years' experience working for an international financial group.			
P	1.5 Years Unemployed	Male	45
Charles is 45 years old and is a certified public accountant with a Bachelor's degree in finance. He has been unemployed for the last 18 months, but has four years' experience working for an international financial group.			

APPENDIX B: Hireability Scale

Hireability Scale

*Questions 1-18 taken from Pearn, Machus, & Culbertson (2012); questions 19-25 taken from Frame, Rippey, Van Hein, Tate, and Rigdon (2013)

Directions: Please carefully read the following statements and choose the number that corresponds to your level of agreement with the statement. Strongly Disagree = 1, Mostly Disagree = 2, Somewhat Disagree = 3, Neutral = 4, Somewhat Agree = 5, Mostly Agree = 6, Strongly Agree = 7.

Note: Based on the information given on the previous page, try to make your best guess even if the answer is not obvious.

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1. This person would come to work dressed appropriately. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 2. This person would knowingly slack off. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 3. This person would give the company a bad name. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 4. This person could be held responsible for completing daily tasks. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 5. This person would be late often. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 6. I could see this person being a hard worker. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 7. This person would act inappropriately while at work. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 8. This person would lie to get out of a day's work. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 9. This person would have enough confidence to believe in their work abilities. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 10. This person would work to improve his/her reputation if it were tarnished. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 11. I could see this person having growth potential within the company. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 12. This person would be able to communicate well with managers and colleagues. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 13. This person would make an effort to move forward within the company. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 14. For quality assurance purposes, please select "Strongly Agree" for this statement. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 15. This person would be flexible if a new work procedure were introduced. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 16. This person could be trusted to do as told. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |

17. This person would be a good employee. SD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 SA
18. I would hire this person for the position. SD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 SA
19. This person is highly qualified for the position. SD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 SA
20. I would not expect this person to perform well on the job. SD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 SA
21. I could see this person having problems communicating and interacting with coworkers SD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 SA
22. I could see this person having problems communicating and interacting with customers SD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 SA
23. I would be likely to let this person in my home. SD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 SA
24. This person probably gets along with others well. SD 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 SA
25. Based upon the information I have reviewed, I recommend that the company hire [insert name of applicant]. Yes No

APPENDIX C: Assumptions Questionnaire

1. Directions: Use the sliding scale below to choose your answer to the following statement.

If I were unemployed, it would take me _____ months to get a job.

Sliding Scale



2. Directions: Below you will see several statements about different groups of people. Please respond openly and honestly about your general level of agreement with each statement.

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1. Most women are lazy. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 2. The majority of women lack job skills. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 3. Generally, women are hard working. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 4. Women's skills tend to be out of date. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 5. Women are female. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 6. Women are generally not very motivated. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 7. Women tend to remain set in their ways. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 8. Most women are adaptable. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 9. Women have difficulty finding good jobs. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 10. Most men are lazy. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 11. The majority of men lack job skills. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 12. Generally, men are hard working. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 13. Men's skills tend to be out of date. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 14. Men are generally not very motivated. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 15. Many men are tall. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 16. Men tend to remain set in their ways. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 17. Most men are adaptable. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |
| 18. Men have difficulty finding good jobs. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | SA |

19. Most 45 year olds are lazy.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
20. The majority of 45 year olds lack job skills.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
21. Generally, 45 year olds are hard working.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
22. 45 year olds' skills tend to be out of date.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
23. 45 year olds are generally not very motivated.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
24. 45 year olds are older than 25 year olds.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
25. 45 year olds tend to remain set in their ways.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
26. Most 45 year olds are adaptable.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
27. 45 year olds have difficulty finding good jobs.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
28. Most 25 year olds are lazy.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
29. The majority of 25 year olds lack job skills.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
30. Generally, 25 year olds are hard working.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
31. 25 year olds' skills tend to be out of date.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
32. 25 year olds are generally not very motivated.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
33. 25 year olds tend to remain set in their ways.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
34. Most 25 year olds are adaptable.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
35. 25 year olds have difficulty finding good jobs.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
36. Most people who are currently employed are lazy.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
37. The majority of people who are currently employed lack job skills.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
38. Generally, people who are currently employed are hard working.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
39. Currently employed peoples' skills tend to be out of date.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
40. Those who are currently employed are generally not very motivated.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
41. Those who are currently employed tend to remain set in their ways.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
42. Those who are currently employed are adaptable.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA

tend to have skills that are out of date.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
61. Those who have been unemployed for 18 months are generally not very motivated.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
62. Those who have been unemployed for 18 months tend to remain set in their ways.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
63. Those who have been unemployed for 18 months are adaptable.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
64. Those who have been unemployed for 18 months have difficulty finding good jobs.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
65. Those who have been unemployed for 18 months just want to collect unemployment.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
66. Those who have been unemployed for 18 months are probably trying to find work.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
67. If someone's been unemployed for 18 months, it's probably the fault of the economy.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA
68. If someone's been unemployed for 18 months, it's probably his or her own fault.	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	SA

APPENDIX D: Big Five Personality Inventory

Directions: Please carefully read the following statements and choose the number that corresponds to your level of agreement with the statement.

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. I am someone who is talkative | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 2. I am someone who tends to find fault with others | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 3. I am someone who does a thorough job | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 4. I am someone who is depressed, blue | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 5. I am someone who is original, comes up with new ideas | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 6. I am someone who is reserved | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 7. I am someone who is helpful and unselfish with others | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 8. I am someone who can be somewhat careless | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 9. I am someone who is relaxed, handles stress well. | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 10. I am someone who is curious about many different things | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 11. I am someone who is full of energy | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 12. I am someone who starts quarrels with others | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 13. I am someone who is a reliable worker | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 14. I am someone who can be tense | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 15. I am someone who is ingenious, a deep thinker | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 16. I am someone who generates a lot of enthusiasm | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 17. I am someone who has a forgiving nature | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 18. I am someone who tends to be disorganized | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 19. I am someone who worries a lot | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 20. I am someone who has an active imagination | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 21. For quality assurance purposes, please select
"Neither Agree nor Disagree" for this statement. | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 22. I am someone who tends to be quiet | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 23. I am someone who is generally trusting | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 24. I am someone who tends to be lazy | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 25. I am someone who is emotionally stable, not easily upset | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 26. I am someone who is inventive | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 27. I am someone who has an assertive personality | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 28. I am someone who can be cold and aloof | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 29. I am someone who perseveres until the task is finished | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 30. I am someone who can be moody | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |
| 31. I am someone who values artistic, aesthetic experiences | SD 1 2 3 4 5 SA |

- | | | | | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 32. I am someone who is sometimes shy, inhibited | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | SA |
| 33. I am someone who is considerate and kind to almost everyone | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | SA |
| 34. I am someone who does things efficiently | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | SA |
| 35. I am someone who remains calm in tense situations | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | SA |
| 36. I am someone who prefers work that is routine | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | SA |
| 37. I am someone who is outgoing, sociable | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | SA |
| 38. I am someone who is sometimes rude to others | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | SA |
| 39. I am someone who makes plans and follows through with them | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | SA |
| 40. I am someone who gets nervous easily | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | SA |
| 41. I am someone who likes to reflect, play with ideas | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | SA |
| 42. For quality assurance purposes, please select “Strongly Disagree”
for this statement. | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | SA |
| 43. I am someone who has few artistic interests | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | SA |
| 44. I am someone who likes to cooperate with others | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | SA |
| 45. I am someone who is easily distracted | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | SA |
| 46. I am someone who is sophisticated in art, music, or literature | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | SA |

APPENDIX E: Demographic Items

1. Which best describes you?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
2. What is your age?
3. What is your race/ethnic identity?
 - a. White
 - b. African American/Black
 - c. Asian
 - d. Hispanic/Latino
 - e. Native American
 - f. Asian/Pacific Islander
 - g. Bi-racial/Mixed
 - h. Other (Please Specify):
4. What is the highest level of school you have completed?
 - a. 8th grade or below
 - b. Some high school, no diploma
 - c. High school equivalent (for example: GED)
 - d. High school graduate (with diploma)
 - e. Some college credit, no degree
 - f. Trade/technical/vocational training
 - g. Associate's degree
 - h. Bachelor's degree
 - i. Master's degree
 - j. Professional degree
 - k. Doctorate degree
5. Have you ever voluntarily quit a job before having another job lined up?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
6. Have you ever been fired from a job?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
7. Have you ever been laid off from a job?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
8. Are you currently employed?
 - a. Yes

- b. No
9. Approximately how many hours per week do you typically work?
10. Are you currently enrolled in school?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
11. If so, are you enrolled full or part time?
- a. Full-Time
 - b. Part-Time
12. How many times have you been unemployed since completing your education?
- a. I have been employed since completing my education
 - b. 1 time
 - c. 2 times
 - d. 3 times
 - e. 4 times
 - f. 5 times
 - g. 6 times
 - h. 7 times
 - i. 8 times
 - j. 9 or more times
13. What was your longest period of unemployment?
- a. Less than 1 month
 - b. More than 1 month, but less than 3 months
 - c. More than 3 months, but less than 6 months
 - d. More than 6 months, but less than 1 year
 - e. More than 1 year
14. How long have you been unemployed since your last job?
- a. Less than 1 month
 - b. More than 1 month, but less than 3 months
 - c. More than 3 months, but less than 6 months
 - d. More than 6 months, but less than 1 year
 - e. More than 1 year
15. What is your current job or occupation? (Please list only one).
16. Which of the following job categories best describes your current or most recent working industry?
- a. Executive, Administrative, and Managerial (e.g. Legislator, CEO, Manager, Management Analyst, Accountant)

- b. Professional Specialty (e.g. Architect, Engineer, Scientist, Physician, Therapist, Teacher)
 - c. Technicians and Related Support (e.g. Laboratory Technician, Pilot, Legal Assistant, Licensed Nurse, Computer Programmer)
 - d. Sales (e.g. Sales Representative, Supervisor of Sales, Real Estate Sales Representative, Advertising, Cashier)
 - e. Administrative Support, Including Clerical (e.g. Bank Teller, Secretary, Receptionist, Mail Clerk, Teacher's Aid)
 - f. Private Household (e.g. Private Cook, Housekeeper, Butler, Launderer, Private Child Care)
 - g. Protective Service (e.g. Fire Fighter, Police Officer, Sheriff, Fire Inspector, Detective)
 - h. Service Occupations, Except Protective and Household (e.g. Bartender/Server, Maid, Short-Order Cook, Dental Assistant, Hairdresser)
 - i. Farming, Forestry, and Fishing (e.g. Farmer, Animal Caretaker, Timber Cutter/Logger, Fisher, Hunter/Trapper)
 - j. Precision and Production, Craft, and Repair (e.g. Mechanic, Locksmith, Plumber, Electrician, Power Plant Operator)
 - k. Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors (e.g. Welder, Drilling Machine Operator, Assembler, Production Tester)
 - l. Transportation and Material Moving (e.g. Truck Driver, Sailor, Bus Driver, Taxicab Driver, Parking Lot Attendant)
 - m. Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers, and Laborers (e.g. Construction Laborer, Garbage Collector, Vehicle/Equipment Washer, Production Helper)
 - n. Other
 - o. N/A
17. Have any of your family members ever been unemployed for 7 months or more?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Uncertain
18. Have any of your friends ever been unemployed for 7 months or more?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Uncertain
19. Have any of your close acquaintances ever been unemployed for 7 months or more?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Uncertain

APPENDIX F: IRB Approval Letter



11/5/2014

Investigator(s): Morgan Pearn, Dr. Mark Frame
Department: Psychology
Investigator(s) Email Address: mp4q@mtmail.mtsu.edu; Mark.Frame@mtsu.edu

Protocol Title: UNEMPLOYMENT STIGMA AND THE SELECTION PROCESS

Protocol Number: #15-120

Dear Investigator(s),

Your study has been designated to be exempt. The exemption is pursuant to 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) Educational Tests, Surveys, Interviews, or Observations.

We will contact you annually on the status of your project. If it is completed, we will close it out of our system. You do not need to complete a progress report and you will not need to complete a final report. It is important to note that your study is approved for the life of the project and does not have an expiration date.

The following changes must be reported to the Office of Compliance before they are initiated:

- Adding new subject population
- Adding a new investigator
- Adding new procedures (e.g., new survey; new questions to your survey)
- A change in funding source
- Any change that makes the study no longer eligible for exemption.

The following changes do not need to be reported to the Office of Compliance:

- Editorial or administrative revisions to the consent or other study documents
- Increasing or decreasing the number of subjects from your proposed population

If you encounter any serious unanticipated problems to participants, or if you have any questions as you conduct your research, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Lauren K. Qualls, Graduate Assistant
Office of Compliance
615-494-8918