

A regression analysis of the personality traits that mediate job seeking and reemployment.

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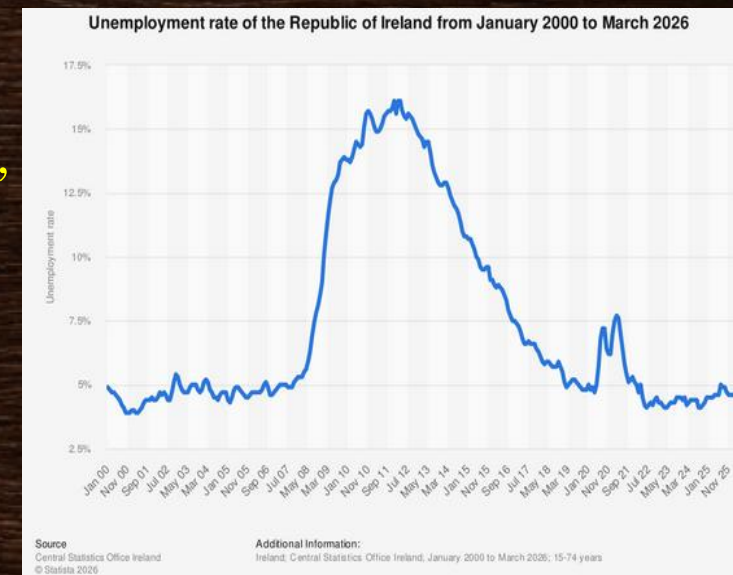
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Introduction

- Ireland continues to experience a range of unemployment / reemployment issues confounded by global economic forces, housing trends, regional diversity, and technological changes.
- Although these may explain considerable proportions of the causal variance, intrapersonal dispositions and skills need to be considered.
- What psychological traits underlie prolonged unemployment, accelerated reemployment, selection of job seeking methods, and job seeking confidence / motivation?
- Kanfer and Hulin (1985), Saks et al. (2015), Dixon and Tiernan (2024) argued that job seeking self efficacy is one of the greatest predictors of reemployment efficiency, yet remains under utilised in professional practice and job seeking training.
- **However; The employment ladders are getting shorter and more unstable, and the increasing number of snakes are getting more venomous.**
- This research addressed 3 questions;-
 - What traits and skills correlate with job seeking self efficacy ?
 - What traits and skills correlate with job seeking intensity & job seeking methods?
 - What traits and skills are affected by prolonged unemployment ?

However, current unemployment figures may not be completely accurate when the 'active labour pool' is considered, how the live register is actually calculated, and, considering those who work P/T, but would prefer full time work (INOU).

Unemployment in Ireland
2000 -----2007---2012-----2020---2026



Design

- Biographical data and self reported ratings of traits from 430 job seekers nationwide. A pragmatic exploration of what psychosocial constructs mediate the reemployment process.
- Procedure was ethically exempt on the basis of normality in reemployment services, but PSI ethical codes of conduct were still adhered to.
- DV's include unemployment tenure, Job Seeking Self Efficacy (JSSE) score, a Job Seeking Intensity score (JSI), and the frequency / use of different job seeking / application methods (JSM).
 - This score was calculated by requesting the Likert rating of a range of job seeking methods in terms of effectiveness, but only those reported to be actually used by each participant. The total JSI score was then divided by the number of methods reported.
- A regression analysis on 85 traits / competencies / skills (identified in the literature) for their impact upon job seeking (operationalised into neutral statements and scored on a Likert scale).
- Due to the fact reemployment services in Ireland do not differentiate on the basis of age, location type, or gender, no segregated analyses were conducted (although there were some age / gender anomalies detected which remains a limitation for further research).
- Results were assessed using initial correlations and ANOVA's.
- After checking that collinearity and homoscedasity criteria were satisfied, the data was subjected to a linear regression analysis for each DV.

Traits related to JSSE

- 8 factor model representing **27%** of the variance ($R = .518$, $R^2 = .269$, $adj. R^2 = .253$).
- *Negative Scores* (traits that decline with reduced JSSE)
 - **Social Altruism** – Care for the wider community reduces, focus on self and family.
 - **Ability to Build Rapport** – Less inclined / able to initiate contact with unknown others.
- *Positive Scores* (Traits that increase in line with enhanced JSSE)
 - **Courage / Fearlessness** – Resilience, tenacity, ability to make direct job applications in person.
 - **Job Search Knowledge** – Confidence in knowing where / how to job seek
 - **Extraversion** – To be sufficiently out going to confidently engage in new meeting new people.
 - **Explicit Self Awareness** – Metacognition, confident in knowing what you are good at.
 - **Resourcefulness** – Coping with new situations / using people as sources of information.
 - **Audience Designed Language** – Applying empathy / impression management strategies.

Traits related to JSI / JSM

- * Due to overlap / similarity, the results for JSI / JSM were combined. This was to control for a few job seeking methods being rated highly by some, while a wider number of job seeking methods being rated less favourably by others.
- The traits reported accounted for 21% of the total variance ($R = .465$, $R^2 = .216$, $adj. R^2 = .205$).
- *Negative Scores* (traits that decline with reduced Job Seeking Intensity / Methods Selection)
- **Recruit Assistance** – Confidence / willingness to gain the support, or network with others was reduced.
- **Episodic Memory** – Ability to consciously recall experiences or events that demonstrated skills was reduced.
- **Concentration / Attention Span** – The ability to focus on an activity for a prolonged period.
- **Impulse Control** – The reduced ability to act in a disciplined and rational manner.
- **Initiative / Self Motivation** – Reduced ability to act and think independently.

Traits related to JSI / JSM

- * Due to overlap / similarity, the results for JSI / JSM were combined.
- The traits reported accounted for 21% of the total variance ($R = .465$, $R^2 = .216$, $adj. R^2 = .205$).
- *Positive Scores* (traits that increase with higher Job Seeking Intensity / Methods Selection)
- Openness to Experience (JS M) – Willingness to try new things and experiences (IT).
- CV / Self Evaluation (JS I) – How confident / proud do you feel regarding your own CV.
- Career Identity – Knowing & clarity of what job you actually want / can get.
- Loci of Control – Feeling that you (yourself) can control / influence your own destiny.
- Problem Solving – The ability to solve problems, make compromises, seek new ideas & solutions
- Belongingness / loyal – the need for attachment / affiliation to a target job or organisation.
- Analytical / Evaluative – The ability to judge and break down information and knowledge.
- Creative / Innovative – To synthesise knowledge and create new solutions from current resources.
- Interview Self Efficacy – Confident self belief in the ability to perform well at interview.

Traits affected by Prolonged Unemployment

- 9 factor model representing 13% of the variance ($R = .362$, $R^2 = .131$, $adj. R^2 = .112$).
- Negative Scores (traits that decline with prolonged unemployment)
- Environmental Perception – Increasing disbelief that ‘there is a job out there for me?’.
- Subjective Competency – Self knowledge of the skills / competences possessed.
- Listening skills – Reduced ability / willingness to listen / respond to others.
- Independence – Reduced belief in the ability to act alone, increased dependency on others.
- Stress Awareness – Reduced ability to recognise stress, rise in denial / acceptance.
- Charisma – Dulling of social skills, perceived attractiveness, preferred isolation.
- Positive Scores (traits that increase with prolonged unemployment)
- Maintain Stamina – Increased tolerance, acceptance, endurance of unemployment.
- Handwriting / Literacy – Increased belief that low literacy is undermining job seeking.
- Logical Decision Making – Increase scrutiny / risk analysis of job opportunities.

Discussion

- Results support the psych-social basis of unemployment as argued by Fugate et al. (2004).
- Subsequent qualitative data helped to clarify the colloquial meaning of some of the traits.
- Offers an illuminating insight into the traits that might mediate job seeking endeavours, and the psychological impact of prolonged unemployment.
- Supports the adaptive nature of human personality, and indicates some criteria for career and unemployment coaching.
- In contrast to hard data, when measuring people lower R^2 values are still considered relevant due to the complexity of social / environmental variables. According to Cohen (1988), R^2 values are rated such that:-
 - Values from .10 - .15 would be considered small (unemployment model, but may reflect social welfare system)
 - Values from .15 - .5 would be considered medium (job seeking confidence / job seeking intensity model)
- Results held high face validity and ecological validity with participants.
- Similarly, individual trait results (and levels of statistical power) were consistent with previous research (E.g. McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005), and showed high construct validity regarding the determinants of unemployment / reemployment.
- Demonstrates to what extent prolonged unemployment & reemployment difficulty is '*in ya head!*'
- The only question that remains is '*are these traits and competencies trainable?*'

Thank you for your valued time and attention

Questions

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