Coping With Job Loss: An Investigation of the Impact of Coping Resources on Coping Strategies and Outcomes.

Barbara Harlock Holmes
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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Coping with job loss: An investigation of the impact of coping resources on coping strategies and outcomes

Holmes, Barbara Harlock, Ph.D.
The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1988
COPING WITH JOB LOSS:
AN INVESTIGATION OF THE IMPACT OF COPING RESOURCES
ON COPING STRATEGIES AND OUTCOMES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Interdepartmental Program in Business Administration

by

Barbara Harlock Holmes
B.A., State University of New York at Buffalo, 1970
M.S., Louisiana State University, 1978
December 1988
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Abstract

Job loss literature literature has tended to focus on the negative impact that job loss frequently has on the individual, while largely ignoring how people respond to or cope with the experience. The purpose of this study was to: (a) examine the coping resources that people have available when they become unemployed as possible determinants of the subsequent coping strategies they select, and (b) determine if certain coping strategies are more effective in dealing with job loss (i.e. lead to earlier re-employment) than others. Coping strategies were hypothesized to act as a mediating variable between coping resources and employment outcomes. Coping resources included: health, internal locus of control, self-efficacy, social support, social skills, problem-solving skills, material resources, and organizational support.

Subjects were volunteers (n = 126) visiting one location of the Louisiana Office of Employment Security who had been unemployed less than one month. Time 1 questionnaires measured the eight coping resources. Followup questionnaires mailed one month later used Lazarus and Folkman's Ways of Coping Checklist to measure coping strategies. New job information was also obtained from subjects who had become re-employed. Subjects still unemployed at Time 2 were sent a third questionnaire (identical to the second) one month later. Factor analysis
of the Ways of Coping Checklist suggested two coping factors: positive coping and negative coping. Regression analysis was used to test the overall model and individual hypotheses.

Results provided no evidence that coping strategies (positive coping and negative coping) acted as a mediating variable between coping resources and employment outcomes. Self-efficacy was the sole significant predictor of employment status at the end of the study, a direct relation not predicted by the model. Supplementary data analysis indicated that social support and positive coping were significantly correlated with new job satisfaction for those (n = 45) employed by the end of the study.

Discussion of results includes implications for practitioners, with emphasis on ways to increase job loss victims' self-efficacy.
Chapter I
Introduction and Job Loss Literature

Job loss is an unpleasant fact of life for a large number of American employees each year. The national unemployment rate of 5.9% (March 1988) represents over seven million people out of work. The actual number of people who lose jobs in a given year is actually much higher, because individuals continually enter and exit the labor force.

While job loss is frequently associated with employees in industrial settings, it increasingly affects white collar and professional workers (Kaufman, 1982). Latack and Dozier (1986) contend that a variety of economic pressures and demographic realities will make involuntary job loss an increasingly common experience for employees of all occupational classifications.

Given the increasing prevalence of job loss, research is needed to provide insight to managers of organizations about actions they might take to offset the negative consequences of job loss (Leana & Ivancevich, 1987). Latack and Dozier (1986) contend that research which provides insight into effective responses to the job loss situation would allow organizations to manage terminations in an optimal fashion, helping them to maintain a positive public image as well as the loyalty of remaining employees.

This chapter will briefly review three basic types of job loss literature. First, studies will be examined which
focus on the many negative outcomes of job loss. Second, studies will be reviewed which provide contradictory evidence suggesting that job loss may sometimes have positive consequences. Finally, research will be reviewed which has identified individual differences or moderating variables associated with job loss. The chapter will conclude by discussing the empirical and conceptual limitations of the current literature and will suggest how the current study might contribute to the job loss literature by investigating how people cope with job loss.

Negative Impact of Job Loss and Unemployment

A sizeable body of literature examines the negative impact of job loss and unemployment in one or more of three basic areas: physical well-being, psychological well-being, and impact on the family. These studies have used both aggregate and individual data.

Studies using aggregate data. Three related studies by Brenner (1973, 1975, 1979) focused on the relation of various societal economic measures, including unemployment, with societal outcome measures such as mental hospital admissions. Brenner reported increased psychiatric admissions and suicides during periods of economic decline. Other research (Catalano & Dooley, 1977; Catalano, Dooley, & Jackson, 1981) related aggregate economic measures to individual outcome measures such as psychological well-being. This research suggests that changes in the economy
are likely to uncover existing illness in unemployed families who are suddenly less tolerant of difficult family members, rather than provoke new illness as suggested by Brenner.

Physical well-being. Many studies have examined the impact of job loss and unemployment on individual physical well-being. Kasl, Gore, and Cobb (1975) longitudinally studied 100 males experiencing a plant shutdown for a period of two years; 74 employed controls were also studied. Both self-report data and biochemical measures indicated significant differences in physical well-being between the employed and unemployed. Differences were also found among the unemployed with duration of unemployment. Research by Linn, Sandifer, and Stein (1985), using data from a 5 year Veterans' Administration study, similarly found poorer physical well-being among the unemployed than the employed.

Cross-sectional studies (Cook, Cummins, Hartley, & Shoper, 1982; D'Arcy & Siddique, 1985; Lajer, 1982; O'Brien & Kabanoff, 1979; Warr & Jackson, 1984) using a variety of self-report measures and doctors' diagnoses support the notion that the unemployed typically have a significantly greater number of health problems than the employed. The unemployed also tend to have a higher percentage of personal habits that may be considered risk factors to health, such as smoking (Cook et al., 1982), alcohol abuse (Buss & Redburn, 1983), and drug taking (Kasl et al., 1975).
Psychological well-being. A large amount of research has also investigated the psychological consequences of unemployment. Several longitudinal studies (Cohn, 1978; Jackson, Stafford, Banks, & Warr, 1983; Kasl & Cobb, 1982; Liem & Rayman, 1982; Milke, 1984) provide evidence that the transition from employment to unemployment is frequently associated with declines in psychological well-being. Typical negative outcomes include depression, anxiety, declines in self esteem, irritability, and hostility.

Cross-sectional studies (Bebbington, Hurry, Tennant, Sturt, & Wing, 1981; Donovan & Oddy, 1982; Fineman, 1979, 1983; Fryer & Warr, 1984; Hepworth, 1980; Payne, Warr, & Hartley, 1984; Viney, 1985) have also found that unemployed individuals are more likely to suffer anxiety, depression, and other symptoms of psychiatric illness than are employed people.

Impact on the family. Considering the severe negative impact that job loss can have on the individual, it might also be expected to affect family members and relationships with them. A number of studies have found anxiety among spouses (Grayson, 1983; Liem & Rayman, 1982) as well as family conflict, tension, and general disharmony (Liem & Rayman, 1982; Madonia, 1983). Studies focusing more on the impact of job loss on children (Madge, 1983; Margolis & Farran, 1981, 1984; Pautler & Lewko, 1984) have reported more illnesses and economic worries among children whose
fathers have been unemployed.

Other studies (Tobin, 1983; Warr, 1984a, 1984b) found changes in responsibilities and roles within the family unit when a spouse becomes unemployed. All of these studies suggest that unemployment affects other people as well as the unemployed.

Contradictory Evidence

Despite the sizeable body of literature supporting the contention that job loss has numerous negative consequences, a smaller but important group of studies provides evidence that there is variability, with some individuals reporting relatively positive reactions to the experience.

Little's (1976) interviews with 100 unemployed professional and technical males found that almost half of them (48%) agreed that losing their positions was "not such a bad break after all." Many were likely to see unemployment as an opportunity or a relief. Similar reactions were found by Fineman (1983) in his research on unemployed managers and professionals, one-third of whom expressed basically positive reactions to the job loss experience. Little contends that educational resources, favorable severance pay, and broad outside interests might account for such positive reactions.

Hartley's (1980) work contradicts studies which have shown that unemployment causes a marked decline in self esteem; the unemployed managers in his sample did not have
lower self esteem than the employed controls.

Other research by Thomas, McCabe, and Berry (1980) suggests that there is variability in the relation between unemployment and family stress. Only 37% of their sample reported negative effects on relationships with wives and only 17% felt relationships with children had deteriorated. The authors believe that financial support systems, erosion of the Protestant Ethic, and changing sex roles have made many husbands less threatened by unemployment.

This body of contradictory evidence suggests that job loss is not a uniform experience. As a result of this realization, a number of individual differences and other variables have gradually been suggested (and to a certain extent investigated) for their possible moderating effect on the stress of job loss and unemployment. These will be reviewed briefly in the next section.

Individual Differences and Moderators

Research has also examined individual differences in responses to job loss. These differences may be classified as personality variables, demographic characteristics, and variables in the job loss situation.

Personality. Several studies observed that various aspects of personality apparently moderate the stress of unemployment. For example, individuals high in self esteem appear to suffer less stress from unemployment than those low in self esteem (Fineman, 1979; Linn, Sandifer, & Stein,
1985). Little (1976) also noted that the most positive reactions to job loss came from subjects who were "optimistic by nature."

**Work involvement or commitment.** Another variable, called by various names such as work involvement or employment commitment, has also been found to moderate the impact of job loss. Several studies (Fineman, 1979; Jackson, Stafford, Banks, & Warr, 1983; Shamir, 1986; Stafford, Jackson, & Banks, 1980; Warr, 1978) have consistently found that individuals with high commitment to or involvement in work suffer more stress from job loss than do those who have low commitment or involvement.

**Occupational status.** Another variable that has been investigated as a possible moderator of the impact of job loss is occupational status. The evidence from this research is somewhat mixed. Some studies (Hepworth, 1980; Liem & Rayman, 1982) suggest that blue collar workers may have more difficulty with job loss than do those of higher status. However Kaufman (1982) contends that professionals suffer more from unemployment than those of lower status. He suggests that their identity and life satisfaction is based on their work, and job loss threatens this identity. Still other work (Payne, Warr, & Hartley, 1984) reported no occupational status differences in either direction.

**Age.** As with occupational status, the research on age as a possible moderator is somewhat conflicting, possibly
because different studies have used different age brackets for comparison. Some studies (Hepworth, 1980; Schlossberg & Leibowitz, 1980; Warr & Jackson, 1984) offer evidence that middle-aged individuals are most negatively affected by job loss. However Little (1976) found that those between 30 and 50 were most likely to express positive attitudes toward job loss.

**Sex.** Unfortunately, the majority of job loss studies have been confined to unemployed males, making comparisons of the differential impact of job loss by sex difficult. One study (Snyder & Nowak, 1984) concluded that women are likely to have different economic and psychological experiences from men, especially since they are likely to have more difficulty than men in finding other work and often face disproportionately lower pay when they do become re-employed.

**Financial position.** Some research has investigated the idea that the impact of job loss is likely to be moderated by the individual's total financial position and perceptions of financial strain. Several studies (Fineman, 1979; Liem & Rayman, 1982; Little, 1976; Viney, 1985) offer evidence that individuals in a better financial position are less likely to suffer stress from unemployment than are those with financial obligations they find difficult to meet.

**Regional employment situation.** Another factor that is
related to the individual's perceived financial situation is the regional employment situation. The local unemployment rate could easily influence the likelihood of becoming re-employed soon and thus influence a person's perception of how much financial stress he is under. Some research (Liem & Rayman, 1982; Swinburne, 1981) offers evidence that a poor local job market may indeed exacerbate stress by making re-employment in a suitable new job much more uncertain.

Social support. Social support appears to have a protective effect in life transitions ranging from pregnancy (Nuckolls, Cassel, & Kaplan, 1972) to aging and retirement (Lowenthal & Haven, 1968). Similarly, social support has been found to moderate the impact of job loss on physical health (Cobb, 1974; Gore, 1978), psychological stress (Fineman, 1979, 1983; Kilpatrick & Trew, 1985; Linn, Sandifer, & Stein, 1985), and even perceptions of financial strain (Gore, 1978).

Discussion

In considering the job loss literature, a number of empirical and conceptual problems become apparent. Empirically, the use of aggregate data in many early studies make these investigations of limited value in understanding the impact of unemployment on the individual (Kasl, 1979; Buss & Redburn, 1983). The frequent use of cross-sectional data in many other studies both lessens the possibility of making firm causal inferences and prevents investigation of how the
job loss experience may change over time. Heavy reliance on self-report measures may also be criticized.

The nature of the samples utilized has often been a problem. Many studies used small samples and the majority of the studies excluded women and minorities altogether. From an American standpoint, the fact that many of the studies (e.g. Bebbington, Hurry, Tennant, Sturt, & Wing, 1981; Cohn, 1978; D'Arcy & Siddique, 1985; Grayson, 1983; Lajer, 1982; Payne, Warr, & Hartley, 1984; Shamir, 1986; Viney, 1985; Warr & Jackson, 1984) have been conducted in foreign countries with different economic and social circumstances also constitutes a problem.

Another criticism is that outcomes are reported with little attempt to explain underlying processes involved. There is still a relatively poor understanding of why negative outcomes occur, or why they occur for some people but not others.

There are also conceptual problems with the job loss literature. First, the large body of literature focusing on the negative impact of job loss often tends to imply that job loss is essentially a uniform experience. It is as if this literature has implicitly adopted the stressful life events model of Holmes and Rahe (1967). This model proposes that the occurrence of major life events, regardless of their desirability (e.g. marriage, divorce, job loss), are stimuli which require readjustment and thus are likely to
produce stress reactions. The model specifically hypothesizes that these life events increase susceptibility to physical illness. The Holmes and Rahe model has been criticized for failing to address individual differences which may account for differential responses to the same stimuli (Rabkin & Struening, 1976).

While the smaller body of job loss research focusing on contradictory evidence and individual differences has begun to correct the misconception that job loss is a uniform experience, this literature also has limitations. By neglecting how individuals respond to or cope with the job loss situation, this literature seems to assume that people are essentially passive victims of the experience, rather than active participants in the process. This criticism again brings to mind the Holmes and Rahe model, which has also been criticized for failing to recognize that coping behaviors may alleviate stress reactions (Rabkin & Struening, 1976). In summary, the existing job loss literature seems, like Holmes and Rahe, to adopt a stimulus-response view of human behavior.

It is the purpose of this dissertation to investigate the neglected area of how people cope with the job loss situation. It will examine the resources that people have available when they become unemployed as possible determinants of the coping strategies they select. It will also attempt to determine if certain coping strategies are more
effective in dealing with job loss than others. In doing so, the current study will investigate the possibility that coping strategies may operate as a mediating variable between coping resources and individual outcomes. Identification of important resources and effective coping strategies may provide insight not only to individuals experiencing job loss, but also to managers seeking to conduct terminations in an optimal fashion.

Chapter II will consider job loss and unemployment within the context of the social-psychological model of stress. Particular emphasis will be placed on the coping aspects of this model and the resources which may permit individuals to cope more effectively. A series of hypotheses will be developed relating coping resources to coping strategies and, ultimately, outcomes of job loss.
Chapter II
Coping With Job Loss

As noted in Chapter I, coping with job loss is largely neglected in job loss research. This chapter considers job loss within the context of the coping literature. Particular emphasis will be put on the idea that individual coping resources are likely to be important determinants of the coping strategies people actually use, and that the choice of coping strategies in turn should impact the outcomes of a stressful encounter such as job loss. A model relating the variables of coping resources, coping strategies, and outcomes will be presented and a number of hypotheses proposed.

An Overview of the Coping Literature

The concept of coping has been important in psychological literature for many years. Despite this, there is little coherence in theory, research, and understanding (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Traditional approaches to coping derive from two separate literatures: animal experimentation and psychoanalytic ego psychology (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In the animal model, coping is usually equated with acts that control aversive environmental conditions (e.g. Miller, 1980). The emphasis in this approach is on avoidance and escape behavior. The animal model is too simplistic to
describe human coping; it neglects the cognitive and emotional complexity that is inherent in human functioning (Lazarus & Folkman).

In the psychoanalytic ego psychology literature, coping is defined as realistic and flexible thoughts and acts that solve problems and thereby reduce stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In this model, the focus is on perception and thinking about the person's relationship with the environment. Systems of coping based on the ego psychology model usually conceive of a hierarchy of strategies that progress from immature or primitive mechanisms, which distort reality, to mature mechanisms. Examples of this approach include work by Menninger (1963), Haan (1977), and Valliant (1977), each of whom propose a different hierarchy of ego processes. In each formulation, coping is the highest or most mature ego process, followed by defenses, which are neurotic modes of adaptation, and, at the bottom of the hierarchy, processes which Haan calls fragmentation or ego-failure and Menninger refers to as regressive or psychotic ego functioning.

The ego psychology model of coping has produced measurement approaches which typically focus on assessing coping traits or styles. These approaches attempt to classify people in order to make predictions about how they will cope with stressful encounters. Like the animal model, the ego psychology approach is also likely to be incomplete.
Trait and style measures tend to underestimate the complexity and variability of the ways in which people actually cope, and they are not necessarily good predictors of actual coping processes (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Another criticism of traditional approaches to coping, especially the ego psychology models, is that the concept of coping is usually equated with successful adaptation. The result of this conceptualization is to confound coping with its outcome (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Billings and Moos (1981) observe that more recent approaches have broadened the conceptualization of coping to include cognitive and behavioral responses which attempt to deal with the external stressor, as well as responses which try to avoid the problem. A prime example of this approach is the work of Lazarus and Folkman (1984). They define coping as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (p. 141). They believe that their conceptualization addresses various limitations of earlier approaches. First, the Lazarus and Folkman approach to coping is process-oriented rather than trait oriented. It views coping as what people actually think or do within a specific context, and it recognizes that coping is likely to change over the course of a stressful encounter. An additional advantage of their approach over traditional approaches is
that it does not equate coping with success; it thereby avoids confounding coping with its outcome. In the Lazarus and Folkman approach, coping consists of efforts to manage stressful encounters, regardless of how well they work.

Recent coping research has also included numerous efforts to develop a typology of coping processes (Holahan & Moos, 1987). However, consensus on a clearcut typology of coping responses has not yet emerged (Fleishman, 1984; Moos & Billings, 1982). For example, Pearlin and Schooler (1978) proposed three categories of coping behaviors: responses that attempt to change the situation by altering or eliminating the source of strain, responses that alter the meaning or appraisal of the stress, and responses intended to control distressful feelings. Billings and Moos (1981) proposed a similar three-category typology: active-behavioral coping consists of overt behavioral attempts to deal directly with the problem and its effects; active-cognitive coping includes attempts to manage the appraisal of the event; avoidance includes attempts to avoid actively confronting the problem or to indirectly reduce emotional tension. Anderson (1977), drawing on Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964), divides coping into Class I coping behaviors, which deal with the objective task situation, and Class II coping behaviors, which deal with emotional reactions to the stimulus. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have also suggested a two-category typology, which
distinguishes between problem-focused coping, which attempts to modify or eliminate the source of stress, and emotion-focused coping, which seeks to manage the emotions aroused by stressors and maintain affective equilibrium.

Holahan and Moos (1987) observe that most approaches to classifying coping responses somehow distinguish between two basic types of coping strategies: those which are designed to actively confront the problem, and those which aim to reduce tension or emotional distress, often by avoiding dealing with the problem. Fleishman (1984) contends that coping typologies which distinguish coping behaviors in terms of their focus (problems or emotions) seem to result in the least amount of ambiguity.

The decision has been made to adopt the Lazarus and Folkman approach to coping, with its problem- and emotion-focused typology of coping strategies, for the current study. The reasons for this choice are numerous. First, the process-oriented nature of the approach appears to have definite advantages over earlier animal and ego psychology models, as discussed above. In addition, the Lazarus and Folkman approach to coping is well integrated conceptually into a broader model of stress, to be described below. Because of this, their approach appears to be useful across a wide range of stressful situations.

The Lazarus and Folkman typology of problem- and emotion-focused coping strategies appears to meet both of
the criteria described by Holahan and Moos (1987) and Fleishman (1984) above. In addition, Lazarus and Folkman have also developed and refined an empirical measure of coping, the Ways of Coping Checklist, which has been utilized in several investigations (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980, 1985; Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986). Their concepts and measures have also been frequently cited, used, or adapted (Parkes, 1984, 1986) by other researchers in the stress and coping literature.

Lazarus and Folkman's Approach to Stress

Before considering how Lazarus and Folkman's ideas on coping may be relevant to job loss, a brief overview of their larger model of stress is necessary. Lazarus and his colleagues (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lazarus & Launier, 1978) have developed a cognitive model of stress. When a life event occurs, an individual uses a mental categorization process called primary appraisal to place the event in one of three categories, depending on the perceived significance of the event for the person's well-being. If an event is appraised as "harmful" (i.e. stressful), a secondary appraisal process occurs in which the person determines what, if anything, can be done--how can he cope with the stressful situation? As noted earlier, coping is defined by Lazarus and Folkman as all efforts to manage the demands of a stressful encounter, whether or not these efforts are ultimately successful. Problem-focused coping attempts to
modify or eliminate the source of stress, while emotion-focused coping seeks to manage the emotions aroused by stressors and maintain affective equilibrium. Individuals may engage in both types of coping more or less simultaneously, and the categories may not always be mutually exclusive. For example, a student faced with a major exam may experience great anxiety. By studying for the exam (problem-focused coping), the student may also experience a reduction in emotional distress.

The research so far (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980, 1985) indicates that individuals are likely to engage in both types of coping in most stressful encounters. Folkman and Lazarus (1984) suggest that certain forms of emotion-focused coping are likely to facilitate problem-focused coping, while other forms of emotion-focused coping may impede problem-focused coping. Preliminary evidence from a study of college students during three stages of an examination (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985) indicated that the emotion-focused forms of coping called "emphasizing the positive" and "seeking social support" were strongly correlated with problem-focused coping ($r = .46$ and $r = .64$ respectively) and may actually facilitate problem-focused coping. Other forms of emotion-focused coping such as "wishful thinking", "distancing", "self isolation", "self blame", and "destructive tension reduction" were less strongly correlated with problem-focused coping and in fact are likely to impede
While many personal and situational variables may influence the person's choice of coping strategies, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) believe that the way a person actually copes depends heavily on the resources available (p. 158). They suggest that six basic coping resources are especially important: health and energy, positive beliefs, problem-solving skills, social skills, social support, and material resources. Their list appears to be consistent with other views of coping resources, such as that of Menaghan (1983), who defines them as "attitudes and skills that are considered advantageous across many situations" (p. 159).

The Current Study

This dissertation investigates the importance of coping resources in the job loss situation. Specifically, the study seeks to determine if certain coping resources are determinants of actual coping strategies used and if, in turn, coping strategies operate as a mediating variable, with some strategies leading to better outcomes (especially early re-employment). This study may be considered consistent with other recent work seeking to identify personal and situational determinants of coping strategies (Holahan & Moos, 1987; Parkes, 1986) and the subsequent impact of coping on outcomes (Folkman, et al., 1986).

Figure 1 is based on the above discussion and depicts the basic model to be tested by this investigation.
Coping Resources include: Health, positive beliefs, problem-solving skills, social skills, social support, material resources, and organizational support

Emotion-focused Coping (Facilitative) includes: seeking social support and emphasizing the positive

Emotion-focused Coping (Impeding) includes: wishful thinking, distancing, self isolation, self blame, and destructive tension reduction

Problem-focused Coping includes attempts to modify or eliminate the source of stress

Figure 1. Model of the impact of coping resources on coping strategies and outcomes.
The antecedent variables in this model are the coping resources, which include Lazarus and Folkman's general categories plus the specific resource of organizational support. This specific resource was included because it is likely to be important in the job loss situation, and it is a resource which terminating managers may have some control over.

Coping resources, in general, are things which can be drawn upon to help with the various demands of living (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). They are likely to be advantageous in many situations (Menaghan, 1983). Because of this, possessing coping resources should lead to greater use of both problem-focused coping and facilitative emotion-focused coping. Facilitative emotion-focused coping is likely to accompany the use of problem-focused coping (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). At the same time, possessing coping resources should lead to less use of the impeding forms of emotion-focused coping. The model assumes that coping resources by themselves are insufficient to find a job; facilitative activities (i.e. coping behaviors) are also needed. Thus the actual coping behaviors which people use are a mediating variable which should impact the outcomes of the job loss situation. For the purposes of this study, the most important outcome is re-employment in a new job. Problem-focused coping should increase the chances of early re-employment; impeding emotion-focused coping should
decrease chances for re-employment.

The remainder of this chapter will consider each of the proposed coping resources. Each of the resources might affect the individual's propensity to use certain coping strategies in dealing with job loss. Literature will be reviewed which shows how these (or similar) resources have been shown to affect coping strategies in other situations. A series of hypotheses will be developed relating coping resources to coping strategies and, ultimately, outcomes (i.e. re-employment).

The Role of Coping Resources

As already noted, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have proposed six basic categories of coping resources: health and energy, positive beliefs, problem-solving skills, social skills, social support, and material resources. Each of these resources will be considered below. An additional resource specifically relevant to job loss, organizational support, will also be discussed.

Health

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) suggest that a person who is frail, sick, or tired will have less energy to expend on coping than will a healthy person. However they also note that some research (Bulman & Wortman, 1977; Dimsdale, 1974) indicates that people can often cope surprisingly well despite poor health. They conclude that if a matter is important enough, even people who are ill
will mobilize energy to cope. There does not appear to be any literature dealing directly with health as an input to stressful encounters. Indeed, as the literature in Chapter I showed, health has often been studied as an outcome variable in job loss. Intuitively, however, one would expect that a person in good health would be more capable of engaging in coping strategies that require active effort and therefore less inclined to engage in avoidance or pessimistic thoughts than would someone in poor health. The following hypotheses are therefore proposed:

H 1a: Good health will be positively correlated with problem-focused coping.

H 1b: Good health will be positively correlated with facilitative emotion-focused coping.

H 1c: Good health will be negatively correlated with impeding emotion-focused coping.

**Positive beliefs**

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) contend that a variety of general and specific beliefs may act as coping resources because they serve as a basis for hope and help sustain coping efforts under even adverse conditions. They suggest that beliefs related to control are likely to be especially important. For the purposes of this study, two types of beliefs about control, one general and one more specific, will be investigated as coping resources. These beliefs are locus of control and self-efficacy.
Locus of control. The most well-known formulation of generalized beliefs about control is Rotter's (1966) concept of locus of control (Folkman, 1984). A person with an internal locus of control believes that events are contingent on one's own behavior. A person with external locus of control believes that events are contingent not on one's own actions, but on luck, fate, or others in power. Considering this definition, a person with internal locus of control would be likely to cope differently with life stresses than would a person with external locus of control.

Some research indicates there is an association between locus of control and type of coping. Locus of control has been found to influence coping strategies used by college students to manage everyday problems and tensions, with internals more likely to meditate and externals more likely to use "escape" strategies such as daydreaming or alcohol (Tanck & Robbins, 1979). Evidence also exists that locus of control influences coping with more specific types of stresses. Strickland (1978) concludes that, overall, internals appear to cope differently with health problems from externals. For example, internals are more likely than externals to collect information about health maintenance and to take action to improve their health habits. These actions may be considered forms of problem-focused coping. Internal locus of control has also been found to be associated with more effective coping among
severe accident victims (Bracken & Bernstein, 1980; Bulman & Wortman, 1977). Anderson (1977) found that owners of small businesses with internal locus of control engaged in more "task oriented" coping behaviors following a flood, while externals tended to be more defensive and withdrawn. Parkes (1984) found that student nurses with internal locus of control used more "direct" coping and less "suppression" in dealing with situations they perceived to be amenable to change; externals showed a reverse coping pattern.

It is somewhat difficult to compare research examining locus of control and coping because of the measures used. Although the measure of locus of control (the Rotter scale) used has been quite consistent across studies, the measures of coping used have varied greatly, both in nature and specificity. Nonetheless, the above literature suggests that internal locus of control tends to be associated with different types of coping than does external locus of control. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H 2a: Internal locus of control will be positively correlated with problem-focused coping.

H 2b: Internal locus of control will be positively correlated with facilitative emotion-focused coping.

H 2c: Internal locus of control will be negatively correlated with impeding emotion-focused coping.

Self-efficacy. A second positive belief is self-
efficacy (Bandura, 1982). Self-efficacy is a more specific type of belief than locus of control (Gist, 1986). Self-efficacy has to do with a person's judgement of how well he can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations (Bandura, 1982). For the job loss situation, self-efficacy would mean how strong the person's belief is that he can do what is necessary to find a new job.

Perceptions of self-efficacy are important because they influence the individual's thought patterns and behaviors (Bandura, 1986). People who believe themselves to be ineffectual in coping with environmental demands tend to dwell on their personal deficiencies and perceive potential difficulties as more formidable than they really are (Beck, 1976; Lazarus & Launier, 1978). These self-doubts create stress and reduce the frequency of problem-solving behaviors by diverting attention from appropriate action to worries over personal inadequacies and possible failures (Bandura, 1986). People are likely to avoid tasks which they believe exceed their capabilities and to attempt those which they believe they can perform successfully (Bandura, 1977). Judgements about self-efficacy can also impact how much effort people will expend and how long they will persist in the face of difficulty. When faced with obstacles, individuals with strong perceptions of self-efficacy are likely to exert more effort to overcome the obstacles,
while those with low self-efficacy are more inclined to lessen their efforts or give up entirely (Bandura & Cervone, 1983).

Research has demonstrated that perceived self-efficacy can help individuals cope with stressful situations. For example, research has investigated the importance of self-efficacy in pain management. Reese (1983) reported that more self-efficacious persons had higher pain thresholds and tolerance in cold pressor tests. Manning and Wright (1983) found that perceived self-efficacy predicted how well women managed pain while giving birth; more efficacious women took longer to ask for pain medication and used less when they did request it. Shoor and Holman (1985) found that chronic arthritis patients who believed they exercised some control over their condition led more active lives and experienced less pain.

Particularly relevant to this study is research which has demonstrated the importance of self-efficacy in job-related pursuits. Individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy consider a wider range of career options than do those with lower self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Persons with lower self-efficacy also tend to be indecisive about the career options they do consider feasible (Taylor & Betz, 1983). One interesting issue addressed by some of this research involves how career interests and pursuits of women may be constricted because of self-beliefs that
they lack the ability to master skills (e.g. math and computer literacy) required in traditionally male occupations. Betz and Hackett's (1981) analyses of college students found that males perceived themselves to be equally efficacious for both "male" and "female" vocations. In contrast, females judged themselves efficacious only for traditional female jobs. These differences in perceptions existed despite the fact that the males and females did not differ in actual verbal and quantitative skills.

In a study more closely related to the current topic, Kanfer and Hulin (1985) studied terminated hospital employees and related self-efficacy data to employment status four weeks after termination (n = 23). Self-efficacy was measured by asking subjects to rate their confidence (on a 7-point scale) for four job search behaviors: finding where job openings exist, filling out applications, deciding which type of job to apply for, and investigating job leads promptly. Subjects who were confident of their job search skills were more likely to be re-employed within one month of termination. The authors concluded that high self-efficacy is necessary to put forth the extended effort required for a successful job search.

The above discussion suggests the following hypotheses:

H 3a: Self-efficacy will be positively correlated with problem-focused coping.

H 3b: Self-efficacy will be positively correlated
with facilitative emotion-focused coping.

**H 3c:** Self-efficacy will be negatively correlated with impeding emotion-focused coping.

While the above discussion has considered how positive beliefs might impact coping, the next section considers how the coping resources of problem-solving skills and social skills may influence coping strategies.

**Problem-solving skills**

Lazarus and Folkman (1984), drawing on Janis (1974) and Janis and Mann (1977), conceptualize problem-solving skills as the ability to search for information, analyze situations in order to generate alternative courses of action, weigh alternatives, and select and implement an appropriate plan of action. They note, however, that a variety of other authors have conceptualized these skills in many different ways. In fact, although such skills have been emphasized as necessary for successful adaptation (Kendall & Hollon, 1980), reviews (Moos & Billings, 1982) indicate there are few general measures of problem-solving skills and therefore little empirical evidence on how such skills impact coping strategies. Spivack, Platt, and Shure (1976) have developed one measurement procedure and a corresponding training program based on the elements of problem-solving they think important: recognizing the existence of a problem, defining the problem, generating possible solutions, and selecting the best solution after evaluating the consequences of all
alternatives. They offer evidence that their training has improved the problem-solving skills and subsequent initiative of school children in the classroom. Other research (Intaglia, 1978) found such training improved the problem-solving and planning of hospitalized alcoholics. While the literature on general problem-solving skills appears quite limited, the following hypotheses propose an exploratory relationship between problem-solving skills and coping strategies:

H 4a: Problem-solving skills will be positively correlated with problem-focused coping.

H 4b: Problem-solving skills will be positively correlated with facilitative emotion-focused coping.

H 4c: Problem-solving skills will be negatively correlated with impeding emotion-focused coping.

Social skills

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) view social skills as the ability to communicate and behave with others in ways that are socially appropriate and effective. They also note a recent proliferation of other attempts to conceptualize and measure social skills.

While literature on social skills is extensive, many studies have been conducted outside "stressful encounters" and seem to focus mostly on the relationship of social
skills to specific outcomes rather than to a mediating variable such as coping strategies. Menaghan (1983), for example, cites support (e.g. Wampler & Sprenkle, 1980) for the importance of interpersonal skills in affecting the level of distress or satisfaction with major life roles such as marriage.

There is additional literature which relates certain personality characteristics that may be associated with social skills (e.g. extroversion, easygoing nature) to general ways of coping. McCrae and Costa (1986), for example, reported that males whose personality inventory showed them to be "extroverts" reported significantly greater use of coping strategies that could be classified as "rational action", "positive thinking", and "restraint." Similarly, Parkes (1986) found that extroverts in her study used significantly more "direct" coping than introverts, a type of coping she describes as "active" and "problem-focused." Holahan and Moos (1987) also found that persons who labeled themselves as "easygoing" used more "active" coping strategies and less "avoidance."

While acknowledging that it is difficult to equate personality characteristics with social skills, the following hypotheses are suggested:

H 5a: Social skills will be positively correlated with problem-focused coping.

H 5b: Social skills will be positively correlated
with facilitative emotion-focused coping.

H 5c: Social skills will be negatively correlated with impeding emotion-focused coping.

All of the resources discussed so far (positive beliefs and skills) are basically internal to the individual. The remaining resources to be examined are external to the individual, or contextual in nature. These include social support, material resources, and organizational support.

Social support

Cobb (1976) defines social support as information leading a person to believe that he is cared for and loved, esteemed and valued, and that he belongs to a network of communication and mutual obligation. Cobb indicates that social support may provide information, tangible support, emotional support, or a combination of these. It was noted in Chapter I that social support has been found to be an important moderator of the impact (i.e. outcomes) of a variety of stressful life encounters, including job loss (Cobb, 1974; Gore, 1978; Linn, Sandifer, & Stein, 1985).

There is additional research which suggests that social support may be associated with different outcomes because people with more social resources use different coping strategies than do people who lack social support. Holahan and Moos (1987) studied the impact of a variety of personal and situational factors on the coping strategies used by
depressed patients and "normal" community members. For both groups, family support was positively associated with what Holahan and Moos call "active-cognitive" and "active-behavioral" coping and negatively associated with the use of "avoidance."

Cronkite and Moos (1984) similarly found that women who lacked family support were more prone to engage in avoidance coping. Individuals in supportive families, however, engaged in more problem-focused coping and less avoidance coping (Billings and Moos, 1982). Holahan and Moos conclude that, although this line of research is still quite limited, social support appears to promote adaptive coping efforts and discourage the use of more dysfunctional forms such as avoidance. Congruent with these findings, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H 6a: Social support will be positively correlated with problem-focused coping.

H 6b: Social support will be positively correlated with facilitative emotion-focused coping.

H 6c: Social support will be negatively correlated with impeding emotion-focused coping.

Material resources

The literature on material resources appears to parallel that on social support in some respects. As with social support, Chapter I noted the existence of literature (Fineman, 1979; Little, 1976; Viney, 1985) suggesting that a
person's material resources or financial situation may moderate the impact (outcomes) of job loss. Also as with social support, some additional research supports the idea that these different outcomes may occur because people with greater financial resources rely on different coping strategies (Menaghan, 1983; Holahan & Moos, 1987).

Haan (1977) reported that individuals of high socio-economic status were more likely to use more adaptive forms of coping, characterized by flexibility and logical choice, and less likely to rely on defensive strategies marked by rigidity and irrationality. Pearlin and Schooler (1978) noted that more affluent people were less inclined to use "selective ignoring" in dealing with marital and job-related problems. Holahan and Moos (1987) found that family income was significantly related to less use of avoidance coping in dealing with a variety of negative life events, including job loss.

The literature on the impact of financial resources on coping strategies is both quite limited and difficult to compare because various measures have been used for both financial resources (e.g. socioeconomic status, family income) and ways of coping. However it does appear that those in a better financial situation, however that is measured, may select different coping strategies from less affluent individuals. Therefore the following hypotheses are proposed:
H 7a: Material resources will be positively correlated with problem-focused coping.

H 7b: Material resources will be positively correlated with facilitative emotion-focused coping.

H 7c: Material resources will be negatively correlated with impeding emotion-focused coping.

Organizational support

The final resource to be considered, organizational support, is not one of the general resources proposed by Lazarus and Folkman but rather one selected as important specifically in the job loss situation. From a practical management standpoint, the relevant question to be addressed by this investigation is: what role can organizations play in providing individuals losing jobs with coping resources? Surveys (Fulmer & Fryman, 1985; Levine, 1985) of personnel practitioners suggest that there are several things organizations often provide under the heading of "outplacement services" that also fit into the category of coping resources. The most common form of support provided is monetary, typically in the form of severance pay. Employees may also be allowed to use company services (phones, secretarial help, xeroxing) in their search for new jobs. A second type of outplacement service consists of counseling to employees who are being terminated to help them deal with their termination and improve their job-seeking skills. Some organizations also actively search for other job leads in
the community. These latter services may be considered forms of social support, providing information, tangible support, or emotional support.

There does not appear to be any literature dealing specifically with how organizational support in the form of outplacement services affects coping strategies used by those to whom it is provided. Emphasis has been placed instead on actual outcomes, especially the number of employees who find new jobs as a result of the services provided; this figure ranges from 25% to 100% (Levine, 1985). However, because the most common forms of organizational support essentially augment categories of resources already discussed (material resources and social support), hypotheses may be derived which parallel those for the more general resources:

H 8a: Organizational support will be positively correlated with problem-focused coping.

H 8b: Organizational support will be positively correlated with facilitative emotion-focused coping.

H 8c: Organizational support will be negatively correlated with impeding emotion-focused coping.

The above discussion has considered how various coping resources may impact the use of different coping strategies by persons experiencing job loss. However Figure 1 also
proposes that the coping strategies selected operate as a mediating variable and thus influence the outcomes of the job loss situation, especially the likelihood of early re-employment. Research using the Ways of Coping Checklist (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980, 1985; Parkes, 1984, 1986) has tended to focus more on understanding the process of coping and less on the long-term outcomes. As a result, there remains a lack of information about the relation between coping processes and the outcomes of the specific stressful encounters in which they occur (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis & Gruen, 1986). More recent work has begun to address this deficiency by examining the outcomes of coping as well. Preliminary evidence (Folkman et al, 1986) suggests that satisfactory outcomes are more likely to be the result of problem-focused efforts, while unsatisfactory outcomes may follow coping strategies such as distancing. This is consistent with the earlier Anderson (1977) study, which found that managers who used task-oriented coping behaviors following a flood had better outcomes in terms of organizational performance than those who used more emotion-centered coping. In order to further investigate the relation between coping strategies and outcomes, the following final hypotheses are proposed:

H 9a: Problem-focused coping will be negatively correlated with length of time to re-employment.

H 9b: Impeding emotion-focused coping will be posi-
tively correlated with length of time to re-employment.

Summary

This chapter has presented a model which proposes that an individual's coping resources will play an important role in determining the particular coping strategies the person uses to cope with job loss. In turn, the use of particular coping strategies will mediate important outcomes of the job loss situation, especially the likelihood of early re-employment. Literature relevant to each of the coping resources has been reviewed and specific hypotheses developed. Chapter III will describe in detail the methodology used to test these hypotheses.
Chapter III
Methodology

This chapter will describe the site, design, and sample for the study, the operationalization of variables, and the data analysis used.

Site

The site of the initial data collection was one location of the Louisiana Office of Employment Security. At the beginning of the study, unemployment in the geographic area served by this office was 9.2% and declined only slightly to 8.7% by the end of the study. Individuals had already filed claims for unemployment compensation and were reporting to this particular office to register for work in order to be eligible to receive benefits. Groups of 10 to 20 individuals were scheduled three times daily to view a film on seeking work. Subsequent to viewing the film, each group was asked for volunteers to participate in a job loss study.

Design

The design of the study was longitudinal. Data were collected at two or three points in time for each subject, depending on the individual's employment status at Time 2. Time 1 was as soon following job loss as possible, with a limit of one month. Time 2 was one month following Time 1. If a subject had found a new fulltime job by Time 2, no further data were collected for that individual. If a
subject was still unemployed at Time 2, the Time 3 data collection point was one month following Time 2, or approximately two months following Time 1.

At Time 1, data were collected on all of the coping resources (to be described in the Measures section). Demographic information was also obtained. Time 1 utilized questionnaires administered in person by the researcher.

At Time 2, data collection focused on the proposed mediating variables (coping strategies) and outcome measures, especially employment status. Each subject was mailed a packet with two separate questionnaires, a cover letter, and a return envelope. Subjects who had found new fulltime jobs since Time 1 were instructed to complete Questionnaire A, which contained measures of coping strategies utilized while unemployed as well as questions about their new jobs. Subjects who were still unemployed at Time 2 were instructed to complete Questionnaire B, which also measured coping strategies. In addition, these subjects were also remeasured on most of the Time 1 items (coping resources). However they were not remeasured on items considered stable, such as demographics and locus of control.

At Time 3, each subject still unemployed at Time 2 was again mailed a packet containing two questionnaires, a cover letter, and a return envelope. The questionnaires and instructions were identical to Time 2; subjects who had found fulltime jobs since Time 2 were instructed to complete
Questionnaire A. Subjects who were still unemployed at Time 3 were instructed to complete Questionnaire B. Table 1 summarizes the design of the study and Figure 2 depicts the responses and nonresponses at each data collection point.

Sample

Subjects were volunteers who met three criteria: each subject had lost a fulltime job, was looking for another fulltime job, and had been unemployed less than one month at Time 1 data collection. A total of 238 subjects meeting these requirements volunteered to complete Time 1 surveys during a period of nine weeks. The mean age of the subjects was 33.3. The mean educational level was 4.1, equivalent to "some college education." Fifty-eight percent of the subjects were male and 52.5% were married. Table 2 provides a demographic summary of these Time 1 respondents. Inspection of this table seems to support the assertion made in Chapter I (Kaufman, 1982; Latack and Dozier, 1986) that involuntary job loss affects all occupational classifications.

The 238 subjects were each mailed a followup survey package one month after completing the Time 1 questionnaire. A total of 126 (52.9%) of the original sample completed and returned Time 2 questionnaires. Table 3 compares the respondents (n = 126) with the nonrespondents (n = 112) at Time 2. It can be observed that those who responded at Time 2 were older and had more education than
Table 1

Design of the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
<th>Time 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(within 1</td>
<td>(1 month</td>
<td>(1 month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>month of</td>
<td>after Time 1)</td>
<td>after Time 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>job loss)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All subjects Coping resources Demographics (N = 238)

Subjects who found new jobs between Time 1 & Time 2

Coping strategies Length of unemploy-
ment Pay Job satis-
faction (n = 32)

Subjects who found new jobs between Time 2 & Time 3

Coping strategies Length of unempl. Pay Job satis-
faction (n = 13)

Subjects remaining unemployed

Coping resources Coping strategies Coping resources Coping strategies (n = 94) (n = 45)

Nonresponses 112 # 36*

# Employment status was obtained on 67 of these subjects by followup phone calls

* Employment status was obtained on 29 of these subjects by followup phone calls
Figure 2. Summary of responses and nonresponses.

* Subjects who obtained jobs were not contacted again

** Employment status was obtained on 29 of these subjects by followup phone calls

# Employment status was obtained on 67 of these subjects by followup phone calls
Table 2
Demographic Summary of Time 1 Participants (N = 238)

1. Job category
   - 10.1% Service/labor
   - 6.3% Equipment operator
   - 9.2% Craftsman
   - 22.3% Clerical
   - 8.0% Sales
   - 9.2% Technician
   - 26.1% Manager
   - 8.8% Professional

2. Age
   - 37.4% Age 29 and under
   - 41.2% Age 30 - 39
   - 15.1% Age 40 - 49
   - 6.3% Age 50 and over

3. Sex
   - 58.0% Male
   - 42.0% Female

4. Education
   - 6.3% Less than a high school degree
   - 27.3% High school graduate
   - 37.0% Some college
   - 16.0% College graduate
   - 6.3% Some graduate school
   - 7.1% Graduate degree
Table 3

Comparisons of Demographics and Outcomes of Time 2 Respondents and Nonrespondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Respondents (n = 126)</th>
<th>Nonrespondents (n = 112)</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Chi-square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean or %</td>
<td>Mean or %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>3.14**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>65% M</td>
<td>50% M</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35% F</td>
<td>50% F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital</td>
<td>56% Married</td>
<td>48% Married</td>
<td></td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44% Single</td>
<td>52% Single</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>2.55*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of unemployed</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>-1.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>periods (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Months (1) unemployed</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>-1.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length (2) unemployed</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>5.39 (3)</td>
<td>-2.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of S's who found</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10% (3)</td>
<td>67.36**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>job by T.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of S's who found</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>25% (3)</td>
<td>30.24***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>job by the end of the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>study (&lt; 3 months)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) In 5 years prior to study

(2) Current study (1 = less than 2 weeks; 2 = 2 to 4 weeks; 3 = 1 month to 6 weeks; 4 = 6 weeks to 2 months; 5 = 2 to 3 months; 6 = over 3 months)

(3) Values obtained by phone interviews with 67 of these subjects after the end of the study

* p < .05    ** p < .01    *** p < .001
those who didn't respond. Based on phone interviews with 67 of the nonrespondents at the conclusion of the study, it also appears that the Time 2 respondents found jobs more quickly than the nonrespondents.

The actual sample in this study is the 126 subjects who responded to both Time 1 and Time 2 questionnaires. These subjects were used to test some of the proposed mediating and causal relationships between coping resources, coping strategies, and subsequent employment status.

Measures

This section describes the measures used in the study. Table 4 has been compiled from the hypotheses in Chapter II and summarizes all the variables for which measures were needed.

Coping resources. The first major category of variables includes all the coping resources. As noted in Chapter II, this category is adapted from the work of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), and includes the following: health, positive beliefs (locus of control and self-efficacy), problem-solving skills, social skills, social support, material resources, and organizational support.

Health. For the purposes of this study, health focused solely on physical well-being. The four items used to form this variable are adapted from the work of Linn, Sandifer and Stein (1985) and D'Arcy and Siddique (1985) and appear in Appendix A. The first three items were open-ended
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables for Which Measures Were Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coping Resources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal locus of control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coping Strategies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-focused coping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion-focused coping (facilitative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion-focused coping (impeding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to re-employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
questions in which subjects were asked the number of doctor visits they had made during the past six months, the number of days they had been sick in bed during the past six months, and the number of medications they take daily. The fourth item asked the subject to rate his overall physical health on a scale from 1 (excellent) to 5 (poor). Z-scores were computed for each item and summed to form the overall scale value for health ($M = .0006, S.D. = 2.77, \alpha = .64$).

Positive beliefs. For the purposes of this study, positive beliefs include internal locus of control and self-efficacy.

Appendix B contains the 11 items from the Rotter (1966) scale used to measure locus of control. Each item consists of a pair of statements from which a subject had to choose the one which better represented his attitude. Responses were coded 0 or 1. The 11 items were summed to construct the scale for locus of control ($M = 7.08, S.D. = 2.68, \alpha = .74$).

Appendix C contains the six items, modeled after the work of Locke, Frederick, Lee, and Bobko (1984), which were written to measure self-efficacy. Subjects were asked to rate their degree of certainty (on a scale ranging from 0% to 100% with 10% intervals) for their ability to find a suitable new job within the following time periods: six months, five months, four months, three months, two months, and one month. Ratings across all six items were summed for
the self-efficacy scale \( \mu = 413.17, \sigma = 161.94, \alpha = .95 \).

**Problem-solving skills.** As noted in Chapter II, Lazarus and Folkman (1984), drawing on Janis (1974) and Janis and Mann (1977), conceptualize problem-solving skills as the ability to search for information, analyze situations in order to generate alternative courses of actions, weigh alternatives, and select and implement an appropriate plan of action. Because no satisfactory measures of general problem-solving skills were found in the literature, items were constructed based on Lazarus and Folkman's conceptualizations. Appendix D contains the 23 items constructed to assess problem-solving skills. Subjects were asked to rate on a five-point scale from 1 (extremely) to 5 (not at all) the extent to which each statement was true of them, or the extent to which they agreed with it. Five of the items were designed to measure information search, six of the items measured analytical activities, seven items examined the ability to generate alternatives, and five items measured evaluation of alternatives. All items were summed to form the problem-solving skills scale \( \mu = 88.88, \sigma = 10.77, \alpha = .75 \).

**Social skills.** One of the most widely used general questionnaires is the Social Avoidance and Distress Scale (SADS) developed by Watson and Friend (1969). Although originally developed for a college population, the items are
appropriate for a general adult population as well (Arkowski, 1981). Appendix E contains the 28 items from the SADS used to measure social skills for this study. Each item consists of a statement which subjects had to rate as either true or false for themselves. Scores for all items were summed to form the social skills scale (M = 24.76, S.D. = 5.56, \( \alpha = .90 \)).

**Social support.** The variable of social support has been incorporated in much of the research on stress and has been operationalized in many different ways. For this study, the items in Appendix F, adapted from the work of Schaefer, Coyne, and Lazarus (1981) were used to measure social support. Subjects were asked to provide the first name of the four people they would be most likely to turn to for help in stressful situations. Then they were asked to rate each person on a five-point scale (1 = not at all, 5 = extremely) on five separate questions. The first question asked how much that person had provided helpful information and guidance to the subject within the past month. The remaining four questions asked about the person's reliability, ability to boost the subject's spirits, and other evidence of emotional support. Scores for all 20 items were summed to form the social support scale (M = 83.68, S.D. = 10.38, \( \alpha = .86 \)).

**Material resources.** The last of Lazarus and Folkman's general coping resources is material resources. Appendix G
contains the two items selected to measure this variable. Subjects were first asked to estimate, using five categories ranging from less than one month to over a year, how long they could survive, given their current liquid assets. They were also asked to rate on a five-point scale from "excellent" to "very poor" their overall current financial condition. Z-scores were computed for each item and summed to form the material resources scale (M = -.001, S.D. = 1.76, \( \alpha = .70 \)).

**Organizational support.** As noted in Chapter II, the major forms of organizational support that individuals are likely to receive will probably fall into one of several categories (Levine, 1985). The first is financial, most likely in the form of severance pay. The second is counseling, which may be aimed either at helping the individual adjust to his job loss or at helping him improve his job-seeking skills. A third form of organizational support might include support services, such as secretarial assistance, xerography facilities, or use of long distance phone lines. The final form of likely support would be actual tangible job leads or introductions to potential employers.

Appendix H contains the six items constructed to measure organizational support. Subjects were asked the number of weeks severance pay they had received. They were also asked if they had received any of the following: counseling on finding employment, counseling on coping with job loss,
miscellaneous support services, actual job leads, and any other type of assistance. Responses to all items were recoded to dichotomous form and summed to form the organizational support scale ($M = .97, S.D. = 1.50, \alpha = .54$).

**Coping strategies.** The second major category of variables consists of coping strategies. Lazarus and his colleagues have developed and refined (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) a Ways of Coping Checklist (Appendix I) which contains 67 items describing various things people might think, do, or feel during a stressful encounter. Subjects are asked to rate on a four-point scale (0 = not at all, 3 = a great deal) the extent to which each item is used during a stressful encounter.

A review of the creators' own use of the Ways of Coping Checklist and attempts to establish scales from it reveals that analysis of the Checklist is still evolving. In one study (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980), the authors simply assigned items from the checklist a priori to problem-focused (P) and emotion-focused (E) categories. Various techniques were then used to evaluate the internal consistency of the classification. In later work (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985), factor analysis led the authors to identify eight scales present in the Checklist, one problem-focused, six emotion-focused (wishful thinking, distancing, emphasizing the positive, self blame, tension reduction, self isolation) and one mixed scale (seeking social support). Problem-focused
coping was strongly correlated with emphasizing the positive 
\( r = .58 \) and seeking social support \( r = .64 \). In a more 
recent study (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, 
& Gruen, 1986), eight scales were again identified, but they 
were somewhat different from the 1985 study: confrontive 
coping, distancing, self-controlling, seeking social 
support, accepting responsibility, escape-avoidance, planful 
problem-solving, and positive reappraisal. Other research 
utilizing the Checklist (Parkes, 1984) has identified still 
other factors: General Coping, Direct Coping, and Suppres­
sion.

Based on the past work with the Checklist described 
above, all 67 items on the Ways of Coping Checklist were 
administered to subjects and subsequently factor analyzed. 
Inspection of the eigenvalues and scree plot revealed no 
clear empirical solution to the appropriate number of 
factors. Thus theory and judgement regarding conceptual 
clarity had to be used in selecting the number of factors. 
This is consistent with the suggestions of Crino, White, and 
Looney (1985), who contend that theory should be an impor­tant consideration guiding factor analysis.

Although the hypotheses in Chapter II are worded in 
such a way as to imply three factors (problem-focused 
coping, facilitative emotion-focused coping, and impeding 
emotion-focused coping), solutions of from two to eight 
factors were examined. In each case, no item was considered
for inclusion unless it loaded at least .4 on one factor and less than .4 on all other factors. All solutions were then examined for conceptual clarity, taking into account past work with the Checklist.

Because of the tripartite nature of the hypotheses, it was hoped that a three-factor solution would be feasible. This solution (Appendix J) produced one factor which resembled problem-focused coping and two additional factors which both contained impeding forms of emotion-focused coping. However no factor resembled facilitative emotion-focused coping. The items which would be classified as facilitative emotion-focused coping ("looking on the bright side" and "seeking social support") failed, for the most part, to load on any of the three factors at a .4 level or greater. Thus a three-factor solution was judged to be unsuitable.

A two-factor solution retaining 38 items from the Ways of Coping Checklist was also examined. This solution was judged to be conceptually more satisfactory than the three-factor solution and was used for further data analysis in this study. Table 5 contains the two-factor solution.

Inspection of the 38 items in this solution suggests that the first 24, which load on Factor 1, include many items which could be categorized as problem-focused coping. Other items loading on Factor 1 appear to fit the (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985) categories of "looking on the bright side"
Table 5

Two Factor Solution to Ways of Coping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways of Coping Item</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changed or grew as a person</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed something so things would turn out all right</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was inspired to do something creative</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>-.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I thought about how a person I admire would handle this situation</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I knew what had to be done so I doubled my efforts to make things work</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Came up with a couple of solutions to the problem</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked to someone about how I was feeling</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looked for the silver lining so to speak;</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tried to look on the bright side of things</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tried to seek things from the other person's point of view</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rediscovered what is important in life</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I made a plan of action and followed it</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>-.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I came out of the experience better than I went in</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>-.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stood my ground and fought for what I wanted</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I reminded myself how much worse things could be</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bargained or compromised to get something positive from the situation</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tried to analyze the problem in order to understand it better</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways of Coping Item</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tried not to burn my bridges but leave things open somewhat</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I asked a relative or friend I respected for advice</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintained my pride and kept a stiff upper lip</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I changed something about myself</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just concentrated on what I had to do next -- the next step</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I let my feelings out somehow</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I made a promise to myself that things would be different next time</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Found new faith</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticized or lectured myself</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wished that I could change what had happened or how I felt</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wished that the situation would go away or somehow be over with</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kept others from knowing how bad things were</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoided being with people in general</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refused to believe it had happened</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoped a miracle would happen</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Went along with fate; sometimes I just have bad luck</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took it out on other people</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I daydreamed or imagined a better time or place than the one I was in</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways of Coping Item</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tried to make myself feel better by eating, drinking, smoking, using drugs or medication</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tried to get the person responsible to change his or her mind</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had fantasies or wishes about how things might turn out</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tried to keep my feelings to myself</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Eigenvalues**  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.14</td>
<td>6.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Percent of variance**  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>9.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and "seeking social support." These results seem to lend support to the findings from this earlier (1985) study that these types of emotion-focused coping may accompany and 
facilitate problem-focused coping. The decision was made to call Factor 1 "positive coping."

The remaining 14 items, which load on Factor 2, largely appear to fit in the emotion-focused categories (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985) which are proposed to impede problem-focused coping. These forms of coping include wishful thinking, distancing, self blame, tension reduction, and self isolation. Factor 2 has therefore been named "negative coping."

As a result of the above analysis, the first 24 items in Table 5 were summed to form the positive coping scale (\(M = 35.62, \text{S.D.} = 12.44, \alpha = .88\)). The final 14 items were summed to form the negative coping scale (\(M = 11.57, \text{S.D.} = 7.87, \alpha = .86\)). The two factors correlated at .17.

Based on the results of the factor analysis of the Ways of Coping Checklist, it was necessary to modify the original hypotheses from Chapter II. As already noted, the hypotheses were originally worded in a way that implies the existence of three types of coping. However the factor analysis suggested that two factors fit the data in this study better. Thus the decision was made to reword the hypotheses from Chapter II as follows: "positive coping" was substituted for both "problem-focused coping" and "facilitative emotion-focused coping." "Negative coping"
was substituted for "impeding emotion-focused coping." For Hypotheses 1 through 8, this rewording had the effect of collapsing the "a" and "b" parts into a single hypothesis. The reworded hypotheses appear in Table 6.

Outcomes. The major outcome of interest in this study is the length of time to re-employment. Length of unemployment was measured by asking subjects who had found jobs to check one of five categories (1 = less than two weeks, 5 = over two months) equal to the duration of their unemployment. Subjects who had not found jobs by the end of the study (within three months) were assigned to an additional category (6). Table 7 shows the percentage of subjects in each category. Over half the subjects were still unemployed at the end of the study, more than three months after their job loss. Three additional dichotomous dependent variables were created: Emp (did a subject find a job by the end of the study?), Emp2 (did a subject find a job by Time 2?), and Emp3 (did a subject find a job between Time 2 and Time 3?). These variables were created to allow examination of possible lagged effects between coping resources, coping strategies, and employment status, as proposed in Figure 1. Each of these variables was coded 0 (no) or 1 (yes).

Although re-employment is the only outcome variable for which hypotheses were specifically proposed, additional outcome measures for job satisfaction and other new job characteristics were obtained from the 45 subjects who
Table 6

Reworded Hypotheses

H 1a: Good health will be positively correlated with positive coping.
H 1b: Good health will be negatively correlated with negative coping.
H 2a: Internal locus of control will be positively correlated with positive coping.
H 2b: Internal locus of control will be negatively correlated with negative coping.
H 3a: Self-efficacy will be positively correlated with positive coping.
H 3b: Self-efficacy will be negatively correlated with negative coping.
H 4a: Problem-solving skills will be positively correlated with positive coping.
H 4b: Problem-solving skills will be negatively correlated with negative coping.
H 5a: Social skills will be positively correlated with positive coping.
H 5b: Social skills will be negatively correlated with negative coping.
H 6a: Social support will be positively correlated with positive coping.
H 6b: Social support will be negatively correlated with negative coping.
H 7a: Material resources will be positively correlated with positive coping.
H 7b: Material resources will be negatively correlated with negative coping.
H 8a: Organizational support will be positively correlated with positive coping.

(table continues)
H 8b: Organizational support will be negatively correlated with negative coping.

H 9a: Positive coping will be negatively correlated with length of time to re-employment.

H 9b: Negative coping will be positively correlated with length of time to re-employment.
Table 7

Summary of Unemployment Duration for the Sample (n = 126)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Subjects</th>
<th>Cumulative Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (less than two weeks)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (two to four weeks)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (one month to six weeks)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (Six weeks to two months)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (Two to three months)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (Over three months)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown*</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These were subjects who were unemployed at Time 2 who failed to complete the Time 3 questionnaire and whom the researcher was unable to contact by telephone at the end of the study.
returned Questionnaire A at Time Two or Time Three. Job satisfaction was measured by items adapted from the Short-Form Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967). Subjects were presented with 20 items (Appendix K) concerning various aspects of their jobs. For each item, a subject had to state if he was "very dissatisfied", "dissatisfied", "neither more or less dissatisfied", "satisfied", or "very satisfied" with this aspect of his new job compared to his old job. Responses were coded from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied) and summed to form the job satisfaction scale ($M = 77.98$, $S.D. = 13.78$, $\alpha = .95$).

Appendix L contains the other items collected as measures of new job characteristics.

Table 8 provides summary statistics for the measures used in the study. Two of the scales, health and organizational support, appear to have lower than acceptable reliabilities. Therefore results of data analysis should be interpreted cautiously.

**Analysis of the Data**

The model to be tested by this investigation (Figure 1) proposes that coping strategies operate as a mediating variable between coping resources and the outcome variable of employment. Data analysis was therefore guided by the recommendations of Judd and Kenny (1981) and Baron and Kenny (1986) for testing mediation. Baron and Kenny propose that
Table 8
Means, Standard Deviations and Reliabilities for Scales Used in the Study (N = 238)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>.01*</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus</td>
<td>7.08</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>413.17</td>
<td>161.94</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-Solving Skills</td>
<td>88.88</td>
<td>10.77</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Skills</td>
<td>24.76</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td>83.68</td>
<td>10.38</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Resources</td>
<td>- .01*</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Support</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Coping</td>
<td>35.62</td>
<td>12.44</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Coping</td>
<td>11.57</td>
<td>7.87</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed (6 categories)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed by end of study</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed by Time 2</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed between Time 2 and 3</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>77.98</td>
<td>13.78</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Z-scores
NA = Not available
one should test for mediation by means of three regression equations. First, the mediator should be regressed on the independent variable. Second, the dependent variable should be regressed on the independent variable. Finally, the dependent variable should be regressed on both the independent and mediating variables. These regressions would also allow testing of each of the individual (reworded) hypotheses (Table 6).

Following this procedure for this investigation, coping strategies (the mediating variable) were first regressed on all the coping resources (the independent variables). Second, employment status (the dependent variable) was regressed on all the coping resources (the independent variables). Finally, employment status was regressed on both coping resources and coping strategies.

Baron and Kenny (1986) contend that, for mediation to be established, certain conditions must be met as a result of performing the above analyses. First, the independent variable (coping resources) must affect the mediator (coping strategies) in the first equation. Second, the independent variable (coping resources) must affect the dependent variable (employment status) in the second equation. Third, the mediating variable (coping strategies) must affect the dependent variable (employment status) in the third equation. Finally, the effect of the independent variable (coping resources) on the dependent variable
(employment status) must be less in the third equation than in the second.

Chapter IV will present the results of the analyses described above.
Chapter IV
Results

This chapter presents the results of the data analyses performed to test the model proposed in Chapter II (Figure 1) and the hypotheses derived from it. The primary results will be those from the three regression analyses performed to test for mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986), as described at the end of Chapter III. In addition, supplementary data analysis related to job satisfaction will be presented.

Table 9 first presents a correlation matrix of all variables included in the hypotheses. It can be observed that while many of the coping resources are positively correlated, none of the correlations are higher than .36. Thus multicollinearity does not appear to be a problem. In addition, positive coping and negative coping are modestly correlated ($r = .17$), indicating that these two variables are relatively independent. Past research using the Ways of Coping Checklist (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985) has also found positive correlations (ranging from $r = .20$ to $r = .46$) between various coping scales.

Inspection of the correlations in Table 9 reveals several significant bivariate relationships between coping resources and ways of coping. Positive coping was significantly correlated with locus of control ($r = .20, p < .05$), problem-solving skills ($r = .20, p < .05$), and social support ($r = .33, p < .001$). Negative coping was signifi-
### Table 9

**Inter correlations for All Variables (n = 126)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Locus</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Self-efficacy</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Problem-solving skills</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Social skills</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Social support</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Material resources</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Organizational support</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Positive coping</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Negative coping</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.31</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Employed by end of study</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Employed between T. 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlations above .19 are significant at the .05 level, above .23 at the .01 level, and above .29 at the .001 level.

NR = Not relevant
cantly correlated with locus of control ($r = -0.31, p < .001$), problem-solving skills ($r = -0.28, p < .01$), social skills, ($r = -0.20, p < .05$), and material resources ($r = -0.30, p < .001$).

While these significant bivariate relationships should be noted, regression analysis provides a more conservative test of the proposed model. The primary data analysis was therefore guided by the recommendations of Baron and Kenny (1986) for testing mediation. The first analysis regressed the mediator (coping strategies) on the independent or antecedent variables (coping resources). This analysis also allowed specific testing of Hypotheses 1 through 8 by examining the Beta coefficients for each individual coping resource.

Table 10 presents the results of regressing both positive coping and negative coping on all of the coping resources. This table reveals that only two of the eight resources, social support ($\beta = 0.31, t = 3.41, p < .001$) and material resources ($\beta = -0.24, t = -2.66, p < .01$) appear as significant predictors of positive coping. However, material resources is significant in a direction counter to the hypotheses. The overall regression equation is also significant ($F(8,110) = 3.33, p < .01$).

Table 10 also shows that only material resources ($\beta = -0.23, t = -2.66, p < .001$), emerges as a significant predictor of negative coping. The overall equation is also
Table 10
Regression of Coping Resources with Positive Coping and Negative Coping (n = 126)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Positive Coping</th>
<th>Negative Coping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>3.41***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material resources</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>-2.66**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational support</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Multiple R = .44
R square = .20
F(8,110) = 3.33**

Multiple R = .44
R square = .20
F(8,110) = 3.35

* p < .05
** p < .01
*** p < .001
significant \( F(8,110) = 3.35, p < .01 \).

In summary, the results of the first pair of regression equations only partially meet the first necessary condition described by Baron and Kenny (1986). Only two of the independent variables (coping resources), social support and material resources, significantly affect the mediator (coping strategies). Of the individual reworded Hypotheses 1 through 8, only Hypotheses 6a and 7b are supported by this analysis. In addition, there is evidence contradicting Hypothesis 7a.

The second regression analysis involved regressing the dependent variable (employment) on the independent variables (coping resources). Three separate dichotomous dependent variables were created: whether a subject had a job by the end of the study (Emp), whether a subject had a job by Time 2 (Emp2), and whether a subject found a job between Time 2 and Time 3 (Emp3). Table 11 presents the results of these three regressions.

Table 11 shows that only two of the coping resources, self-efficacy (\( \beta = .26, t = 2.62, p < .05 \)) and material resources (\( \beta = .21, t = 2.15, p < .05 \)), are significant predictors of whether a subject found a job by the end of the study (i.e. within three months of job loss). The overall regression equation is also significant \( F(8, 104) = 2.46, p < .05 \).

Table 11 also reveals two significant predictors of
### Table 11

Regression of Coping Resources with Employment Status

**Variables (n = 119)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Emp</th>
<th></th>
<th>Emp2</th>
<th></th>
<th>Emp3</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( \beta )</td>
<td>( t )</td>
<td>( \beta )</td>
<td>( t )</td>
<td>( \beta )</td>
<td>( t )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.85</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.61</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.40</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>2.62*</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>2.35*</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-1.27</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>-2.15*</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material resources</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>2.15*</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>2.14*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational support</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple R</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td></td>
<td>.36</td>
<td></td>
<td>.29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R square</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td></td>
<td>.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>8,104</td>
<td></td>
<td>8,104</td>
<td></td>
<td>8,104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( F )</td>
<td>2.46*</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*  \( p < .05 \)

Emp = employment status at the end of the study (coded 0 or 1)

Emp2 = whether a subject became employed between Time 1 and Time 2 (coded 0 or 1)

Emp3 = whether a subject became employed between Time 2 and Time 3 (coded 0 or 1)
whether a subject found a job by Time 2: self-efficacy ($\beta = .24, t = 2.35, p < .05$) and social skills ($\beta = -.21, t = -2.15, p < .05$). The support for social skills is contradictory to what was expected however. Furthermore, the overall regression equation is not significant.

Table 11 also shows that only material resources ($\beta = .21, t = 2.14, p < .05$) is a significant predictor of whether a subject found a job between Time 2 and Time 3. The overall regression equation is not significant.

In summary, the second set of regression equations only partially meets the condition specified by Baron and Kenny (1986) that the independent variables (coping resources) affect the dependent variable (employment). Only two of the eight coping resources (self-efficacy and material resources) significantly affect employment status at the end of the study.

The third and final regression analysis consisted of regressing the dependent variable (employment) on both the independent (coping resources) and mediating variables (positive coping and negative coping). Once again, each of the three forms of the employment outcome (Emp, Emp2, Emp3) was examined separately. Table 12 presents the results of these three regression equations.

Table 12 shows that self-efficacy is the sole significant ($\beta = .26, t = 2.55, p < .05$) predictor of whether a subject found a new job by the end of the study. The
Table 12

Regression of Coping Resources and Coping Strategies with Employment Status Variables (n = 119)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Emp</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.87</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.59</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.42</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>2.55*</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>2.41*</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-1.24</td>
<td>-.21</td>
<td>-2.08*</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material resources</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational support</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive coping</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-1.15</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.49</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative coping</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple R</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td></td>
<td>.36</td>
<td></td>
<td>.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R square</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td></td>
<td>.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>10,101</td>
<td></td>
<td>10,101</td>
<td></td>
<td>10,101</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>2.16*</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emp = employment status at the end of the study (0 or 1)

Emp2 = whether a subject became employed between Time 1 and Time 2 (coded 0 or 1)

Emp3 = whether a subject became employed between Time 2 and Time 3 (coded 0 or 1)

* p < .05
overall regression equation is also significant ($F(10, 101) = 2.16, p < .05$). This table also indicates that self-efficacy is also a significant ($\beta = .25, t = 2.41, p < .05$) predictor of whether a subject found a job by Time 2 (Emp2). Social skills is also a significant ($\beta = -.21, t = -2.08, p < .05$) predictor of Emp2, but in a direction opposite what was expected. The overall regression equation for Employment2 is not significant.

Table 12 reveals no significant predictors of whether a subject found a job between Time 2 and Time 3; in addition, the overall regression is not significant.

The results of all three of this final set of regressions fail to meet the third condition specified by Baron and Kenny (1986): the mediating variables (positive coping and negative coping) do not affect the dependent variables (the three employment variables). In summary, then, the regression analyses fail to support the model depicted in Figure 1, which proposes that coping strategies operate as a mediating variable between coping resources and employment outcomes.

Table 13 summarizes the support (or lack of) for each of the individual (reworded) hypotheses that were proposed. This table shows that only two (6a and 7b) of the eighteen individual hypotheses are supported by the regression analyses. In addition, support appears contrary to that predicted for another hypothesis (7a).
Table 13
Summary of Hypotheses and Support for Them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H 1a: Good health will be positively correlated with positive coping.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 1b: Good health will be negatively correlated with negative coping.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 2a: Internal locus of control will be positively correlated with positive coping.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 2b: Internal locus of control will be negatively correlated with negative coping.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 3a: Self-efficacy will be positively correlated with positive coping.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 3b: Self-efficacy will be negatively correlated with negative coping.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 4a: Problem-solving skills will be positively correlated with positive coping.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 4b: Problem-solving skills will be negatively correlated with negative coping.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 5a: Social skills will be positively correlated with positive coping.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 5b: Social skills will be negatively correlated with negative coping.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 6a: Social support will be positively correlated with positive coping.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 6b: Social support will be negatively correlated with negative coping.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H 7a: Material resources will be positively correlated with positive coping.</td>
<td>Support contradictory to hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 7b: Material resources will be negatively correlated with negative coping.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 8a: Organizational support will be positively correlated with positive coping.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 8b: Organizational support will be negatively correlated with negative coping.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 9a: Positive coping will be negatively correlated with length of time to re-employment.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 9b: Negative coping will be positively correlated with length of time to re-employment.</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3 presents a graphic summary of the significant results from the regression analyses performed.

Supplementary Data Analysis

It was noted in Chapter III that job satisfaction measures were collected for the subjects \( n = 45 \) who found jobs by the end of the study and completed Questionnaire A at either Time 2 or Time 3. This section presents the results of analysis conducted on the job satisfaction data.

As described in Chapter III, job satisfaction was measured by items adapted from the Short-Form Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967). These items appear in Appendix K.

Table 14 presents the correlations of all the independent variables (coping resources) and proposed mediating variables (coping strategies) with job satisfaction. It can be observed that positive coping is significantly correlated \( (r = .50, p < .01) \) with job satisfaction, although it was not significantly correlated with the primary outcome variable (employment status at the end of the study). Social support is also significantly correlated \( (r = .36, p < .05) \) with job satisfaction. Implications of these findings will be discussed in Chapter V.

Summary

In summary, the results fail to support the model
Figure 3. Graphic summary of significant regression results.
Table 14
Correlations of Coping Resources and Coping Strategies with Job Satisfaction (n = 45)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Correlation with Job Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locus</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving skills</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support</td>
<td>.36*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material resources</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational support</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive coping</td>
<td>.50**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative coping</td>
<td>-.05</td>
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* p < .05
** p < .01
proposed in Chapter II (Figure 1). While there is some support for the proposed relationships between coping resources and subsequent coping strategies, there is no support whatsoever for the proposed mediating role of coping strategies on employment outcomes. In addition, the significant effect of self-efficacy on employment, but not on coping strategies, was not anticipated by the model. Chapter V will discuss possible reasons for the results presented here and consider the potential significance of them.
This chapter will suggest conclusions that may be drawn from the results of this study and will consider various limitations of the current investigation. It will also suggest some practical implications of the results as well as directions for future research.

The results of this study offer three conclusions regarding coping with job loss. First, there is a lack of support for the model as a whole (Figure 1). The regression results, especially those in Table 12, indicate that coping strategies do not appear to operate as a mediating variable between coping resources and the primary outcome of interest, employment status at the end of the study. A variety of theoretical, methodological, and situational limitations of the study may be at least partly responsible for this conclusion. Each of these will be discussed separately.

There are two major theoretical concerns. The first is the possibility that the model developed in Chapter II simply does not fit the job loss experience very well. Some of the empirical evidence suggests this, especially the significant impact of one of the coping resources, self-efficacy, on employment status at the end of the study (Table 12), but not on coping strategies (Table 10). This result is a serious threat to the overall model. It suggests that some coping resources may be independently
important in predicting the outcomes of a stressful encounter, rather than operating through coping strategies as proposed by the model.

The second theoretical concern relates to conceptualizations of coping effectiveness. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) contend that coping effectiveness is based on two functions: regulating distress, and managing the problem causing the distress. But their empirical work seems to focus more on the emotional distress function. One study (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985) using the Ways of Coping Checklist measured coping and emotional reactions at three points before and after a midterm exam. Later work (Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986) which examined the relation between coping and outcomes used outcome measures that essentially measured whether the subject thought the problem had been resolved satisfactorily. This may actually be just another way of measuring emotional outcomes.

While Lazarus and Folkman appear to focus on emotional outcomes, a criticism of the current investigation might be that it focused on problem-related outcomes of the stressful encounter but ignored the emotional outcomes. In other words, a possible weakness of the model in this study may be the failure to include perceived stress as an important variable. It is possible that some coping resources may serve to reduce or even eliminate perceptions of stress. Perhaps perceived stress is a mediating variable between
coping resources and coping strategies. No measures of perceived stress were obtained in the current study, precluding investigation of that possibility.

There are also seven methodological limitations in three basic areas which might have contributed to the lack of support for the model in Figure 1. The three general areas are: the Ways of Coping Checklist, the use of self-report data, and the nature of the sample.

First, the Ways of Coping Checklist, as developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), may simply not be very relevant to the job loss situation. The fact that the items on the checklist are general enough to be used in any stressful encounter is both a strength and a weakness. While it is useful to have an instrument which can be used in a variety of situations, the general nature of the items precludes inclusion of other, more specific coping strategies that may be more relevant to particular types of stressful situations. Thus there may be other ways in which people cope with job loss that do impact their ability to find new jobs, but which are not included on the Checklist.

A second criticism of the Checklist is that it does not contain items which would assess strategic decisions that individuals may make while unemployed, such as whether to take the first job that comes along or wait for a better job. Strategic decisions such as these could easily affect the length of time that an individual is unemployed, but
the Checklist provides no measures of these kinds of thought processes.

A third limitation of the Ways of Coping Checklist is suggested by the earlier discussion of theoretical concerns. It was noted that Lazarus and Folkman appear in their empirical work to focus more on emotional outcomes of stressful encounters than on problem-related outcomes. It is possible that the Ways of Coping Checklist is a more useful predictor of emotional outcomes than of the problem-related outcomes which were the focus of the current investigation.

Two methodological concerns have to do with potential problems with the use of self-report data (Podaskoff & Organ, 1986). One concern is the social desirability problem, which refers to the possibility that questionnaire items may prompt a subject to respond ego defensively. Consider, for example, the Ways of Coping Checklist. It is possible that some subjects may have observed that some of the items were activities they "should" be doing while unemployed (e.g. "made a plan of action and followed it"), while other items were clearly less desirable (e.g. "drinking excessively"). It is possible that subjects sometimes answered in what they perceived to be a socially desirable manner rather than a totally honest manner. The result of this could be to suppress the variance in some variables such as coping strategies, making it more difficult to
achieve levels of significance. The social desirability problem may be a likely concern in the current study, given the fact that none of the questionnaires were truly anonymous because of the followup mailing requirements.

A second problem related to self-report data involves the possibility of common method variance. When the same person provides self-report measures of two or more different constructs, resulting correlations may be due to a desire to be consistent rather than to a real underlying relationship (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). One of Podsakoff and Organ's recommendations for avoiding this problem is to separate measures in time and place. In considering this recommendation in regards to the current study, it would seem that common method variance is an unlikely issue in most relationships between coping resources (measured at Time 1 at the Employment Security Office) and either coping strategies (measured at Time 2 at home) or job satisfaction (measured at Time 2 or Time 3 at home). However it could be at least partly responsible for the relationship between positive coping strategies (measured at Time 2) and job satisfaction (measured at Time 2 or Time 3).

Two additional methodological limitations of the study that may be partly responsible for the results obtained have to do with the specific sample utilized. One limitation was the necessity of relying on volunteer, non-randomly selected subjects for this study. It is reasonable to
expect that individuals who volunteer for research, particularly on an unpaid basis, would differ in some respects from those who choose not to participate. Unfortunately, the nature of these differences, if any, can never be known. One can only guess, therefore, how inclusion of the "nonvolunteers" might have changed the results of the study.

A second concern related to the sample is the fact that the Time 2 respondents and nonrespondents differed significantly from each other in several ways (Table 3). Respondents were somewhat older and better educated than nonrespondents; they also were more likely to be employed by the end of the study and even by Time 2. What is not known is if there were significant differences in the coping strategies used by the two groups. It is possible, although only conjecture, that part of the reason the nonrespondents were more likely to be unemployed at the end of the study had to do with the coping strategies they used. Thus it is possible that responses from the Time 2 nonrespondents might have leant some support to the proposed importance of coping strategies.

One final situational limitation which may have contributed to the general lack of support for the model may have to do with the level of unemployment at the time the study was conducted. As noted in Chapter III, unemployment in the area was over nine percent at the beginning of the investigation and declined only gradually by the end of the
study. This figure was both considerably higher than the national average and higher than had been common in the area just a few years earlier during the "oil boom" that had pervaded the entire region. The unemployment level may be a variable which impacted subjects' ability to find new jobs (Liem & Rayman, 1982; Swinburne, 1981), perhaps more than did the ways in which they coped with job loss. This may be true for some job categories more than others however. If there are indeed very few jobs available in an area, an individual's efforts (or lack of) may have little to do with success (or lack of) in job hunting. This idea would seem to be congruent with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) contention that not every stressful encounter has the potential for being coped with effectively, especially if there are underlying conditions which are not amenable to change. Certainly the local unemployment rate is not amenable to individual change.

Pearlin and Schooler (1978) similarly note that there are human problems which are not responsive to individual coping responses. They suggest that what appear to be coping "failures" may in fact be failures of a social system a person finds himself in, rather than of the individual himself. One might thus conclude that in this situation, perhaps the social system didn't contain enough suitable jobs, at least in certain job categories. Failing to find re-employment should not then be viewed as a coping
failure on the part of the individual job loss victim, nor should it be construed to mean that the coping strategies utilized are always ineffective. In an area with better job opportunities, perhaps coping strategies would have had more of an impact on the individual's ability to find a new job than they did in the current investigation. In summary, it would not be appropriate to generalize the results of this investigation to other economic situations.

The above discussion has suggested a variety of theoretical, methodological, and situational limitations which may have contributed to the lack of support for the model. While it is impossible to say with certainty which of these factors may have been preponderant, it is possible that methodological limitations, especially problems with the ways of coping measure, may have been most critical. The mediating variable, ways of coping, plays a central role in the proposed model (Figure 1). But many difficulties and limitations of the measure used (the Ways of Coping Checklist) have already been identified. The central role of the mediating variable, combined with the numerous difficulties involved with the measure used in this study, leads to the tentative conclusion that problems of research methodology may have contributed more to the overall nonsignificant results than did theoretical or situational limitations.

Despite the apparent lack of support for the model as
a whole, a second conclusion which may be drawn from the results of this study is that coping strategies, especially positive coping, may nonetheless be important in regards to job satisfaction. Although the choice of coping strategies may not help a person find a job sooner, the supplementary data analysis (Table 14) suggests that positive coping may increase the chances of being satisfied when new employment is found. This may occur because individuals who use more positive coping do not seize the first possible employment opportunity but tend to wait for something they consider suitable. Because the positive coping scale includes some activities that relate to problem solving (e.g. made a plan, came up with solutions, did something creative), this explanation seems plausible. As noted earlier, however, it is also possible that common method variance contributed to the significant relationship between positive coping and job satisfaction.

The third conclusion which may be drawn from the results of this study is that, although the total model is not supported, some of the coping resources may still be important in the job loss situation. In particular, self-efficacy, social support, and material resources each appear to be important in coping with job loss.

Self-efficacy appears to be important because it emerges as the sole significant predictor of employment status at the end of the study when the whole model is
tested (Table 12). Interestingly, however, self-efficacy is not related to the coping strategies. Because the self-efficacy literature indicates that self-efficacy influences thought patterns and behavior (Bandura, 1986), the lack of significant relations between self-efficacy and coping strategies suggests that there may be other important thoughts and behaviors not included on the Ways of Coping Checklist which contribute to the significant effect of self-efficacy on the employment outcome.

Social support may be important because of its apparent impact on positive coping (Table 10) and, ultimately, on new job satisfaction (Table 14). These results suggest that individuals with good social support may engage in a type of coping which leads them to find a suitable job, as opposed to a readily available job.

Material resources may be important for another reason. Table 10 indicates that material resources are significantly related to both positive and negative coping. However, inspection of the direction of these relationships (both negative) is puzzling at first. One possible explanation for these results may be that people who are in good financial shape when they lose their jobs feel little pressure to do anything right away. They might not feel the need to avoid people or engage in wishful thinking (negative coping). On the other hand, their financial situation would allow them the luxury of not having to find a new job right
away -- hence a lack of positive coping as well. Perhaps the job loss situation is not even perceived as stressful to those with adequate material resources. If this were true, according to Lazarus' model of stress, coping would not be expected.

Implications for Practitioners

Despite the general lack of support for the model as a whole, some practical implications are suggested by the empirical results. The most important implication concerns self-efficacy. Because the resource of self-efficacy appears as the sole significant predictor of employment status at the end of the study, effort should be directed at helping job loss victims develop their perceptions that they will be able to find suitable new employment. The self-efficacy literature (Bandura, 1982, 1986) identifies four sources of information that influence the development of self-efficacy: enactive attainment, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological state. Although enactive attainment (i.e. past success) has been shown to be the most influential in enhancing self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, Adams, & Beyer, 1977), the other sources may also be useful and more applicable to organizational settings. For example, self-modeling is one type of vicarious experience in which subjects are shown videotapes of their performance with mistakes edited out, allowing the person to see himself performing correctly. Some studies
have shown a positive effect of modeling on job-related behavior (Decker, 1983; Meyer & Raich, 1983). Self-modeling could be useful in training job loss victims how to make a good impression at job interviews. Verbal persuasion can also be effective in improving performance, if the heightened appraisal of self-efficacy is realistic (Bandura, 1986). This suggests that those seeking to help the jobless should try to make them believe, within realistic limits, that they can find new jobs. It seems that training to improve relevant skills (so heightened appraisals will be realistic), coupled with verbal persuasion, might be particularly effective in raising self-efficacy.

A second practical implication arises from the apparent impact of social support on subsequent positive coping and new job satisfaction. Although job satisfaction was not the main outcome of interest in this study, it is nonetheless an important individual and managerial concern. These results suggest that providing social support may help individuals in the long run, even if it doesn't necessarily have a direct impact on early re-employment. As noted earlier, organizations may provide social support through counseling, soliciting job leads, or simply expressions of concern. Several subjects turning in Time 1 questionnaires spontaneously commented that the obvious lack of social support in the organization ("no one cared") had affected them deeply. Managers are also reminded that how termina-
tions are managed is likely to affect not only the indi-
viduals involved, but also the employees remaining behind as 
well as the image of the organization in the community
(Latack & Dozier, 1986).

**Further Research**

The results of this study and consideration of its 
limitations suggest several ways for improving or expanding 
this avenue of research in the future.

First, to investigate the possibility that the high 
unemployment level was responsible for some of the nonsig-
nificant results, it is suggested that the study be repli-
cated in two environments, one where unemployment is high 
and the other where unemployment is low. This would provide 
a better test of whether coping strategies operate as a 
mediating variable between coping resources and length of 
unemployment. It would help clarify whether the model 
proposed here is really not suitable to the job loss 
situation, or whether it may be useful under different 
circumstances.

A second suggestion would be to include measures of 
perceived stress in future studies. Stress appears to be a 
potentially important variable that may be included in a 
future revision of the model. It has already been suggested 
that perceived stress may itself be a mediating variable 
between coping resources and coping strategies. It was also 
noted that this study had neglected the possibility that
coping strategies have a significant effect on emotional (if not problem-related) outcomes. Obtaining measures of stress at each data collection point would allow investigation of both of these ideas.

Some additional suggestions concern ways to improve the composition of the subject group in future studies of this type. It would be desirable to stimulate participation by those who would normally be "nonvolunteers", thus perhaps increasing the variety of subjects and simultaneously the range of some of the variables of interest. It would also be desirable if the "dropout rate" could be lowered at followup data collection points. Perhaps monetary incentives would be useful in accomplishing both of these goals.

Another way to improve composition of the subjects would be to identify jobless rates for various job categories and then ensure that all the job categories were adequately represented in the sample. Because unemployment rates are likely to vary by job type, this would allow further investigation of the possibility that the unemployment rate is an important variable.

Another suggestion, arising from the apparently critical nature of the methodological limitations of the study, concerns the coping measure. It is likely that further work with the Ways of Coping Checklist is necessary to determine if any scales consistently emerge which are stable and useful. The results here seem to confirm the
essentially exploratory and evolving nature of coping research.

Another issue that might be explored in future research is whether individual differences may affect the efficacy (i.e., outcomes) of particular coping strategies. The current investigation and other recent studies (Holahan & Moos, 1987; Parkes, 1986) have begun to explore how individual differences may affect the coping strategies that people select. However, it is also possible that different individuals using similar coping strategies may experience different outcomes. Any number of variables may affect the efficacy of coping strategies; perhaps exploration of this issue might begin by examining demographic variables such as sex, education, or job type.

Finally, because self-efficacy emerged as the sole significant predictor of employment status at the end of this study, it would be useful to investigate further the sources and role of self-efficacy in dealing with job loss. In particular, the idea should be explored that some of the other coping resources may themselves be sources of self-efficacy. If this is true, it would suggest that coping resources are important in the job loss situation, even if they do not operate through coping strategies.

Conclusion

This study has tried to extend the job loss literature by examining how individuals cope with the experience. In
doing so, it has focused attention on the idea that job loss does not end when a person walks out of the organization, but is in fact an ongoing experience in which individuals must and do take an active role. The study has also tried to explore to some degree the complex issue of coping. Further studies of this type may ultimately provide insight which will help managers improve their handling of terminations while simultaneously helping individual victims cope more effectively with what is likely to be an increasingly common phenomenon (Latack & Dozier, 1986). The relative lack of significant findings of this study does not make the problem of job loss any less important. It simply confirms the need for more research in an area that may provide important personal, managerial, and societal information (Leana & Ivancevich, 1987).
References


Appendix A

Measures of Health

1. How many visits have you made to doctors within the past 6 months? 

2. How many days within the past 6 months have you been sick in bed (unable to perform regular activities)? 

3. How many different medications do you take daily? 

4. Overall, would you describe your physical health as: (circle one)

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<td></td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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Appendix B

Measures of Locus of Control

Instructions: Please indicate which of the two statements provide in each item listed below BETTER represents your attitude.

1. a. In the long run, people get the respect they deserve in this world.
   b. Unfortunately, an individual's work often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.

2. a. The idea that most teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.
   b. Most students don't realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.

3. a. Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader.
   b. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.

4. a. Becoming a success is a matter of hard work; luck has little or nothing to do with it.
   b. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.

5. a. In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.
   b. Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.

6. a. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.
   b. Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability; luck has little to do with it.

7. a. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.
   b. There is really no such thing as "luck".

8. a. With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.
   b. It is difficult for people to have control over things politicians do in office.

9. a. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.
   b. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.
Appendix B continued

10. a. What happens to me is my own doing.
   b. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.

11. a. Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do.
    b. In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as on a local basis.


Note: In each pair, the item underlined indicates external locus of control.
Appendix C

Measures of Perceived Self-Efficacy

The statements below indicate how certain you are to be able to find an alternative job which is better than or equal to your previous job in a given period of time. Please circle the number that best describes your belief about your ability to find such a job. For example, for Item 1, if you are absolutely certain that you will be able to find a suitable alternative job within the next six months, you should circle 100. If you are absolutely uncertain that you will be able to find a suitable alternative job within the next six months, you should circle 0. If you are somewhat certain, somewhat uncertain, circle a number in between that best describes your degree of certainty. Please complete the rest of the items in the same manner.

1. I will be able to find a suitable job within the next 6 months.

   0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100%
   Completely Certain
   Completely Uncertain

2. I will be able to find a suitable job within the next 5 months.

   0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100%
   Completely Certain
   Completely Uncertain

3. I will be able to find a suitable job within the next 4 months.

   0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100%
   Completely Certain
   Completely Uncertain

4. I will be able to find a suitable job within the next 3 months.

   0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100%
   Completely Certain
   Completely Uncertain
Appendix C continued

5. I will be able to find a suitable job within the next 2 months.

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6. I will be able to find a suitable job within the next 1 month.

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Appendix D

Measures of Problem-Solving Skills

For each of the following questions, indicate the extent to which the statement describes you (is true of you), or the extent to which you agree with it.

1️⃣  2️⃣  3️⃣  4️⃣  5️⃣

Extremely Not at all

1. I am talking to a lot of people trying to get information that might help me find a new job. *(I)*
2. I'm reading books and articles that have advice on job hunting. *(I)*
3. I'm trying to learn as much as possible about all kinds of jobs which might be available. *(I)*
4. I don't rely on other people much for information or help in finding a new job. *(I)*
5. I'm looking for a new job in new and different ways and places than I have before. *(AL)*
6. I'm doing a lot of thinking and planning about how to find a new job. *(AN)*
7. I have analyzed what my needs and requirements are for a new job. *(AN)*
8. I have a good idea of what my strengths and weaknesses are. *(AN)*
9. I haven't thought much about exactly what I'm looking for in a new job. *(AN)*
10. I'm really not sure what kind of job I'm best qualified for. *(AN)*
11. I haven't any definite plans on how I'm going to look for a new job. *(AN)*
12. I have lots of ideas on how and where to look for a
Appendix D continued

13. I'm spending most of my time trying to find the same kind of job I had before.  * (AL)

14. I'm considering many types of jobs that are different from things I've done before.  (AL)

15. I'm only willing to take a job similar to something I've done before.  * (AL)

16. I really don't know how or where to look for a job.  * (AL)

17. I can think of lots of companies to call that might be able to hire me or give me some leads.  (AL)

18. I'm carefully looking at the advantages and disadvantages of each new job possibility.  (E)

19. I'm willing to take almost any job.  * (E)

20. I'd be willing to turn down a job offer if I decided it really wasn't what I wanted or needed.  (E)

21. I think if the money is right, one job is as good as another.  * (E)

22. I haven't thought much about the consequences of accepting various job offers.  * (E)

23. I can clearly see that some jobs have advantages over others, even if they pay the same.  (E)

* Items which are to be scored negatively.

The letters in parentheses indicate the aspect of problem-solving skills that item is designed to measure:

I = information search

AN = analysis (situation and self) and planning

AL = generation of alternatives

E = evaluation of alternatives
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These consist of pages: 116-117
Appendix F

Measures of Social Support

List below the first name of the 4 people you would be most likely to turn to for help in stressful situations. Then rate each person on the list on a 1 - 5 scale (1 = not at all, 5 = extremely) for each of the five following questions:

1. How much did this person give you information, suggestions and guidance over the last month that you found helpful?

2. How reliable is this person? (Is this person there when you need him/her)?

3. How much does this person boost your spirits when you feel low?

4. How much does this person make you feel he/she cares about you?

5. How much do you feel you can confide in this person?

Appendix G

Measures of Material Resources

1. Given your current liquid assets (cash and items which could easily be converted to cash), estimate how long you would be able to survive (assuming your usual expenditures and no unforeseen emergencies) before you totally exhausted these assets.
   A. Less than one month (1)
   B. One to three months (2)
   C. Four to six months (3)
   D. Seven months to a year (4)
   E. Over a year (5)

2. Overall, which of the following best describes your current financial condition?
   A. Excellent (5)
   B. Good (4)
   C. Fair (3)
   D. Poor (2)
   E. Very poor (1)
Appendix H
Measures of Organizational Support

Answer the following questions concerning the last organization for which you worked.

1. How many weeks of severance pay (if any) did you receive, in terms of your regular pay? _____ weeks

2. Did the organization provide you with any guidance or counseling to help you find new employment?
   ____ No  ____ Yes

3. Did the organization provide you with any guidance or counseling to help you cope with losing your job?
   ____ No  ____ Yes

4. Did the organization provide you with any of the following? (Check all that apply)
   ____ Secretarial help to type resumes and/or cover letters.
   ____ Free use of xeroxing facilities
   ____ Free use of long distance phone service

5. Did the organization give you any actual job leads (names of people or organizations to call)?
   ____ No  ____ Yes (How many? _____)

6. Did the organization provide any other kinds of assistance not already mentioned?
   ____ No  ____ Yes (Briefly describe)
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These consist of pages: 121-132
Appendix L

Other Outcome Measures

Answer the following questions about your new job.

1. What is your job title?

2. What type of industry or organization do you work for?

3. How many hours (on the average) do you work per week?

4. Compared to your last job, how much does your new job pay?

   - The same
   - $1 - $300 per month less
   - $301 - $600 per month less
   - $601 - $900 per month less
   - Over $900 per month less
   - $1 - $300 per month more
   - $301 - $600 per month more
   - $601 - $900 per month more
   - Over $900 per month more

5. How long were you unemployed (Count from your last day on your last job to your first day on your new job)?

   - Less than two weeks
   - Two to four weeks
   - One month to six weeks
   - Six weeks to two months
   - Over two months

6. How did you find your new job?
VITA
Barbara H. Holmes

Home Address: 7600 Ridgemont Drive
Newburgh, Indiana 47630
(812)853-7690

Work Address: School of Business Administration
University of Evansville
1800 Lincoln Avenue
Evansville, Indiana 47722
(812)479-2854

Education:
December 1988 - Ph.D. in Business Administration
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Major: Management
Minor: Marketing
Dissertation Topic: Coping with Job Loss: An Investigation of the Impact of Coping Resources on Coping Strategies and Outcomes

August 1978 - M.S. Management
Louisiana State University

December 1976 - Master of Library Science
Louisiana State University

June 1970 - B.A. German
State University of New York at Buffalo

Educational Honors:
LSU representative to Doctoral Consortium in Personnel, August 1986
Phi Beta Kappa
B.A. summa cum laude
New York State Regents Scholar
National Merit Scholar

Academic Work Experience:
August 1988 - present
Assistant Professor of Management
University of Evansville
Courses taught: Principles of Management, Organizational Behavior
August 1980 - May 1987
Assistant Professor of Management
University of Southwestern Louisiana
Courses taught: Organizational Behavior,
Human Resources Management, Principles

Also taught numerous short courses
for practitioners through the USL
Business and Industry Training
Service

January 1977 - May 1978
Graduate Assistant, Department of Management
Louisiana State University

January 1976 - December 1976
Library Trainee(Graduate Assistant)
Louisiana State University

Other Work Experience:
January 1979 - June 1980
Administrator, Training and Development
Blue Cross of Louisiana
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

March 1971 - August 1975
Subject and Language Specialist
Yale University Library
New Haven, Connecticut

September 1970 - January 1971
German Teacher
Genesee Humboldt Junior High School
Buffalo, New York
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Barbara Harlock Holmes

Major Field: Business Administration (Management)

Title of Dissertation: Coping With Job Loss: An Investigation of the Impact of Coping Resources on Coping Strategies and Outcomes

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination: September 12, 1988