

## **Coping type and the professional degree reinsertion for the unemployed**

Elena-Nicoleta **Bordea** and Angelo **Pellegrini**<sup>i</sup>

---

**Abstract:** *Unemployment represents a stress factor which together with other individual characteristics, such as the coping type, affects the professional reinsertion in a negative way. The objective of our paper is to evaluate whether the professional reinsertion of the unemployed people is influenced by the type of coping. We conducted a survey with 208 respondents (102 men and 106 women), aged between 20 and 65 years, from the urban area, being unemployed, selected using the method of simple random sampling. A cross-sectional survey was performed using the following research instruments: a psychiatric interview and the Brief COPE scale.*

*Our results show that 59.2% from the unemployed people with coping focused on issue were hired in 6 months, while the unemployed people with coping focused on emotion were hired in a percentage of 32,2%. The unemployed people with avoiding coping had the lowest hiring degree (10%). We conclude that the persons who have coping focused on issue are reintegrated faster than those with coping focused on emotion and those with avoiding coping.*

---

**Key words:** *unemployed people, coping, professional reinsertion, Brief COPE scale.*

**JEL Classifications:** F66, I12

### **Introduction**

The job loss implies a deterioration of the living standard, because of the financial safety, causing an anxiety that life is out of control for the individual. There are many published surveys that approach the connection between unemployment, stress and mental health, most of them suggesting that the unemployment is a stress factor which together with other individual characteristics, such as the coping, affects the professional reinsertion in a negative way (Janda et al., 2013; Strielkowski and Čábelková, 2015; Ehrenberger et al., 2015).

---

<sup>i</sup> MD, PhD Titan Psychiatric Hospital Dr. C. Gorgos, „Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Bucharest, Romania. E-mails: lilianabordea2015@gmail.com, pellegrini.angelo@gmail.com

The coping strategies are the actions undertaken by the individual in order to cope with some specific difficulties and/or preserving a good feeling.

The objective of our paper is to report the findings of the survey that was conducted to evaluate whether the professional reinsertion of the unemployed people is influenced by the type of coping.

## **Materials and method**

The survey participants were 208 persons (102 men and 106 women), aged between 20 and 65 de ani, from the urban area, being unemployed, selected using the method of simple random sampling.

The participants selection was performed at the headquarters of the Municipal Agency for Employment in Bucharest, based on volunteering and expressed free consent, after a psychiatric interview and some inclusion and exclusion criterias, in 2014.

The inclusion criteria of the unemployed people from the survey were: men and women from the urban area, at least one month after they became unemployed, aged between 20 and 65 years; education level: without secondary education, with secondary education, with higher education.

Exclusion criteria: the following unemployed people were excluded from the survey: people diagnosed with severe mental disorders previously or during the selection interview and those with severe somatic disorders or that can influence the mental condition deeply; people addicted to alcohol, drugs, or other psychotropic substances and the persons who did not provide correct and complete information.

The examined population was represented by the sampling extracted from the reference population (unemployed people) and presented its characteristics.

The independent variables used were the age and the gender. The dependent variables used were the type of coping and the professional reintegration.

A cross-sectional survey was performed, using the following research instruments:

- a psychiatric interview in order to notice whether there are important mental disorders that require special attention,
- Brief COPE scale.
  
- In order to indentify the coping strategies, we chose the Brief COPE questionnaire (translation and adaptation in Romanian, by S. C. Carver, 1997).
- The COPE questionnaire implies 14 forms of coping that can be mainly active or passive. The questionnaire includes 28 statements.

## COPING TYPE AND THE PROFESSIONAL DEGREE REINSERTION FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

The answer is on a scale from 1 to 4 where 1 represents „I usually do not do this”, and 4 „I often do this”.

- The 14 scales corresponding to the coping strategies are:
  - *The active coping* refers to the concrete actions that have the purpose to remove the stress factor or the alleviation of its effects ( items 2, 7)- coping focused on issue
  - *Withdrawal* refers to the withdrawal from the situation created ( items 1, 19)- avoiding coping
  - *Denial* refers to the refuse to believe that the stress factor exists or to the actions undertaken that ignore the stress factor as if it was not real (items 3 , 8)- avoiding coping
  - *Consuming substances and alcohol* refers to using the anxiolytic medication or alcohol in order to alleviate the mental discomfort derived from the confrontation with the threatening situation (items 4, 11).- avoiding coping
  - *Emotional support* refers to the way the person tends to ask for understanding, compassion or moral support from friends, relatives, colleagues in order to diminish the stress ( items 5, 15)- coping focused on emotion
  - *Social instrumental support* evaluates the tendency to ask for advice, information, material help necessary for the actions to alleviate the situation ( items 10, 23)- coping focused on issue
  - *Disengagement* evaluates the response tendency to stress by reducing the effort or abandoning in reaching the goal. (items 6, 16)- avoiding coping
  - *Emotional ( expressing) release* underlines the tendency of the person to reduce the level stress by expressing his feelings and negative emotions ( items 9, 21)- avoiding coping
  - *The positive reinterpretation* identifies the tendency of a person to benefit even from an undisable situation or with bad consequences ( items 12, 17)- active coping
  - *Planning* refers to the way of thinking how to act (items 14, 25)- active coping
  - *Humor* ( items 18, 28)- avoiding coping
  - *Acceptance* refers to the resignation that nothing can be done in order to improve the situation (items 20, 24)- avoiding coping
  - *Self-accusation* (items 13, 26)- coping focused on emotion

- *Religion* refers to the way the subject asks for the help of God in insecure moments - coping focused on emotion

The questionnaire items were created such way the same instrument can allow the examination both of the coping moods, but also the coping answers regarding a specific situation. The difference is the instruction provided to the subject. When the *coping style* is evaluated, the subject is required to answer how he acts, generally speaking, when he faces difficult or stressful situations. In order to evaluate the *situational coping*, the subject will choose the answers that reflect the best the way he acted in a specific situation.

The statistical analysis of the information was performed with SPSS application, using:

- hi-square test in order to check whether there are significant differences between unemployed people, regarding the reintegration degree, differences determined by the type of coping
- the logistical regression in order to quantify the chances of the professional reintegration of the unemployed people after the type of coping.

## Results and debates

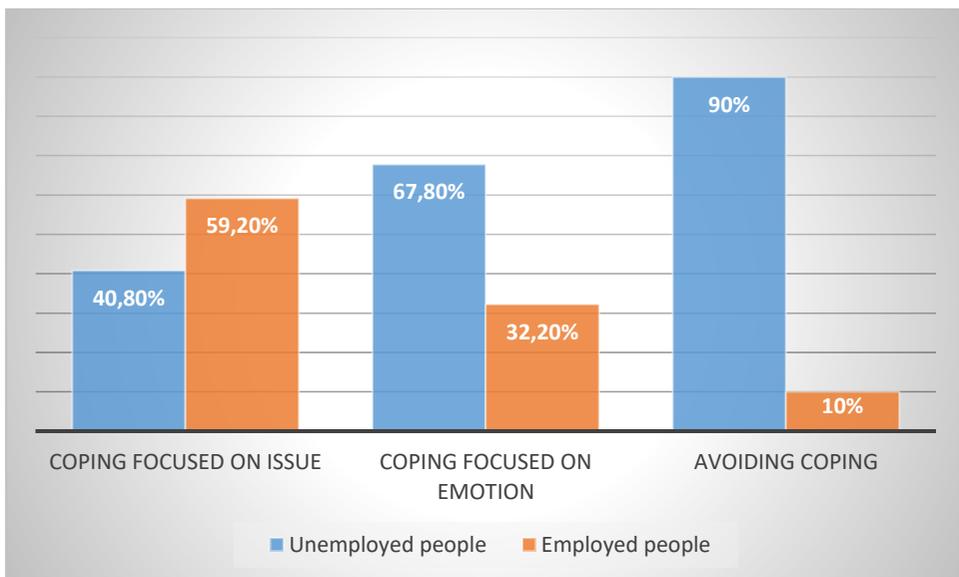
About 59.2% from the unemployed people with coping focused on issue, were hired in 6 months, while the unemployed people with coping focused on emotion were hired with a percentage of 32,2%. The unemployed people with avoiding coping had the lowest employment degree (10%) (table 1, figure 1).

**Table 1:** The distribution of the unemployed people according to the type of coping and the final status

Type of coping	% out of	Unemployed people	Employed people
Focused on issue	Coping	40,8%	59,2%
	Final status	22,6%	57%
Focused on emotion	Coping	67,8%	32,2%
	Final status	44,5%	36,7%
Avoiding	Coping	90%	10%
	Final status	32,8%	6,3%

Source: Own results

## COPING TYPE AND THE PROFESSIONAL DEGREE REINSERTION FOR THE UNEMPLOYED



**Figure 1:** The distribution of the unemployed people according to coping and final status

*Source: Own results*

A level of empirical significance with null value for the hi-square test indicates the fact that there are significant differences between unemployed people regarding the reintegration degree, differences determined by the type of coping (table 2).

**Table 2:** Differences between unemployed people regarding the professional reintegration degree according to the type of coping

	Value	Freedom degrees	Asymptotic significance
Hi-square Pearson	31,744	2	0
Verisimilitude report	35,264	2	0
Linear association	32,466	1	0

*Source: Own results*

The logistical regression model suggested in order to quantify the faster reintegration chances of the unemployed people with coping focused on issue is a valid model (the empirical limit of significance is 0, less than 0,05). According to Bratu, the dependent variable (the final status, written down with Y) takes values between 0 or 1, while the independent variable one takes

real values (the type of coping in our case, written down with X). The probability for a case to be in a specific category is written down with p. The chances report of an event or the verisimilitude report is  $p/(1-p)$  and it written down with OR. The logarithm of the chances report is :  $ln \frac{p}{1-p} = b_0 + b_1X + \varepsilon$ . The parameters that need to be estimated are  $b_0$  and  $b_1$ . A unitary report of the chances shows that if X increases with one unit, the chances stay the same, meaning X does not influence Y. An extraunitary report of the chances shows that an increase with one unit of the exogenous variable, the level of the dependent variable increases  $e^{\widehat{b}_1}$  times. An OR smaller than one implies a decrease of  $e^{\widehat{b}_1}$  of the dependent variable.

**Table 3:** Logistical regression regarding the professional reintegration of the unemployed people according the type of coping

	B	The standard error	Wald statistics	Freedom degrees	Significance	Exp(B)
Coping	-1,229	0,228	29,024	1	0	0,292
constancy	1,641	0,415	15,636	1	0	5,162

Source: Own results

The chances for the unemployed people with coping focused on issue to be reintegrated are 5,162 higher than the chances of those with coping focused on emotion. Therefore, the persons with dominant coping focused on issue are reintegrated faster than the persons with dominant coping focused on emotion and those with avoiding coping (Table 3).

## Conclusions

Overall, our investigation revealed that unemployment might represent and often yields as a stress factor that, together with other individual characteristics, such as the type of coping, might affect the professional of individuals reinsertion in a negative way.

It appears that in this way unemployment creates distortions on the labour market and negatively influences its balancing. Moreover, the issue might reach increased proportions in the times of uncertainty (e.g. economic turmoil or financial and economic crisis).

Our results show that the persons with dominant coping focused on issue are reintegrated faster than those with coping focused on emotion and those with

## COPING TYPE AND THE PROFESSIONAL DEGREE REINSERTION FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

avoiding coping. These results might be useful for managers and labour market specialists dealing with the devastating impact of unemployment.

### References

- Billings, A. G., Moos, R. H. (1981). The role of coping responses and social resources in attenuating the stress of life events, *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 4(2), 139-157
- Carver C.S., Scheier M.F. (1994). Situational coping and coping dispositions in a stressful transaction. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 66(1), 184-195
- Dollard, M. F., & Winefield, A. H. (2002). Mental health: overemployment, underemployment, unemployment and healthy jobs. *Australian e-Journal for the Advancement of Mental Health*, 1(3), 170-195
- Ehrenberger, M., Koudelkova, P., & Strielkowski, W. (2015). Factors influencing innovation in small and medium enterprises in the Czech Republic. *Periodica Polytechnica. Social and Management Sciences*, 23(2), 73-83
- Gowan, M. A., Gatewood, R.D. (1997). A model of response to the stress of involuntary job loss. *Human Resources Management Review*, 7, 227-298
- Horowitz M. J. (2003). *Treatment of Stress Response Syndromes*, American Psychiatric Publ., Washington, DC.
- Janda, K., Rausser, G., & Strielkowski, W. (2013). Determinants of Profitability of Polish Rural Micro-Enterprises at the Time of EU Accession. *Eastern European Countryside*, 19, 177-217
- Lazarus, R. S. (1993). Coping theory and research: past, present, and future. *Psychosomatic medicine*, 55(3), 234-247.
- Lazarus, R., S., Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal and coping*, Ed. Springer, New York.
- Limm H, Heinmüller M, Liel K, Seeger K, Gundel H, Kimil A, Angerer P. (2012). Factors associated with differences in perceived health among German long-term unemployed, *BMC Public Health*.
- Marmot MG., Bell R. (2009). How will the financial crisis affect health? *British Medical Journal* 338, 1314.
- Riga, S., Riga, D. (2008). *Stresologie, adaptologie si sănătate mintală*; ed. Cartea Universitaria.
- Scheier, M. F., & Carver, C. S. (1992). Effects of optimism on psychological and physical well-being: Theoretical overview and empirical update. *Cognitive therapy and research*, 16(2), 201-228.

- Scheier, M. F., Weintraub, J. K., & Carver, C. S. (1986). Coping with stress: divergent strategies of optimists and pessimists. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 51(6), 1257-1264.
- Simmons J., Kalichman S., Santrock J. (1994). Human Adjustment. New York: Mcgraw-Hill College Division.
- Strielkowski, W., & Čábelková, I. (2015). Religion, Culture, and Tax Evasion: Evidence from the Czech Republic. *Religions*, 6(2), 657-669
- Taylor S., Aspinwall L. (1996). Mediating and moderating processes in psychosocial stress, in *Psychosocial Stress*, ed. Kaplan H., Academic Press, New York.
- Zlate, N., & Negovan, V. (2006). Strategii de adaptare a studenților la mediul universitar, Editura Universitară, București.