



Hostility and unemployment: A two-way relationship? [☆]



Christian Hakulinen ^a, Markus Jokela ^a, Mirka Hintsanen ^{b,a}, Laura Pulkki-Råback ^a,
Marko Elovainio ^c, Taina Hintsanen ^a, Nina Hutri-Kähönen ^d, Jorma Viikari ^e,
Olli T. Raitakari ^{f,g}, Liisa Keltikangas-Järvinen ^{a,*}

^a IBS, Unit of Personality, Work and Health Psychology, University of Helsinki, Finland

^b Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, University of Helsinki, Finland

^c National Institute for Health and Welfare, Helsinki, Finland

^d Department of Pediatrics, University of Tampere and Tampere University Hospital, Finland

^e Department of Medicine, University of Turku and Turku University Hospital, Finland

^f Research Centre of Applied and Preventive Cardiovascular Medicine, University of Turku, Finland

^g Department of Clinical Physiology and Nuclear Medicine, Turku University Hospital, Finland

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 14 December 2012

Available online 15 April 2013

Keywords:

Unemployment

Hostility

Personality

Longitudinal

Finland

Population based

ABSTRACT

Previous studies have indicated that personality can lead to selection into unemployment, and that unemployment can adversely influence psychological well-being. This study examined the relationship between trait hostility and unemployment, hypothesizing a two-way relationship. Participants were from the Young Finns study that began in 1980, including 2097 (56% women) individuals followed over 15 years from 1992 to 2007. Short-term unemployment within the preceding year was reported in 2001 and current unemployment status was reported in 2007. Long-term history of unemployment was reported in 2001 and 2007. Results showed that high hostility is associated with higher risk of becoming unemployed and having longer unemployment duration. Being unemployed predicted higher hostility in the short-term, but not over the long-term after adjustments for participant's own and parental educational level. Thus, personality factors are involved in the self-selection into unemployment and unemployment can influence short-term personality change.

© 2013 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Numerous studies indicate that unemployment can lead to poor health and mental health problems (McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005; Paul & Moser, 2009; Wanberg, 2012). A recent meta-analysis concluded that the unemployed have worse mental health than the employed individuals by the difference of half standard deviation in cross-sectional studies (Paul and Moser, 2009). Similar difference was found also in longitudinal studies, but the effect size was somewhat smaller (Paul and Moser, 2009). Unemployment has also been linked with suicide (Chen, Chou, Lai, & Lee, 2010; Classen & Dunn, 2012) and mortality (Eliason & Storrie, 2009; Roelfs, Shor, Davidson, & Schwartz, 2011; Sullivan and Von Wachter, 2009), especially in those who lose their job during early career (Roelfs et al., 2011). However, this relationship seems to be mediated by societal and economic factors (McLeod, Lavis, MacNab, & Hertzman, 2012), and is therefore not found consistently (e.g., Martikainen, Mäki, & Jäntti, 2007).

Many people become unemployed because of external reasons that are beyond the individual's influence, including economic depression or lay-offs due to organizational changes. However, there is also evidence that individual differences in personality characteristics may be related to self-selection into unemployment. Low self-control of emotions, i.e. aggressive behavior, in childhood has been shown to directly and also indirectly predict long-term unemployment in adulthood (Kokko & Pulkkinen, 2000; Kokko, Pulkkinen, & Puustinen, 2000). In addition, temperament traits high negative emotionality and low activity have been shown

[☆] Conflicts of interest statement: No conflicts declared.

* Corresponding author at: IBS, Unit of Personality Work and Health Psychology, University of Helsinki, P.O. Box 9, FIN-00014 University of Helsinki, Finland.
Fax: +358 9 191 29521.

E-mail address: liisa.keltikangas-jarvinen@helsinki.fi (L. Keltikangas-Järvinen).

to predict unemployment and the duration of unemployment in adulthood (Hintsanen et al., 2009). Higher hostility has also been found to predict poor health outcomes in numerous studies (Chida & Steptoe, 2009; Miller, Smith, Turner, Guijarro, & Hallet, 1996; Smith, 1992), leading to increase in number of sickness absences (Vahtera, Kivimäki, Koskenvuo, & Pentti, 1997) that in turn are likely to be associated with higher unemployment risk (e.g., Virtanen et al., 2006). High hostility in combination with unemployment has also been found to be associated with poor health (Kivimäki et al., 2003). Altogether, it seems that personality characteristics might contribute to the probability of ending up unemployed.

In the current study, we focused on examining the association between hostility and unemployment. Typically hostility is defined as cynical attitudes and distrust to others. In terms of five factor model of personality (Digman, 1990), this corresponds to low agreeableness, high neuroticism and low extraversion (Tremblay & Ewart, 2005; Watson & Clark, 1992). There is evidence that hostile individuals interpret other people's intentions pessimistically (Guyl & Madon, 2003; Larkin, Martin, & McClain, 2002), which can lead to social conflicts at the workplace. High level of hostility is also related to low social support (Benotsch, Christensen, & McKelvey, 1997; Heponiemi et al., 2006; Smith, Pope, Sanders, Allred, & O'Keeffe, 1988), and individuals with high hostility do not benefit from social networks as much as individuals with low hostility (Seeman & Syme, 1987; Watkins, Ward, Southard, & Fisher, 1992). Hostile individuals tend to view their environment as being more hostile toward them, are probably not very good at giving social support to work colleagues, are easily left outside from social networks at work, and due to their own hostile behavior are more prone to have conflicts at work. Ill-health effect of hostility also supports the possibility that hostility could contribute to the probability of ending up unemployed.

Thus, findings to date suggest that there may be a bidirectional relationship between hostility and unemployment, but to our knowledge there are no previous studies examining this. In the current study, we set out to examine whether there is a two-way relationship between hostility and unemployment. Previous studies examining the associations of hostility and unemployment have been either cross-sectional or used small ($n < 400$) longitudinal samples (Kivimäki et al., 2003; Kokko & Pulkkinen, 2000; Kokko et al., 2000). Based on previous findings, we assumed that high hostility would lead to selection into unemployment and that being unemployed would lead to higher hostility. We also hypothesized that these associations would be partly attenuated by socioeconomic position, i.e. education, which has been previously shown to influence associations between personality characteristics and general life outcomes (e.g., Chapman, Fiscella, Kawachi, & Duberstein, 2010; Nabi et al., 2008).

1. Method

1.1. Participants

Participants for the current study were selected from the ongoing population based Young Finns study that began in 1980 (Åkerblom et al., 1991; Raitakari et al., 2008). The original sample ($n = 3596$) included randomly selected children and adolescents from six age cohorts (3, 6, 9, 12, 15 and 18 years-old at the baseline). Random selection was done by dividing Finland into five areas according to the locations of university cities with a medical school (Helsinki, Kuopio, Oulu, Tampere, and Turku). Based on personal social security number, urban and rural boys and girls were randomly selected from each of the five areas. Written informed consent was obtained from participants who were at least 9 years old and from the parents of younger participants. The study was approved by local ethics committees. For the present study follow-up examinations from years 1983, 1992, 2001, and 2007 were used. Hostility was measured three times: in 1992, 2001 and 2007. Parental education was assessed in 1983. Unemployment and its duration were measured 2001 and 2007. Participant's own education level was assessed in 2001.

Descriptive statistics of the study group are presented in Table 1. Data were available from 2097 (56% women) participants of whom 2074 reported the unemployment status between 1992 and 2001, and 1991 participants reported the duration of unemployment between 1992 and 2000. In addition, unemployment status at 2001 was reported by 1562 participants and unemployment status at 2007 by 1624 participants. Finally, 1517 participants reported the unemployment status history (yes/no) and 1465 participants reported the total number of unemployment months in 2007.

Differences between the original sample and current study sample in demographics were analyzed using χ^2 -test and t-test. Compared with original population, excluded participants were more likely to be men (56.1% of the excluded participants were men vs. 44.0% of the included participants were men, $p < .001$), slightly older (mean ages in 2001: 31.8 vs. 31.2, $p < .001$), and had slightly higher scores in some of the hostility measures (mean paranoia score in 2001: 2.44 vs. 2.31, $p < .001$; mean paranoia score in 2007: 2.23 vs. 2.14, $p < .01$; mean cynicism score in 1992: 2.90 vs. 2.82, $p < .05$; mean cynicism score in 2001: 2.83 vs. 2.71, $p < .01$).

The association between adulthood temperament traits and unemployment was investigated in a previous study using the same dataset (Hintsanen et al., 2009). However, in the current study we included an additional follow-up in 2007 where status of unemployment, life course history of unemployment, and hostility were measured. This enables examination of potential reciprocal relationships between unemployment and hostility.

2. Measures

2.1. Hostility

Two core components of hostility, cynicism and paranoia, were measured at three time points (1992, 2001 and 2007) using self-report instruments. Cynicism was measured using scale that was derived from the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/886880>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/886880>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)