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**The Impact of Perceived Economic Resources on
Role Stress and Job Insecurity among "Survivors" of Downsizing**

Julie Donaldson

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Masters of Arts

Department of Psychology, Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

August, 1996

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**The Impact of Perceived Economic Resources on Role Stress and Job Insecurity
Among "Survivors" of Downsizing**

submitted by Julie Donaldson, B. A. Hon., in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

Thesis Supervisor

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August, 1996

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is focused on the work stress which may accompany downsizing within an organizational setting. Jick (1985) reported that employees are subject to "job insecurity" resulting from the uncertainty of job loss that accompanies downsizing. The present research examined job insecurity and role stress intrinsic to task performance in relation to economic resources as a coping variable. Economic resources included perceptions of alternative employment opportunities, skill transferability, and preparedness to seek other employment opportunities. As hypothesized, economic resources accounted for significant variability in job insecurity but not role stress. Implications of these results are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a growing body of research concerned with the impact of downsizing in relation to work stress reactions among employees (Brockner, 1988, Jick, 1985, Kinicki, 1985, McGrath, 1976) and factors such as job security and job satisfaction have been investigated for their influence on job performance and productivity (Greenhalgh, 1983, Brockner, Grover, Reed & DeWitt, 1992a).

There is also research on the mitigating effects of coping mechanisms, including social support, internal and external resources, and stress management skills, in relation to organizational stressors (e.g., Beehr & Bhagat, 1985, Jick, 1985).

The purpose of this thesis is to examine one's perceived economic resources as a coping factor during organizational downsizing.

The Theoretical Foundation

Figure 1 depicts Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) definition of stress as "a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources (p. 11)" Jick (1985).

Figure 1

developed a model of stress that integrated four major components of stress: (1) environmental demands or stressors, (2) cognitive appraisal, (3) stress responses, and (4) individual differences and coping (see Figure 1). Environmental demands may be stressful only in so far as they are perceived (cognitive appraisal) by the individual as such. An individual's perceptions of what is stressful, Jick argues, is likely to be tempered by uncertainty, importance and duration, "it is the uncertainty, not knowing whether one has sufficient resources and coping strength to meet future demands, which primarily determines the initial level of experienced stress (Jick, 1985, p. 89)." Using a similar conceptual framework Beehr and Bhagat (1985) define stress as "a cognitive state in which an individual confronts a decision-making or problem-solving situation characterized by high levels of uncertainty, associated with obtaining important outcomes and, in which existence of such uncertainties is long in duration (p. 6)." Again, the definition incorporates three components, (1) uncertainty, (2) importance and (3) duration. In the context of organizational downsizing, uncertainty may relate to the unpredictability of being laid-off as well as to ambiguity about the consequences of on-going change in the work-place. Importance may deal with the costs (both financial and psychological) associated with being laid off. Beehr and Bhagat (1985) suggest that costs include economic factors such as the inability to financially support a family or maintain a mortgage, as well as psychological costs such as the perceived

loss of a prestigious position. Duration refers to the time-frame or span of uncertainty. The longer in duration of the stressful events, the more the cumulative stress (McGrath, 1976).

All such definitions of stress incorporate the underlying influence of perceived resources in moderating the stress reaction. Economic factors may be seen as a perceived resource (Beehr & Bhagat, 1985; McGrath, 1976; Jick, 1985) and may include a financial safety net or savings, having the earning power of a spouse or partner to assist, and economic factors may be seen as the perception of the individual regarding the availability of alternative employment opportunities. Perceived resources may include one's financial situation, as well as such organizational factors as membership in a union or coalition that actively resists the effects of layoffs and attempts to prevent further layoffs. The support and efforts made by the union may act as a cushion against the fear of job loss, adding to one's sense of control over a situation. Management's communications that deal honestly with the situation may also dispel uncertainty. Perceived personal resources may encompass coping skills such as stress management skills or the availability of social support. Coping entails the efforts one is able to put forth to manage demands (and conflicts) that might otherwise exceed a person's resources.

Work Stress

There appears to be little question that organizational downsizing and employment uncertainty are experienced by many people as stressful. Jick (1985) reported that as organizations adapt to leaner times, employees are subject to multiple sources of stress. These include the uncertainty and instability of their work lives in face of constant change and decline, the fear of job loss, the burden of doing more with less as a result of decreased staff, the pressure to cut costs wherever possible, the increase in paperwork to document changes, the strain between management and staff over changes, and the fear that job performance would be affected. "In short, it is a stress situation that is likely to contain many more demands and constraints than opportunities (Jick, 1985, p.84)". Jick added that individuals may be uncertain whether they will perform well when they perceive themselves to be overloaded, under unrealistic deadlines, and in chronic conflict with their coworkers over scarce resources.

Cutbacks in personnel may be intended to reduce an organization's workforce with the aim of increasing productivity through cost cutting. Few organizations, however, report real increase in productivity (Noer, 1994). Increased stress on the employees may result in effects such as decreased job satisfaction and organizational commitment which, in turn, erodes productive effort and results in higher turnover of employees (Brockner, Grover & Blonder,

1988). Organizations may incur costs associated with rehiring and retraining people for key positions that cut into cost savings initially projected. Employees may also resist change especially if they view the cutbacks to be unfair (Brockner, 1988). In addition, costs may be incurred to provide outplacement assistance for employees. Brockner (1988, 1990) posit that employees are in general, more accepting of their manager's decisions regarding layoffs when they receive clear explanations for these decisions. Individuals who feel they did not receive an adequate account of the layoffs, are likely to express anger and guilt resulting in increased levels of stress, reduced organizational commitment and work effort, and higher turnover intentions.

The preventative measures needed to offset the potential negative consequences may be quite costly to the organization. The uncertainty of job loss that accompanies downsizing may be stressful if viewed as important to the individual, and especially if the uncertainty is prolonged (Beehr & Bhagat, 1985; Jick, 1985; Latack & Dozier, 1986). Surviving downsizing may be stressful depending on the individual's economic resources (Brockner et al., 1992a; Jick, 1985) or when prospects for alternative employment look bleak. The economic climate in Canada is undergoing change. In the first three months of 1995, 132,000 Canadians became unemployed (Statistics Canada, 1995). The newly

unemployed include employees from the federal government, private industry, and the health care system (Treasury Board, 1995; "Bell to eliminate," 1995).

Role Stress

One type of work stress may be role stress. Organizational literature related to the effects of cutbacks on the individual and the organization has centered on role stress theory according to which individuals experience stress when there are discrepancies between environmental and personal expectations, and the perceived ability to meet the demands of those expectations (Jick, 1985). Several aspects of role stress have been recognized and researched extensively (e.g., Beehr & Bhagat, 1985; Jackson & Schuler, 1985). They include: role ambiguity, role conflict, role insufficiency and role load

Role Ambiguity. Role ambiguity refers to an individual's uncertainty regarding expectations in terms of behavior or performance levels. Brockner, et al. (1988) define role ambiguity as "the uncertainty associated with an individual's performance expectations, how to meet those expectations, and the consequences of having met them (p. 437)". Organizations that have undergone cutbacks must reorganize and redefine the duties and responsibilities of remaining employees, thus increasing the employee's perceived uncertainty.

Role conflict. Role conflict refers to situations in which the individual is faced with playing a role that conflicts with his/her value systems or playing two or more roles that conflict with each other. Several types of role conflict have been identified including intersender role conflict where the demands of two people or groups directly conflict. This type of conflict may be especially evident in an organization that has faced cutbacks where the demands by subordinates for a reduced workload conflict with management expectations of increased productivity. Other types of role conflict include incompatible expectations from a single role sender, incompatibility between work and non-work expectations, and conflicting role demands that clash with the individual's values or personality. Managers in an organization faced with cutbacks may be especially vulnerable to conflicting role demands as they are likely to be asked to increase some employee workloads while reducing the number of staff.

Role load. Role load refers to the amount and nature of the work expected of an employee. Role load involving expectations on the worker beyond what can be handled is called role overload. Role overload is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Quantitative overload is having too many tasks to fulfill within the time frame allotted. Qualitative overload refers to a lack of ability or skills necessary to perform the tasks that may lead to feelings of ineptitude and high levels of exhaustion. One would expect perceptions of role overload to be

high in an organization where fewer people remain to do the same amount of work

Role insufficiency Role insufficiency refers to a lack of fit between individual skill and job requirement. Hackman and Lawler (1971) and Hackman and Oldham (1975) stressed the importance of skill underutilization as a potential stressor. O'Brien (1982) suggested that perception of a match between individual abilities and job requirements should be a predictor of job satisfaction. Evidence of role insufficiency within a downsized environment may be seen when remaining employees with seniority transfer from the position they had strived to attain, to a lower, less challenging position.

VanSell, Brief & Schuler (1981) made a conceptual distinction between types of role stress. Whereas role ambiguity is associated with a lack of clear information, role conflict is the incongruity of the expectations associated with a role though the expectations themselves may be clear. Both role ambiguity and role conflict may prevent an individual from attaining or completing a task. Role overload and role insufficiency are associated with an individual's need for stimulation. Too much stimulation, as well as too little, has been associated with high stress and may also prevent the task from being accomplished (Van Sell et al., 1981). Thus, role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload and role insufficiency are

partly mutually exclusive types of role stress and have the potential for overlap and reciprocal influences

There are a number of studies of the operation of role ambiguity, role conflict and role load within a downsized environment (e.g., Tombaugh & White, 1990; VanSell et al., 1981; Brockner 1988). Tombaugh and White (1990) reported a significant increase in role ambiguity, role conflict and role load in their study of a petrochemical facility that had reduced its workforce by 25%. They found that employees who survived reductions to the workforce suffered increased levels of work related stress and that stress manifested itself in job dissatisfaction and an increased intention to withdraw. They also reported that workers were uncertain about altered job descriptions and new responsibilities. Managers and group members reported difficulties in setting priorities, making decisions, and effectively distributing work loads. Employees reported restricted avenues for effectively communicating concerns and ideas to upper management.

Jackson and Schuler (1985) reported evidence to suggest that participation that fosters feedback and communication may be important in reducing ambiguity and conflict. They suggested that under layoff conditions the potential for disruption in the relationship between management and employees is strong. They found, through a cross-study analysis, that employee participation in decision

making significantly decreased role ambiguity and role conflict and that, in turn, role ambiguity and conflict were directly linked to job satisfaction, job involvement, job performance and organizational commitment (see also e.g., House & Rizzo, 1972; Rizzo, House & Lirtzman, 1970). They suggested that participation in decision making influences two aspects of an individual's work environment: (1) influence over other's role expectations - which could reduce role conflict; (2) and availability of information about role expectations that serves to reduce role ambiguity. The importance of participative decision making have been noted in a number of other studies (e.g., Brockner, Grover, Reed, DeWitt & O'Malley, 1987; Brockner et al., 1992; Davy, Kinicki & Scheck, 1991). For example, Brockner (1990) suggested that communication that keeps the individual informed and feeling like a participant in organizational decision making is one important factor that influences individual's perceptions of the fairness of layoffs. These perceptions have role strain consequences, which in turn contribute to individual affective and behavioral consequences including job satisfaction, job insecurity, organizational commitment, and intention to withdraw.

Brockner et al., (1988) explored factors associated with 'survivors' job involvement subsequent to layoffs. They measured role ambiguity in a downsized environment and found that pre-experimental measures of role stress (prior history of role ambiguity) were unrelated to post-layoff outcomes. Specifically severe

layoff conditions were quite stressful for most or all survivors regardless of prior history of stress. This suggests that most of the remaining employees in any organization are likely to report significant stress related symptoms. Nelson, Cooper and Jackson (1995) pointed to a similar conclusion in their review of the impact of organizational uncertainty on job satisfaction. They noted that, regardless of previous level of satisfaction, satisfaction was more likely to be labile during a period of transition.

Job Insecurity

Role stress may be thought of as intrinsic to job task (e.g., Ashford, Lee & Bobko, 1989; Greenhalgh, 1982, 1983, Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). The present research is based on the idea job insecurity is a distinct source of work stress. Job insecurity is defined as "feeling powerless to maintain desired continuity in a work situation (Greenhalgh, 1983, p. 432)". A sense of powerlessness or lack of control over a situation, particularly if the situation is viewed as important, can result in a stress reaction (Brockner, 1988). A person's sense of powerlessness may be rooted in the belief that they or their manager can take some action to prevent job loss or counteract the negative consequences of job loss. Greenhalgh (1987) suggested that one way to counteract the negative consequences of downsizing is to give the individual a say in the decision making process. Having a say can make all the difference in resulting job insecurity.

consequences, as it adds to one's feeling of control. Further evidence in support of the importance of control comes from research by Brockner, Tyler and Cooper-Schneider (1992b). They explored job insecurity among survivors of downsizing, testing perceived threat and control as moderators of job security. Five hundred and ninety seven respondents were surveyed from a large chain of retail stores which had been recently downsized. The results supported their hypothesis that perceptions of threat and control would moderate job security. Participants with high threat and low control measures rated higher in job insecurity than participants reporting low threat and high control. Brockner et al., (1992) argued that people's behaviours are consistent with their beliefs to the extent that those beliefs are psychologically important to them. It follows that survivor's insecurity will be expressed in their work effort only to the extent that their jobs are important to them. Along a similar dimension, Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) noted that job security appeared to be an important intervening variable between worker's beliefs about the change situation and their stress reaction. These authors stated that job security is based on (1) perceived threat, and (2) perceived importance. Perceived threat was divided into two components; (1) perceived threat of job content, and (2) perceived threat of job loss, and was tempered by the individual's perceptions of importance.

According to Greenhalgh, (1982, 1983) economic factors may be related, as a coping mechanism, to job insecurity. Greenhalgh (1982) argues that there is a qualitative difference in apprehension over a change in one's job and the deep anxiety of the threat of job loss. The former may represent a threat to the fulfillment of higher order needs while the latter is a threat to lower order, basic security needs. The concept of higher order needs and basic security needs is derived from Maslow's (1943) hierarchy where people with higher order needs depend upon the successful performance of their jobs as they gain intrinsic rewards from this success. The threat of a change in job content may reduce overall motivation to work by reducing the expectation that performance leads to valued outcomes. Job loss, on the other hand, may lead to a threat to basic security needs which include food, shelter, clothing and related needs that form the basis for human survival.

Two Ways to Approach Economic Resources

Several studies have looked at the relationship between economic resources and stress. Jick (1985) included economic variables in his discussion of work stress and related outcomes among individuals facing lay-off. Jick discussed two approaches to economic resources. First, economic resources may include financial savings and spousal income and the subsequent need associated with work. The second aspect of economic resources may involve resources as a type

of coping mechanism involving the perceptions an individual has regarding the ability to find alternative employment. He postulated that these economic resources may have a mediating effect on the degree of stress experienced by an individual facing cutbacks. Pearlin, Lieberman, Menaghan and Mullan (1981) looked at the degree to which economic strain had an impact on symptoms of stress. They found that economic strain may act as a mediating variable between an event (job loss) and an outcome (depression). Dooley and Catalano (1980) explored the relationship between economic life changes (e.g., job termination and unemployment experiences) and behavioral disorders such as depression, psychophysiologic symptoms, dissatisfaction with self and suicide. In a longitudinal study of the relationship between status of the economy (e.g., inflation rate, unemployment, industrial mix) and mental health, Dooley and Catalano (1980) found evidence to support the relation between economic change and behavioral disorder. Specifically, they linked unemployment to suicide across studies and job termination to depression, anxiety and dissatisfaction with self. Similar results were reported by Catalano, Dooley and Jackson (1981) who studied the relationship between the use of mental health facilities and changes in economic conditions. They hypothesized that as the economy declined, there would be a marked increase in the number of patients admitted to mental health facilities. The results showed that poor economic conditions were significantly

related to increased inpatient admissions, suggesting that economic resources may have acted as a mediator against some of the health consequences of stress

Carsten and Spector (1987) included unemployment rates as a possible mediator in studying the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. While testing the relationship between satisfaction and turnover, the authors theorized that this relationship would be strong during low unemployment and weak during high unemployment. They argued that even though individuals may not be satisfied with their jobs, they would remain with their employer rather than face unemployment. Conversely, when individuals had employment alternatives, dissatisfied employees would quit. The results of their study supported their hypotheses and furthered the possibility that other economic factors, apart from unemployment rates, may have contributed to their findings. These factors included future job prospects in the organization, and job insecurity. Unfortunately, the authors did not know whether the turnover data was based on voluntary or involuntary turnover. In addition, state unemployment rates and the approximate timeframe in which the study took place were some months apart. Nevertheless, the results are consistent with other similar studies (Muchinsky & Morrow, 1980). One evident question may be how do future job prospects within the organization, and outside the organization, influence employee perceptions of job insecurity.

The perception of downsizing as stressful may also be related to economic needs. Brockner et al. (1992a) reported that 'need to work' significantly moderated findings regarding job security and work effort. Feelings of job insecurity, for the survivor of cutbacks, were expressed in their work effort only to the extent that their jobs were important to them. Paradoxically, remaining employees who were the breadwinner in their households, were more likely to translate job insecurity into reduced work effort. Ashford et al. (1989) investigated the consequences of job insecurity, suggesting perceived employment alternatives as a possible source of variance. They examined the degree to which levels of job insecurity would lead to intentions to seek new employment. The rationale was that employees who could easily find alternative employment might be expected to react to job insecurity by seeking new jobs. The findings suggested that intentions to quit were positively related to increased job insecurity, implying that the scarcity of job opportunities may exacerbate feelings of job insecurity. Another valuable component of this study was the exploration of the link between role ambiguity and job insecurity, supporting the notion that both ambiguity and job insecurity may be based on feelings of lack of control. In contrast, the authors suggested that role conflict and role overload were not related to job security, as these types of stress are not related to perceptions of the continuity of the job itself.

It should be noted that perceptions of economic factors may be more important than actual economic factors. Van Sell and his colleagues (1981) noted that it is important to know if differences in individual perceptions of the same environment can result in different perceived levels of work stress. For the purposes of the present research, subjective evaluation of economic factors is particularly important. For example, the city where the study was conducted was experiencing massive restructuring and cutbacks in private industry, health care and government from 1993 through to 1995. These cutbacks were the subject of intense media concentration during that time, which may have resulted in people's perceptions of unemployment in this city as being especially acute. In fact, the unemployment rate had not varied substantially over the previous three years (Statistics Canada, 1995).

Other Variables

Concomitants of stress include job satisfaction (Jackson & Schuler, 1985), organizational commitment (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1979, Meyer & Allen, 1984), and perceived organizational support (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison & Sowa, 1986, Jones Flynn & Kelloway, 1995)]

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to an individual's positive affective reaction towards his/her work. Job satisfaction has been found to be correlated with affective commitment (Locke & Latham, 1990) and negatively correlated with role ambiguity and role conflict (Jackson & Schuler, 1985). Because job satisfaction is assumed to be an indication of a worker's general attitude to work in organization, it has become a frequently measured outcome variable in work stress research. The relationship between job satisfaction and insecurity has been examined. Davy, Kinicki and Scheck (1991) sampled 120 employees of a high-tech firm about to lay-off a fair number of staff members. A pre-condition measure was taken one month before the lay-off. A second survey was administered three months after the lay-off. Results indicated that both job satisfaction and organizational commitment mediated the relation between job security and intentions to withdraw. When layoffs occurred, survivors felt in jeopardy of losing their job which resulted in job insecurity. Reduced job security impacted on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment, in turn, impacted on intentions to withdraw. These findings are consistent with Steers and Mowday's (1981) turnover model and with models of procedural justice (e.g., Konovsky & Folger, 1987; Lind & Tyler, 1988, Tyler, 1984). Steers

& Mowday (1981) argued that individuals are likely to withdraw psychologically, through reduced satisfaction and commitment before they withdraw behaviorally.

Nelson, Cooper & Jackson (1995) reported that employees who felt they had some degree of control over their work role showed less deterioration in job satisfaction when faced with an organizational reorganization than subjects who felt they had no control over their work role. Greenberger, Strasser, Cummings & Dunham (1989) have reported evidence of the causal role of perceived control to job satisfaction and subsequent job performance, enhancing the need to keep communication channels open between management and staff during reorganization.

Satisfaction with one's job has also been linked to economic conditions and the perception of available employment alternatives. An inverse direct relationship between perceived work alternatives and job satisfaction has been reported in several studies (Smith, Kendall & Hulin, 1969, Miller, Katerburg & Hulin, 1979, Hulin, Roznowski & Hachiya, 1985) Pond & Geyer (1987) investigated the mediating influence of age on the relationship between perceived work alternatives and job satisfaction. They postulated that a weaker correlation between perceived work alternatives and job satisfaction should exist for older employees relative to younger employees. According to the authors, older employees would not be

bothered as much by their perceptions of employment alternatives due to their higher status, prestige, and investments in their current job, or, older employees may be bothered by employment alternatives but are more able to withstand this aggravating stimulus by virtue of their position and tenure. A third explanation may be that older employees do not aspire to new opportunities, being resigned to their job situation. Thus they are less likely to view perceived work alternatives as a stimulus. Finally, the authors hypothesized that older employees may not be bothered as much by their perceptions of work alternatives because of certain cohort effects. They may not view work alternatives in the same frame of reference as younger employees when judging job satisfaction. In their sample of 226 employees of a mental health facility Pond and Geyer found a perceived work alternatives by age interaction which significantly predicted job satisfaction. Although the theoretical basis of their hypothesis seems plausible, the construct validity measure of work alternatives seem to be a more accurate measure of elements of satisfaction than of perceptions of actual employment. Pond and Geyer considered employment alternatives, not in terms of availability, but in terms of a 'wish list'. Also, the 'wish list' measure of employment alternatives seemed to be based on a comparison of satisfaction with one's current job versus 'if you found something better'. In effect, these two measures were asking the same questions which would account for a significant relationship. Hence, the present

investigation seeks to construct a more direct measure of perceptions of alternative employment.

Further investigations into the relationship between economic factors and job satisfaction have been offered by Carsten and Spector (1987). While studying the relationship between satisfaction and turnover intention, they found that this relationship was moderated by economic factors. Under poor economic conditions, characterized by high unemployment and fewer job alternatives, individuals were not as likely to quit their job regardless of levels of satisfaction. Conversely under favourable economic conditions, characterized by low unemployment and more job alternatives, the satisfaction-turnover correlation was higher.

In sum, the relationship of job satisfaction to job insecurity and role stress, in addition to the link with economic factors, suggests that job satisfaction may contribute to the present research

Organizational Commitment

Mowday, Porter and Steers (1979) defined commitment as having three components: a (1) strong belief in the organization's goals or values, (2) willingness to expend extra effort on the organization's behalf, and (3) intention to remain with the organization. Meyer and Allen (1984) argued that this definition

describes "affective" properties of commitment. Affective commitment relates to the individuals underlying attitudes toward the organization. Individuals are thought to have high affective commitment when what they feel toward the organization is reflected in their work behaviour (Meyer & Allen, 1984).

A second type of commitment was originally conceptualized by Becker (1960) as the tendency to engage in "consistent lines of activity as a result of the accumulation of 'side bets' that would be lost if the activity were discontinued (p. 372)". Meyer and Allen (1984) refer to this type of commitment as continuance commitment. These authors explain that a side bet is "anything of value the individual has invested that would be lost or deemed worthless at some perceived cost to the individual if he or she were to leave the organization (p. 373). Costs may be economic in nature and include salary, pension contributions, organizational-specific skills or status resulting in an inability to transfer these to another organization, a perceived lack of alternative employment opportunities, as well as organizational benefits such as reduced status (cf. Beehr & Bhagat, 1985).

Research has clearly separated continuance commitment from affective commitment in that "the extent to which an individual is affectively committed does not affect the degree of continuance commitment and vice versa (Meyer & Allen, 1984, p. 373)". In relation to the present investigation it is likely that

economic factors will correlate highly with 'continuance' commitment, as these two measures are conceptually similar. Meyer and Allen (1984) developed the measure of continuance commitment on an economic rationale assessing the extent to which employees felt committed to their organizations by virtue of the costs associated with leaving (e.g., investments and/or lack of employment alternatives).

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Feelings of job insecurity may be offset by perceptions of a communicative and supportive organization (Greenhalgh, 1982; Brockner, 1992). It follows that individuals who feel insecure with their jobs may not view their employer as supportive. Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986) define perceived organizational support (POS) as "global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values (the employees) contribution and cares about their well-being (p 501)". While attention has not been given to the relation between job insecurity and POS, there is support for the relation between POS and other organizational factors. Eisenberger and colleagues (1986) have found that employees that feel support from their employer experience higher affective organizational commitment, and are less inclined toward absenteeism. They also argued that POS from the organization, while increasing affective commitment, also enhances what they call "calculative" commitment. Calculative commitment

occurs when the individual feels that the organization can be relied upon to fill its reciprocal obligations "of noticing and rewarding efforts made on its behalf."

Moreover, "where the employee feels that the organization is committed to him or her, the organization's gain is more readily perceived as his/her gain (Eisenberger, Fasolo & Davis-Lamastro, 1990, p.57)". Jones et al., (1995) add that POS may be a central factor in mediating the effects of work stress on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. They found that POS functioned to mediate the effects of role conflict and role ambiguity on satisfaction with one's work and on one's level of affective commitment to the employer. They conclude that the notion of perceived organization support is separate and distinct from the notion of social support and central to understanding the connections between such factors as work stress, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and productivity. An organization that has just reduced its workforce may tend to foster job insecurity and may not be seen as supportive by its employees. It follows that perceived organizational support may have a positive relationship to job security.

Demographic Variables

The role of factors such as age and gender and occupation in predicting stress and its antecedents is somewhat controversial. Some authors have found a relationship (e.g., Burke & Greenglass, 1989), while others have not (e.g., Hock, 1988, Martocchio & O'Leary, 1989, Raquepaw & Miller 1989).

Age differences According to Katz (1985) younger employees may experience more role ambiguity and role conflict while learning their jobs. Pond and Geyer (1987) add that younger employees may also perceive themselves as having more alternatives and consequently feel less satisfied and less committed to their current position. As the present research looks at the effects of the perceptions of alternative employment, it will be of interest to measure these in relation to the potentially moderating effect of age. A person's perceived resources with respect to economic factors may also differ depending on age.

Gender differences There is a certain body of research suggesting that women may experience multiple sources of stress compared to men (e.g., Barnett, Marshall & Sayer, 1992, Graddick & Farr, 1983, Phillips, Little, & Goodine, 1995), yet the results are inconclusive. Some studies have found that men and women differed on aspects of organizational commitment and certain role stressors (e.g., Graddick & Farr, 1983) while others have not (Martocchio & O'Leary, 1989). Other studies have found sex differences with respect to social support (Burke & Greenglass, 1989, Phillips et al., 1995).

Occupational group differences Nelson, Cooper and Jackson (1995) reported variation in job satisfaction between occupational groups, that remained consistent over time. Bhalla, Jones and Flynn (1991) found that managers, supervisors and clerical employees were likely to report different sources of role

stress. These findings suggest the possible need to control for occupational groups.

Hypotheses

The evidence presented supports the relevance of considering economic resources in relation to work stress and related outcome variables (e.g., Carsten and Spector, 1987, Brockner et al., 1992; Beehr & Bhagat, 1985). It is hypothesized that, in general, an employee with limited perceived economic resources will experience increased levels of job insecurity. Following Ashford et al. (1989) lower levels of stress (ambiguity, insufficiency, conflict and overload) may be independent of perceived economic resources.

The economic resources in this study include, (1) individual perceptions of the likelihood of alternative employment, (2) perceived ability to transfer skills to other organizations, (3) perceived need to work, and (4) preparedness to seek other employment. Except for 'need to work' and alternative employment opportunities, these variables have not been isolated and measured previously. Brockner et al., (1992) measured 'need to work' and the same question and scale was adopted for the current study.

METHOD

Respondents

Participants were support staff of a medium sized Canadian university experiencing a large reduction in the number of employees. Most employees had left by way of voluntary separation and early retirement incentives. Questionnaires were distributed to 689 members of one union local. Of the 689 questionnaires distributed 225 employees responded. The demographics of the sample are presented in Table 1. The sample was largely female and predominately clerical or administrative.

Procedure

Permission to conduct this study was granted by the executive of the union representing all participants. To ensure anonymity, respondents were asked not to write their names anywhere on the questionnaire and were instructed to return their completed questionnaires directly to the principal researcher.

Measures

Economic Resources Three questions were asked to measure the respondents perception that they might have marketable skills and their preparedness to seek alternative employment (see Appendix 1). Responses were made on a 5 point Likert-type scale. The fourth economic question, adapted from Brockner et al., (1992), was asked to determine the respondent's perception of

TABLE 1
Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

AGE (Mean 42.0; Std dev = 9.1)	No.	%
< 30 years of age	25	11.1%
31 to 40 years of age	75	33.3%
41 to 50 years of age	81	36%
50 years of age	39	17.3%

GENDER	No.	%
Female	185	82%
Male	39	18%

YEARS OF SERVICE (Mean 11.6; Std dev = 6.9)	No.	%
< 5.5 yrs service	50	22.2%
> 5.5 to 10.5 yrs	66	29.3%
> 10.5 to 20.5 yrs	72	32.0%
> 20.5 years service	35	15.6%

JOB CLASSIFICATION	No.	%
Clerical or secretarial	59	26.2%
Administrative or supervisory	74	32.9%
Technical or programmers	51	22.7%
Professional	29	12.9%
Other	10	4.4%

their economic need to work and rated a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from "Not at all" (1) to "A great deal" (7)

Role Stress Role stress was assessed by means of measures taken from the Occupational Environment Scale (Form E-2) (Osipow and Spokane, 1983) Respondents rated 40 Likert-type items along a five scale continuum ranging from "rarely or never" (1) to most of the time (5) This scale was chosen based on its pertinence and comprehensiveness with respect to role conflict, role overload and role ambiguity, as well as, its psychometric properties Internal consistency for the total scale and sub-scales as well as two-week test re-test was adequate as follows: total scale (Cronbach $\alpha = .89$), subscales ($\alpha = .71$ to $.90$), two-week test-retest reliability ($r = .90$) (Osipow & Spokane, 1983).

Job Satisfaction The measure of Job Satisfaction was the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) developed by Smith, Kendall & Hulin (1969) The JDI subscales are intended to measure satisfaction with the work itself, pay, promotion, colleagues, supervision and the job in general. Test re-test estimates are generally above .7 and .8 between JDI measures and other measures of satisfaction, and internal consistency yields an average reliability estimate of .79 (Smith et al., 1969) JDI scales show consistent discriminant and convergent validity (Smith et al., 1969)

Organizational Commitment Both Affective and Continuance Commitment were measured by means of scales developed by Meyer & Allen

(1984) The Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) is intended to measure positive feelings of identification with, attachment to, and involvement in, the work organization. Reliability is estimated at $\alpha = .87$ (Meyer & Allen, 1984). The Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS) assesses the extent to which employees feel committed to their organization based on the perceived costs that they feel are associated with leaving. Reliability was found to be acceptable ($\alpha = .77$) (Meyer & Allen, 1984). In both cases, respondents rate items on a 7-point rating scale.

Job Insecurity Job insecurity was assessed using four questions taken from Davy et al. (1991) which ask respondents to rate future career prospects in the organization along a 5-point Likert-type scale. The measure has a reported reliability of $\alpha = .80$ (Greenhalgh, 1982).

Perceived Organizational Support The Survey of Perceived Organizational Support was developed by Eisenberger, et al (1986) and used to measure employee perceptions of being appreciated and cared for by their employer. The sixteen 7-point Likert-type items include statements that reflect individual beliefs about whether the organization values their contributions and how it would treat them in certain hypothetical situations. Internal reliability has been shown to be high ($\alpha = .97$) (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

RESULTS

The data will be analyzed in the following manner. An estimate of internal consistency (reliability) will be calculated for each scale. Descriptive statistics for the total sample will be explored. Principle component analysis will be used to reduce the data set where applicable. Multiple regressions will be performed to examine the predictors of each type of work stress.

Reliability Analysis and Descriptive Statistics

Reliability for all scales are reported in Table 2. All scales showed acceptable reliability. Table 2 also shows the means and standard deviations for each of the nine measured variables. Table 2 also shows the grouping of the variables according to their respective fit to the stress model as depicted in Figure 1.

Principle Components Factor Analysis

Table 3 lists the product moment correlations between the variables in the set. In order to reduce the information in Table 3 to manageable form and in order to provide a rationale for data reduction, principle components factor analysis was conducted. Six factors were extracted (Table 4). Factor one groups work stress variables (insufficiency, conflict, ambiguity), with the outcome variables Job Satisfaction and Affective Commitment. The second factor loads Resource with

TABLE 2**Mean, Standard Deviation and Reliability (Cronbach's α) for Each Variable**

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>α</u>
<u>Work Stress</u>			
(1) "Stress" --			
Role ambiguity	20.8	4.9	.79
Role insufficiency	26.1	9.2	.88
Role conflict	21.2	7.2	.78
(2) Overload = Role overload	25.1	6.9	.82
(3) Job Insecurity	9.2	3.4	.79
<u>Coping Variables</u>			
(4) POS= Perceived Organization Support	54.3	16.6	.95
(5) Resources = 3 economic factors	8.9	2.5	.67
<u>Outcome Variables</u>			
(6) Total Job Satisfaction =	166.0	43.4	.75
Satisfaction: General	42.0	10.0	.91
Satisfaction: Job	35.9	10.0	.82
Satisfaction: Pay	14.0	6.0	.78
Satisfaction: People	37.2	11.0	.86
Satisfaction: Promotion	7.1	5.1	.74
Satisfaction: Supervision	41.2	12.0	.90
(7) Affective Commitment	31.0	8.3	.86
<u>Dependency Variables</u>			
(8.) Continuance Commitment	35.5	8.5	.82
(9) Breadwinner = other economic factor	5.5	1.8	

TABLE 3

Correlation Coefficient Matrix

Work Stress Variables

	ambiguity	conflict	insufficiency	overload	job insecurity	affective commitment	continuance commitment	perceived org support- POS	satisfaction general
Ambiguity	1.000								
Conflict	.58***	1.000							
Insufficiency	.40***	.49***	1.000						
Overload	.09	.29***	-.07	1.000					
Job insecurity	-.11	.04	-.18	.04	1.000				
Affect commit	-.32***	-.41***	-.35***	-.03	.15	1.000			
Contin commit	.13	.15	.05	.06	-.26***	.02	1.000		
POS	-.33***	-.41***	-.47***	-.17	.39***	.44***	-.25***	1.000	
Satis gen	-.40***	-.59***	-.54***	-.07	.14	.38***	-.09	.45***	.71***
Satis job	-.41	-.58***	-.66***	.03	.13	.39***	-.12	.41***	.24***
Satis pay	-.06	-.20**	-.20**	-.17	.17	.13	-.14	.28***	.39***
Satis promo	-.16	-.28***	-.31***	-.08	.32***	.22**	-.13	.42***	.45***
Satis supervise	-.33***	-.42***	-.29***	-.02	.18	.17	-.08	.31***	.37***
Satis people	-.10	-.26***	-.23**	.02	.10	.25***	-.10	.30***	.03
Resource	-.05	.03	.05	.03	.21**	-.19	-.43***	.05	-.14
Breadwinner	.23**	.14	.03	.18	-.00	-.14	.29***	-.17	.13
Years Service	-.01	-.04	-.14	.06	.07	.14	.13	-.05	.04
Age	-.15	-.15	-.22**	.03	-.01	.19	.04	.11	.09
Gender	.05	-.02	-.09	.09	.19	.01	-.21	.08	-.04
JobClass	.06	-.06	-.09	.19	.01	-.08	-.04	-.11	

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

TABLE 4

Rotated Factor Matrix (Showing only Factor loadings $\geq .30$)

	<u>Factor 1</u>	<u>Factor 2</u>	<u>Factor 3</u>	<u>Factor 4</u>	<u>Factor 5</u>	<u>Factor 6</u>
Conflict	-.79					
Satisfaction: Job	.79					
Satisfaction: General	.75					
Role Insufficiency	-.73					
Role Ambiguity	-.74					
Perceived Org Support	.51		.55			
Affective Commitment	.52				-.30	
Satisfaction: Supervise	.50			.49		
Satisfaction: Promotion	.38		.46			
Job Insecurity			.81			
Continuance Commitment			-.38		-.30	.68
Resource		-.57	.30		.36	-.33
Years of Service		.81				
Age		.74				
Satisfaction: People						
Satisfaction: Pay				.70		
Gender			.36		.51	
Breadwinner						.71
Role Overload				-.36	.45	.43
Job Classification					.75	

Age and Years of Service. The third factor loads Job Insecurity with Perceived Organizational Support. The fourth factor loads measures of Job Satisfaction together. The fifth factor notes a relationship between Gender and Job Classification as expected. The sixth factor shows the relation between Breadwinner, Continuance Commitment and Resource and indicates that role Overload is a distinct variable from the other role stress variables.

Based on the factor analysis and the literature review, the six satisfaction subscales were summed together to form one global measure of Satisfaction, while three measures of role stress, role ambiguity, conflict and insufficiency were summed to form one measure labeled "Stress". As role overload did not load with the other measures of role stress it stood alone as a separate measure of role stress called Overload.

Validity of Economic Resources Measures

As is apparent from Table 3 the economic resources were strongly related to continuance commitment. Continuance commitment was significantly and negatively correlated with the combined Resource variable ($r = -.44$, $p < .001$) while showing a significant and positive correlation with Breadwinner ($r = .30$, $p < .001$). Factor analysis (Table 4) also loads Continuance Commitment, Breadwinner and Resource on one factor. As continuance commitment is based on an economic

rationale (Meyer & Allen, 1984), it is plausible to argue that these measures share a similar construct, namely one with an economic rationale. Further, it would appear Breadwinner is distinct from the other measures of economic resources, since Breadwinner was not related to Resource in the correlational matrix.

Multiple Regression Analyses

Tables 5, 6 and 7 show the summary of regression analyses with each measure of work stress as dependent variables. (Note that Overload was analyzed separately from the other role stress measures as they did not load together.)

Job Insecurity As hypothesized, Resource was a significant predictor of variation in Job Insecurity ($t = 2.48, p < .01$) (Table 5) suggesting that employees with limited perceived economic resources will experience increased levels of work stress. Job Insecurity was also predicted by POS in line with previous research on the relationship between support from the organization and role stress (Jones et al., 1995). However, contrary to hypothesis, Breadwinner did not account for significant variation in Job Insecurity. This effect will be discussed below. Years of service was positively associated with Job Insecurity, which was to be expected given that lay-offs in the organization would be based on lack of seniority (see also Pond & Geyer, 1987).

Role Stress - Role stress was divided into two separate regressions - "Stress" and Overload. Both regressions of role stress were not predicted by economic resources (Tables 6 and 7). However, Perceived Organizational Support did predict significant variability in both measures of role stress as reported in Jones et al. (1995). "Stress" was associated with Affective Commitment, Job Satisfaction and Age as in much previous research. Previous studies have also found that those in lower ranks experience more Overload than in higher ranks (e.g., Pond & Geyer, 1987, Rhodes, 1983, Marshall & Seyer, 1992).

TABLE 5**Regression Analysis with Job Insecurity as the Dependent Variable**

R sq = 22

Adjusted R sq = 18

Degrees of freedom (10,206) F obtained 5.78 Sign .0000

Variables in the equation		BETA	T	Sign. T
1	Job classification	0.02	0.23	NS
2	Continuance commitment	-0.10	-1.35	NS
3	Affective commitment	0.03	0.46	NS
4	Years of service	0.18	2.33	.02
5	Gender	0.09	1.29	NS
6	Breadwinner	0.09	1.44	NS
7	Total satisfaction	0.05	0.61	NS
8	Age	-0.06	-0.80	NS
9	Economic resources	0.18	2.48	.01
10	Perceived organizational support	0.32	3.81	.0002

NS -- not significant

TABLE 6

Regression Analysis with "Stress" as the Dependent Variable.

R sq = .48

Adjusted R sq. = .46

Degrees of freedom (10,206)

F obtained = 19.33

Sign. = .0000

Variables in the equation		BETA	T	Sign. T
1	Job classification	-0.35	-0.43	NS
2	Continuance commitment	0.24	1.89	NS
3	Affective commitment	-0.41	-3.12	.002
4	Years of service	0.06	0.41	NS
5	Gender	1.08	0.43	NS
6	Breadwinner	0.64	1.20	NS
7	Total satisfaction	-0.18	-6.98	.0000
8	Age	-0.33	-2.88	.004
9	Economic resources	0.30	0.72	NS
10	Perceived organizational support	-0.14	-1.89	NS

NS = not significant

Resources and POS as Coping Mechanisms As a side issue it was of interest to explore how the coping variables in the present research functioned to enable the individual to cope with stressful events. Coping means that the effects of stress on some outcome measure are less than they otherwise might have been (see e.g., LaRocco, House & French, 1980; Ganster, Fusilier, & Mayes, 1986). In general a coping mechanism may function in one of two ways. Either coping may be effective at all levels of stress or coping may be effective at only higher levels. The first process has been called the "direct" effect and the second has been described as "buffering" (LaRocco et al., 1980; Ganster et al., 1986). Ganster et al. (1986) have developed a statistical procedure for determining whether the coping mechanism functions directly or as a buffer. The canonical correlation between the stressors and the coping variables on the one hand and an outcome measure on the other may demonstrate a direct effect. Buffering effects are determined from the interaction between stressor and coping variables in a multiple regression.

As an outcome measure, it was useful to take the sum of Satisfaction and Affective Commitment as a measure of Positive Attitudes to Work and the Organization as Affective Commitment and Job Satisfaction measures loaded together. The canonical correlation between coping variables, stressors and outcomes is shown in Table 8. A single significant function emerged. Role stress (though not Overload) had a direct effect on the outcome measure as did POS. A

multiple regression with cross-product terms entered on the second step is shown in Table 9. The regression indicated a significant interaction between POS and Job Insecurity. Again this analysis showed that the effects of Job Insecurity and of Economic Resource are quite specific. Job Insecurity was not strongly predictive of Positive Attitudes. POS, on the other hand, appeared to have a direct effect in minimizing the effects of role based Stress on Positive Attitudes and a buffering effect in relation to Job Insecurity.

TABLE 8**Canonical Analysis of Stressors, Coping Variables and the Outcome Measure****Positive Attitudes to Work**

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Structural Coefficients</u>
"Stress"	-.90
Overload	.20
Job Insecurity	.20
POS	.54
Economic Resource	-.09

Canonical Correlation = 0.90 (p < .0001)

TABLE 9

Interactions between Coping Variables and Stressors with **Positive Attitudes to Work** as the Dependent Variable

Adjusted R sq 54

Degrees of freedom (11,209)

Obtained F = -24.43

sign p= .0001

Step 1

	Beta	T	p
"Stress"	-.48	-8.41	.0001
Overload	-.02	0.42	NS
Job Insecurity	.04	0.67	NS
POS	.31	5.23	.0001
Economic Resource	.001	0.02	NS

Step 2

	Beta	T	p
Resource x "Stress"	.12	0.47	NS
Resource x Overload	.18	0.77	NS
Resource x Job Insecurity	.11	0.58	NS
POS x "Stress"	.32	1.96	NS
POS x Overload	.14	0.80	NS
POS x Job Insecurity	.99	5.04	.0001

DISCUSSION

The results of the study may be summarized as follows

- 1 The perception that the individual has viable economic resources was related to reduced feelings of job insecurity
- 2 Role stress was not related to economic resources.
- 3 Need to work ("Breadwinner") was not related to feelings of insecurity nor to role stress
- 4 Perceived organizational support was consistently related to work stress

In short, the results of the study support the hypothesis that economic factors may account for a significant proportion of the variability in job insecurity. The perception that one's job is secure was, in this workforce, strongly related to the perception of opportunities for alternative employment, transferability of skills, and being prepared to look for alternative employment.

In an organization which is reducing its workforce, feelings of job insecurity may be more salient than details of the work itself. If we assume that role stress is more closely associated with job content, then we may be able to explain why economic resources predict Job Insecurity but not role stress.

Greenhalgh (1982) has argued that the apprehension over a change in job content would not likely be as great as the deeper anxiety over the threat of job loss as measured by job insecurity. As such, economic factors would likely impact more on the threat of job loss than job content. This idea receives support from Ashford et al., (1989) who suggested that role stress measures seemed to be, in general, more connected to job content. In their study on the content, causes and consequences of job insecurity, they found evidence to suggest role stress seemed to stem from the content of the job rather than from perceptions of continuity of the job. The idea that role stress is more connected to job content than job continuity requires further investigation.

In the present sample, need to work ("Breadwinner") did not predict Job Insecurity contrary to expectation. A possible explanation may be derived from arguments made by Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984). They argued that job insecurity may be moderated by economic dependency in a majority of employees. However, those individuals who have a degree of seniority would be less troubled by feelings of insecurity since security of employment is often directly related to seniority. In the present sample, Years of Service predicted Job Insecurity suggesting that employees correctly understood the mechanism for determining lay-offs. Years of Service and Breadwinner were essentially independent variables.

In other words, in this sample whether an individual needs to work or not has little to do with one's actual job security

Economic resources may function as a coping mechanism which enables the individual to deal with the apprehension of job loss. As Greenhalgh (1982) notes "Job insecurity is a pervasive phenomenon that quickly permeates an entire organization when rumors of layoffs proliferate (p. 166)." In the present case, reductions were achieved through voluntary separation agreements which principally effected older workers. However, rumors of layoffs had been widespread on campus and in the local media. Global feelings of insecurity may be mitigated by the perception, correct or not, that alternative employment may be relatively easy to secure perhaps because the assumption of resources strengthens feelings that individual will be able to control the environment effectively (cf. Ashford et al., 1989).

In other words, the stress of insecurity is strongly related to the subjective reality that individuals construct about their job prospects. This confirms the general model developed by Jick (1985, see also Beehr & Bhagat, 1985 and Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) in which environmental demands are stressful only in so far as they are appraised in this way by the individual. The individual who believes that he or she has the resources to deal with job loss will appraise the

possibility of job loss differently from the individual who does not believe that he or she is in a good position to seek alternative employment

Resources in this sense were not associated with role stress or with general satisfaction with the organization. POS on the other hand was a predictor of all types of stress examined in the present study as well as of satisfaction. Jones et al. (1995) have argued that POS appears to be conceptually different from social support as traditionally understood. Social support has to do with the operation of networks within the organization that are interposed between the stress producing aspects of the organization and the individual. POS refers to the general nature of cultural transactions of the organization as an entity. As such, POS may be a variable of importance in understanding the connections between factors central to any general theory of organizational behaviour including work stress and general attitudes to work. Employees who feel that they enjoy relevant support and endorsement from their employer feel more secure in their present position. Consequently, employers who wish to reduce insecurity (and thereby improve effectiveness) may wish to foster a work environment in which individuals feel that their values are supported and their efforts reciprocated.

It is worth noticing that levels of POS in the present sample are relatively low. A mean of 54 implies that the typical respondent had negative views about

the organization. It was not possible to obtain indications of POS prior to rumors of staff reductions. However, one might speculate that the actions of management have contributed to the present low levels. Greenhalgh (1982) suggested that organizations must improve communications about work force change prior to any change. Brockner (1988, 1990) has, as noted earlier, argued that employees are more likely to accept the judgment that workforce reductions are necessary if they receive appropriate explanation. In the present case, one manager told the media, contrary to the known facts, that layoffs were not contemplated. The failure of management to inform the workforce in a competent manner may have contributed to low levels of POS. Unfortunately, for management of the organization, low levels of POS are strongly associated with low levels of productivity (Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-Lamastro, 1990; Jones, Berwald, Catano, & Hackett, 1992).

The present research has implications for the individual and for the organization. From an individual perspective, those persons faced with organizational downsizing can take preventative measures to offset potential experiences of stress. One may prepare to look for employment options by becoming up to date on the latest job search methods. And an individual may want to update skills and look for applicability to other organizations and other

industries. These are just some of the ways in which may prepare to meet the felt demands of organizational downsizing.

From an organizational perspective, organizations may want to consider ways in which the organization can appear supportive to the individual such as being communicative with employees regarding downsizing activities.

Organizations may also want to consider several options when cutbacks and layoffs are necessary allowing individuals to have some sense of control (e.g., voluntary layoffs, early retirement, transfers to sister companies). Organizations may also want to provide assistance for affected employees in the form of preparing individuals for job transition, assisting in upgrading of skills, or assisting in ways and methods of addressing other opportunities by offering incentives to other company's to hire your employees. All these measures may help to offset the potential deleterious effects of the stress associated with downsizing, and may help toward preventing drastic reductions in productivity which inevitably affect the companies bottom line.

Future research may want to look at other dimensions beyond the scope of the present research in accounting for variation in work stress. Other dimensions include additional economic factors such as savings and the earnings of a spouse. Personality factors such as hardiness, self-efficacy and locus of control may assist in explaining relationships among the variables. Individual differences such as

previous experience with downsizing may also be of value. All of these dimensions, and more, will go a long way toward understanding the complex relationship of what is appraised by an individual to be a stressful event.

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N.B. As per memo last week from Bonnie Hinton

ATTENTION: MEMBERS OF CUPE 2424

I am carrying out research at Carleton University under the supervision of Dr. Bill Jones of the Department of Psychology. I am requesting your assistance in taking part in a study for the purpose of determining behaviours and attitudes that presently exist in organizations that have undergone changes in the number of employees over the past two years. Changes in the number of employees can include layoffs, rearranging of staff allocations, and non-replacement of employees who have either retired or left for other reasons.

Please take the time to help us by filling out this booklet now and return it to the union office A510UC, or if you prefer, to the researcher Julie Donaldson, Dept. of Psychology B550 Loeb. Your participation is strictly voluntary and all responses are **completely anonymous**. You may withdraw from completing this study at any time, and you may opt not to answer any question or questions as you so choose. These questionnaires are not shared with any management authority of Carleton University according to our departments code of ethics

This booklet of questions should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. When answering please put down the first response that occurs to you without giving the statement or question a lot of thought. There is no need to go over your responses as the first response is often the one most likely to fit your true feelings. Please complete questions in this booklet and return it before **December 20th, 1995** to the CUPE 2424 union office 510A, UC or to me directly in Rm B550 Loeb. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the researchers at the following numbers: Julie Donaldson principal researcher 230-6485. Dr. Bill Jones, chair of the Department of Psychology, at 788-2600 ext. 2648 or Dr. Lise Paquet, chair of the ethics committee of the Department of Psychology at 788-2600 ext. 2692.

Thank you in advance for your participation,

please turn to next page

INSTRUCTIONS

The following 40 statements are designed to measure the kinds of stress that people experience in their work. Read each statement and circle the answer which seems to fit you best for each statement according to the following scale

	1	2	3	4	5
	"Rarely or Never"	"Occasionally"	"Often"	"Usually"	"Most of the time"
1 At work I am expected to do too many different tasks in too little time	1	2	3	4	5
2 I feel that my responsibilities are increasing	1	2	3	4	5
3 I am expected to perform tasks on my job for which I have never been trained	1	2	3	4	5
4 I have to take work home with me	1	2	3	4	5
5 I have the resources to get my job done	1	2	3	4	5
6 I feel competent in what I do	1	2	3	4	5
7 I work under tight time deadlines	1	2	3	4	5
8 I wish that I had more help to deal with the demands placed upon me at work	1	2	3	4	5
9 My job requires me to work in several equally important areas at once	1	2	3	4	5
10 I am expected to do more work than is reasonable	1	2	3	4	5
11 I feel that my career is progressing about as I had hoped	1	2	3	4	5
12 I feel that my job fits my interests and skills	1	2	3	4	5
13 I am bored with my job	1	2	3	4	5
14 I feel that I have enough responsibility on my job	1	2	3	4	5
15 I feel my talents are being used on the job	1	2	3	4	5
16 I feel my job has a good future	1	2	3	4	5
17 I am able to satisfy my needs for success and recognition in my job	1	2	3	4	5
18 I feel I am overqualified for my job	1	2	3	4	5
19 I learn new skills in my work	1	2	3	4	5

please turn to next page

	1 "Rarely or Never"	2 "Occasionally"	3 "Often"	4 "Usually"	5 "Most of the time"
20 I have to perform tasks that are beneath my ability	1	2	3	4	5
21 My supervisor provides me with useful feedback about my performance	1	2	3	4	5
22 It is clear to me what I have to do to get ahead.	1	2	3	4	5
23 I am uncertain about what I am supposed to accomplish in my work.	1	2	3	4	5
24 When faced with several tasks at once I know which should be done first.	1	2	3	4	5
25 I know where to begin a new project when it is assigned to me	1	2	3	4	5
26 My supervisor asks for one thing but really wants another	1	2	3	4	5
27 I understand what is acceptable personal behaviour on my job (e.g. dress, interpersonal behaviour etc)	1	2	3	4	5
28 The priorities of my job are clear to me	1	2	3	4	5
29 I have a clear understanding of how my boss wants me to spend my time	1	2	3	4	5
30 I know the basis on which I am evaluated	1	2	3	4	5
31 I feel conflict between what my employer expects me to do and what I think is right and proper	1	2	3	4	5
32 I feel caught between factions at work	1	2	3	4	5
33 I have more than one person telling me what to do	1	2	3	4	5
34 I feel I have a stake in the success of my organization.	1	2	3	4	5
35 I feel good about the work I do	1	2	3	4	5
36 My supervisors have conflicting ideas about what I should be doing.	1	2	3	4	5
37 I am proud of what I do for a living	1	2	3	4	5
38 It is clear who really runs things where I work	1	2	3	4	5
39 I have divided loyalties on my job	1	2	3	4	5
40 The work I do has as much payoff for me as for my employer	1	2	3	4	5

please turn to next page

INSTRUCTIONS**WORK ON PRESENT JOB**

Think of your present work What is it like most of the time?

In the blank beside each word in each column below write

Y = for "Yes" if it describes your work

N = for "No" if it does NOT describe it, or

? = if you cannot decide

Fascinating	_____	Routine	_____	Satisfying	_____
Boring	_____	Good	_____	Creative	_____
Respected	_____	Hot	_____	Pleasant	_____
Useful	_____	Tiresome	_____	Healthful	_____
Challenging	_____	On Your Feet	_____	Frustrating	_____
Simple	_____	Endless	_____	Gives sense of accomplishment	_____

PRESENT PAY

Think of the pay you get now How well does each of the following words describe your present pay?

In the blank beside each word in each column below write

Y = for "Yes" if it describes your present pay

N = for "No" if it does NOT describe it, or

? = if you cannot decide

Income adequate for normal expenses	_____	Satisfactory profit sharing	_____
Barely live on income	_____	Bad	_____
Income provides luxuries	_____	Insecure	_____
Less than I deserve	_____	Highly paid	_____
Underpaid	_____		

please turn to next page

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROMOTION

Think of the opportunities for promotion that you have now. How well does each of the following words describe these?

In the blank beside each word in each column below write
Y = for "Yes" if it describes your opportunities for promotion
N = for "No" if it does NOT describe it, or
? = if you cannot decide

Good opportunities for promotion _____	Opportunity somewhat limited _____
Promotion on ability _____	Dead-end job _____
Good chance for promotion _____	Unfair promotion policy _____
Infrequent promotions _____	Regular promotions _____
Fairly good chance for promotion _____	

SUPERVISION ON PRESENT JOB

Think of the kind of supervision that you get on your job. How well does each of the following words describe this supervision?

In the blank beside each word in each column below write
Y = for "Yes" if it describes the supervision you get on your job
N = for "No" if it does NOT describe it, or
? = if you cannot decide

Asks my advice _____	Hard to please _____	Impolite _____
Praises good work _____	Tactful _____	Influential _____
Up-to-date _____	Doesn't supervise enough _____	Quick-tempered _____
Tells me where I stand _____	Annoying _____	Stubborn _____
Knows job well _____	Bad _____	Intelligent _____
Leaves me on my own _____	Around when needed _____	Lazy _____

please turn to next page

PEOPLE ON YOUR PRESENT JOB

Think of the majority of the people that you work with now. How well does each of the following words describe these people?

In the blank beside each word in each column below write
Y = for "Yes" if it describes the people you work with.
N = for "No" if it does NOT describe them, or
? = if you cannot decide

Stimulating _____	Boring _____	Slow _____
Ambitious _____	Stupid _____	Responsible _____
Fast _____	Intelligent _____	Easy to make enemies _____
Talk too much _____	Smart _____	Lazy _____
Unpleasant _____	No privacy _____	Active _____
Narrow interests _____	Loyal _____	Hard to meet _____

JOB IN GENERAL

Think of your job in general. What is it like most of the time?

In the blank beside each word in each column below write
Y = for "Yes" if it describes your job.
N = for "No" if it does NOT describe it, or
? = if you cannot decide

Pleasant _____	Bad _____	Ideal _____
Waste of time _____	Good _____	Undesirable _____
Worthwhile _____	Acceptable _____	Like to leave _____
Better than most _____	Disagreeable _____	Makes me content _____
Inadequate _____	Excellent _____	Rotten _____
Enjoyable _____	Poor _____	

please turn to next page

INSTRUCTIONS

On this page you will see a number of statements about the organization for which you work, each of which you may agree or disagree with depending on your own personal evaluation. Please indicate the degree of agreement and disagreement with each statement by circling a number from 1 to 6 according to the following scale

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Mildly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1 The organization values my contribution to its well being	1	2	3	4	5	6
2 If the organization could hire someone to replace me at a lower salary it would do so	1	2	3	4	5	6
3 The organization fails to appreciate any effort from me	1	2	3	4	5	6
4 The organization strongly considers my goals and values	1	2	3	4	5	6
5 The organization would ignore any complaint from me	1	2	3	4	5	6
6 The organization disregards my best interests when it makes decisions which effect me	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 Help is available from my organization when I have a problem	1	2	3	4	5	6
8 The organization really cares about my well- being	1	2	3	4	5	6
9 Even if I did the best possible job, the organization would fail to notice	1	2	3	4	5	6
10 The organization is willing to help when I need a special favour	1	2	3	4	5	6
11 The organization cares about my general satisfaction at work	1	2	3	4	5	6
12 If given the opportunity the organization would take advantage of me	1	2	3	4	5	6
13 The organization shows very little concern for me	1	2	3	4	5	6
14 The organization cares about my opinions	1	2	3	4	5	6
15 The organization takes pride in my accomplishment at work	1	2	3	4	5	6
16 The organization tries to make my job as interesting as possible	1	2	3	4	5	6

please turn to next page

INSTRUCTIONS

Below are a number of statements about the organization for which you work, each of which you may agree or disagree with depending on your own personal evaluation. Please indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling a number from 1 to 6 according to the following scale

	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Mildly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1 I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization	1	2	3	4	5	6
2 I do not feel emotionally attached to this organization	1	2	3	4	5	6
3 This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me	1	2	3	4	5	6
4 I do not feel like "part of the family" at this organization	1	2	3	4	5	6
5 I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization	1	2	3	4	5	6
6 I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 I really feel as if this organizations problems are my own	1	2	3	4	5	6
8 I think I could easily become as attached to another organization as to this one	1	2	3	4	5	6
9 Right now staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire	1	2	3	4	5	6
10 One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice - another organization may not match the overall benefits I have	1	2	3	4	5	6
11 I feel I have too few options to consider leaving this organization	1	2	3	4	5	6
12 One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives	1	2	3	4	5	6
13 It would be hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to	1	2	3	4	5	6
14 Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now	1	2	3	4	5	6
15 It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organization in the future	1	2	3	4	5	6
16 I'm not afraid of what would happen if I quit my job without having another lined up	1	2	3	4	5	6

please turn to next page

INSTRUCTIONS

Answer the following questions about the organization in which you work using the 5-point scale presented below. Indicate your response by a number from 1 to 5 according to the following scale

1	2	3	4	5
Extremely Uncertain	Uncertain	Neither Uncertain Nor Uncertain	Certain	Extremely Certain

1 How certain are you of the opportunities for promotion and advancement which will exist in the next few years with this organization	1	2	3	4	5
2 How certain are you about what your future career picture looks like with this organization	1	2	3	4	5
3 How certain are you about your job security	1	2	3	4	5

What are the chances you will be fired or laid off within the next year?

1	2	3	4	5
0% chance	25% chance	50% chance	75% chance	100% chance

please turn to next page

INSTRUCTIONS

How do you rate the opportunities for alternative employment outside your organization?

1	2	3	4	5
absolutely no opportunities				excellent opportunities

How transferable/useful do you feel your skills are to another organization?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all transferable				very transferable

To what extent are you the major breadwinner in your home?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
not at all						a great deal

To what extent do you feel prepared to look for alternative employment.

1	2	3	4	5
very unprepared				very prepared

please turn to next page

JOB CLASSIFICATION

What job classification do you fall under? If you can not find your job classification please indicate the classification that best suits you according to your own evaluation

- ☐ Clerical or Secretarial
- ☐ Administrative or Supervisors
- ☐ Technical or Programmers or Analysts
- ☐ Professional
- ☐ Other

GENDER

(For statistical control purposes only) Male ☐ Female ☐

AGE

(For statistical control purposes only) Please indicate your age

OF YEARS OF SERVICE

Indicate the approximate number of years you have worked for your present employer yrs.

Thank you. You have finished this booklet. Please read the next page and return this booklet as soon as possible to the Cupe 2424 office 510A Unicentre or directly to the researcher, Julie Donaldson in Rm B550 Loeb.

please turn to next page

END

1 7 0 6 9 7

FIN