

# The Effects of Pending Redundancy on Construction Workers in Ireland

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## Abstract

The objective of this study was to determine what effects the experience of pending redundancy within the construction sector would have on the workers lives. Quantitative analysis was used to determine the findings between the office and site based staff in terms of their job satisfaction, their overall satisfaction with life, perceived stress levels and their total self-esteem.

The overall findings indicate that male and female workers with the construction company experience much higher levels of stress than what is perceived to be normal by Cohen (1983). The higher the education attainment a person has the less likely they are to be made redundant.

## Introduction

While the Irish construction sector is infamous for fluctuations within its level of employment rising and sharply falling, one can consider it to be a temporary job for most, in that bring about uncertainty to the majority of employees. Overall the majority of research published surrounding the effects of unemployment have been conducted once unemployment had already happened. The findings of such studies have found there to be a positive correlation between unemployment and anxiety, depression, low self esteem and mental health. (Artazcoz, Benach, Borrell & Cortes, 2002)

There is ample evidence to suggest that inconsistent labour force participation is an important determinant of health inequalities, as demonstrated by higher morbidity and mortality among unemployed people. Poor health may increase when unemployment is actual and when faced with the probability of becoming unemployed the same is also true. (Burdorf, 2008, p. 81)

## Method

To carry out the research a quantitative design was chosen. A questionnaire booklet was compiled consisting of four separate questionnaires and was issued out to participants within a leading construction firm in Ireland. The four questionnaires are as follows.

### Job Satisfaction.

The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ-SF; Weiss, Davis, England & Lofquist, 1967) was used to measure an employee's satisfaction with his or her present job.

### Satisfaction with Life .

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) is a short questionnaire consisting of 5 questions in total designed to measure ones satisfaction with his or her life as a whole. (Diener, et al,1985)

### Stress.

Sheldon Cohen's Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was used in the study to measure the perception of stress in the participant life within the last month. This scale is designed to ascertain how uncontrollable and overloaded respondents find their lives at the time of the study. (Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983).

### Self-Esteem.

Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale questionnaire was used to identify the respondents self esteem at the time of the study taking place. It is used to measure self esteem as a positive or negative orientation towards oneself and an overall evaluation of one's worth. (Rosenberg, 1965).

## Results

The total number of participants within the current study was 120 (N=120). The gender breakdown consisted of 101 (84.2%) males and 19 (15.5 %) females. A small amount of females worked as site based staff at 4 (21%) while the majority 15 (78.9%) were employed within the office, compared to male who worked in the office which was 34 (33.7%) and 67 (66.3%) of them worked as site based staff.

## Discussion

The main areas of this study were to research what effects pending redundancy has on site and office based workers within an Irish construction company.

Analysis suggests that overall male and female workers within the construction company experienced higher than normal stress levels.

Results of the t-test showed there to be a significant difference between level of education attainment and the likelihood of being made redundant,  $t(3,1)=117$ ,  $p<.002$

## References

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