

# Even optimists get the blues when pink-slipped

October 29 2008

---

(PhysOrg.com) -- In the midst of an economic crisis that's sparked massive layoffs, new research by a U of T professor shows that even optimists get the blues when facing a pink slip.

It's a long-standing belief that some people are just born optimists, bouncing back with relative ease from disappointment and dismay. But, according to an article in the most recent issue of *Social Indicator Research*, even those who tend to be optimistic find it difficult to look on the bright side of things when unemployed.

"This research addresses the age-old question: how much of our well-being is determined by issues within ourselves and how much by factors outside ourselves?" said Professor Ulrich Schimmack of psychology at the University of Toronto's Mississauga, co-author of the article.

"Contrary to popular belief, we found that certain life circumstances - like unemployment - can have a significant effect on a person's sense of well-being, whether they're generally an optimist or not."

Using interviews and data from German participants aged 16 to 94 - including individuals coping with the stresses of real life and not just a volunteering student population - the researchers determined that even optimists struggled with being unemployed.

While other studies have shown there are supposed positive aspects of unemployment such as increased leisure time, Schimmack's research demonstrates that the cons, such as the loss of income and sense of

security, definitely outweigh the supposed benefits.

"Even if your general outlook is positive, losing a job can significantly alter how you evaluate your life," Schimmack said.

The article, *The Influence of Environment and Personality on the Affective and Cognitive Component of Subjective Well-Being*, was co-authored by Jürgen Schupp of the Free University of Berlin and Gert Wagner of the Berlin University of Technology.

Provided by University of Toronto

Citation: Even optimists get the blues when pink-slipped (2008, October 29) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2008-10-optimists-blues-pink-slipped.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.