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Lived Experiences of Women Over 50 Who Have Experienced Involuntary Job Loss

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MS, Johns Hopkins University, 2002

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Both the short-term and long-term unemployment rates for older workers in the United States have increased significantly since the 2007 recession. Researchers who examine the impact of involuntary job loss have predominantly focused on the experiences of men. Limited prior research exists on the job loss experiences of women over 50 years of age compared to men. The goal of this study was to address this gap in knowledge by examining the lived experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss, the barriers faced to reemployment, and the ways women overcame the barriers to reemployment. A phenomenological design was employed to gather data from a convenience sample of 10 women in a northeastern metropolitan city. Guided by the frameworks of Bandura and Leana and Feldman, this transcendental approach aimed to capture the lived experiences of the women who incurred involuntary job loss. Data transcribed from audio-taped interviews were manually coded and aligned with the appropriate research question. The findings highlighted the emotions, finances, family and social life of women following job loss. The findings suggest women faced age discrimination, organizational practices, technological challenges, and stereotypical beliefs in their attempts toward reemployment. The results of the study can be used to inform organizational leaders of the need for greater emphasis on programs offering solutions to older female workers seeking reemployment. The study promotes potential positive social change by informing organizational leaders of the experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to God, my friends and family, specifically my husband Harold, who stuck by me and encouraged me during this entire dissertation journey. The love of God and the support and encouragement of my friends and family made this great accomplishment possible. I am forever grateful for the participation of the Workforce Career Centers and the participants in this study who willing shared their stories.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Downsizing has become the norm in the United States as organizational leaders continue to use layoffs as a tool to streamline the workforce (Karren & Sherman, 2012). Mass layoffs between 2000 and 2007 have affected a large amount of U.S. workers due to business leaders cutting costs, relocating business operations, changing technology, and low customer demand (Itkin & Salmon, 2011). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, 2013) found an unemployment rate for December 2012 of 8.2% (12,700,000 unemployed persons) in a household data survey. In addition, the traditional unemployment rates for men and women have reversed, and with unemployed rates decreasing for men and increasing for women (Kochhar, 2011). The unemployment rate for women 20 years' old and over was 7.3%, and the unemployment rate for men 20 years old and over was 7.2% (BLS, 2013).

Significant changes have taken place in the United States, since 1965, relating to caregivers and breadwinners in families as a result of the rising rate of breadwinning mothers (Doucet, 2015). The number of stay-at-home fathers taking care of family increased substantially from 1.1 million in 1989 to 2 million in 2012 (Livingston, 2014). Although in December 2011 the overall unemployment rates for adult men were ahead of those for adult women, a year later those positions had reversed (BLS, 2013). The unemployment rates for women between the ages of 45 and 54 remained ahead of the unemployment rates of men in 2011 and 2012 with an unemployment rate of 6.6% in December 2011 and 6.0% in December 2012, compared to the unemployment rate of 6.5% for men in December 2011 and 5.9% in December of 2012 for men. The number of

unemployed women between the ages of 45 and 54 almost doubled from 634,000 in 2007 to 1,119,000 in 2011 (BLS, n.d.b).

The overall unemployment and long-term unemployment rates of older workers have dramatically increased since the beginning of the recession in 2007 (U.S. Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2012). The unemployment rate for older workers, age 55 and over, increased from 3.1% at the beginning of the recession to 6.0% in December 2011 (GAO, 2012). In December 2012, the percentage of long-term unemployed workers was 39.1% (4,800,000) in the United States (BLS, 2013). Long-term unemployment increased at a greater rate for older workers than for younger workers (GAO, 2012). Fifty-five percent of unemployed older workers actively searched for a job for over 6 months (GAO, 2012).

Older workers will have a harder time recovering from the economic crisis and will delay retirement or return to work (Shearer, 2009). Over half of people 45 years old and older indicated in a survey that they expected to delay retirement for at least 5 years (Shearer, 2009). An increase of nearly 2 years in the average retirement age has occurred since 1990 as more employees are working longer and delaying retirement (Munnell & Chen, 2015). An unstable economy, reduced pensions, an extended lifespan (Brandan, Goddard, Kabir, Lofton, Ruiz, & Hau, 2013) and a need for health insurance (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health, 2012) has resulted in a longer stay in the workforce by older workers. In addition, a BLS report for December 2012 found that 1,100,000 unemployed workers felt discouraged from looking for jobs due to their belief that no jobs were available.

An increase in job loss has a detrimental effect on the total amount of goods and services demanded in the economy, which further reduces hiring and investment and causes additional employment losses (Pacitti, 2011). The Congressional Budget Office projected a workforce population of 162,000,000 in the United States by 2016 (Congressional Budget Office [CBO], 2011). By 2016, 53,460,000 (one-third of the projected workforce population) will be age 50 or older, and will increase to 115,000,000 by 2020 (Tishman, Van Looy, & Bruyere, 2012). Workers who lose their jobs experience an average income loss of over 40% of their predisplacement incomes (Pacitti, 2011). The financial position of unemployed workers may prevent them from consuming as many products and services they desire (Pacitti, 2011). If older workers' problems regaining employment are not addressed, the well-being of older workers, their families and society as a whole may be negatively impacted.

The Global Employment Trends report predicted that the gender impact of the economic crisis in terms of unemployment rates to be more detrimental for women than men in most regions of the world (Fildis, 2011). Whether employers are willing to hire older workers, specifically older women is a concern (Heywood, Jirjahn, & Tsertsvardze, 2010; Vandenberghe, 2011). Women are often the first to lose jobs, work harder to seek additional income, and spend less time on nurture and care of family (Fildis, 2011). The International Labor Organization Report projected an increase of unemployed women up to 22,000,000 in 2009 due to the economic crisis in the United States (Fildis, 2011). Long-term unemployment for women in the United States almost doubled from 16.1% of female unemployment in 2009 to 30.2% in 2011 (World Bank, n.d.).

The aging of the U.S. workforce has generated concerns about the management of aging workforces, sustainability of social welfare systems, and predicted labor market skill shortages (Jorgensen & Taylor, 2008). Older workers are generally the first to lose their jobs, face greater difficulties obtaining new employment than younger workers, and experience substantial earnings losses upon reemployment (Cha & Morgan, 2010; GAO, 2012; Gringart, Helmes, & Speelman, 2013; Jolkkonen et al., 2012; Karren, 2012). Older workers who have been laid off are likely to have a stigma attached (Karren & Sherman, 2012). Older workers also face stereotypes of being less productive, less flexible, and harder to train with new technology (Karren & Sherman, 2012). This has caused some industrialized countries to place a greater emphasis on policies designed to reverse the early exit trend of older workers in order to address their aging workforce's concerns (Jorgensen & Taylor, 2008). As the number of older workers seeking reemployment increases, government workforce development programs offering market responsive solutions to job seekers and employers are increasingly necessary (Uhalde, 2011).

The economic impact of job loss has raised significant concerns regarding how long-term unemployment affects reemployment prospects and the future retirement of older workers in the United States (GAO, 2012). Changes in U.S. family structure have caused older workers to continue to work to support dependents, and women often have to work to bring in income after the job loss of spouses (Parris & Vickers, 2010). A change in eligibility of social security benefits, smaller pension plans, and an unstable economy are causing workers to stay in the workforce longer than before (Brandan et al., 2013).

Significant gender-based gaps in current research exist on this topic. Multiple studies have explored the emotional, financial, and psychosocial experiences workers face after losing jobs (Gabriel, Gray, & Goregaokar, 2010; Garrett-Peters, 2009; Hodges & Lentz, 2010; Howe, Hornberger, Weihs, Moreno, & Neiderhiser, 2012; Lippmann & Rosenthal, 2008; Nuttman-Shwartz & Gadot, 2012; Parris & Vickers, 2010; Porcellato, Carmichael, Hulme, Ingham, & Prashar, 2010; Root & Park, 2009; Russell, 2011; Wooten & Valenti, 2008). Women lacked equal representation in six of these 11 studies; overall, women represented 40% of the total participants studied and men represented 60% of the participants. Women have been underrepresented in numerous studies on ways to overcome barriers to reemployment (Blustein, Kozan, & Connors-Kellgren, 2013; Gabriel et al., 2010; Porcellato et al., 2010). Women represented 38% of the total participants, and men represented 62% in these studies. This disparity supports Hodges and Lentz's (2010) assertion that researchers have underresearched job loss experiences for women.

Researchers described the emotional experiences workers face after losing jobs as anger, sadness, fear, shock, depression, and anxiety (Gabriel et al., 2010; Nuttman-Shwartz & Gadot, 2012; Parris & Vickers, 2010; Russell, 2011; Wooten & Valenti, 2008). The financial experiences described by researchers include earnings loss and depletion of finances (Hodges & Lentz, 2010; Jolkkonen, Koistinen, & Kurvinen, 2012; Root & Park, 2009). Other documented psychosocial experiences include a loss of identity and social position relating to job loss (Garrett-Peters, 2009; Lippmann & Rosenthal, 2008; Mendenhall, Kalil, Spindel, & Hart, 2008; Porcellato et al., 2010). The

emotional, financial, and psychosocial experiences described in these studies align closely with the research findings of this study.

Barriers to reemployment that older workers generally face include age discrimination (Jyrkinen & McKie, 2012), technological change (Rizzuto, 2011), stereotypical beliefs (Bruckmuller, Ryan, Rink, & Haslam, 2014; Lu, 2010), and organizational practices targeting older workers (Armstrong-Stassen & Cattaneo, 2010). Researchers documented support groups, self-concept repair strategies (Blaustein, Kozan, & Connors-Kellgren, 2013), self-employment (Gabriel et al., 2010; Porcellato et al., 2010), and workforce agencies (Blaustein et al., 2013; Porcellato et al., 2010) as ways to overcome barriers to reemployment. The barriers faced to reemployment and the ways to overcome the barriers as described in these studies identify with the research findings of this study.

Men are more likely have success when networking, whereas women face a glass ceiling in some organizations (Bruckmuller et al., 2014; Caceres-Rodriguez, 2013; Schuh et al., 2014). The glass ceiling is a shield preventing women from obtaining positions in higher management (Bruckmuller et al., 2014; Buckalew et al., 2012; Schuh et al., 2014; Skelly & Johnson, 2011). Organizational leaders tend to see men as more suitable for leadership due to the think-manager-think-men association (Bruckmuller et al., 2014). Though more women have entered the workplace over the past several decades, their representation in top management positions in the United States still lags behind that of men (Carnes & Radojevich-Kelley, 2011, p. 70).

A review of the structure of organizations revealed very few women are in management and leadership positions (Jyrkinen & McKie, 2012). Because women are not looked at as "one of the guys", women are at a disadvantage when searching for job opportunities in a work environment where men are the majority (Caceres-Rodriguez, 2013, p. 679). Women experience underrepresentation in leadership roles, which creates a challenge to society, specifically businesses (Schuh et al., 2014). "Women represent 50.8% of the population in the United States, account for 47% of the workforce, and 49% of the college-educated workforce", but lack equal representation when compared to men holding leadership positions (Warner, 2015, p. 1). Though women "represent 45% of the S&P 500 workforce, only 19% of women hold board seats and only 4.6% of women in these companies hold CEO positions" (Warner, 2015, p. 1). These statistics indicate women still experience the existence of a glass ceiling putting them at a disadvantage in obtaining equal representation in leadership positions (Schuh et al., 2014, p. 363). In light of the progress in gender equality in educational attainment and in representation of women in the workforce, these statistics are of concern as it relates to "equity and fairness" (Schuh et al., 2014, p. 363).

Women and men view job loss differently, with women having a higher level of agreeableness than men in accepting specific outcomes of job loss (Michniewicz et al., 2014; Weckstrom, 2011). In a comparison between women and men, men generally describe "themselves as more angry" following job loss (Wooten & Valenti, 2008, p. 151). Women and men cope with job loss differently; women are generally unemployed

longer, are less likely to relocate for work, and shoulder more responsibilities for home and family (Michniewicz et al., 2014; Weckstrom, 2011; Wilkins & Wooden, 2013).

Various definitions used to designate older workers present a challenge in identifying who exactly is an older worker (Work and Family Researchers Network, n.d., p. 1). Researchers define older workers as 55 and over (GAO, 2012). Other researchers define older Americans workers as 50 and over (AARP, 2013, formerly the American Association of Retired Persons; Gabriel et al., 2010; Porcellato et al., 2010) and over 45 (Root & Park, 2009). "The 1967 Age discrimination in Employment Act" describe older workers as "40 years of age or older" (Work and Family Researchers Network, n.d., p. 1). For this study, older workers were 50 and over.

This research study is important because it generated insight and a greater in-depth understanding of the experiences of women 50 years' old and older in the United States who had experienced involuntary job loss. This study provides guidance to organizations as organizational leaders and policy makers address challenges and policies that directly affect women over 50 experiencing job loss. The results are intended to provide guidance to policy makers and workforce development agencies when considering strategies to address the unique needs of older workers seeking reemployment.

Chapter 1 includes an overview of how the economy has affected job loss, specifically for older workers. The chapter includes an overview of the research questions and the nature and the purpose of the study. The chapter also includes the theoretical

framework, definitions of key terms, assumptions, limitations, scope, delimitations, and the significance of the study.

Background of the Study

Older workers are dominant in the growth segment of the U.S. labor force (Sanders & McCready, 2010, p. 209). The participation rate of older workers began increasing in 1996; this cohort is the only group in the U.S. workforce showing a significant increase in the labor force participation rate (Toossi, 2012). By 2016, the number of U.S. workers ages 55-64 is predicted to increase by 36.5% whereas the number of workers ages 25-54 is predicted to increase by only 2.4% in the same period (Kunze, Boehm, & Bruch, 2013). Some of the factors contributing to an increase in the percentage of older workers remaining in the workforce include an unstable economy, a decrease in value of financial assets, and the passage of age discrimination laws (Toossi, 2012, p. 62). Healthier workers and a longer lifespan enable workers to stay in the workforce longer (Tang, Chi, & Good, 2013, p. 82). Another contributing factor included workers no longer having to retire at a specific age (Toossi, 2012, p. 62).).

The U.S. workforce is overall older (Toossi, 2012), and the participation of women in the workforce was significantly higher in 2013 than it was in the 1970s (BLS, 2013). In 2014, women represented 50.8% of the population in the United States and accounted for 47% of the U.S. labor force (Warner, 2015, p. 1). The change in workforce participation of older women in the United States has been dramatic since the 1970s (Macunovich, 2012). More women entered the workforce or increased working hours as

the men who were the breadwinners in the family lost jobs during the 2007 recession (Mattingly & Smith, 2010). In 2011, 5.3% of women held more than one job, compared to a lower rate of 4.6% for men (BLS, 2013). The overall U.S. workforce has changed due to changes in family structure and the increase of women in the workforce.

The move of manufacturing and service industry jobs to countries outside of the United States continues to negatively affect the U.S. economy (McCormack, 2013). Millions of manufacturing jobs disappeared from December 1979 to December 2007 (Katkov, 2012, p. 109). Prior to 2007, jobs were prevalent for blue-collar workers in major industries such as "construction and manufacturing, and transportation/warehousing" until these industries experienced a decline in employment much larger than any other industry between 2007 and 2010 (Sum, Khatiwada, McLaughlin, & Palma, 2010, p. 8). These changes have severely affected the U.S. housing market, and the retail trade, leisure, and hospitality industries have also experienced employment declines (Goodman & Mance, 2011). Large-scale layoffs in the textile industry have significantly affected women (Hodges & Lentz, 2010, p. 35). In the United States, almost half of the workers in the textile industry were women and over half of the workers in the apparel industry were women since 1966 (Hodges & Lentz, 2010, p. 23). "Women are just as likely, if not more, than men" to experience job loss in the textile industry (Hodges & Lentz, 2010, p. 23).

Researchers have focused predominantly on men and job loss. Women's perspectives on their experiences of job loss have been underrepresented in the studies. Researchers underrepresented women in all of the following studies on the experiences

displaced workers faced after losing their jobs: Gabriel et al. (2010), Mendenhall et al. (2008), Parris and Vickers (2010), Porcellato et al. (2010), Root and Park (2009), Wooten and Valenti (2008). Only one study made a distinction between men and women regarding the experiences of job loss (Wooten & Valenti, 2008). Researchers underrepresented women in two (Parris & Vickers, 2010; Root & Park, 2009) of the three studies describing psychosocial experiences (Garrett-Peters, 2009), and no distinction was made between men and women in these studies. Hodges and Lentz (2010) noted that women who have experienced job loss are emotionally traumatized and experience a sense of loss the same as men, yet information is lacking pertaining to the experiences of unemployed workers across gender.

Gabriel et al. (2010), Garrett-Peters (2009), and Russell (2011) explored feelings of depression, low self-esteem, and low efficacy, but made no distinction between how men and women experienced emotions. Richardson, Webb, Webber, and Smith (2013) and Timmons, Hall, Fesko, and Migliore (2011) emphasized the importance of understanding the experiences of older workers following involuntary job loss; but neither group of researchers distinguished between men and women. Though men and women view and cope with job loss differently (Michniewicz et al., 2014; Weckstrom, 2011), few researchers mentioned distinctions between the experiences of men and women as a result of job loss. Due to limited research on the perspectives of older women who have experienced job loss, gaining further insights into the experiences of older women related to job loss is important.

Women are affected more than men by the financial and emotional impact of "divorce, death of a spouse, long-term job loss, and serious illness or disability of self, spouse or child" (Shearer, 2009, p. 16). In a survey, 66% of women indicated job loss had a substantial impact on their financial status compared to 49% of men (Shearer, 2009, p. 16). Seventy four percent of divorced women cut back on expenses as a result of job loss compared to 59% of men (Shearer, 2009, p. 16). Forty-two percent of women surveyed worked two jobs due to job loss compared to 21% of men (Shearer, 2009, p. 16).

Discrimination is a barrier to reemployment that older workers may face (Gibson et al., 2010). In a national survey, 81% of older workers experienced age discrimination (Chou & Choi, 2011). Age discrimination affects older workers more than younger workers (Humpert, 2013). The Equal Employment Opportunity Center reported an higher level of complaints regarding age discrimination between 2004 and 2007 (Gibson et al., 2010). Gibson et al. (2010) identified age discrimination as the most prevalent type of discrimination case; age discrimination cases increased from 17,800 in 2004 to 19,103 in 2007.

Women experience age discrimination more than men (Jyrkinen & McKie, 2012). Employers view older workers as less flexible (Kunze et al., 2013; Lyons, Wessel, Tai, & Ryan, 2014). Some additional barriers to reemployment are technological change (Rizzuto, 2011), stereotypical beliefs regarding older workers (Billett et al., 2011; Bruckmuller et al., 2014; Lu, 2010), and organizational practices targeting older workers (Armstrong-Stassen & Cattaneo, 2010; Van Dalen, Henkens, & Schippers, 2010). Caregiver responsibilities at home can be a barrier to reemployment (Hossfeld, Kelly,

McTague, & Wadsworth, 2012). Researchers did not distinguish between men and women in eight (Armstrong-Stassen & Cattaneo, 2010; Billett et al., 2011; Bruckmuller et al., 2014; Kunze et al., 2013; Lu, 2010; Lyons et al., Ryan, 2014; Rizzuto, 2011; Van Dalen et al., 2010) of 10 studies (Hossfeld et al., 2012; Jyrkinen & McKie, 2012). Researchers have identified support groups, self-concept repair strategies (Blustein et al., 2013), education and retraining, change of job type, local government support (Blau, Petrucci, & McClendon, 2013; Hodges & Lentz, 2010), self-employment, workforce agencies (Porcellato et al., 2010), networking (Blustein et al., 2013) and relocation (Berger, 2009) as ways for older workers to overcome barriers to reemployment. Berger (2009) was the only study that made a distinction between men and women regarding overcoming barriers to reemployment.

Limited studies exist on the experiences of older women and job loss (Hodges & Lentz, 2010; Hossfeld et al., 2012; Nuttman-Shwartz & Gadot, 2012). The primary focus of most of the literature on the adverse effects of job loss has been on men, and the common assumption is that job loss is less serious for women (Nuttman-Shwartz & Gadot, 2012). None of these researchers focused specifically on the barriers older women faced and how older women, particularly women over 50, overcame the barriers to reemployment. My study led to an in-depth understanding of the impact of job loss on older workers, specifically women over 50. A more in-depth understanding regarding the impact of job loss on older workers is important considering that the increasing size of the aging workforce will greatly affect the future reemployment and retirement income

for older workers (GAO, 2012). Chapter 2 includes a further discussion of related literature regarding the impact of job loss on older workers.

Problem Statement

Individuals may face job loss and insecurity due to a recession (Weckstrom (2011). The lengths of time older workers are unemployed have caused great concern in countries with an increase in the population growth of older people (Zacher, 2013). The unemployment and long-term unemployment rates for older workers age 55 and older in the United States have increased since the beginning of the recession in 2007 (GAO, 2012). Individuals will continue to experience job loss as organizational leaders continue to outsource jobs outside of the United States (Boniface & Rashmi, 2012). Women are at risk of experiencing job loss as more women enter the workforce (Nuttman-Shwartz & Gadot, 2012).

Researchers have explored the experiences of older workers following job loss. Based on the coping behaviors theory of Leana and Feldman (1992), individuals will often experience depression, anger, apathy, and signs of physical illness following job loss. Researchers who explore job loss have predominantly included the experiences of men. A review of the literature revealed the underrepresentation of the experiences of women, specifically women over 50, as they relate to involuntary job loss. None of the studies reviewed included a focus on all three constructs of this study: the experiences of women over 50, the barriers to reemployment, and the ways women overcame the barriers to reemployment. An important factor is the limitation in the body of knowledge regarding literature on the experiences of older women and job loss. It was important to

address this gap in literature and to conduct a transcendental phenomenological study to bring insight and a greater understanding to the experiences of older women, specifically women over 50, and job loss.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the lived experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss, the barriers faced to reemployment, the ways the women overcame these barriers to reemployment, and compare their experiences to research studies relating to men over 50. Men and women view and cope with job loss differently, and this phenomenological study closes the gap on the experiences of women over 50 related to job loss. Insight gained from the lived experiences of women over 50 may contribute to a greater understanding of the phenomenon by employers.

Research Questions

The study involved exploring the experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss, their perspectives on the barriers to reemployment, and how the barriers to reemployment have been overcome and then comparing the experiences of women to the reports of men over 50. The research questions were:

1. How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe the experiences of involuntary job loss?
2. How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe the barriers to reemployment?

3. How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe how they overcame the barriers to reemployment?
4. How do these experiences compare to reports on the job losses of men over 50?

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical framework for this study was Bandura's (1988) theory of coping efficacy, and Leana and Feldman's (1992) theory of coping behaviors as they relate to unemployment. Bandura's (1988) coping efficacy is defined as "the degree to which a person believes that he or she is capable of controlling specific threatening situations" (Latack et al., 1995, p. 321). Leana and Feldman described coping behaviors as attempts to gain reemployment and attempts to reestablish a degree of psychological well-being after losing one's job.

Other researchers, such as Latack el al. (1995), in their integrative process model, built on Leana and Feldman's (1998) general theoretical model of job loss, which explains "how individuals perceive, react to, and cope with job loss" (Latack et al., 1995, p. 314). Latack et al. (1995) examined coping strategies used by individuals who had experienced involuntary job loss and examined the impact coping strategies have on obtaining reemployment. In the integrative process model, the cybernetic coping process is prompted by the job loss event (Latack et al, 1995).

Feedback regarding an individual's perceived job loss experience is input into the integrative process model, a discrepancy appraisal is conducted and the individuals perceived job loss discrepancy is cognitively examined regarding harm, loss or threat

(Latack et al., 1995). The results of the discrepancy appraisal directly affect the coping goals that one is seeking to accomplish using coping strategies (Latack et al., 1995). Coping strategies influence goals or standards and coping resources affect coping strategies (Latack et al., 1995). The cycle of the integrative process model repeats until the individual resolves all discrepancies and achieves all goals (Latack et al., 1995).

Blau et al. (2013) and Chen and Lim (2012**)** considered the findings of Leana and Feldman's (1992) model relating to job loss and coping behaviors in their analyses. Leana and Feldman (1991) looked at the differences in the perceptions, coping, and reactions following job loss among 94 men and 63 women. Blau et al. and Chen and Lim identified core similarities between the two studies relating to job loss and coping behaviors.

Gabriel et al. (2013) related their findings to Leana and Feldman's (1992) model of coping behaviors. Patterns and core similarities between the two studies relating to coping behaviors are (a) problem-focused coping, which includes behaviors a person engages in to control or eliminate the cause of stress; and (b) symptom-focused coping, which includes behaviors a person engages in to alleviate the negative consequences of a stressful event (Gabriel et al., 2013).

Sandler, Tein, Mehta, Wolchik, and Ayers (2000) investigated three theoretical models of coping efficacy. Lazarus and Folkman's transaction model was one of the three models (Sandler et al., 2000, p. 1099). Bandura's, and Skinner and Wellborn's coping efficacy models were two of the three models described (Sandler et al., p. 1100). Sandler et al. defined coping efficacy as "a global belief that one can deal both with the demands

made and the emotions aroused by a situation" (p. 1099). Sandler et al. theorized if one handled stressors well previously, it was an indicator that one would likely handle future stressors well (p. 1099).

Sandler et al. (2000) presented the following aspects of coping efficacy to differentiate the definition of coping efficacy from other associated concepts:

1. "Coping efficacy is a subjective evaluation rather than an objective measure of the effects of coping on various outcomes and thus differs from actual effectiveness of coping" (p. 1099).
2. Coping efficacy is attributed to one's ability to influence the outcomes of stressors as opposed to assigning responsibility to the cause of events (p. 1099).
3. Coping efficacy is a person's ability to cause positive outcomes as opposed to the belief that a positive outcome will likely occur (p. 1099)
4. "Coping efficacy is similar to the concept of control expectancy", but different from the control expectancy concept in the belief that specific actions cause certain outcomes and the belief that one can use these specific actions (p. 1099).
5. "The concept of coping efficacy differs from the broader belief system concerning the locus of control over events". The concept of coping efficacy alludes to control over specific "stressful or problematic" events (p. 1099).

The focus of Lazarus and Folkman's (2011) transaction model was on various coping strategies and relieving the negative impact of unemployment. Coping potential is

associated with Lazarus and Folkman's 'secondary appraisal' concept (Sandler et al., 2000, p. 1099). Coping potential is the extent to which an individuals can manage the circumstances of stressful situations to protect themselves from outcomes that prevent them from being happy or healthy (Sandler et al., 2000). The belief that a person can handle circumstances that threaten one's well-being "should increase the use of strategies that are expected to be effective" and "increase perceptions of coping efficacy" provided the coping strategies are successful (Sandler et al., 2000, pp. 1099-1100).

Bandura's (2012) concept of coping efficacy is the idea that one can control events that are potentially threatening. One's perception, emotions, motivation to take action, and ability to make decisions are impacted by the level of efficacy an individual has (Bandura, 2012). One's perceptions of efficacy in a stressful situation form and promote coping efforts (Bandura, 2012). Perceiving that one has a higher level of efficacy make it likely an individual will react in useful ways, view situations as less threatening, and successfully decrease the number of negative responses (Bandura, 2012).

Skinner and Wellborn's perspective on coping efficacy stemmed from a "motivational theory of stress and coping" (Sandler et al., 2000, p. 1100). The effect of coping efficacy beliefs impacts one's actions to cope in the future (Sandler et al., 2000). Stressful events are viewed by individuals as a challenge or threat to the ability to be successful in "coping to restore, repair, maintain, or replenish their abilities to meet these needs" (Sandler et al., 2000, p. 1100).

Coping is a regulator of behavior, one's feelings, and orientation in order to bring back a sense of being effective (Sandler et al., 2000). How one perceives stressful events

are impacted by coping efficacy beliefs (Wolchik, 2011). Lazarus and Folkman, Bandura, and Skinner and Wellborn model "how people adapt to stress and indicate how coping efficacy beliefs, coping efforts, and symptoms" influence and impact the other over time (Sandler et al., 2000, p. 1100). The theoretical models of Lazarus and Folkman, Bandura, and Skinner and Wellborn area different, but each "support three propositions about the effects of coping efficacy, coping efforts, and psychological symptoms under conditions of stress" (Sandler et al., 2000, p. 1100).

Previous researchers reflected on Latack et al.'s (1995) integrative process model and on Lazarus and Folkman's (2011) transaction model (Gabriel et al., 2010). Latack et al.'s integrative process model reflected on the individual's process of managing stress and coping with stressors (Gabriel et al., 2010) and was built on Leana and Feldman's (1998) general model of job loss. The focus of Lazarus and Folkman's transaction model was on various coping strategies and the effectiveness in easing the negative impact of unemployment. Although each of the models integrated Bandura's (1988) coping efficacy (Gabriel et al., 2010; Leana & Feldman, 1992), the focus of both models was on coping strategies as opposed to Leana and Feldman's (1992) model on coping behaviors. I chose Leana and Feldman's (1992) model as the most appropriate model to understand the behavior of individuals who have lost jobs.

Coping efficacy (Bandura, 1988) and coping behaviors (Leana & Feldman, 1992) provided a perspective that involved exploring and brought to light the experiences faced by women over 50 experiencing involuntary job loss. The theories of coping efficacy (Bandura, 1988) and coping behaviors (Leana & Feldman, 1992) served as the foundation

for this study, and I used them to provide insights to the findings. Leana and Feldman (1992) built their coping behaviors upon Bandura's (1988) coping efficacy theory, and I used the coping behaviors as the principal guide to determine similar characteristics and meanings as they relate to the findings of this study. Chapter 2 includes further information about coping efficacy and coping behavior theories.

Nature of the Study

The study included a qualitative interview methodology. The study also included a phenomenological approach to describe the lived experiences of women over 50 who have incurred involuntary job loss. I addressed the lack of information on the lived experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss using this phenomenological approach. I addressed the gap by looking at the phenomenon from the perspective of women over 50. Coping efficacy (Bandura, 1988) and coping behaviors (Leana & Feldman, 1992) informed the exploration of the participants' experiences, informed how they faced barriers, and explained how to overcome the barriers to reemployment. This qualitative study involved looking at all three constructs in an attempt to provide insight into the lived experiences, the barriers faced, and what women over 50 did to overcome the barriers to reemployment (see Figure 1).

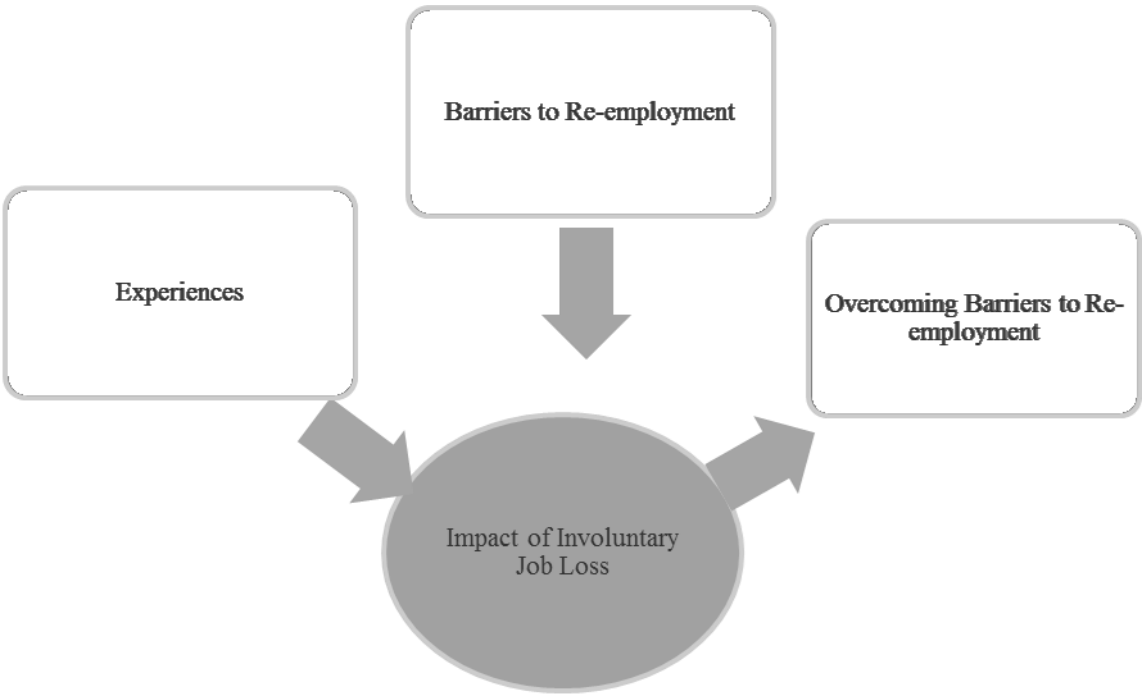

Figure 1. Constructs influencing the study.

Definitions

Barriers to reemployment: Discrimination such as stereotypes, age, lack of training, and lack of education (Gabriel et al., 2010).

Displaced workers: Persons age 20 and over who lost jobs due to closings of plants or companies; insufficient work for employees, or termination of position or work shift (BLS, 2013).

Downsizing: Organizational practice of reducing the workforce to improve organizational performance (Datta, Guthrie, Basuil, & Pandey, 2010).

Great Recession of 2008–2009: An economic downturn that included a substantial reduction in the "number of employed working-age adults in the United States; sharply increased unemployment, underemployment, hidden unemployment, and other forms of

labor underutilization; and increased employment, wage, and annual earnings inequality" (Sum et al., 2010, p. 6).

Involuntary job loss: Displaced workers have no control over job loss (Gowan, 2014).

Job loss: A stressful circumstance that threatens one's financial status, family, and spousal relationship (Nuttman-Shwartz & Gadot, 2012).

Lived experiences: Financial, emotional, and psychosocial experiences that were a result of job loss in this study (Russell, 2011); experiences people live through in their actions, relations, and situations (Van Manen, 2014).

Long-term unemployed: Jobless for 27 weeks or more (BLS, 2012).

Mass layoff: At least 50 or more workers separated from their jobs (BLS, n.d.a.).

Offshoring: Strategy of moving manufacturing facilities abroad to cut costs (Katkov, 2012).

Older workers: Workers 50 years and older (Gabriel et al., 2010; Porcellato et al., 2010).

Outsourcing: Contracting work overseas where labor costs are lower rather than completing work internally (Chung & Khan, 2012).

Underemployment: Workers employed in jobs below their full working capacities; overeducated, overskilled, overqualified, and underpaid workers (Blau et al., 2013; Gowan, 2014; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011).

Assumptions

A phenomenological study begins with the experiences of individuals and their perceptions of these experiences (Leavy, 2014). The nature of the phenomenological study includes an assumption that participants will openly share experiences. Another assumption that I made was that the participants would completely disclose and describe the experiences of the phenomenon.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study included the insights and views of older female workers who had experienced involuntary job loss. Although researchers have studied the population of older men, they have underrepresented older female workers in the literature. I limited the potential transferability of the study to women over 50 who had shared the same experiences of involuntary job loss and participated in similar workforce programs.

The boundaries of the study included women over 50 because the experiences of women differ from those of men (Michniewicz et al., 2014). Previous studies have been predominantly on men (Gabriel et al., 2010; Mendenhall et al., 2008; Parris & Vickers, 2010; Porcellato et al., 2010; Wooten & Valenti, 2008). Because women over 55 are the highest proportion of unemployed in the northeastern city studied (BLS, 2011b), and previous studies were predominantly on men, this study did not include an additional exploration of men's experiences.

Limitations

The transferability of this study was limited to similar populations of women who were in the same age cohort and shared the same experiences of involuntary job loss. I have witnessed colleagues experience involuntary job loss, and I am aware of the potential for bias. To limit any bias, I represented the voices and experiences of the women, and I gained a greater in-depth understanding of the experiences of women who experienced involuntary job losses. I used convenience sampling, which limited the generalizability of the results.

Significance of the Study

The study may be significant for participants who feel empowered as a result of sharing personal stories and experiences. Insight gained from the lived experiences of women over 50 may contribute to a greater understanding of the phenomenon by organizational leaders and provide guidance to organizational leaders as they address organizational challenges, for example, the loss of tacit knowledge and policies directly affecting older workers. The insight gained from the lived experiences of women over 50 may allow other women over 50 who are experiencing involuntary job losses to better prepare for the obstacles resulting from losing a job. The study's potential to help older workers to prepare and plan more effectively for a future in a changing work environment provides social significance. The potential positive change is a better understanding of the needs of women over 50.

Summary

Hodges and Lentz (2010) suggested that understanding the impact of unemployment on women is imperative due to large-scale layoffs in the 20th and 21st centuries. Due to limited research on the perspective of older women who had experienced job loss, it was important to gain further insights into women's experiences of job loss. This study involved investigating the experiences of involuntary job loss on older workers, specifically women over 50.

Theories support the study, and I used a series of interview questions to gather the data for the study. I used a software program to analyze the data and obtain answers for the study. I also examined job loss experiences, barriers to reemployment, and ways to overcome the barriers for ways to help older workers better prepare and plan for the future and ultimately to give employers and policy makers a greater in-depth understanding of the needs of older workers, specifically women over 50, who experienced involuntary job losses. A qualitative method using a phenomenological research design was suitable for describing the lived experiences of women over 50 and served as a valuable source of information for employers and policy makers to consider when making decisions and policies relating to older workers. Chapter 2 includes additional literature relating to the experiences of involuntary job loss on older workers. Chapter 3 provides a description of the phenomenological research design for this study. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the collected data and the results of the research study. Chapter 5 includes the summary of research study findings and the interpretations from the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss, the barriers faced to reemployment, how the women overcame the barriers to reemployment, and compare their experiences to research studies of men over 50. Chapter 2 includes a detailed discussion of the current situation of older workers who had experienced job loss. The review of literature in Chapter 2 reveals the impact job loss has had on older workers through an exploration of the experiences of older workers, the barriers to reemployment, and how women overcame the barriers to reemployment. A review of the literature indicated a gap in research on the experiences of older women, specifically women over 50, who had experienced involuntary job loss.

This literature review begins with an exploration of the theoretical background of the study, specifically Leana and Feldman's (1992) theory of coping behaviors originating in Bandura's (1988) coping efficacy. Chapter 2 includes information on literature search strategies and the theoretical framework of the study. Economic recession and the impact of the economic recession on job loss include the topics of business restructuring or downsizing and outsourcing. The chapter includes the experiences of involuntary job loss and the financial, emotional, and psychosocial impact of job loss, as well as barriers to reemployment and overcoming barriers to reemployment as they relate to employee self-initiative and assistance seeking strategies.

Literature Search Strategy

The strategies used to search for literature included online searches of books and articles through Worldcat; online searches of journals and dissertations through databases subscribed to by Argosy University and Walden University such as Academic Search, Google Scholar, PsycINFO, ProQuest, SAGE, and Thoreau databases; and manual searches at local universities such as Johns Hopkins University and Notre Dame of Maryland University. Key terms used in the literature search included *displaced workers, older workers, mature workers, baby boomers, midlife, aging labor force, aging workforce, reemployment, reentry, unemployment, underemployment, women, women over 50, men, involuntary job joss, downsized, laid off, lived experiences, barriers, impact, coping, challenges, economy, recession, great recession, global recession,* and *economic decline.* In cases where I found few studies on women over 50 experiencing job loss, I conducted a broader search on workers and job loss. The search for journal articles included full-text and peer-reviewed journal articles.

Theoretical Foundation

The basis for the theoretical framework for the study was the theory of coping efficacy (Bandura, 1988) and the theory of coping behaviors (Leana & Feldman, 1992). Leana and Feldman (1992) built their coping behaviors upon Bandura's (1988) coping efficacy theory. Leana and Feldman integrated coping efficacy into the coping behaviors theory. The theories of both Bandura and Leana and Feldman were suitable for analyzing the findings of the research questions. Coping efficacy (Bandura, 1988) and coping behaviors (Leana & Feldman, 1992) were suitable for analyzing the questions and

capturing the lived experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss. The theories of both Bandura and Leana and Feldman served as a foundation for this study to contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the impact of involuntary job loss on older workers and addressed the gap in literature regarding the experiences of older women, specifically women over 50, and job loss.

Coping efficacy is an individual's view of his or her ability to cope with the demands of a stressful or traumatic situation (Bandura, 1988). Leana and Feldman (1992) built on the concept of coping efficacy by integrating it into the coping behaviors theory. The higher the person's view of his ability to cope with a stressful situation, the more likely the person will adopt a strategy to change threatening environments into more favorable environments (Bandura, 1988). For example, a driver uncomfortable with driving on curvy mountain roads might imagine having an accident and suffering from bodily harm, whereas a confident driver does not foresee having any problems (Bandura, 1988). Efficacy beliefs affect attentiveness toward potential threats and how people perceive and cognitively process potential threats (Bandura, 2012). Efficacy beliefs also control stress and anxiety and the impact efficacy beliefs have on coping behaviors (Bandura, 2012). People who possess a stronger sense of efficacy are bolder in taking on the problematic situations that often lead to stress (Bandura, 2012). I considered Bandura's coping efficacy theory when analyzing the responses of participants in this study to determine similar characteristics and meanings.

Coping is an active means individuals used to establish new routines after they have experienced a stressful event (Leana & Feldman, 1992). A person's stress and

depression level is impacted by that person's beliefs regarding his ability to cope with threatening circumstances (Bandura, 2012). A person consistently changes his emotional and behavioral efforts to handle the discrepancies that extend beyond an individual's control (Latack et al., 1995, p. 316).

In employment, coping behaviors are attempts to regain employment or regain some semblance of psychological well-being (Leana & Feldman, 1992). Leana and Feldman (1992) presented two classes of coping behaviors: (a) problem-focused coping behaviors that a person engages in to control or eliminate the cause of stress, and (b) symptom-focused coping behaviors that a person engages in to alleviate the negative consequences of a stressful event. I analyzed the data of this study for similar patterns relating to Leana and Feldman's coping behaviors.

Problem-focused coping behaviors such as obtaining training for a new career, searching for a new job, or trying to relocate to an area with better job opportunities help individuals experiencing job loss to deal with stress (Leana & Feldman, 1992). Symptom-focused coping behaviors such as applying for monetary support, seeking help from family and friends, or volunteering to assist others who lost jobs, aid in reducing the negative feelings of isolation, depression, or financial stress associated with losing one's loss (Leana & Feldman, 1992). Although symptom-focused behaviors may help to reduce the negative feelings associated with job loss, they do nothing to change a person's employment status (Leana & Feldman, 1992).

People who have experienced job loss often experience feelings such as depression, anger, apathy, anxiety, and signs of physical illness (Leana & Feldman,

1992). Despite these emotions, many people who have experienced job loss do not just give up. First, despite the misfortunes experienced, job loss often provides a needed incentive to change directions (Leana & Feldman, 1992). For example, job loss gives people an incentive to change careers to relocate to a better economic community. Second, coping can aid in reducing the initial source of stress: unemployment (Leana & Feldman, 1992). Many unemployed workers realize that taking action can eliminate joblessness (Leana & Feldman, 1992). Third, coping can aid people who have experienced job loss to reestablish patterns of daily life, reaffirm a sense of control, and regain confidence in their ability (Leana & Feldman, 1992).

Leana and Feldman (1992) presented coping behaviors such as self-initiated job search, geographic relocation, and seeking financial assistance as ways to overcome the barriers to reemployment. Leana and Feldman also included seeking social support, education and/or retraining, and getting involved in community activities as ways to overcome barriers to reemployment (Leana & Feldman, 1992). I analyzed the data of this study for similar patterns and characteristics.

Leana and Feldman (1992) found a self-initiated job search was a tactic undertaken by nearly all study participants. Following up on help-wanted notices was the most frequent strategy, whereas job search assistance through governmental agencies and community job bank services were less viable alternatives in local areas where the perception was very few jobs were available (Leana & Feldman, 1992). Nearly half of the study participants looked for jobs outside of local communities, and less than a quarter of them made definite plans to relocate (Leana & Feldman, 1992). Study participants who

relocated and found a new job experienced difficulty with losing touch with friends and the lives they led in previous communities.

Some study participants who applied for financial assistance were reluctant to report applying for financial assistance due to embarrassment and humiliation experienced at government agencies, and they faced frustration when working with government bureaucracy or the bureaucracy of former employers. Seeking social support was the most frequently used symptom-focused coping strategy (Leana & Feldman, 1992). Workers experiencing job loss turned to spouses, friends, and former coworkers as outlets for anxiety and apprehension relating to unemployment. Workers who lost jobs also turned to community groups for assistance. Few employees pursued further education in local technical schools or colleges and did not receive offers of training opportunities by their companies. Some older workers did not choose to seek additional training and felt more education would not be worthwhile, and other workers experienced financial difficulties or family concerns that interfered with pursuing additional training. I considered the findings of Leana and Feldman's study when analyzing the data for patterns and similar characteristics and meanings related to Leana and Feldman's coping behaviors.

Economic Recession

The Great Recession of 2008–2009 had a significant impact on the U.S. labor market (Sum et al., 2010). Job seekers outnumbered job openings five to one in September 2010 (Mishel, Bivens, Gould, & Shierholz, 2012). The United States experienced a reduction in the number of employed working-age adults, which caused a

substantial increase in "unemployment and underemployment" (Sum et al., 2010, pp. 6-7). The fall of the property market and the economic crisis were central to causes of the recession (Katkov, 2012). In contrast, Katkov (2012) contended the real cause of the recession was the mid-1980's shift in the U.S. government's economic policy. In an effort to decrease production costs, leaders of U.S. corporations transferred manufacturing facilities abroad (Katkov, 2012). The shift in manufacturing activities abroad, also known as offshoring, eliminated millions of manufacturing jobs and caused a negative impact on the job creation process in other regions of the United States (Katkov, 2012). Construction and manufacturing, along with the transportation and warehousing industries, which are "a major employer of blue-collar workers", experienced a decline in employment much larger than any other industry (Sum et al., 2010, p. 7). "Fifty-four percent of all payroll losses" in the United States from "January-February 2010" resulted from a decline in employment in the construction and manufacturing, as well as the transportation and warehousing industries (Sum et al., 2010, p. 9).

Impact of Economic Recession

Unemployment increased due to employment declines in construction, manufacturing, and service-providing industries during the 2007–2009 recession (Goodman & Mance, 2011). Jobs in manufacturing decreased by 2,000,000 (14.6%) from December 2007 through June 2009, with a severe job loss in motor vehicles and parts manufacturing of 35% (Goodman & Mance, 2011). Employment in construction decreased by 2,200,000 (28.8% as of December 2010), and employment in private service-providing industries fell by 4.6 million (Goodman & Mance, 2011). The losses of

jobs monthly were at an all-time high and heaviest in manufacturing and construction (Goodman & Mance, 2011). The impacts on the housing market and employment were severe (Goodman & Mance, 2011). The retail trade, leisure, and service industries that were traditionally stable experienced a decline in employment (Goodman & Mance, 2011). The economy also experienced a 3.9% reduction in employment in financial activities (BLS, 2012). In addition to loss of employment, workers experienced a cut in weekly hours (Goodman & Mance, 2011). The average weekly hours of all employees fell by 1 hour to 33.7 hours in June 2009 (Goodman & Mance, 2011). Older workers had more difficulty finding new work (Mossaad, 2010). Data from the Urban Institute (as cited in Mossaad, 2010) indicated the number of people without a job who were 55 years of age and over almost doubled from November 2007 to August 2009, which was a significant increase for this age group.

In December 2007, the national unemployment rate showed as 5% and in December 2009, the unemployment rate doubled to10% (Mattingly & Smith, 2010). Fifteen million workers were unemployed in the United States (Mattingly & Smith, 2010). By the end of 2010, the median number of weeks jobseekers were out of work was a little over 10 (BLS, 2012). In contrast, the median was 5 weeks prior to the start of the recession in 2007 (BLS, 2012). Long-term unemployment grew substantially for workers age 55 and over and raised a concern about how long-term unemployment would affect older workers regarding future prospects for reemployment and retirement income (Jeszeck, 2012). Rising unemployment for older workers was mainly due to the increase in workforce participation in that group (Mossaad, 2010). Researchers at the National

Center for Chronic Disease and Health Promotion (2012, p. 1) found "baby boomers - people born between 1946 and 1964", are staying in the workforce longer which caused a rise in the amount of older workers in the labor force. The increase in the age of older workers is attributed to a healthier older population, basic need of having health benefits, change in retirement benefits and an unstable economy (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2012).

New standards arose regarding the loss of jobs, rate of unemployment, and time employed due to the Great Recession (Mattingly & Smith, 2010). The Great Recession appeared to end in June 2009, in spite of the continued deterioration of labor market problems experienced by U.S. workers (Sum et al., 2010). The unemployment rate remained at or slightly above 10% in the last 3 months of 2009 (Sum et al., 2010). Between December 2007 and January 2010, the number of jobs lost in the United States reached 8,400,000 (BLS, 2011a).

Underemployment increased substantially (Sum et al., 2010). In October–November 2007, people who were underemployed in the United States was approximately 4,200,000 and increased to 7,200,000 during October–December 2008 (Sum et al., 2010). The number of underemployed continued to increase, rising to 8,900,000 in the fourth quarter of 2009 (October–December; Sum et al., 2010). Following the end of World War II, underemployed workers increased 112%, which was the most substantial increase in any two year period in the United States (Sum et al., 2010).

In 2007, 8.5 weeks was the median unemployment duration a person was out of work in the United States (Anderson, 2010). In 2010, the amount of time workers were without a job averaged at 27 weeks, the maximum number of weeks ever reached at that time. For over 6 months 41% of workers were without a job (Madland, 2010). Short-term unemployment of less than 5 weeks had the highest percentage (35.9%), whereas long-term unemployment of 15 weeks or longer was 32.5% (Anderson, 2010). In 2008, an increase of 1,800,000 individuals in the average yearly rate of unemployment and a higher unemployment rate of 1.2% resulted in a shift in allocation between short-term and long-term unemployment (Anderson, 2010). The long-term unemployed made up the largest percentage (35.7%), and individuals unemployed short-term dropped to 32.8%, a reduction of 3.1 percentage points (Anderson, 2010). The number of unemployed continued to increase in 2009, resulting in a 15.3% increase in long-term unemployment from 2008 (Anderson, 2010). In 2009, a person was without a job at the national level for 15.1 weeks (median), which was an increase from 9.4 weeks in the previous year (Anderson, 2010).

The overall unemployment and long-term unemployment rates of older workers age 55 and over grew substantially since the beginning of the recession in 2007 (GAO, 2012). The unemployment rate for older workers increased from 3.1% at the beginning of the recession to 6.0% in December 2011. Fifty-five percent of workers without jobs actively searched for a job over 6 months (GAO, 2012). The BLS (2012) disclosed an unemployment rate of 8.2% and 12,700,000 unemployed persons in a household data

survey. The number of persons jobless for 27 weeks or more in the United States was 5,400,000 (BLS, 2012).

The impact of the recession affected the state of Maryland in the first 6 months of 2008 (Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration [DOLETA], 2008). Approximately 20 employers closed operations in Maryland, which resulted in a layoff of approximately 1,500 workers (DOLETA, 2008). Approximately two thirds of jobs loss in construction in the state of Maryland resulted from downsizing among specialty trade contractors (DOLETA, 2008). Jobs decreased by 24,700 in the trade, transportation, and utilities sector, specifically in motor vehicle and parts dealers and in durable wholesalers (State of Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, 2010). Fifteen Maryland auto dealerships closed (State of Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, 2010). Clothing stores and electronics stores either downsized or closed (State of Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, 2010). Professional and business services dropped 13,400 jobs (State of Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, 2010). The finance sector lost approximately 12,800 jobs between December 2007 and June 2009 (DOLETA, 2008). Trade, transportation and utilities absorbed 80% of the job loss experienced in 2009 in Maryland (State of Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, 2010).

Maryland's job market continued to decline in 2009 reaching a level of joblessness not seen since early 1980 (State of Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, 2010). The number of jobseekers in Maryland rose to an all-time high of more than 200,000 by February 2009 and continued to rise higher in June 2009 to a 7.2%

unemployment rate, which was the highest since 1983 (DOLETA, 2008). The economic recession had a greater impact on men, Whites, and persons aged 55 and over in Maryland (DOLETA, 2008). The effect on workers age 65 and over was more severe, with unemployment increasing from 2.6% in 2007 to 5.6% in 2008 (DOLETA, 2008). The unemployment rate in a northeastern city in Maryland almost doubled from 5.5% in 2007 to 10.5 % in 2011 (DOLETA, 2008).

Significant changes in the expected roles that women and men play in society took place as a result of the Great Recession (Mattingly & Smith, 2010). Due to a higher job loss for men during the 2007-2009 recession, women held 50% of nonfarm payroll jobs in June 2009; a first for women in nonfarm payroll jobs (BLS, 2014a). The role of women as economic providers increased due to men losing three fourths of the jobs lost in 2009 (Mattingly & Smith, 2010). More women entered the workforce or increased the number of hours worked to meet financial obligations following job loss of the spouse (Mattingly & Smith, 2010). Women held multiple jobs (BLS, 2014b). The multiple-job holding rate was 5.2% for women and 4.6% for men (BLS, 2014b).

The unemployment rate for women age 55 and over in a northeastern city in the United States steady increased from 2007 to 2011 (BLS, 2011b). In the past, the unemployment rate for men 55 and over in this city exceeded the unemployment rate for women 55 and over (BLS, 2011b). In 2011, the unemployment rate for women in this city exceeded the unemployment rate for men 55 and over by 4.6% (BLS, 2011b). A higher number of working women and the current critical state of the economy caused

women to become a "target population for job loss" (Nuttman-Shwartz & Gadot, 2012, p. 275).

The impact of long-term unemployment regarding future reemployment prospects and the retirement of older workers is a concern (GAO, 2012). The management of aging workforces, sustainability of social welfare systems, and predicted labor market skill shortages are current concerns of an aging workforce (Jorgensen & Taylor, 2008). "Demographic and economic factors have increased the focus" on knowledge retention (Jackson, 2010, p. 908). Public workforce development programs face unprecedented challenges in attempts to help millions of workers who remain jobless (Uhalde, 2011). As the number of older workers seeking reemployment increases, workforce development programs offering market responsive solutions to job seekers and employers are increasingly necessary (Uhalde, 2011).

Experiences of Involuntary Job Loss

Major economic downturns cause a large increase in permanent layoffs among workers (Davis & Von Wachter, 2011). The decline of steady and long-term employment leads to a restructuring of the labor market and negatively affects the experiences of workers (Davis & Von Wachter, 2011). Hodges and Lentz (2010) explored some of the financial, emotional, and psychosocial experiences older workers face after losing a job. A review of the literature regarding the financial, emotional, and psychosocial experiences of older workers revealed a gap in research regarding the experiences of older women, specifically women over 50, related to job loss.

Financial

Workers who have experienced involuntary job loss have also experienced financial loss (Cha & Morgan, 2010; Couch et al., 2009; Davis & Von Wachter, 2011; Gringart et al., 2013; Hironimus-Wendt, 2008; Hodges & Lentz, 2010; Jolkkonen et al., 2012; Lippmann, 2008; Mattingly & Smith, 2010; Parris & Vickers, 2010; Root & Park, 2009). A review of research revealed three studies on men only (Davis & Von Wachter, 2011; Parris & Vickers, 2010; Root & Park, 2009), seven studies on men and women (Cha & Morgan, 2010; Couch et al., 2009; Gringart et al., 2013; Hironimus-Wendt, 2008; Jolkkonen et al., 2012; Lippmann, 2008; Mattingly & Smith, 2010), and one study on women only (Hodges & Lentz, 2010).

The researchers of the three studies on men only (Davis & Von Wachter, 2011; Parris & Vickers, 2010; Root & Park, 2009) indicated job loss caused displaced workers to experience financial strain (Root & Park, 2009) and less stability in earnings (Davis & Von Wachter, 2011). Earnings losses for men varied with labor market conditions at the time of displacement (Davis & Von Wachter, 2011). Older workers had larger earnings losses and the present value of earnings decreased 11% in an average year for men who lost jobs with 3 or more years of prior tenure (Davis & Von Wachter, 2011). Some workers who experienced involuntary job loss were able to find jobs, but at lower wages (Davis & Von Wachter, 2011; Root & Park, 2009). Of the three studies reviewed that represented men only, Parris and Vickers (2010) made a distinction between findings as they regarded men and women. Parris and Vickers (2010) found a societal move away from the traditional view of men as the wage earner along with a change in women's role

of having responsibility for taking care of the home. Root and Park (2009) studied 173 men and no women, and Parris and Vickers (2010) studied nine men and no women. Davis and Von Wachter (2011) did not specify the number of men in their study.

Researchers investigated men and women who experienced earnings losses due to involuntary job loss in seven studies: Cha and Morgan (2010), Couch et al. (2009), Gringart et al. (2013), Hironimus-Wendt (2008), Jolkkonen et al. (2012), Lippmann (2008), and Mattingly and Smith (2010). Some workers who experienced involuntary job loss were able to find jobs but at lower wages (Cha & Morgan, 2010). Earnings losses increased sharply for men and women with age (Couch et al., 2009), and the earnings losses of older workers who lost jobs were greater upon reemployment (Gringart et al., 2013; Lippmann, 2008). Women were more likely to experience a larger loss of earnings (Jolkkonen et al., 2012). Cha and Morgan's findings were consistent with these findings and indicated earnings losses were larger among displaced workers later reemployed. These findings were in agreement with the findings of Feldman and Leana (2000), in which individuals upon reemployment, particularly higher level professionals were underemployed with lower earnings. Reemployed workers experienced wage losses of 34–47% of previous hourly wage equivalents (Hironimus-Wendt, 2008). A study of Bridgestone/Firestone indicated workers lost on average $20,000 in the first year following displacements (Hironimus-Wendt, 2008). Workers had to make early withdrawals from retirement plans and sell rental property, cars, recreational vehicles, boats, furniture, and computers to make ends meet and to take care of emergencies (Hironimus-Wendt, 2008). A long-term trend of replacing higher wage primary jobs with

lower wage service sector jobs greatly affected workers who had experienced involuntary job loss and lost a substantial amount of annual income (Hironimus-Wendt, 2008). Workers who involuntarily lost jobs had to make significant sacrifices relating to food, clothing, shelter, and personal wellness due to insufficient wages (Hironimus-Wendt, 2008). Wives had to enter the workforce or increase working hours due to financial strain (Mattingly & Smith, 2010). Due to the loss of the husband's job, families began to rely on wives as breadwinners (Mattingly & Smith, 2010).

The researchers of four studies on men and women made a distinction between men and women: Couch et al. (2009), Hironimus-Wendt (2008), Lippmann (2008), and Mattingly and Smith (2010). Women generally experienced significantly larger, proportional wage losses than men when taking a new job (Hironimus-Wendt, 2008). In contrast, Couch et al. found the earnings loss in the year following job loss was larger in the majority of the industries for men in comparison to women. Excluded was educational and health services, where women 40 to 49 years of age showed a minimal decrease in earnings and experienced an immediate recovery (Couch et al., 2009). "An additional year of age extended the time women were unemployed by approximately one third of a week", whereas the oldest displaced men in the sample experienced significantly longer unemployment spells (Lippmann (2008, p. 1275). The earnings of wives tended to be lower than the earnings of the husbands (Mattingly & Smith, 2010). Couch et al. and Hironimus-Wendt underrepresented women in their studies. Hironimus-Wendt studied the experiences of 336 men and 59 women, and Couch et al. studied 7,603 men and 6,477 women.

In their study on women, Hodges and Lentz (2010) discussed the experiences of financial impact due to job loss. Women found themselves financially strained and forced to cut back on expenses (Hodges & Lentz, 2010). Working at minimum wage jobs, women were not able to pay for their children's college education and lost homes and cars (Hodges & Lentz, 2010). Hodges and Lentz did not make a distinction relating to financial impact between men and women.

Emotional

On the topic of emotions, Parris and Vickers (2010) and Root and Park (2009) studied men only. Gabriel et al. (2010), Howe, Hornberger, Weihs, Moreno, and Neiderhiser (2012), Papa and Maitoza (2013), Russell (2011) and Wooten and Valenti (2008) studied both men and women; and Hodges and Lentz (2010), Hodges (2013), and Hossfeld et al. (2012) looked at only women. Workers who have experienced involuntary job loss have experienced emotions such as fear, and stress (Papa & Maitoza, 2013; Parris & Vickers, 2010; Russell, 2011), anxiety (Hodges & Lentz, 2010; Hodges, 2013; Howe et al., 2012; Parris & Vickers, 2010; Russell, 2011; Wooten & Valenti, 2008), and failure (Gabriel et al., 2010; Parris & Vickers, 2010). Workers felt anger (Gabriel et al., 2010; Parris & Vickers, 2010; Wooten & Valenti, 2008), devastation and disbelief (Hodges & Lentz, 2010), disrespect and dehumanization (Hossfeld et al., 2012; Lyons et al., 2014), grief (Gabriel et al., 2010; Papa & Maitoza, 2013), and guilt (Gabriel et al., 2010; Wooten & Valenti, 2008). Workers also felt humiliation (Howe et al., 2012), sadness, shame, alienation (Gabriel et al., 2010; Parris & Vickers, 2010), shock (Gabriel

et al., 2010; Hossfeld et al., 2012; Parris & Vickers, 2010), and depression (Gabriel et al., 2010; Howe et al., 2012; Russell, 2011; Wooten & Valenti, 2008).

Parris and Vickers (2010) and Root and Park (2009) studied only men. Park and Vickers's participants described feelings of anger toward employers, sadness at leaving colleagues and staff, and fear regarding the future of employment and the ability to take care of the family. Men focused on others' perception of them, which resulted in feelings of failure based on the failure to provide for family and to provide guidance (Parris & Vickers, 2010). The greatest emotional response in this study was feelings of failure (Parris & Vickers, 2010). The loss of jobs caused men to feel inadequate due to the inability to maintain the provider role in the family (Parris & Vickers, 2010). In Root and Park's (2009) study, men described themselves as being bitter or anxious after learning they would be losing their jobs. Conversely, some men near retirement were happy to leave with the incentive of a separation allowance (Root & Park, 2009). Workers who involuntarily lost jobs felt stress when addressing immediate monetary demands such as paying mortgages and children's education (Parris & Vickers, 2010). Anxiety escalated over the pressure to make ends meet as finances diminished (Parris & Vickers, 2010). Nine men and no women were participants in Parris and Vickers's study and 173 men and no women were participants in Root and Park's study. Neither study included a distinction between men and women regarding emotions.

In six studies regarding the emotional experiences of displaced men and women, the participants noted reactions of fear (Russell, 2011), anxiety, (Russell, 2011; Wooten & Valenti, 2008), anger (Gabriel et al., 2010; Wooten & Valenti, 2008), dehumanization

(Lyons et al., 2014), disillusionment, failure, grief, guilt, shock, shame, self-pity (Gabriel et al., 2010; Wooten & Valenti, 2008), betrayal, and depression (Gabriel et al., 2010; Howe et al., 2012; Papa & Maitoza, 2013; Russell, 2011; Wooten & Valenti, 2008). Anger was one of four emotions (anger, anxiety, depression, guilt) that significantly differed between men and women (Wooten & Valenti, 2008). The distinction made between men and women in Wooten and Valenti's (2008) study indicated men in comparison to women described themselves as angrier following the loss of a job. Some workers experienced complete shock (Gabriel et al., 2010). Fink indicated people first experience a period of shock when they deny the experience of job loss (as cited in Gabriel et al., 2010). Workers felt betrayed by management and became bitter (Gabriel et al., 2010). Women were underrepresented in Wooten and Valenti (2008), with 301 men and 118 women participating; in Gabriel et al. (2010), with 11 men and one woman; and in Papa and Maitoza (2013), with 40 men and 33 women. Russell (2011) did not distinguish between men and women regarding the emotional experiences of job loss.

Three studies regarding women included feelings of anxiety, depression (Hodges, 2013), disbelief, devastation (Hodges & Lentz, 2010), disrespect, and dehumanization following job loss (Hossfeld et al., 2012). Women felt disbelief and devastation when they learned they would lose their jobs (Hodges & Lentz, 2010). Women felt disrespected and dehumanized when applying for social services (Hossfeld et al., 2012). A distinction arose between men and women in one study in which men experienced emotional strain as a result of a change in their roles as provider in the family; women had the responsibility of finding support for themselves, children, and others for whom they cared

(Hossfeld et al., 2012). These findings were consistent with the findings in a study of men only (Parris & Vickers, 2010), in which men experienced stress due to loss of the breadwinner role in the family. The financial experiences and the emotional experiences of job loss could lead to psychosocial implications for workers who experienced involuntary job loss (Parris & Vickers, 2010).

Psychosocial

Workers who have experienced involuntary job loss have experienced psychosocial feelings such as loss of sense of community (Blau et al., 2013; Hodges & Lentz, 2010; Hossfeld et al., 2012; Root & Park, 2009), loss of social status (Howe et al., 2012; Mendenhall et al., 2008), occupational prestige (Lippmann & Rosenthal, 2008), decreased self-worth (Howe et al., 2012; Mendenhall et al., 2008; Parris & Vickers, 2010; Root & Park, 2009), and loss of identity (Howe et al., 2012; Michniewicz et al., 2014; Parris & Vickers, 2010). Two studies had only male participants: Parris and Vickers (2010) and Root and Park (2009). Five had men and women: Howe et al. (2012), Blau et al. (2013), Lippmann and Rosenthal (2008), Mendenhall et al. (2008), and Michniewicz et al. (2014). Two studies had women only: Hodges and Lentz (2010) and Hossfeld et al. (2012).

Parris and Vickers (2010) and Root and Park (2009) looked solely at men. Men felt a loss in sense of community during unemployment (Root & Park, 2009), employment was central to the development of male identity, and men felt concerned with how others viewed them regarding the ability to work and provide for family (Parris & Vickers, 2010). Men had a need to appear successful to others and themselves (Parris

& Vickers, 2010). Men lost their sense of identity and felt inadequate after job loss because they were not able to take care of family (Parris & Vickers, 2010). Men experienced a personal attack on self-worth, questioned what was wrong with them, and second-guessed themselves (Parris & Vickers, 2010). Root and Park identified with the results of Parris and Vickers relating to a decrease in self-worth of men. Both studies included an underrepresentation of women. Nine men and no women were in Parris and Vickers's study, and 173 men and no women were in Root and Park's study.

Four studies relating to men and women indicated a loss in social status and self-worth (Howe et al., 2012; Mendenhall et al., 2008), occupational prestige (Lippmann & Rosenthal, 2008), and loss of identity (Howe et al., 2012; Michniewicz et al., 2014) due to involuntary job loss. Abrupt separation from work triggered identity issues related to privilege and social locations (Mendenhall et al., 2008). Midcareer female and male workers 40–60 years of age felt a sense of self-degradation and tended to undervalue major accomplishments to obtain positions that did not match the identity or personal fulfillment of the workers (Mendenhall et al., 2008). Displaced men and women lost status or occupational prestige upon reemployment (Lippmann & Rosenthal, 2008). Upon reemployment, occupational prestige impacted mostly professional workers and skilled blue-collar workers. Loss of prestige included a less senior position, less responsibility, less pay, or less accountability for staff (Parris & Vickers, 2010). A distinction made by only Lippmann and Rosenthal (2008) indicated men lost more prestige than women did. In a distinction made between men and women, having a job was less central to women in comparison to men (Michniewicz et al., 2014). Women did not fear gender-based

reaction following job loss, whereas men held negative perceptions of the effects of job loss on their male status (Michniewicz et al., 2014). In another distinction made between men and women, Michniewicz et al. (2014) indicated women adjusted better to job loss than men because the women's work was less central to their identities. An underrepresentation of women occurred in two (Lippmann & Rosenthal, 2008; Mendenhall et al., 2008) of the four studies (Howe et al., 2012; Michniewicz et al., 2014). Lippmann and Rosenthal (2008) studied the experiences of 1,637 men and 1,088 women; 64 men and 13 women participated in Mendenhall et al.'s (2008) study, 206 men and 220 women participated in Howe et al.'s study, and the representation of men and women was equal in Michniewicz et al.'s (2014) study, with 408 men and 408 women.

Hodges and Lentz (2010), and Hossfeld et al. (2012) studied only women. Women reported losing a strong women-centered support network after losing their jobs (Hossfeld et al., 2012). Women who previously experienced strong support networks expressed sadness regarding the loss of work relationships (Hossfeld et al., 2012). Female workers who experienced involuntary job loss missed the social enjoyment that daily interaction with coworkers provided (Hodges & Lentz, 2010). A distinction between men and women did not exist in either of these studies. Fourteen women participated in Hodges and Lentz's study, and 10 women participated in Hossfeld et al.'s study.

Barriers to Reemployment

A review of the literature revealed the gap in research on older women, specifically women over 50, and job loss as it relates to the barriers they face to reemployment. Several researchers have demonstrated the existence of barriers to

reemployment such as age discrimination (Billett, Dymock, Johnson, & Martin, 2011; Gringart, Helmes, & Speelman, 2013; Jyrkinen & McKie, 2012; Lu, 2010), stereotypical beliefs regarding older workers (Billett, Dymock, Johnson, & Martin, 2011; Bruckmuller, Ryan, Rink, & Haslam, 2014; Lu, 2010; Van Vianen, Dalhoeven, & De Pater, 2011), organizational practices (Armstrong-Stassen & Cattaneo, 2010; Richardson, Webb, Webber, & Smith, 2013; Rothenberg & Gardner, 2011; Van Dalen, Henkens & Schippers, 2010), glass ceiling (Buckalew, Konstantinopoulos, Russell, & El-Sherbini, 2012; Caceres-Rodriguez, 2013; Carnes & Radojevich-Kelley, 2011; Schuh et al., 2014; Vinkenburg, van Engen, Eagly, & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2011), technological change (Armstrong-Stassen & Cattaneo, 2010; Blustein, Kozan & Connors-Kellgren, 2013; Cha & Morgan, 2010; E. S. W. Ng & Law, 2014), and family responsibilities (Hossfeld, Kelly, McTague, & Wadsworth, 2012). None of the studies reviewed regarding barriers to reemployment had an exclusive focus on men, but 16 studies involved both men and women (Armstrong-Stassen & Cattaneo, 2010; Billett, Dymock, Johnson, & Martin, 2011; Bruckmuller, Ryan, Rink, & Haslam, 2014; Buckalew, Konstantinopoulos, Russell, & El-Sherbini, 2012; Caceres-Rodriguez, 2013; Carnes & Radojevich-Kelley, 2011; Cha & Morgan, 2010; Gringart, Helmes, & Speelman, 2013; Lu, 2010; E. S. W. Ng & Law, 2014; Richardson, Webb, Webber, & Smith, 2013; Rothenberg & Gardner, 2011; Schuh et al., 2014; Van Dalen, Henkens, & Schippers, 2010; Van Vianen et al., 2011; Vinkenburg, van Engen, Eagly, & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2011), and two studies included women only (Hossfeld, Kelly, McTague, & Wadsworth, 2012; Jyrkinen & McKie, 2012).

Older workers seeking jobs have been unsuccessful due to age discrimination in hiring practices (Gringart et al., 2013). Some organizational leaders underestimate the potential contribution of older workers (Van Dalen et al., 2010). Negative stereotypes regarding the ability of older workers to be productive or age discrimination are possible obstacles for securing stable employment after age 50 (Lu, 2010). Older workers are perceived to be less motivated to obtain additional training and learning than younger workers (Van Vianen et al., 2011). Ageism in the workforce exists in organizational practices and stereotypes where older workers are viewed as inflexible and not willing to learn (Gibson et al., 2010; T. W. H. Ng & Feldman, 2012). Ageism or age discrimination is "the practice of excluding applicants or employees from all types of employment decisions based solely on the calendar age of the individual" (Gibson et al., 2010, p. 54). Organizations are least likely to hire the oldest applicants, who are those over 54 years (Richardson et al., 2013; Rothenberg & Gardner, 2011). Younger people are more likely to receive a promotion than older workers are (Billett et al., 2011). Types of ageism include "personal ageism", pertaining to a one individual's stereotypical beliefs regarding older people, "institutional ageism", such as forced retirement after reaching a specific age;" intentional ageism", or purposely applying biased practices against older workers; and "unintentional ageism", in which individuals are not unaware of their own biases (Gibson et al., 2010, p. 55).

In agreement with the theoretical findings of Leana and Feldman (1992), age group differences attributed to employer bias towards older workers and older workers who resisted moving to another location or seeking additional training. Lyon et al. (2014)

noted internalized stereotypical beliefs negatively affect the behavior of older workers. For example, older workers may be less productive, less flexible, and harder to train with new technology (Billett et al., 2011; Karren & Sherman, 2012; Lyons et al., 2014). Older workers may receive less social support relating to learning and development, and social support regarding employee development activities is important (Gringart et al., 2013; Richardson et al., 2013). Armstrong-Stassen and Cattaneo (2010) indicated a less supportive training and development atmosphere in organizations for older workers. Armstrong-Stassen and Cattaneo found that organizations that had downsized were not likely to take part in tailoring human resource practices to older workers.

Employers regarded older workers as "less adaptable to change, less productive", and "hard to train" (Billett et al., 2011, p. 376). Billett et al., 2011 described the employers view of older workers as "inflexible, less motivated, a risky investment and with potential poor health" (p. 376). Workers who involuntarily lost jobs usually possessed skills considered obsolete (Cha & Morgan, 2010). Contrary to Cha and Morgan (2010), participants in Gabriel et al.'s (2010) study viewed their strongest assets as experience and expertise in the search for jobs.

The existence of the glass ceiling in some organizations may be a barrier for women (Bruckmuller et al., 2014; Buckalew et al., 2012; Caceres-Rodriguez, 2013; Carnes & Radojevich-Kelley, 2011; Russo & Hassink, 2012; Schuh et al., 2014; Skelly & Johnson, 2011; Vinkenburg et al., 2011). Women are prevented from rising to top executive positions due to the existence of a glass ceiling (Vinkenburg et al., 2011). In male-dominated organizations, men excluded women from networks that create

opportunities because they did not see women as one of the guys (Caceres-Rodriquez, 2013). Another distinction between men and women indicated women shouldered more responsibilities for family than men did and were more likely to turn down jobs that required more travel or relocation (Hossfeld et al., 2012; Wilkins & Wooden, 2013). Workers over 50 are less likely to have the technological skills needed in the labor market and will face challenges learning new skills and technology-mediated work processes upon the implementation of new IT initiatives (GAO, 2012; Rizzuto, 2011). Some organizational leaders do not foresee a profit in retraining older workers (Behaghel, Caroli, & Roger, 2011). Older workers may face stereotypical beliefs related to being unwilling to work with IT or being ill-suited for computer-related occupations (Rizzuto, 2011). Older workers seeking jobs have been unsuccessful due to hiring discrimination by age (Gringart et al., 2013).

Hossfeld et al. (2012) described barriers to reemployment for women following job loss. Caretaker responsibilities are a barrier to reemployment for women, and women turn to family for support; women have the responsibility to care for immediate family members (Hossfeld et al., 2012). Caregiver responsibilities prevent women from seeking additional skills and education. Women's caregiving responsibilities often result in women having more gaps in earning histories than men due to absence from the workforce (Hossfeld et al., 2012).

Ways to Overcome Barriers to Reemployment

A review of the literature regarding how older workers overcame barriers to reemployment revealed a gap in research on older women, specifically women over 50,

and the ways they overcame the barriers. Researchers have examined how displaced workers have overcome the barriers to reemployment caused by job loss, including support groups, self-concept repair strategies (Blustein et al., 2013; Garrett-Peters, 2009), education and retraining, change of job type, local government support, relocation, networking (Berger, 2009; Hodges & Lentz, 2010; Hossfeld et al., 2012; Tomlinson & Colgan, 2014), self-employment (Gabriel et al., 2010; Porcellato et al., 2010; Tomlinson & Colgan, 2014), and workforce agencies (Blustein et al., 2013; Porcellato et al., 2010). Of these studies, five included both men and women (Berger, 2009; Blustein et al., 2013; Gabriel et al., 2010; Garrett-Peters, 2009; Porcellato et al., 2010), one study represented men only (Parris & Vickers, 2010), and three included women only (Hodges & Lentz, 2010; Hossfeld et al., 2012; Tomlinson & Colgan, 2014).

Researchers described relocation, networking (Berger, 2009; Hodges & Lentz, 2010; Hossfeld et al., 2012; Tomlinson & Colgan, 2014), self-employment (Gabriel et al., 2010; Porcellato et al., 2010), workforce agencies (Blustein et al., 2013; Porcellato et al., 2010), and self-concept repair strategies (Blustein et al., 2013; Garrett-Peters, 2009) as ways to overcome barriers to reemployment. In a distinction between men and women, Berger (2009) indicated women more often kept their training updated compared to men. Workers who experienced job loss maintained their skills; changed expectations regarding reemployment; omitted information revealing age from their resumes, changed use of language and outward appearance (Berger, 2009). Workers who involuntarily lost jobs used workforce agencies (Porcellato et al., 2010) and some became self-employed (Gabriel et al., 2010; Porcellato et al., 2010; Tomlinson & Colgan, 2014). Based on the

theoretical foundations of Leana and Feldman (1992), and Latack et al., (1995), researchers have noted problem-focused strategies are most effective when compared to the use of emotion-focused strategies (Gabriel el at., 2010, p. 1691). Problem-focused strategies attempt to deal with the ramifications of unemployment in an orderly manner, whereas, emotion-focused strategies handle suffering and pain following the loss of a job (Gabriel et al., 2010). Berger (2009) made one distinction between men and women. The other studies included no distinctions between men and women (Blustein et al., 2013; Gabriel et al., 2010; Garrett-Peters, 2009; Hodges & Lentz, 2010; Porcellato et al., 2010; Tomlinson & Colgan, 2014). The number of women was less than the number of men in three of the nine studies; Blustein et al. (2013) studied seven men and six women, Porcellato studied 31 men and 25 women, and Gabriel represented 11 men and one woman. One study represented men and women and the number of participants was not specified (Berger, 2009). Three studies represented women only. Hodges and Lentz (2010) studied 14 women, Hossfeld et al. (2012) represented 10 women, and Tomlinson and Colgan (2014) studied eight women.

Garrett-Peters (2009) found that churches and job search groups provided resources and various kinds of assistance to displaced workers. Access to churches and job search groups helped men and women who experienced involuntary job loss create networks to share information, focus on finding jobs, and engage in self-concept repair. Garrett-Peters described five self-concept repair strategies: "(a) redefining the meaning of unemployment, (b) realizing accomplishment, (c) restricting time, (d) forming accountability partnerships, and (e) helping others" (p. 549). In church-affiliated support

groups, the self-concept strategy of redefining unemployment involved viewing job loss as a positive opportunity and part of God's larger plan for them (Garrett-Peters, 2009). In taking this view of unemployment, men and women who involuntarily lost jobs could turn aside feelings of self-blame and protect their state of being competent (Garrett-Peters, 2009). Displaced men and women stayed motivated to search for a job and believed giving up was a betrayal of God (Garrett-Peters, 2009). Men and women viewed the loss of a job as an opportunity, to attend to personal needs such as focusing on repairing physical and mental health (Blustein, Kozan, & Connors-Kellgren, 2013). Support groups reinforce valuing minor accomplishments, staying busy with job search activities, learning to appreciate ongoing accomplishments whether big or small, and using time wisely (Blustein et al., 2013; Garrett-Peters, 2009). Support group leaders encouraged members to form accountability partnerships, communicate on a regular basis, and encourage each to job search (Garrett-Peters, 2009). Displaced men and women helped one another inside and outside of the group of people that helped them as a way to see themselves as capable (Garrett-Peters, 2009). The representation of men and women in Garrett-Peters' study was equal, with 11 men and 11 women. No distinctions existed between men and women in the study.

In a study of 14 women with no distinction between men and women, Hodges and Lentz (2010) indicated education, retraining, change of job type, and local government support were ways for displaced textile workers to overcome barriers to reemployment. Displaced women sought local government support to obtain a high school diploma, GED, or academic degree (Hodges & Lentz, 2010). Women who lost jobs retrained for a

different position or for a new area of work (Garrett-Peters, 2009). Others searched for jobs in geographical areas where manufacturing jobs were still available (Garrett-Peters, 2009). In another study of eight women, Tomlinson and Colgan (2014) indicated all eight women contemplated moving into self-employment. This study did not include a distinction between men and women.

The Gap

A review of literature exposed a gap between the representation of the experiences of men and the experiences of women relating to job loss. Researchers have conducted studies predominantly on the experiences of men and job loss and not women. Limited research exists on the experiences of older women, specifically women over 50, relating to job loss compared to men. In a review of literature, only four studies focused exclusively on older women regarding loss: Hodges (2013), Hodges and Lentz (2010), Hossfeld, Kelly, McTague, and Wadsworth (2012), Jyrkinen and McKie (2012). A review of the literature indicated research on the experiences of women over 50 and job loss is lacking. This study extends the body of literature by looking at the experiences of women over 50 and job loss, barriers women over 50 faced to reemployment, and how women over 50 overcame the barriers to reemployment.

The majority of women in this study experienced a significant financial strain, lower salaries, fewer benefits upon reemployment, and a decrease in savings following job loss as described in the literature: Cha and Morgan (2010), Couch et al. (2009), Davis and Von Wachter (2011), Gringart et al. (2013), Hironimus-Wendt (2008), Hodges and Lentz (2010), Jolkkonen et al. (2012), Lippmann (2008), Mattingly and Smith (2010),

Parris and Vickers (2010), and Root and Park (2009). Women lacked equal representation in four (Gringart et al., 2013; Hironimus-Wendt, 2008; Parris & Vickers, 2010; Root & Park, 2009) of 11 (Cha & Morgan, 2010; Couch et al., 2009; Davis & Von Wachter, 2011; Hodges & Lentz, 2010; Jolkkonen et al., 2012; Lippmann, 2008; Mattingly & Smith, 2010) studies reviewed regarding the financial experiences of older workers and job loss. Only Hodges and Lentz focused exclusively on women. None of the studies reviewed included a specific focus on all three constructs of this study: experiences of women over 50 and job loss, barriers the women faced to reemployment, and the ways the women overcame the barriers to reemployment. Limited research exists on the experiences of older women and job loss. The findings of this study address the gap in literature and add to the body of knowledge related to the financial experiences of women over 50 and job loss.

Researchers have described the emotions of older workers following job loss such as fear, loss of self-esteem, stress (Papa & Maitoza, 2013; Parris & Vickers, 2010; Russell, 2011), guilt (Wooten & Valenti, 2008), and shock (Gabriel et al., 2010; Hossfeld et al., 2012). Anxiety (Hodges, 2013; Russell, 2011), grief, anger (Gabriel et al., 2010; Papa & Maitoza, 2013), failure (Parris & Vickers, 2010), depression (Russell, 2011), devastation, disbelief (Hodges, 2013; Hodges & Lentz, 2010), alienation (Parris & Vickers, 2010), disrespect, and dehumanization were descriptors used (Hossfeld et al., 2012). As revealed in Michniewicz et al. (2014), the findings of this study indicated women experienced and coped with job loss differently than men. Researchers reported the emotions of failure and anger in the studies of men, whereas failure and anger did not

appear to be important factors in the findings of women in this study (Parris & Vickers, 2010; Root & Park, 2009). Depression emerged as the dominant emotion in this study, contrary to the dominant emotion of failure in the literature regarding men (Parris & Vickers, 2010). Only three studies included an exclusive focus on women: Hodges (2013), Hodges and Lentz (2010), and Hossfeld et al. (2012). The representation of women was unequal in five (Gabriel et al., 2010; Papa & Maitoza, 2013; Parris & Vickers, 2010; Root & Park, 2009; Wooten & Valenti, 2008) of nine studies (Hodges, 2013; Hodges & Lentz, 2010; Hossfeld et al., 2012; Russell, 2011). A review of the literature indicated a lack in the full representation of the experiences of older women and job loss. Limited studies exist on the experiences of older women, specifically women over 50, and job loss. The findings of this study provide additional insight regarding the emotional experiences of women over 50 and job loss.

Researchers have described the psychosocial experiences following job loss. Blau et al. (2013) reported a loss in sense of community; Hodges and Lentz (2010) and Hossfeld et al. (2012) described a loss of support networks; and Mendenhall et al. (2008) described a loss in social status. Lippmann and Rosenthal (2008) denoted a loss of occupational prestige; Michniewicz et al. (2014) reported a loss of identity; and Parris and Vickers (2010) and Root and Park (2009) reported a decrease in self-worth. In the literature on men, having a job was central to the development of male identity. Men had a need to appear successful to others and themselves (Michniewicz et al., 2014; Parris & Vickers, 2010). Contrary to the literature, the findings of this study indicated the majority of the women did not need to appear successful, and having a job was less central to the

development of their identities (Michniewicz et al., 2014; Parris & Vickers, 2010). Women lacked equal representation in five studies: Blau et al. (2013), Lippmann and Rosenthal (2008), Mendenhall et al. (2008), Parris and Vickers (2010), and Root and Park (2009). Only two studies included only women: Hodges and Lentz (2010) and Hossfeld et al. (2012). Limited research existed on the experiences of women over 50 and job loss. None of the studies reviewed focused specifically on all three constructs of this study: the experiences of women over 50, the barriers women over 50 faced to reemployment, and the ways the women overcame the barriers to reemployment. The findings of this study address this gap and add to the body of literature regarding the psychosocial experiences of women over 50 and job loss.

Gringart et al. (2013), Jyrkinen and McKie (2012), and Lu (2010) described age discrimination as a barrier to reemployment. Billett et al. (2011) and Bruckmuller et al. (2014) reported stereotypical beliefs; Richardson et al. (2013), Rothenberg and Gardner (2011), Van Dalen et al. (2010), and Van Vianen et al. (2011) described organizational practices as barriers. Researchers described the glass ceiling (Caceres-Rodriguez, 2013; Carnes & Radojevich-Kelley, 2011; Schuh et al., 2014; Vinkenburg et al., 2011), technological change (Armstrong-Stassen & Cattaneo, 2010; Blustein et al., 2013; Buckalew et al., 2012; Cha & Morgan, 2010; E. S. W. Ng & Law, 2014), and family responsibilities (Hossfeld et al., 2012) as barriers. Women lacked full representation in six studies: Blustein et al. (2013), Gringert et al. (2013), Lu (2010), Van Dalen et al. (2010), Van Vianen et al. (2011), and Vinkenburg et al. (2011). Two studies represented women only: Hossfeld et al. (2012) and Jyrkinen and McKie (2012). Researchers of

seven studies did not specify the number of men and women represented: Billett et al. (2011), Bruckmuller et al. (2014), Buckalew et al. (2012), Caceres-Rodriguez (2013), Carnes and Radojevich-Kelly (2011), Cha and Morgan (2010), Rothenberg and Gardner (2011). I found no studies exclusively on men regarding barriers faced to reemployment. One study included the experiences of men and women following job loss, the barriers men and women faced to reemployment, and the ways men and women overcame the barriers to reemployment (Blustein & Connor-Kellgren, 2013). No other researchers described all three constructs regarding women over 50, as done in this study. Limited research exists specifically on the experiences of women over 50 following job loss. The findings of this study address this gap in literature.

Researchers described ways older workers overcame barriers to reemployment such as support groups, self-concept repair strategies (Blustein et al., 2013; Garrett-Peters, 2009), education and retraining, change of job type, local government support, relocation, networking (Berger, 2009; Hodges, 2013; Hodges & Lentz, 2010; Hossfeld et al., 2012; Tomlinson & Colgan, 2014), self-employment (Gabriel et al., 2010; Porcellato et al., 2010), and workforce agencies (Porcellato et al., 2010). The finding of this study paralleled the findings in the literature with the exception of relocation. None of the women in this study considered relocation to secure another job. Women lacked full representation in five studies: Berger (2009), Blustein et al. (2013), Gabriel et al. (2010), Garrett-Peters (2009), Porcellato et al. (2010). Only four studies included exclusively women: Hodges (2013), Hodges and Lentz (2010), Hossfeld et al. (2012), Tomlinson and Colgan (2014). I found no studies exclusively on how men overcame barriers to

reemployment. None of the studies specifically included the experiences of women over 50 and job loss, the barriers women faced to reemployment, and how the women overcame the barriers to reemployment, as done in this study.

Very limited research emerged on the experiences of women over 50, which supported Hodges and Lentz's (2010) assertion that research on job loss experiences for women are lacking. Studies conducted relating to job loss were predominantly on the experiences of men and not women. Researchers have looked at the experiences of older workers and job loss, barriers to reemployment, and ways to overcome barriers to reemployment, but no one had studied all three constructs in depth with regard to the experiences of women over 50, as done in this study. A review of the literature indicated the experiences of women, specifically women over 50, as they relate to involuntary job loss are lacking full representation. I recognized a gap in the body of knowledge regarding literature on the experiences of older women, specifically women over 50 and job loss. Due to limited research regarding how older women perceive job loss, gaining further insights into the experiences of women over 50 related to job loss is important. The present study addressed this gap in the literature and included three constructs: the experiences of women over 50, the barriers women faced to reemployment, and the ways women overcame the barriers to reemployment. This study is significant in that it addressed the gap in literature and added to the body of knowledge by providing insight and a more in-depth understanding relating to the experiences of women over 50 regarding job loss, the barriers to reemployment faced by women over 50, and the ways women overcame barriers to reemployment.

Summary and Conclusions

This section includes information on literature search strategies, the theoretical framework of the study, economic recession, and the impact of the economic recession on job loss. The theory of coping efficacy (Bandura, 1988) and the theory of coping behaviors (Leana & Feldman, 1992) served as the theoretical framework for this study. I used coping efficacy (Bandura, 1988) and coping behavior theories (Leana & Feldman, 1992) to analyze the questions and capture the lived experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss.

An in-depth understanding of the experiences of displaced workers who had experienced job loss emerged from previous research. I examined the impact of the economic recession on job loss. I also described the financial, emotional, and psychosocial experiences of displaced workers; the barriers to reemployment; and the ways to overcome the barriers to reemployment. Though quite a bit of research exists on experiences of unemployment, barriers to reemployment, and ways to overcome those barriers, it was not clear how these three constructs related to women over 50. Limited research exists on the experiences of older women, specifically women over 50, relating to job loss compared to men. One researcher studied the constructs of this study regarding the experiences of men and women following job loss. None of the other researchers studied in depth all three constructs specifically regarding the experiences of women over 50 and job loss, barriers women over 50 faced to reemployment, and strategies the women used to overcome the barriers. This study filled the gap and studied all three constructs relating to women, specifically women over 50. Chapter 3 includes a

discussion on the research methodology and a detailed plan regarding how I designed and conducted the research.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the lived experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss, explore the impact of their job losses relating to barriers to reemployment, and learn how they overcame these barriers and to compare their experiences to research studies relating to men over 50. Men and women view and cope with job loss differently (Michniewicz et al., 2014; Weckstrom, 2011). Women are generally unemployed longer, spend less time searching for jobs due to family responsibilities, have a higher level of agreeableness (Michniewicz et al., 2014; Weckstrom, 2011), are more passive in their search for social support, and are less likely to relocate for a job.

Men typically use action-oriented, problem-focused methods of coping, are less agreeable, and tend to have an advantage by tapping into network resources in a male-dominated organization (Michniewicz et al, 2014). Male-dominated organizations are likely to create barriers for women in securing leadership positions (Bruckmuller et al., 2014). I conducted this phenomenological study to have a better understanding of the experiences of involuntary job loss on women over 50. This chapter includes a description of the phenomenological research design for this study. I explore the theoretical frameworks used to analyze the lived experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss. I also discuss the research design, my role as the researcher, the methodology, and issues of trustworthiness.

Research Design

Research Questions

I chose a phenomenological approach to describe the lived experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss. I explored their experiences of unemployment, barriers to reemployment, and the ways they overcame these barriers were explored and compared them to the experiences of men over 50. The open-ended questions generated for this study helped me to address the following research questions (see Appendix A):

1. How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe the experiences of involuntary job loss?
2. How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe the barriers to reemployment?
3. How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe how they overcame the barriers to reemployment?
4. How do these experiences compare to reports on the job losses of men over 50?

Research Approach

I reviewed grounded theory, meta-analysis, case study, and phenomenology to determine which method would be most appropriate for the research topic. Grounded theory, case study, and phenomenology are qualitative methods, and meta-analysis is a quantitative method. Qualitative research involves studying the experiences of people in their world to make sense of these experiences in terms of how the experiences are

perceived by them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Jacob and Furgerson (2011) indicated "at the heart of qualitative research is the desire to expose the human part of a story" (p. 1). Qualitative researchers must have the ability to analyze circumstances critically, avoid biases, gather credible and quality data, and possess the ability to conceptualize and make generalizations, for example, regarding shared patterns of thought (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). Theoretical and social sensitivity, keen observation skills, and good interactional skills are necessary (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). Quantitative methodologies include mathematical analysis to explain a social phenomenon and qualitative methodologies focus on conceptual or thematic rather than numerical data (Masue, Swai, & Anasel, 2013).

I compared and contrasted each methodology (grounded theory, meta-analysis, case study, and phenomenology) to the others. I also reviewed the strengths and challenges of each methodology. A summary of the methodologies is in Table 1.

Table 1

Methodologies

Grounded theory	Meta-analysis	Case study	Phenomenology
Qualitative approach	Quantitative approach	Qualitative approach	Qualitative approach
Theory grounded from the perspective of the participants	Provide an understanding of accumulated studies conducted on the same question	Provide in-depth understanding of case or cases	Describe the essence of a lived experience
Study of a process, action, or interaction involving many individuals	Survey of published literature	Study of an event, program, or an activity	Study of individuals that share the same experience
Inductive reasoning	Deductive reasoning	Inductive reasoning	Inductive reasoning
Data collected via interviews	Data collected from summarized statistics of published and unpublished literature, reports	Data collected via interviews, observations, and documents	Data collected via interviews, observations, and documents
Generate a theory	Generate a report	Develop a detailed analysis of one or more cases	

The first qualitative method considered was grounded theory. The objective of grounded theory is to generate a theory from data shaped from the views of the participants (Strauss & Corbin, 2015). A strong point of grounded theory is the systematic procedures provided by various theorists, who aid researchers, specifically novice researchers, in conducting a quality research study. The challenge for researchers is setting aside any preconceptions that may skew the results and interpretations of the research study (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Grounded theory as a methodology would not have been appropriate for this study as the focus was gathering data firsthand from each study participant.

The second method considered was a quantitative design. Meta-analysis involves generating a statistical analysis across many studies for the purpose of integrating the findings (Gondek, 2013; Zanon, Doucouliagos, Hall, & Lockstone-Binney, 2013). The strength in meta-analysis is the ability to statistically synthesize results from different studies and draw inferences regarding the relationships among variables (Zanon et al., 2013). Because important data critical to the examination of evidence are often missing from studies, systematically summarizing quantitative studies on a topic with precise statistical estimates of effects presents a challenge (Zanon et al., 2013). Meta-analysis was not appropriate for this study as it would not allow for first-person accounts of the experiences through conversations or interviews (Moustakas, 2009), which was the intent of this study.

Case study, the third method, involves the intensive analysis of one or more cases (Bryman, 2012). Burns (2000) discussed six types of case studies. Table 2 includes a summary of each type of case.

Table 2
Case Studies

Historical	Observational	Oral history	Situational analysis	Clinical	Multicase
Trace the development of an organization, system over time	Focused on a classroom, group, teacher, or pupil	Researcher collects first-person narratives using extensive interviewing of a single individual	Particular events are studied, e.g., an act of student vandalism	Aim is to understand in depth a particular individual (e.g., a child having problems with reading)	A collection of cases not based on the sampling logic of multiple subjects in one experiment
Depends heavily on records, documents, and interviews	Uses a variety of observation and interview methods as major tools	Researchers do not usually have a person in mind and meet a person as they are exploring the topic	Interviews, documents, and other records are the main source of data	Detailed interviews, nonparticipant observation, documents, records, testing	Is a form of replication (e.g., multiple experiments)
				Individual case study or a collection of individual case studies often used to define a particular case	

Case study is strong in that the methodology allows for an in-depth study of a specific case or cases in its real world context (Yin, 2013). The challenge for researchers is in identifying a representative cases or cases (Wahyuni, 2012) and difficulty in processing a mass of data (Leavy, 2014). Yin (2013) described validity and generalization as challenges in designing and conducting case study evaluations when the number of cases studied is limited. Case study was not the preferred method in this study, as data gathered were from first-person reports of life experiences (Moustakas, 2009).

The final method that I considered was phenomenology. Most phenomenological methodologies draw from the philosophy of Edmund Husserl or Martin Heidegger (Gill,

2014; Perry, 2013). The history of phenomenology began with the writings of Edmund Husserl that addressed the phenomenological philosophy (Gill, 2014). Husserl described a lived experience as one's consciousness and inward perceivedness (Van Manen, 2014). Gathering a description of the experience should take place gradually and prior to reflection (Van Manen, 2014).

Whereas Husserl focused on the importance of a description of experience, Heidegger focused on being (presence in the world) and proposed "hermeneutic" phenomenological methodology in which the "human experience of being" is explored (Gill, 2014, p. 120). The hermeneutic circle is the way in which the researcher achieves interpretations through understanding (Tuohy et al., 2013). The process involves back and forth questioning to discover the meaning of being and to expand the circle of ideas (Tuohy et al., 2013).

Hermeneutic and transcendental phenomenology represents two approaches for analyzing phenomenological data (Gill, 2014). The focus of hermeneutic phenomenology is on reflective interpretation of a text or study (Moustakas, 2009), whereas the focus of transcendental phenomenology is on a description of the experiences of participants (Moustakas, 2009). Transcendental phenomenology involves an attempt to eliminate prejudgment and focus on the experiences described by the participants as opposed to the hermeneutic phenomenological approach that reflects the interpretations or point of view of the researcher (Moustakas, 2009).

The focus of phenomenology is on the ways in which we experience things and the meanings these experiences create for us (Leavy, 2014). Van Manen (2014) described

phenomenology as a reflection on the lived experience of human existence that must be free, as much as possible, from prejudice and preunderstanding. Moustakas (2009) indicated individuals hold knowledge judgmentally in the natural attitude, but *epoché* requires a fresh way of looking at things. Epoché is the task of suspending temporarily the researcher's personal biases, beliefs, preconceptions, and assumptions regarding the phenomenon (Lin, 2013). Though each school of phenomenology has some commonality, each has distinct features.

Phenomenology is strong in that it provides a deeper understanding of a specific case (Masue et al., 2013). One of the challenges in conducting a phenomenological study is in knowing the specific number of people to interview before data saturation is achieved (Bryman, 2012). The procedure of bracketing personal experiences may be a challenge for researchers (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013).

Phenomenology was my preferred method, as the primary objectives of grounded theory, case study, phenomenology, and meta-analysis differ. Meta-analysis differs from grounded theory, case study, and phenomenology in methodological procedure and research method (Yilmaz, 2013). Meta-analysis is a statistical analysis of a large collection of results across empirical studies (Bryman, 2012; Gondek, 2013), whereas phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study use words instead of numbers to describe, explain, or explore a social phenomenon (Leavy, 2014).

Grounded theory, case study, and phenomenology share the same inductive scientific reasoning (Harwell, 2011), whereas meta-analysis has deductive reasoning (Bryman, 2012; Singleton & Straits, 2010). Scientists reason inductively when they infer

generalizations from observations (Hussein, Hirst, Salyer's, & Osuji, 2014) and deductively when theory guides the research; theories and hypotheses imply facts or predictions (Bryman, 2012; Leavy, 2014; Singleton & Straits, 2010). Grounded theory, case study, and phenomenology involve inferring generalizations from observations, whereas meta-analysis involves showing how theories and hypotheses imply specific facts or predictions.

The units of analysis for grounded theory, meta-analysis, case study, and phenomenology are distinct. A case study involves a detailed and intensive analysis of one or more cases; grounded theory generates a theory from data; meta-analysis closely examines, identifies similarities and differences, and summarizes the findings of a large number of quantitative studies; and phenomenology focuses on how individuals perceive situations in the environment in which they live (Bryman, 2012). Data collection varies because of the forms of data used.

Case study includes primarily interviewing, observation and document analysis (Leavy, 2014); grounded theory involves observations, interviews and documents; meta-analysis collects results from a large number of quantitative studies; and phenomenology involves primarily interviews to collect data (Bryman, 2012). Each method generates a different product. Case study researchers study one or more cases and develop a thorough and intensive analysis (Bryman, 2012), whereas grounded theory researchers generate a theory (Leavy, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 2015). Meta-analysis researchers generate a report of statistical analysis across studies (Bryman, 2012; Gondek, 2013), whereas

phenomenology researchers describe the essence of a lived experience (Moustakas, 2009; Yilmaz, 2013).

The focus of this study was on transcendental phenomenology with interviews as the primary form of data collection to capture the experiences of job loss described by each participant. I collected data firsthand from individuals who encountered the same circumstances and created a textural and structural description of what and how the individuals experienced the phenomenon (Moustakas, 2009). Data were from in-depth and multiple interviews from individuals who had experienced the phenomenon. Ten study participants participated in interviews, and I asked broad questions regarding what they had experienced following job loss and what circumstances had impacted their experiences following job loss. The interviews included other open-ended questions as well. I bracketed my personal experiences as much as possible to describe how participants viewed the phenomenon.

Researchers write about participants' experiences and the events that impacted those experiences. I highlighted meaningful and important statements that provided knowledge of how the phenomenon was experienced by the participant. I also used significant statements and themes to write a description of what the participant experienced. From the structural and textural descriptions, I wrote a composite description depicting the nature of the participants' experiences (Moustakas, 2009).

Each methodology has its own challenges, and I needed to choose the methodology most appropriate for examining the research problem. A phenomenological approach was the most appropriate for this study to gain an in-depth understanding of the

experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss. Examining the life experiences of a person is different from emerging theories, exploring a problem through a case or cases, or quantitatively reviewing the results of accumulated studies in a specific area (Creswell, 2013). I used the demonstration of the guidelines, systematic procedures, and strategies presented for each methodology to choose the most appropriate approach.

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher was to recruit and interview study participants, collect and analyze data, and provide a written report of research findings that reflected the voices of the participants (Creswell, 2013). I analyzed the data for significant statements, patterns, categories, and new theories (Leavy, 2014). My focus was to capture the lived experiences of the study participants as they related to the problem through their actions, relations, and situations, while managing my perceptions (Van Manen, 2014).

Though I had no personal or professional relationships with any of the study participants, I related to the experiences and barriers they faced. While working for an organization that was downsizing, I witnessed firsthand the emotional, financial, and psychosocial impact experienced by the employees. I developed my own perceptions of organizational practices toward older workers. I managed researcher bias by being aware of my own biases and bracketing my personal experiences. I used NVivo qualitative analysis software to reduce researcher subjectivity and bias (Cochrane, 2013) and to determine relevant data and proper coding of data (QSR International, n.d.a). As a result

of following this process, researcher bias did not influence the recorded experiences of the study participants.

Methodology

Participant Selection

A limitation of this study was that the population included only women over 50 who resided in a northeastern city. Participants who met the study requirements of being women over 50 who experienced involuntary job loss received a request to participate in the study. I identified and recruited participants through access to government workforce development career centers and the snowball approach.

I recruited participants at three workforce development career centers located in different areas of the northeastern city. The staff at the workforce development career centers provides support for city residents seeking employment and prepares city residents for employment, assistance with job search and job placement, and training to update skills (Mayor's Office of Employment Development [MOED], n.d.b). Twenty-three thousand city residents use the Career Center Network annually (MOED, n.d.a), which made the career centers a good source for gathering participants for the study. I posted flyers with my contact information throughout three career centers to recruit participants (see Appendix B). It was not necessary to schedule meetings at the workforce career center to recruit additional study participants. Leadership at MOED reviewed and approved the flyers (see Appendix B). I made edits as needed according to written feedback (see Appendix C) from MOED prior to posting the flyer in the career centers.

I used snowball sampling to locate suitable study participants. In my initial contact with each participant, I asked him or her to provide names of other members of the target population who met the criteria of the study, which were women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss. I contacted the study participants referred to me via telephone or e-mail (see Appendix D) and asked them to participate in the research study. I explained the details and criteria of the study to each potential study participant. Potential study participants obtained via snowball sampling who requested me to contact them via e-mail received a copy of the flyer (see Appendix B) attached in the e-mail (see Appendix D). The flyer (see Appendix B) gave a brief description of the study and instructions for individuals to contact me via telephone or e-mail if they had an interest in participating in the research study.

Participants requesting contact by telephone received a telephone call from me, and I described the details of my study to them. Participants who met the study criteria received an invitation to meet with me for an interview in a quiet room at a workforce career center or favorable location such as a library or the home of the participant, and I asked them to sign a consent form. If a face-to-face interview was not convenient for the participant, the participant received a consent form in the mail along with a self-addressed stamped envelope to return the signed consent form to me. A workforce development center contact agreed to reserve a room in the career center, if needed, to conduct interviews with study participants. I reserved rooms in a library for interviews conducted there. I arranged teleconference calls with participants if a face-to-face interview was not convenient for the participant.

This study consisted of 10 interviews, as this was the suggested number of study participants (e.g., Moustakas, 2009; Patton, 2015). To achieve the maximum number of study participants, I attempted to recruit a minimum of 15 study participants in case people did not show or dropped out. I continued to accept participants until data saturation occurred and the data gathered reached a consensus.

Small-scale work in qualitative research provides depth in explaining the problem under study (Masue, Swai, & Anasel, 2013). The more depth a study has, the smaller the sample size can be (Leavy, 2014). Much of the foundational research in the field of psychology historically included small samples (Englander, 2012). Boyd recommended 10 study participants in phenomenological research (as cited in Ziakas & Boukas, 2014). An appropriate sample size for phenomenological studies can range from approximately six, six to eight, six to 10 (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013) and six to 12 participants (Beitin, 2012).

Charmaz (2014) affirmed that a study with depth and significance is possible using a small sample. Hill (2012) indicated only a small sample can be examined due to the intensity of trying to understand each participant's story. Glaser and Strauss (2012) stressed using the guidelines for data saturation for most qualitative studies to determine sample size provided the researcher follows the principles of qualitative research. Data saturation occurs at the point when gathering more data reveals no new information or themes (Leavy, 2014). Saturation is likely to occur at any point if saturation is the guiding principle of qualitative studies (Mason, 2010). As few as 10 participants in some studies established a reliable source of information (Mason, 2010).

Researchers of studies with smaller samples provide depth in explaining the problem under study, whereas researchers with larger samples lack depth in capturing the essence of the experience (Masue, Swai, & Anasel, 2013). The recommended number of study participants serves as a guideline; the authors of these cited works asserted no empirical evidence for the recommended numbers. The small sample size for this study was possible following the principles of a phenomenological study and using the concept of saturation as the guiding principle (Glaser & Strauss, 2012; Mason, 2010). The sample size selected aligned with Boyd's sample size recommendation (as cited in Ziakas & Boukas, 2014). The selected sample size also aligned with sample size recommendations in other phenomenological studies (Beitin, 2012; Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). I took into account the purpose of this study, which was to describe the lived experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss, as well as the research questions, in choosing the sample size (Patton, 2015).

Flyers were posted by me with my contact information throughout three workforce career centers to recruit participants (see Appendix B). Leadership at MOED approved the flyers. I edited the flyer according to written feedback from MOED and posted the flyer in the career centers. I scheduled a time to meet to conduct the interviews with participants who contacted me and expressed an interest in participating in the study. The initial telephone call with potential participants served to build familiarity, to establish rapport with study participants, and to arrange interviews with qualified study participants at the end of the initial telephone call. I followed up with a telephone call or e-mail (see Appendix E) to the participants to confirm the dates and times of the

interviews. I asked the participants on the initial call if they were a woman over 50 and experienced involuntary job loss to verify that they qualified for the study. Prior to conducting the interview, I presented a consent form to the interviewees to participate in the study. I explained the purpose of the study, necessary time for conducting the interview, and how the findings from the interview will be used. Prior to conducting the interview, study participants had the opportunity to ask me questions regarding the study. One-hour interviews are common, but they can take longer (Singleton & Straits, 2010; Englander, 2012). Semistructured face-to-face interviews for this study averaged 30 minutes to 1 hour. I conducted 10 interviews. Data saturation occurred when no new information emerged that provided additional understanding to the problem. Data saturation was achieved after interviewing seven study participants. I interviewed three additional participants and no new information emerged from the data.

Snowballing was appropriate for finding suitable study participants. Snowballing is a process of asking participants to refer others who meet the study criteria and may be willing to participate in the study (Singleton & Straits, 2010; Ziakas & Boukas, 2014). I asked study participants to refer members of the target population who met the criteria of the study, which were women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss. The snowball process continued until I had recruited enough participants to answer the research questions. I presented the details and criteria of the study to participants who expressed an interest in the study, and I scheduled a day and time to meet on the initial call to complete a consent form and conduct an interview. I conducted the interviews in a

quiet room such as a library or the home of the participant. I arranged teleconference calls with participants if a face-to-face interview was not convenient for the participant.

Instrumentation

The study included data collection instruments to gather sufficient and relevant information to answer the research questions. I created an interview protocol using open-ended questions to capture the experiences and perspectives of study participants relating to involuntary job loss (see Appendix A). An expert panel reviewed the interview protocol, and I requested the expert panel to provide written feedback regarding the content of the questions (see Appendix C). I used an interview protocol to clarify or restate questions participants did not understand, to record information in the event the audio recorder failed to work, and to ensure participants answered every question.

I used a digital recorder to audio record interviews to ensure the accuracy of information. I e-mailed (see Appendix E) or called each study participant 1 week prior to the scheduled interview date as a reminder. Interpretive analysis occurred following the transcription of the interviews. All participants signed a consent form to indicate their agreement to participate in the research study (see Appendix F), and a representative of the workforce development agency in the northeastern city in which I conducted this study signed a site agreement form to give permission to recruit study participants and conduct research at the career center locations (see Appendix G). I thanked each participant after completing the interview for taking the time to participate in the study. At the end of the interview, I asked each study participant to participate in member checking to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings and to confirm the

interpretations of their interviews, which took approximately 10 minutes. Study participants who agreed to participate in member checking provided their e-mail address and I either e-mailed a copy of my findings and interpretations of their interviews to them or met individual study participants at a favorable location such as a quiet room in a library or the home of the participant.

I used the gathered data to answer the research questions. The data gathered provided a snapshot of the impact of involuntary job loss on women over 50 relating to financial, emotional, and psychosocial experiences; barriers to reemployment; and ways the participants overcame barriers to reemployment. I compared the experiences of women over 50 to research on the experiences of men over 50.

The three validation strategies used were (a) peer debriefing, (b) member checking, and (c) rich, thick description. Member checking verified the credibility and validity of recorded data (Harper & Cole, 2012; Leavy, 2014). I asked each study participant at the end of the interview to participate in member checking. I explained the member checking strategy to each study participant who agreed to participate in member checking. Member checking participants received a copy of the findings and interpretations of their individual interviews via e-mail. If the participant did not have an e-mail address, I met with the study participant at a mutually agreeable location, such as a quiet room in a library or the home of the participant. I asked the member-checking participants to provide their views on the accuracy and credibility of the findings and interpretations of their individual interviews via e-mail or telephone call. Peer debriefing enhanced the trustworthiness of the data (Lee, 2012; Leavy, 2014). The use of a peer

debriefer helped to ensure the internal validity and quality of the research process (Freysteinson, Lewis, Sisk, Wuest, Deutsch, & Cesario, 2013). A peer with a graduate degree and years of experience in higher education and the dissertation writing process performed the responsibilities of the peer debriefer for this study. Both the peer debriefer and researcher met regularly to discuss research and identify concerns and areas for further development (Leavy, 2014). Both the peer debriefer and researcher kept audio accounts of regularly held meetings (Leavy, 2014). The names of participants or any information that could identify the participants in the study, including friends and family, remained confidential. I assigned alphanumeric codes to the study participants to protect their identities. I used the same alphanumeric codes to represent the real names of each study participant in the tape-recorded interviews and transcripts. The real names of the study participants did not appear in any of the audio recordings or interview transcripts. I was the only one with access to the alphanumeric codes, along with the real names that corresponded to the alphanumeric codes. The participants provided a rich, thick description of their experiences. Providing a rich thick description allows others to make judgements about the possibility of transferring information to other settings due to shared characteristics (Hill, 2012).

Expert Panel Review

An expert panel review took place with two administrators from the workforce development career center and my dissertation committee chair. The focus of the government workforce development career center in the northeastern city of this study is to provide the local workforce with resources to obtain employment (MOED, n.d.b). The

Career Center Network also provides available "training and workforce development resources" for the district (MOED, n.d.b). The dissertation chair's responsibility is to provide guidance and support to students to enable them to conduct a quality research project. Based on experience and expertise in their fields, members of the expert panel provided written feedback on the clarity of vocabulary and language use, completeness of demographic information, and completeness of central and probing questions that capture the experiences of the study participants (see Appendix C).

I called the director of the workforce development career centers and asked if one or two of his administrators who had experience providing job seeker services and understood the issues the participants faced to participate in an expert panel review. I explained the purpose of the expert panel review in the initial telephone call to the director of the workforce development career centers. The director of the workforce development career centers provided the names and e-mail addresses of potential expert panel participants. I sent an e-mail to potential members to invite them to participate in the expert panel review (see Appendix H). The e-mail to potential members of the expert panel included a description of the study (see Appendix B), a copy of the interview protocol (see Appendix A), and a copy of the form to provide written feedback regarding the interview protocol (see Appendix C). The e-mail to the committee chair included a copy of the interview protocol and written feedback form (see Appendices A and C).

The purpose of the expert panel review was to establish the validity and reliability of the interview protocol. Conducting an expert panel review allowed me to perfect the interview questions after the panel reviewed the questions (Hill, 2012). The expert panel

review took place prior to submitting the proposal to the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Pilot Test

A pilot test took place after receiving IRB approval and prior to conducting the main study. Yin (2014) recommended pilot testing to evaluate and make clear the plans for collecting data and developing questions that will allow the experiences of the participants to be adequately reflected upon and described. The purpose of the pilot test was to test the quality of the interview protocol (see Appendix A) and identify potential researcher bias. I called three individuals known to me who had experienced involuntary job loss to test the function of the interview protocol for potential problems such as misinterpretation of questions and ambiguous wording. I advised each participant of the purpose of the pilot test, asked each individual to participate in a recorded interview, and provided an informed consent form to sign prior to the interview. Each participant gave feedback at the end of the interview on the clarity of the interview questions and wording. All participants in the pilot test acknowledged that they understood the questions and wording used in the interview protocol. Based on the feedback received from the pilot test participants, I made no changes to the main research questions in the interview protocol, and no further contact with the participants in the pilot test was necessary. I did not submit a request for change in procedures form to the IRB.

Conducting a pilot test allowed me to evaluate the interview process and my interviewer skills. I listened to all recorded interviews for possible researcher bias, and I did not recognize the need for any changes or adjustments in the interview process.

Listening to the recorded interviews allowed me to refine the interview process by asking additional probing questions to gather additional data. I added one probing question under Research Question 3 to gather additional data. I changed the order in which I asked probing questions at times as the participant would sometimes answer some of the questions before I had a chance to ask them.

Recruitment

I posted flyers with a brief description of the research study throughout three career centers to recruit participants (see Appendix B). Had recruitment resulted in too few participants, I would have requested permission from the workforce development agency to attend a scheduled meeting at each of the workforce development career centers in the city to explain my research study and recruit additional volunteer participants for the study, but doing so was unnecessary. Snowballing helped to locate suitable study participants. Posting flyers, attending a scheduled meeting as needed to explain my study at each of the career centers, and using the snowballing technique served as multiple avenues to solicit study participants. I explained the purpose of the study, criteria for participant selection, timeframe for conducting the interview, and how the findings from the interview will be used to potential participants. I arranged face-to-face interviews in subsequent calls to study participants who volunteered and qualified for the study. The interview lasted approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour in a quiet room. If the workforce center location was not convenient for the participant, I met the participants at a mutually agreeable location, such as a quiet room at a library or the home of the participant. I conducted a teleconference call with the participant if a face-to-

face interview was not convenient for the participant. I used a recorder and interview protocol to record the data gathered during the interview process. I thanked participants for their time at the end of the interview and asked them to participate in a follow-up interview or telephone call, if needed. At the end of the interview, I asked each study participant if she would like a copy of the research findings from the completed dissertation. I summarized the research findings in a one- to two-page executive summary and e-mailed the executive summary to the study participants and career center supervision, if requested. I assured the participants that their responses and potential future interviews would remain confidential.

Data Collection

Data collection for this phenomenological study began after receiving IRB approval from Walden University (06-20-14-0124534). I collected data via recorded interviews with participants and I transcribed all interviews for analysis. I obtained the demographic information before the audio recording of the interview began to protect the identity of the participant. I did not disclose the names of participants or any information that could identify the participants in the study, including friends and family. I deidentified data prior to sharing them with others. I assigned alphanumeric codes to each study participant to protect the identity of the participant. I used the same alphanumeric codes to represent the real names of each study participant in the tape-recorded interviews and transcripts. The real names of the study participants did not appear in any of the audio recordings or interview transcripts. I was the only person who had access to the information that showed the match between the alphanumeric codes and the real

names of the participants. I used an interview protocol to prompt participants to describe their experiences and to provide additional information when needed (see Appendix A). Based on the experiences of the study participants, I modified the probing questions of the interview protocol. If a study participant was seeking employment, that employment was the focus of the probing questions. If a study participant had found employment, I modified the probing questions to explore experiences reflecting on job loss and the participant's situation at the time of the interview. I used an interview protocol to take notes during the interview process. I used NVivo software to analyze data from interview notes and audio recordings. I attended an online demonstration of NVivo software and attended a 2-day NVivo training workshop for effective use of the software. If recruitment resulted in too few participants, I would have requested permission from the workforce development agency in the northeastern city in which I conducted this study to attend a scheduled meeting at each of the workforce development career centers to explain my research study and recruit additional volunteer participants for the study, but doing so was not necessary. I used snowballing as an approach to find suitable study participants.

Data Analysis

The basis of the study was a phenomenological approach. Three constructs received consideration based on the thematic analysis of the data: experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss, barriers they faced to reemployment, and the ways they overcame those barriers. In the final step to address Question 4, I compared the results of data analysis from Question 1 regarding experiences to research

cited in Chapter 2 regarding the themes and findings of men over 50. I compared data analysis conducted for Research Question 2 regarding the barriers to reemployment to research findings on men over 50. I compared the results of Question 3 regarding ways to overcome barriers to reemployment to findings of men over 50. I examined the collected data to identify significant statements and reoccurring concepts, phrases, and themes that could provide an understanding of the participants' experience of involuntary job loss, the barriers to reemployment the participants faced, and the ways the participants overcame the barriers to reemployment. I used the coping efficacy theory of Bandura (1988) and the coping behaviors theory of Leana and Feldman (1992) to support and shed light on themes and perspectives discovered in data analysis. I observed similarities among themes and categories to identify meaningful relationships within the data (Silverman, 2011). I analyzed the collected data and mapped them back to the original research questions to provide a complete picture related to three constructs: participants' experiences, barriers they faced to reemployment, and the ways they overcame those barriers. I identified any discrepancies wherein the participants did not see their experiences as barriers in the final analysis. I attended an online demonstration of NVivo software and attended a 2-day NVivo training workshop for effective use of the software. I used NVivo software to support the qualitative analysis by sorting and filtering the data, which made analytical tasks quicker and more efficient (QSR International, 2012). I used NVivo to collect, organize, and analyze content from interview notes and audio recordings. I analyzed the data deeply using search, query, and visualization tools such as tree maps, tag clouds, and charts (QSR International, 2011, n.d.b). Researchers use

NVivo to uncover themes, ideas and validate findings (QSR International, n.d.b). I identified significant statements, themes, and categories for use in building a complete and quality picture of the participants' experiences using the NVivo software.

The process for qualitative methods such as organization and analyzation of data is facilitated by NVivo. NVivo was on my computer, and I used it to input data gathered from interviews such as memos and audio recordings. I imported the source materials and used codes to gather all the references on a specific topic, theme, or person. I used codes to gather data from interviews for further exploration. I coded and referenced data in a single node, and I created nodes using NVivo to contain concepts, topics, and themes from the data. I used tools featured in NVivo such as a word frequency query to identify common terms, and I used NVivo queries to code sources automatically based on occurrences of words or phrases. For example, when I found an interesting phrase or theme in one interview, I used a text search query to see if the phrase or theme appeared in other interviews and automatically coded the content. I used queries to search for similar concepts and words that occurred most often. I continued to code all interviews using NVivo until I reached saturation. I used framework matrices to compare the experiences described in each individual interview and to see how different themes related to each other for a particular participant. I created reports to identify themes that were occurring more than others and presented them in my findings. I did not use a professional transcriber to assist with the transcription of data gathered from the audio-recorded interviews. I assigned an alphanumeric code to each study participant prior to recording and transcribing the data for analysis. I used validation strategies such as peer

debriefing, member checking, and rich, thick description to establish the trustworthiness of the collected data. I established dependability through an external check of the research process (peer debriefing; Leavy, 2014).

Trustworthiness

First, an expert panel review took place to establish validity of the interview protocol used in the study. After data collection, member checking addressed the credibility of data gathered by asking each study participant to provide views on the research findings and interpretation of data analysis (Leavy, 2014). The peer debriefer's audit of the research process established credibility and confirmability (Wahyuni, 2012). I recruited a peer experienced in the dissertation writing process to challenge methods, meanings, and interpretations of data (Wahyuni, 2012). I did not disclose the names of participants or any information that could identify the participants in the study, including friends and family. In order to protect the anonymity of the participants, I removed information from the data that might identify or allow participants to be traced (Punch, 2014). I assigned alphanumeric codes to each study participant to protect identity and used the same alphanumeric codes to represent the real names of each study participant in the tape-recorded interviews and transcripts. The real names of the study participants did not appear in any of the audio recordings or interview transcripts. I was the only person who had access to the alphanumeric codes along with the real names that corresponded to the alphanumeric code. A rich, thick description of the experiences of study participants established transferability (Bryman, 2012). A detailed description of experiences allows

readers to ascertain if the results of the study are transferable to other settings (Hill, 2012).

Ethical Procedures

A representative of workforce development career centers in the northeastern city in which I conducted the study signed a recruitment site agreement (see Appendix G) for permission to conduct recruitment and research activities at three workforce development career centers. The IRB received a copy of the document. I obtained IRB approval prior to beginning the research study and followed IRB guidelines regarding access to and treatment of human participants. Study participants received a detailed description of the research study upon receiving IRB approval and prior to the interview. Potential participants received a consent form to sign to allow participants to understand the study prior to taking part in the study (see Appendix F). The consent form included an explanation that participation in the research study was voluntary and participants could drop out of the study at any time. Details of the consent form included (a) a brief description of the study, (b) time allotted for interview and sample questions, (c) criteria for participants, (d) potential risks and benefits of being in the study, and (e) security measures taken to ensure confidentiality of participants in the study. Ensuring the participants had a clear understanding of the study supported their ability to make informed decisions regarding participation in the study. Peer debriefing, member checking, and a rich, thick description of the experiences of study participants served as additional safeguards to ensure accuracy of data. I obtained identifiable demographics prior to beginning the audio recording of the interview to protect the identity of the

participant, and I deidentified the data before anyone had access to them. I did not disclose the names of participants or any information that could identify the participants in the study, including friends and family. I assigned alphanumeric codes to each study participant to protect the identity of the participant and used the same alphanumeric codes to represent the real names of each study participant in the tape-recorded interviews and transcripts. The real names of the study participants did not appear in any of the audio recordings or interview transcripts. I was the only one who had access to the alphanumeric codes along with the real names that corresponded to the alphanumeric codes. Written and digital data remained in a locked file cabinet to maintain participant confidentiality, and I will not use the personal information for any purposes outside of the research project. I will keep the collected data for at least 7 years, which is a requirement of Walden University.

Summary

Chapter 3 included a discussion of phenomenology as the methodology used in the research study to capture the lived experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss. The chapter included an outline of the research design and a description of how I conducted the research. Compared to other research methodologies, phenomenology resulted in a more in-depth description of the phenomenon, and I was able to interpret the meaning of the lived experiences of multiple individuals (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Chapter 4 includes an analysis of the collected data and the results of the research study.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss, the barriers faced to reemployment, learn how the women overcame the barriers to reemployment, and compare the experiences of women over 50 to research studies of men over 50. The study included the following questions:

1. How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe the experiences of involuntary job loss?
2. How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe the barriers to reemployment?
3. How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe how they overcame the barriers to reemployment?
4. How do these experiences compare to reports on the job losses of men over 50?

An analysis of Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 led to an answer to Research Question 4. Data were from interviews conducted with 10 women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss. Chapter 4 includes a description of the data collection and data analysis process implemented.

I analyzed the data collected and mapped them back to Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 to provide a complete picture related to three constructs: the experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss, barriers women over 50 faced to reemployment, and ways the women overcame the barriers to reemployment. I identified

significant statements; reoccurring concepts, phrases, and themes that provided insight as to how the participants perceived involuntary job loss; the barriers faced to reemployment; and the ways the participants overcame the barriers to reemployment. I also identified similarities among themes and categories from the data.

NVivo software was suitable for collecting, organizing, and analyzing content from interview notes and audio recordings. I identified significant statements, themes, and categories using NVivo software to build a complete and quality picture of the participants' experiences. Participants' experiences related to job loss appear in the final analysis. I identified any extreme variances in the perceptions of the participants relating to job loss. The coping efficacy theory of Bandura (1988) and the coping behaviors theory of Leana and Feldman (1992) supported and shed light on themes discovered in the data analysis.

Chapter 4 includes a description of the expert panel review, pilot test, setting, and demographics relevant to the study. Also described are data collection, data analysis, and evidence of trustworthiness. The chapter includes a review of the findings that addressed Research Questions 1, 2, and 3. An analysis of those findings addresses Research Question 4 in Chapter 5.

Expert Panel Review

The expert panel review took place prior to beginning the research study to establish the validity and reliability of the interview protocol (see Appendix A). Conducting an expert panel review allowed me to perfect the interview questions after the panelists reviewed the questions. Two administrators from the workforce

development career centers and my dissertation committee chair participated in the expert panel review. Based on experience and expertise in their fields, members of the expert panel provided written feedback (see Appendix C) on clarity of vocabulary and language use, completeness of information, and completeness of central and probing questions included in the interview protocol (see Appendix A).

The director of the workforce development career centers provided names and e-mail addresses of the expert panel participants, and I sent an e-mail inviting them to participate in an expert panel review (see Appendix H). The e-mail sent to the workforce administrators included a description of the study (see Appendix B), a copy of the interview protocol (see Appendix A), and a copy of the form to provide written feedback regarding the interview protocol (see Appendix C). The e-mail sent to the committee chair included a copy of the interview protocol and written feedback form (see Appendix C). The two administrators from the workforce development career centers recommended no changes. I added a demographic section to the interview protocol as suggested by the dissertation committee chair. Demographic information gathered consisted of highest degree earned, age, race, marital status, number of children, industry worked in, occupation, position held in the company, time unemployed, years of experience in the industry worked, and whether or not the participant participated in a workforce development program.

Pilot Test

The pilot test took place prior to conducting the main study. The purpose of the pilot test was to test the quality of the interview protocol (see Appendix A) and identify

potential researcher bias. I called three participants known to me who met the study requirements and asked them to test the function of the interview protocol for potential problems such as misinterpretation of questions and ambiguous wording. I advised each participant of the purpose of the pilot test, asked each participant to participate in a recorded interview, and gave each participant an informed consent form to sign prior to the interview. Each participant gave feedback at the end of the interview on the clarity of the interview questions and wording. All participants in the pilot test acknowledged that they understood the questions and wording used in the interview protocol. Based on the feedback received from the pilot test participants, I did not make any changes to the main research questions in the interview protocol, and no further contact with the participants in the pilot test was necessary.

Conducting a pilot test allowed me to evaluate the interview process and my interviewer skills. Listening to the recorded interviews allowed me to refine the interview process by asking additional probing questions to gather additional data. Conducting several interviews allowed me to become more comfortable with the interview process.

Three women, ages 54, 57, and 64, who met the criteria of the research study participated in the pilot test. Two were White, and one was African American. Two women were married with children, and one was separated with children. Each of the pilot study participants had completed a college degree. Two pilot study participants had a bachelor's degree, and one of the pilot study participants had a master's degree. Each of the three participants worked in a different industry: human services (case manager), education (teacher), and information technology (computer specialist). Two participants

held a nonmanagement position, and one participant held a mid-level management position. One of the participants had more than 30 years in the industry, one participant had 35 years of experience, and the other participant had 26 years of experience in the industry. During the pilot study, two participants were unemployed. One participant had not had a job for 7 months, and the other participant had not had a job for 1 week. The third pilot study participant found reemployment prior to the pilot study but had been unemployed for 3 years. None of the pilot study participants participated in a workforce development program.

Setting

Interviews took place in a quiet private setting in a room, at the home of the participant, in a library, or via teleconference. Each setting remained productive with no interruptions or distractions throughout the interview process. I conducted follow-up sessions to review interview transcripts via telephone or e-mail as needed.

My original contact person for the workforce career center was responsible for setting up a meeting with potential study participants, but later moved to another department due to budget cuts. I received the name of another person in the workforce career center to contact, if needed. The change in personnel did not affect my access to study participants at the workforce career centers.

Demographics

The demographic data of the 10 main study participants appear in Tables 3 and 4. Ten study participants of various ethnicities participated in the research study. Each participant was a woman over 50 who met the criteria of the research study. The ages of

the study participants ranged from 56 to 74. A PhD was the highest level of education achieved, and a high school diploma was the lowest level of education achieved. Five study participants were single, four were divorced, and one was separated. Eight participants had children. The industries represented by the 10 study participants were telecommunications, education, communications, automobile, health care, and government.

Table 3

Demographics of Main Study Participants

Pseudonym	Degree	Age	Race	Marital status	Children	Industry
Iva	Bachelor's	57	African American	Single	Yes	Telecom
Kate	Master's	56	White	Divorced	Yes	Education
Sabrina	Bachelor's	57	White	Divorced	Yes	Telecom
Cathy	PhD	65	African American	Separated	Yes	Communications
Janay	High school	63	African American	Single	Yes	Auto
Jean	Associate's	60	African American	Single	No	Health care
Yolanda	Masters	62	African American	Single	Yes	Telecom
Dana	Bachelor's	56	African American	Single	No	Government
Idelia	Master's	74	White	Divorced	Yes	Education
Kacey	Bachelor's	61	White	Divorced	Yes	Education

Six study participants held a mid-level management position in their previous jobs, two held an executive position, and two held nonmanagement positions. One participant obtained a higher position level upon reemployment, and four participants obtained the same position level. One of the four participants became self-employed. Three participants obtained a lower level position and two participants remained unemployed. The length of time the participants were unemployed ranged from 1 month to 4 years. Years of experience for the participants ranged from 15 years to 33 years. Seven participants participated in a workforce development program.

Table 4

Demographics of Main Study Participants

Pseudonym	Occupation	Previous position	Current position	Time unemployed	Years of experience	Participation in workforce development program
Iva	Senior accountant	Mid-level	Nonmanagement	2 years	27	Yes
Kate	HR executive	Executive	Unemployed	2.5 years	23	Yes
Sabrina	Program manager	Mid-level	Mid-level	3 years	33	Yes
Cathy	Executive assistant	Mid-level	Mid-level	1 month	15	No
Janay	Accounts payable/ receivable manager	Mid-level	Unemployed	13 months	29.5	Yes
Jean	Team lead	Nonmanagement	Mid-level	3 months	28	No
Yolanda	Technical manager	Mid-level	Nonmanagement	1 year	27	Yes
Dana	Contract specialist	Nonmanagement	Nonmanagement	4 years	26	Yes
Idelia	Adult learning specialist	Executive	Executive	1 year	30	Yes
Kacey	Administrative	Mid-level	Nonmanagement	6 months	20	No

Data Collection

The focus of the study was on transcendental phenomenology using interviews as the primary form of data collection to capture the experiences of job loss described by 10 study participants. I posted flyers in three workforce career centers to recruit study participants. Snowballing served as an approach to locate additional study participants who met the criteria of the study (Singleton & Straits, 2010). If recruitment resulted in too few participants, my plan was to request permission from the workforce development agency to attend a scheduled meeting at each of the workforce development career centers in the northeastern city to explain my research study and recruit additional volunteer participants for the study. This approach was not necessary.

I collected data firsthand from in-depth interviews with the study participants. The topics of the open-ended questions included the participants' experiences related to involuntary job loss and the circumstances that impacted their experiences of the phenomenon. An average of two interviews took place each week. I researched libraries in the area with quiet rooms and sent an e-mail to the participant to arrange a convenient day, time, and location to meet. Two participants rescheduled due to a conflict.

The initial plan was to conduct face-to-face interviews to observe the participants' facial expressions and body movement as the participants described their stories. Four face-to-face interviews took place in a quiet room at a library, two face-to-face interviews took place in a quiet room at the home of the participants, and four face-to-face interviews were teleconferences. Face-to-face and teleconferenced interviews lasted 30 to 60 minutes in a glass-enclosed room assigned by the library assistant. Although I could hear occasional outside noise during the interview, the setting was private and remained favorable for conducting the interview.

I used an interview protocol (see Appendix A) to gather sufficient and relevant information to answer the research questions. Prior to submitting the proposal to the IRB committee, three members of an expert panel, consisting of two workforce development career center administrators and my dissertation chair, reviewed the interview protocol (see Appendix A). Each individual received an e-mail invitation to participate in an expert panel review. Members of the expert panel provided written feedback after reviewing the interview protocol, written feedback form, and a copy of the flyer that included a brief description of the research study. Members of the expert panel provided

written feedback regarding the clarity of vocabulary and language use, completeness of demographic information, and central and probing questions (see Appendix C). I conducted an expert panel review so I could perfect the interview questions after the experts reviewed the questions.

Using an interview protocol allowed me to take field notes, clarify and restate questions participants did not fully understand, and ensure participants answered every question. I reviewed all field notes within 48 hours of the interview to ensure I could recall previously documented information accurately. I prompted participants to describe their experiences and provide additional information when necessary using the interview protocol (see Appendix A). Based on the experiences of the study participants, I modified the probing questions of the interview protocol.

I audio recorded and transcribed all interviews to ensure accuracy of information. I also asked each participant at the end of the interview to participate in member checking to ensure accuracy and credibility of findings and interpretations of their interviews. I advised the participants that the member-checking process would take approximately 10 minutes. Study participants who agreed to participate in member checking provided e-mail addresses, and I sent a copy of my findings and interpretations of their interviews to them via e-mail. I used NVivo 10 qualitative software to assist in determining relevant data and the proper coding of data. I also used NVivo 10 to identify emerging patterns, themes, and meanings to the theories of Bandura and of Leana and Feldman.

Data Analysis

Thematic and comparative analyses of data helped to determine emerging themes and patterns from the transcripts of 10 study participants. NVivo 10 qualitative software helped to identify patterns and themes from the data. Visual displays presented using NVivo 10 represented the findings. The process involved importing transcribed data, audio recordings, and documents into NVivo 10 software after the first interview. Using NVivo 10, I created nodes to hold the data gathered for each construct: experiences related to involuntary job loss, barriers faced to reemployment, and overcoming barriers to reemployment.

I manually coded nodes while reviewing each transcript to catalog ideas and gather material by topic. I created multiple levels of subfolders using NVivo 10 related to each construct based on the data gathered from the transcripts. For example, the subfolders created and listed under the node labeled “experiences” were “social,” “financial,” and “emotional.” I stored the data related to the subfolder under the appropriate subfolder. For example, I stored data such as family, friends, and coworkers under the subfolder social. I gathered data by coding or highlighting contents of the transcript specific to a theme or idea and adding the highlighted information from the transcript to the node or subfolder related to the theme or idea described by the study participants. Identifying and expanding codes involved carefully reviewing individual transcripts many times. I created coding summaries by node to review and analyze the content coded at each node, and I determined categories or themes after the coding process was complete.

I examined and analyzed the data gathered from the interview questions to determine relevancy to the research questions and adequately capture the perspectives of the participants. Multiple reviews of the interview transcriptions provided me the opportunity to discover as many perspectives as possible. Horizonalizing the data involved highlighting and listing significant statements and quotes related to how the participants experienced job loss (Creswell, 2013). I grouped significant statements into themes. I created a figure to show the vast amount of emotions experienced by the participants following job loss (see Appendix J). I manually created tables to show the main themes and subthemes that emerged from the transcribed data (see Appendix I, Appendix K, Appendix L).

Manually creating tables made it easier to identify commonality among the participants. I was able to determine the percentage of participants who gave the same or similar responses. For example, under the main theme of emotions, five out of 10 participants expressed depression. I reviewed the participants' data describing depression and determined the responses that were most significant in capturing the voice of the participants. I also reviewed responses that were significantly different from or opposite of the majority of the participants' responses.

NVivo allowed me to compare the information I gathered against the reports in NVivo. I identified additional themes manually that were not revealed using NVivo by going over the transcripts many times and interpreting the responses of the participants. For example, a participant may not have used the word *depression*, but reading the description of the participant's emotions indicated the participant might have been in a

depressed state. Textural descriptions of the experience, including verbatim examples, included significant statements to describe what the participants experienced related to job loss. Structural descriptions reflected on the context and setting in which job loss occurred. The structural description process included an exhaustive examination of the data to capture information important to understand how the participants experienced job loss.

I presented visual displays of interrelationships and patterns in the data using the cluster analysis tool in NVivo 10. Cluster analysis involved reviewing and comparing the relevant word similarity of the interview content among the study participants. I created models using NVivo 10 to represent ideas and demonstrate findings, recorded demographics for each participant and placed them in tables, and took additional notes while gathering demographic information and used them in the analysis process.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The three validation strategies used were (a) peer debriefing, (b) member checking, and (c) rich, thick description. Member checking is important to verifying the accuracy, completeness and validity of data analysis (Harper & Cole, 2012). I asked each study participant at the end of the interview to participate in member checking. I explained the member checking strategy to each study participant who agreed to participate in member checking. Member checking participants received a copy of the findings and interpretations of their individual interview via e-mail. If the participant did not have an e-mail address, I met with the study participant at a mutually agreeable location, such as a quiet room in a library or the home of the participant. I asked member-

checking participants to provide their views on the accuracy and credibility of the findings and interpretations of their individual interviews via e-mail or telephone call. A peer debriefer is important to help ensure the internal validity and quality of the research process (Freysteinson et al., 2013). A peer with a graduate degree and years of experience in higher education and the dissertation writing process performed the responsibilities of the peer debriefer for this study. A peer experienced in the dissertation writing process challenged methods, meanings, and interpretations of data (Wahyuni, 2012). The peer debriefer and researcher kept copies of the audio recorded meetings (Wahyuni, 2012).

The names of participants or any information that could identify the participants in the study, including friends and family, remained confidential. I assigned alphanumeric codes to the study participants to protect their identities. I used the same alphanumeric codes to represent the real names of each study participant in the tape-recorded interviews and transcripts. The real names of the study participants did not appear in any of the audio recordings or interview transcripts. I was the only one with access to the alphanumeric codes, along with the real names that corresponded to the alphanumeric codes. Transferability was established by providing a rich, thick description of the experiences of each study participant (Bryman, 2012). Providing detailed information regarding the participants and the research process allows readers to determine whether the findings are transferable to other settings (Hill, 2012).

Results

I interpreted the meaning of the lived experiences of 10 participants using in-depth descriptions shared by the participants regarding the impact of involuntary job loss.

I used the transcendental phenomenological approach of Moustakas (2009) that involved identifying meaningful and important statements that provided knowledge of how job loss was experienced by the participants. The participants described their lived experiences of involuntary job loss, barriers faced to reemployment, and ways to overcome the barriers to reemployment. Specific themes and subthemes emerged from the data analysis process by coding the data and aligning the data with the appropriate research question. The findings of the data analysis indicated the participants experienced a wide range of emotions following involuntary job loss (see Appendix J). Job loss for the study participants entailed loss of income, loss of financial security, and change in social activities. Study participants described their experiences following job loss, the barriers faced while seeking reemployment and the strategies used to overcome the barriers to reemployment. A review of the findings related to Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 follows.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was as follows: How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe the experiences of involuntary job loss? All the participants responded to the interview questions relevant to Research Question 1 and described their experiences in detail. The participants described the emotional, financial, family, and social impact experienced following job loss (see Appendix I). It became evident while conducting the interviews with the study participants and reviewing the interview transcripts that the experience of job loss had a profound emotional impact on the lives of

the study participants. The findings include significant statements shared by the participants regarding their experiences of job loss.

Finding I: Emotion. The findings indicated that job loss was a distressful event in the lives of the majority of the women in this study (see Appendix J). The majority of participants experienced strong negative emotions, including shock, shame, anxiety, stress, fear, depression, devastation, and alienation, as highlighted in the literature (Gabriel et al., 2010; Hodges & Lentz, 2010; Hossfeld et al., 2012; Parris & Vickers, 2010; Russell, 2011). As suggested in findings in the literature, job loss is handled by individuals in different ways (Gabriel et al., 2013; Latack et al., 1995; Leana & Feldman, 1992).

A close link existed between the emotions of the participants and their abilities to cope with the demands of a stressful or traumatic situation, as indicated by Bandura (1988). As demonstrated by Bandura (2012), the efficacy beliefs of the participants determined how the participants perceived and mentally processed the impact of job loss. The emotions described by the participants were distinctive in that some were more powerful than others were (Appendix J). The participants' beliefs in their coping capabilities affected the amount of stress and depression they experienced following job loss, as indicated by Bandura (2012).

Based on the findings of this study, depression was the dominant emotion among the participants. Five of the 10 participants expressed a state of depression. As supported in Hodges's (2013) study, unemployed women were at a greater risk for depression than

unemployed men were. When asked to describe the experiences of involuntary job loss, Idelia articulated how job loss affected her emotionally:

> I actually went into depression trying to figure out what my next move would be. I also went to see a doctor in regards to my depression and also had to take some medication for it. But that was just a temporary solution. I just had to find myself out in the world again and I'm getting emotional about it right now because it was a struggle and I just didn't want to give up. It felt like I couldn't go on but I did.

Cathy also described a state of depression: "How can I face the world, and the depression level I have to tell you is just 10 times worse than it is when you have accepted a package."

Five of the 10 participants felt a lack of confidence in self, which was in agreement with findings in the literature (Parris & Vickers, 2010; Root & Park, 2009). Idelia exemplified a loss of confidence in people and the hiring process after being promised a job and later having the organization hire someone younger for the position: "I was promised a job and all of a sudden I was dropped because I was told a younger applicant was brought in." Idelia's experience supported Humpert (2013), who noted that organizational leaders hire older workers less than they hire younger workers. Kacey felt a lack of confidence in getting a job as an older woman with three children: "Who was gonna want to hire me or give me training as a 51-year-old woman with three kids. I couldn't imagine any company or any organization who would want to do that."

Nine of 10 participants did not expect to be out of a job. Some of the participants were uncertain about what would become of them as a result of losing their jobs. Aligned

with prior studies (Gabriel et al., 2010; Hodges & Lentz, 2010; Hossfeld et al., 2012; Parris & Vickers, 2010), participants described emotional experiences of devastation, frustration, shock, and surprise. The responses of the participants were in line with Gabriel et al.'s (2010) findings that individuals first experience shock when they deny the experience of job loss. Jean articulated a sense of surprise and uncertainty: "From an emotional standpoint it was a bit surprising; it was a bit unsettling because at the time I had heard about people losing their jobs but I had never experienced it myself." Sabrina articulated an emotional experience of being shaken: "It shook me to my core, it shook my confidence and it was almost overwhelming." As supported in Gabriel et al. (2010), one participant described feelings of being alone and betrayed after being a loyal employee for many years. Some of the participants asked "Why me?" and "What did I do wrong?"

Two of 10 participants responded differently and had a positive reaction to the notification of job loss. Iva and Dana expressed a sense of relief. Iva expressed having health issues and needing time for her body to heal. Dana described being under a lot of stress and feeling a sense of freedom for a little while after the loss of her job. Consistent with literature, the loss of a job was an opportunity to attend to personal needs such as focusing on repair of physical and mental health (Blustein et al., 2013).

Finding II: Financial. Aligned with the literature, the majority of participants in this study experienced a substantial financial impact following job loss (Mattingly & Smith, 2010). The majority of the participants did not have savings or spousal support. Some participants received severance packages and some participants received

unemployment benefits that helped to ease the impact of job loss. The impact of job loss was substantial for the majority of women who had to accept lower paying jobs upon reemployment, as indicated in the literature (Cha & Morgan, 2010; GAO, 2012; Gringart et al., 2013). Agreeing with the findings of Feldman and Leana (2000), the majority of participants in this study received lower earnings upon reemployment, particularly the higher-level professionals. Consistent with literature, the majority of participants were the breadwinner in the family, which indicated a societal move away from the traditional view of men as the wage earner (Parris & Vickers, 2010). Other participants were single moms with children who depended on them for financial support. Some participants did not have children or the children were adults who no longer lived with their parents. Sabrina represented the financial impact of job loss:

> It's nearly impossible to replace your income dollar for dollar. The debts that you have or responsibilities or obligations that you have don't change but your income does. If you have to touch things like a 401K or things like that, you have all kinds of penalties that are also associated with that. So it's like a double whammy. You might think you're okay in terms of the money, but it's not gonna last even faster because of penalties and things associated with utilizing those funds. So there's almost like you are slapped in the face at every turn. And you realize very quickly that you have to buckle down and do something about protecting your income as fast as possible.

The majority of the participants described having to manage money better by cutting back on spending because they did not know how long it would be before they

found another job. Janay described the financial impact of losing her job, coupled with the disappointment of receiving only 6 months of unemployment benefits after working for 30 years, as devastating. For some participants, savings began to dwindle after being out of work for over a year. Janay expressed her reluctance in having to make the decision to receive social security benefits after her unemployment benefits ran out.

Finding III: Family. All the participants in this study had the burden of meeting family responsibilities. Aligned with Hossfeld et al.'s (2012) study of women only, participants had the responsibility of finding support for themselves and their children. When asked to describe how job loss affected their families, some families experienced the impact of job loss, whereas others did not. Some participants had children who were adults and understood what was happening, and others had young children who were confused, scared, and worried. Some participants experienced concern from family members, and their families became closer. Others described pressure and stress put on the family to help. One participant had to make significant sacrifices following job loss and had to sell her home. Kate exemplified the impact of job loss on her family:

> Had a terrible impact. It felt like it was a big disappointment to them because I had been the primary wage earner so it was unnerving from a security point of view. It was diminishing in terms of status and credibility. It caused me to have to dispose of the family home, which displaced my son and made him feel he no longer had a home.

Dana described how she saw the world after losing her job:

> I have to say there is a very closed world. Well for my experience, it can be a very small world. Your inner circle becomes even tighter. People I think are afraid to reach out sometimes because they don't know what to do. It's like a person can feel bad for you that you've lost your job. They are afraid that you might ask for something. Even though people might say I'll help you, if you really need help just let me know and I'll be there for you. But then I also have to think I don't know if I would really reach out to that person or not, sometimes people can avoid you. So I find that it can be a very small world that you live in when you go through a job loss.

Finding IV: Social. Job loss had a profound effect on participants regarding social experiences. Although a few participants still socialized with friends on a regular basis, other participants experienced a significant impact on social life with friends after the job loss. Friends shied away, and friends stopped calling. In alignment with studies exclusively on men, some of the participants in this study felt concerned about how others perceived them and did not want anyone to know they no longer had a job (Parris & Vickers, 2010). One participant did not want to show defeat, and because of her pride, she would not reach out to her children who were successful and living on their own in another state.

In agreement with findings in the literature, women experienced a loss of community, loss of identity, a sense of inadequacy, and a lack of self-worth (Parris & Vickers, 2010; Root & Park, 2009). Kathy indicated she no longer had a social network: "You are alienated, people don't want to be bothered with you. It's not that they don't

want to be your friend, but I think there's a stigma around losing your job." In alignment with Kathy, Sabrina discussed her experience with downsizing and the social impact of job loss:

> There is a stigma associated with being downsized, being let go. It's embarrassing, it's humiliating, you try to, you know, you wanna withdraw from that and then people want to ask you a ton of questions and you don't want to talk about it. So for a while work relationships went on hold for actually quite a while.

The social impact with associates and coworkers changed for most of the participants. Most participants lost contact with coworkers. Only a few participants maintained contact with coworkers. Consistent with the literature, one participant grieved the loss of social contact with coworkers and compared the loss of contact with coworkers to the loss of her family (Gabriel et al., 2010; Papa & Maitoza, 2013).

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was as follows: How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe the barriers to reemployment? Research Question 2 addressed how the study participants described their experiences related to barriers to reemployment and job loss. Four main themes emerged from the data relevant to Research Question 2: age, organizational practices, technology, and stereotypical beliefs (see Appendix K). The main themes that emerged from the data are in Table 5.

Table 5

Number of Participant Responses—Barriers

Barriers	Number of responses (N = 10)
Age	8
Organizational practices	8
Technology	7
Stereotypical beliefs	6

Finding I: Age. Researchers described the existence of barriers to reemployment, including age discrimination (Billett et al., 2011; Gringart et al., 2013; Jyrkinen & McKie, 2012; Lu, 2010). In agreement with these studies, eight of the 10 participants expressed age as a major barrier to reemployment. Kacey felt potential employers did not consider her applications because of her age and years of experience on the job. When interviewing for a job, an interviewer told Kate the quality of her interview was good, yet the individual hired was a younger person with less experience. These findings agree with literature indicating organizations are less likely to hire the oldest applicants (Richardson et al., 2013). Some participants dummied down their resumes and omitted years of experience to downplay how old they were in order to get an interview. In a prior study, older workers indicated they omitted information from the resume that might reveal age and colored hair to change their outward appearances (Berger, 2009; Lyons et al., 2014). Consistent with these findings, some participants in this study colored their hair to hide the gray that they perceived made them look older. Nine of the 10 participants had degrees and were overqualified for most of the positions for which they applied. Though some of the participants were willing to take a lower paying position, potential employers

told the participants they were overqualified for the position. Yolanda noted her age was a barrier to reemployment:

> Well you know you don't expect the person that is interviewing to say, to outright tell you we don't want you because you're old. They would say you were overqualified. So from that I gathered it was because of my age and years of work.

Consistent with literature, participants perceived potential employers did not want to hire older workers, in particular older women (Heywood et al., 2010; Vandenberghe, 2011). Kacey described feeling shut out from the world because of her age and had doubts whether organizations would hire or provide training to a 51-year-old woman with three kids. Catherine also perceived potential employers did not want to hire older workers. Catherine noted, "But there is the mind-set I think that particularly in this country that older people in some positions, they just don't want to hire you."

Finding II: Organizational practices. In alignment with Hodges and Lentz (2010), the majority of the participants earned lower wages upon reemployment. Some participants felt organizational leaders did not want to pay them what they were worth and described a significant decrease in level of pay. Yolanda's experience exemplified the barriers encountered related to the level of pay: "They looked at my last salary, and they didn't necessarily want to pay anything close to or equivalent of what I was used to making in my prior job even though they wanted the expertise." Sabrina's experience was representative of underemployment:

> The only positions I was able to get while I was still looking forward to getting gainfully reemployed were jobs that paid 25% of what I was making before, which meant that I had to draw on resources and bleed out a lot of that resource while I was scrambling to try to find more work. The only job that I have been able to get that's in my field now is a consulting position in the same industry but it pays roughly 50 to 60% of what I made before so I'm still in my opinion underemployed.

Finding III: Technology. In agreement with literature, participants in this study possessed skills considered obsolete following job loss (Cha & Morgan, 2010). Seven of the 10 participants described technological challenges as barriers to reemployment. Some participants worked in the same job for many years and never had to use the Internet to job search. Janay articulated the challenge of searching for a job on the Internet: "I didn't know job search. Everything you do, you have to do it on the computer. Nobody talks to you."

Some participants lacked computer skills and software skills in Microsoft. Kate noted technological challenges:

Without question, the worst for me was the completion of the automated application systems. It was stressful for me when anything got caught in the loop. It was stressful because the blanks in the application didn't allow me to fully explain or present what I thought would be my most marketable or saleable asset. It made me feel very much like a number and not like a person, like I'm one more thing being processed through a machine. It was incredible depersonalization and that was probably the greatest barrier

for me, to make myself fill out those applications because every time I sat down to do one, it was an ordeal. So often there is a request that people have the full complement of skills in Microsoft Office so I've struggled and gone to some Excel classes but I have to say that unless you use it day to day, it is hard to have the confidence that you are really competent in using it.

Kacey exemplified a lack of sufficient skills for the job market:

> Once I was terminated, I found that there was no access to any training so my skills, while adequate, didn't get improved and there was no way that I could have gone back into that market with the skills I had.

Though five of the 10 participants noted having a lack of sufficient skills was a barrier, other participants indicated that skills previously obtained through education were an advantage for them. Dana typified education as a benefit:

> You're a woman in a minority, over 50 years old, luckily have a college degree. That is a big plus, at least in the field that I'm in. That's a tremendous plus, so if I just had high school, I don't know where I'd be and that's the truth.

Iva also exemplified the benefit of having a degree and acquiring specific skills:

> Education has helped me because I have found that there are a lot of jobs out there for accountants, there really is. This market to me has been open. It's just a matter of going out and putting in for a lot of different jobs in this area.

Finding IV: Stereotypical beliefs. In alignment with the literature, potential employers perceived older workers as being less productive, less flexible, and harder to train with new technology (Billett et al., 2011; Karren & Sherman, 2012; Lyons et al.,

2014). Six of the 10 participants described stereotypical beliefs as barriers to reemployment. When asked what challenges, if any, she faced relating to stereotypical beliefs, Iva depicted prejudice against older workers:

> You think sometimes you're expendable and I felt that way. I do know that sometimes you feel as though when you get to a certain age that they feel as though you really need to move on. I guess that type of thing or that you really can be replaced with someone else who is younger.

Sabrina also described a strong sense of prejudice against being over 50:

> There is an attitude, let's say 35 to early 40s people generation, that's doing the interviewing most of the time that your ways are, I've been there, done that, I don't want to do it again. You're going to be slow; you're going to be rigid. I strongly feel prejudice against being over 50.

Dana articulated her belief about what others think of older people: "If you're older, you are stuck in your ways and you cannot teach an old dog new tricks."

Other participants described barriers to reemployment such as a competitive job market. These findings regarding too many applicants for available jobs were consistent with Mishel et al. (2012). Participants also discussed not knowing where to look for a job. Dana's response typified a competitive job market and the impact of the number of people looking for a job:

> There are millions of people unemployed. If there's a job opening, you could be 1 in 150, 'cause that literally really happened to me. I applied for a job at a college and I was 1 in 150 people who applied for that same job.

Iva noted, “I found that it wasn’t as easy as I thought it would be because it was so many people at that point that were I found out were unemployed.” Two participants stated not knowing where to look for a job was a barrier to reemployment. Both participants expressed concern regarding where to look for a good company that would pay the type of benefits and salary needed to survive.

Organizational leaders tended to ignore women’s knowledge where men held primary power in a male-dominated organization (Jyrkinen & McKie, 2012). Consistent with the literature (Bruckmuller et al., 2014; Buckalew et al., 2012; Schuh et al., 2014), Kacey described the glass ceiling as a barrier to reemployment:

> I felt shut out of that whole world because of my age, because of my gender. I never felt that I was considered for any of the jobs I felt in any way to break into applications for jobs that would have been on a higher level or higher pay. It seemed as if I was not included in that world. As far as teaching in taekwondo, I got a lot of, there was a glass ceiling sort of speak at being 51 and as I progress and older and a women, I was not expected to or be able to go beyond an assistant teacher.

Consistent with the literature, women were less likely to travel or relocate for a job (Michniewicz et al., 2014; Weckstrom, 2011; Wilkins & Wooden, 2013). Yolanda indicated travel was a barrier to reemployment:

> Well there were challenges of did I want to accept a job where I would have to move and/or would I accept a job where I would have to travel a long distance to work and I put a limitation on that because I had done that. I had traveled a long

distance. I traveled an hour and a half away and so I guess that put limitations on my getting a job because I didn't want to travel that hour and a half.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 was as follows: How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe how they overcame the barriers to reemployment? The findings of Research Question 3 addressed how the study participants described overcoming the barriers to reemployment. The strategies described by participants to overcome the barriers to reemployment appear in Appendix L. Four main themes emerged from the data relevant to Question 3, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Number of Participant Responses—Strategies

Strategies	Number of responses (*N* = 10)
Job programs	9
Education/retraining	6
Networking	6
Support groups	6

As described by Leana and Feldman (1992), the participants in this study used problem-focused and symptom-focused coping behaviors to regain employment or psychological well-being. The participants used problem-focused coping behaviors such as searching for a new job via temporary agencies, recruiters, and the Internet and obtaining additional education or training. Problem-focused and symptom-focused coping behaviors were a way for the participants to control or eliminate the cause of the stress experienced following job loss (Leana & Feldman, 1992). The participants also used symptom-focused behaviors such as volunteer work, participating in job programs, professional organizations, support groups, and applying for government benefits. One

participant became self-employed to overcome barriers to reemployment, and another participant became certified in another skill. These findings were consistent with Leana and Feldman (1992), who indicated that involuntary job loss served as an incentive for individuals to change directions or careers.

Finding I: Job programs. Nine of the 10 participants reported using job programs as a strategy to overcome barriers to reemployment. Some participants used temporary agencies, workforce centers, recruiters, and job fairs and joined professional organizations as strategies to secure another job. Participants who participated in the workforce center and in outplacement assistance programs attended networking and resume writing workshops. Jean described temporary agencies as an important factor in obtaining a job:

> I started looking at temporary agencies because it seems that the temporary agencies, there are so many different ones and some are better than others. One of the things that attracted me to that agency was the fact that they had full benefits and paid days off, they have 401k, they had insurance benefits. I think I like the idea of the agency finding a job for me rather than me sending out a whole bunch of different resumes, and from my past experience with the agencies I had signed up with three different agencies and they were all trying to get the best fit not only for the company, but the best fit for me and that's important to me.

Sabrina described her experience with outplacement assistance:

> I used outplacement resources that were part of that package, part of that severance package that I was eligible for, and I went through career counseling

> with that industry. I did not find it to be particularly helpful other than it helped me gear up for my resume and good pointers to get started on that and they would you know proof it and help me with that so that was a help from modern strategy with resumes.

Cathy described using a recruiter to secure a new job: "My recruiter was excellent, she has been with me for 20 years, and we met as a result of my losing a job, she's been right there for me." Another participant was contacted by a recruiter as part of the severance package but did not find the service helpful. Idelia noted joining a professional organization as a strategy to reemployment, "I joined ASTD at that time and actually got a job through them."

Finding II: Education/retraining. Six of the 10 participants described education/ retraining as a strategy to overcome barriers to reemployment. Two of the nine participants who held degrees mentioned having a degree in their field helped them to overcome the barriers to reemployment. Dana noted the importance of education:

> The education, that was a plus because one of the probably minimum requirements was to have a bachelor's degree in business or in that arena so that was at a minimum. You had to at least have that and I could bear anywhere from 5 to 10 years or more experience in the field.

One participant obtained training in another profession to secure another job. Some participants took classes to become familiar with the computer and to update skills in Microsoft Word. Two participants earned a certification in a specific skill to overcome barriers to reemployment. Idelia mentioned taking a course to update a specific skill: "I

took courses then to just update my skills again at a university, instructions systems design, the latest techniques."

Finding III: Networking. Six of the 10 participants networked with friends, associates, previous coworkers, and professional organizations to secure another job. Jean noted developing positive relationships with friends: "It's important to develop positive relationships that just like with your friends, you don't have to talk to them every single day but when you need them you can call them and they're available to you." Sabrina described networking: "Networking was a big thing. I went to all kinds of things and I had a blast. I met all kinds of people and did all kinds of things. I was with the downtown partnership for a while."

Finding IV: Support groups. Six of 10 participants used support groups to overcome barriers to reemployment. Aligned with the literature (Blustein et al., 2013; Garrett-Peters, 2009), participants used support groups to overcome barriers to reemployment. Friends, family, associates, coworkers, church, and outreach programs were a support base for the participants. The majority of support came from friends and family. Jean described associates as a support base:

> One of my associates was a good friend really. She was working for a company, and I just faxed my resume over and between her saying I was a good worker 'cause we had worked previously together and my resume and my walking in the door and answering all the questions the way they were happy with, I guess within less than 30 minutes, I had the job, and that was one resume that I just, you know faxed over as a result of someone telling me about it so that was a blessing.

Other themes emerged from the data.

Five of 10 participants used the Internet to overcome barriers to reemployment. Some participants searched online for jobs and posted resumes to the websites Indeed.com, Monster.com, and Career Builder as strategies to overcome barriers to reemployment. Iva described the use of Career Builder:

> Career Builder is a very good program. That was one that was offered by the company. I found that helpful because I did hear from time to time from an individual at Career Builder who, for the most part they helped you first of all with your resume and they gave you some pointers and then from time to time if they saw positions that might fit your requirements they would send them to you by e-mail. That did help in some respects. They were positions that I could apply for that I may not have seen otherwise on my own.

Five of the 10 participants used unemployment services, and five participants participated in volunteer work. Participants volunteered at church, professional organizations, and senior centers. Jean discussed volunteer work:

> In volunteering, I was able to get another reference. A current reference as to my work ethic, because people are always looking for people who show up to work on time, do the tasks that are assigned to them in a timely manner. So doing volunteer work if you are coming for a voluntary project and you're showing up on time, guess what, you're definitely gonna show up on time when you're getting paid.

Three of the 10 participants noted exercising prayer and faith in God helped to overcome barriers to reemployment. Dana described her faith in God: "What helped me was my faith in God that something would turn around." Three of 10 participants expressed having a positive attitude to overcome barriers to reemployment. One of the participants stayed motivated by exercising and staying physically fit. Three of the 10 participants accepted lower paying jobs. Sabrina described accepting lower pay:

> I took a job as a hostess in a restaurant. I took a job as a gift shop worker for a museum, and I took a job as an office manager for a nursery, a greenhouse, something that was an interest of mine all of my life and I took a job as a receptionist for a small business. All which paid significantly less, but I thought I would try anything I could to get my foot in the door, to either use former interest of mine or hobbies of mine or network my way into something else.

One participant made cold calls to overcome barriers to reemployment. Another participant started her own business and became an independent contractor.

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 was as follows: How do these experiences compare to other reports focused on the job losses of men over 50? Research Question 4 addressed the question of how the experiences of women over 50 who had incurred job loss compared to studies on men over 50 and job loss. To answer Research Question 4, I conducted an analysis of Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 and compared the results of the data analysis for Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 to research findings on men over 50. I compared three studies of exclusively male participants (Davis & Von Wachter, 2011; Parris & Vickers,

2010; Root & Park, 2009) and eight studies with distinctions between men and women (Couch et al., 2009; Hironimus-Wendt, 2008; Hossfeld et al., 2012; Lippmann, 2008; Lippmann & Rosenthal, 2008; Mattingly & Smith, 2010; Michniewicz et al., 2014; Wooten & Valenti, 2008) to the findings of Research Questions 1, 2, and 3. A thorough summary of agreements, disagreements, and emerging patterns between the studies on men and the findings of Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 follows.

Finding I: Emotion. A comparison of the literature on men's experiences and the findings of women in this study indicated job loss appeared to have more of an emotional impact on women than on men. The majority of women in this study described themselves as visibly shaken and devastated following job loss. Whereas depression was the dominant emotion among women in this study, the men studied did not mention depression, and it did not appear to be an important factor. In contrast to the findings of women in this study, failure was the dominant emotion for men (Parris & Vickers, 2010).

Participants in this study mentioned emotions such as shock, anxiety, alienation, stress, fear, loss of identity, shame, and loss of confidence (see Appendix J). Based on the studies of men, men also experienced many of these emotions (Parris & Vickers, 2010; Root & Park, 2009). Men were anxious and felt stress after job loss (Parris & Vickers, 2010; Root & Park, 2009). In a distinction made between men and women, men generally experienced emotional strain due to the loss of breadwinner role in the family (Hossfeld et al., 2012). Job loss caused men to feel inadequate due to the inability to provide for the family (Parris & Vickers, 2010). Whereas many of the emotions of men and women were similar, two emotions were unique to men. Anger and failure were reported in the studies

of men (Parris & Vickers, 2010; Root & Park, 2009) but not in the findings of women in this study. In a distinction between men and women, anger was one of four emotions (anger, anxiety, depression, guilt) that significantly differed between men and women (Wooten & Valenti, 2008). Men were angrier following job loss (Wooten & Valenti, 2008). Anger and failure did not appear to be important factors in the findings of women. Failure was the dominant emotion in the studies of men, whereas depression was the dominant emotion in the findings of women.

Finding II: Financial. The financial impact of job loss varied for men and women. Men in literature did not receive incentive packages prior to losing their jobs (Parris & Vickers, 2010), whereas some women in this study received offers of incentive packages to encourage them to volunteer for redundancy. Consistent with previous studies of men (Davis & Von Wachter, 2011; Parris & Vickers, 2010; Root & Park, 2009), the women in this study experienced financial strain due to a substantial loss in earnings following job loss. In agreement with a study of men (Parris & Vickers, 2010), the majority of the women in this study did not have savings or receive spousal support. Some men were able to obtain reemployment but at lower wages (Davis & Von Wachter, 2011; Root & Park, 2009). In alignment with studies of men (Davis & Von Wachter, 2011; Root & Park, 2009), women in this study had difficulty finding jobs with pay equal to previous salaries and had to accept lower paying positions. In a distinction between men and women, women generally experienced significantly larger proportional wage losses than men upon reemployment (Hironimus-Wendt, 2008). In contrast, Couch et al. (2009) found a drop in earnings was larger for men in comparison to women in most

industries. In a distinction between men and women, the earnings of wives tended to be lower than the earnings of husbands (Mattingly & Smith, 2010). In another distinction, Parris and Vickers (2010) found a societal move away from the traditional view of men as the wage earner. The findings of this study indicated a change in the traditional view of men as the breadwinner of the family. All the women in this study were breadwinners in the family.

Finding III: Family. Job loss had a significant impact on the family of women in this study, which was consistent with previous studies of men (Parris & Vickers, 2010). Women in this study were either single or divorced with children and the breadwinner of the family. Literature indicating a societal move away from the traditional view of men as the wage earner (Parris & Vickers, 2010) supported these findings. The traditional views of men as the breadwinner and protector of the family were important factors regarding male identity (Parris & Vickers, 2010). Due to the inability to provide for and protect their families, men viewed themselves as failures (Parris & Vickers, 2010). In contrast to these findings, the women in this study who were breadwinners in the family did not view themselves as failures.

Finding IV: Psychosocial. Job loss affected both men and women psychosocially. A loss of community, loss of identity, sense of inadequacy, and lack of self-worth were prevalent psychosocial experiences in the studies of men (Parris & Vickers, 2010; Root & Park, 2009). Having a job was important to the development of male identity (Michniewicz et al., 2014; Parris & Vickers, 2010). Men worried about how others viewed them related to work and providing for their families (Parris & Vickers,

2010). In a distinction between men and women made by Michniewicz et al. (2014), men displayed exaggerated negative attitudes regarding the effects of unemployment on their gender status, whereas women did not. In a distinction made by Lippmann and Rosenthal (2008), men lost more prestige than women did when they became unemployed. In agreement with Lippmann and Rosenthal (2008), some women in this study described a diminished status, loss of identity, and loss of dignity. Consistent with the findings of men (Parris & Vickers, 2010), some women in this study previously believed in themselves, but following job loss, they questioned what was wrong with them that resulted in job loss. Pride prevented men from letting others know that they no longer had a job (Parris & Vickers, 2010). In alignment with previous studies of men (Parris & Vickers, 2010), some of the women in this study shared their concern about how others perceived them and did not want anyone to know they no longer had a job. In a distinction between men and women, women seemed to adjust better to job loss than men (Michniewicz et al., 2014, Weckstrom, 2011).

Finding V: Barriers to reemployment. I found no studies exclusively on men regarding barriers to reemployment. Women in this study experienced a range of barriers to reemployment relevant to Research Question 2. Based on the findings of women only, age, organizational practices, technology, and stereotypical beliefs emerged as key barriers to reemployment.

Finding VI: Overcoming barriers to reemployment. I also found no studies exclusively on how men overcame barriers to reemployment. Based on the findings of women in this study, job programs, education/ retraining, networking, and support groups

were prevalent themes. The findings also included accepting lower pay, making cold calls, using the Internet, having a positive attitude, embracing religion, and performing volunteer work.

Summary

Themes and subthemes emerged from the data and appeared in tables and diagrams. The results of the study indicated emotions, financial impact, family, and social impact were dominant themes from the data relevant to Research Question 1 (see Appendix I). Age, organizational practices, technology, and stereotypical beliefs were dominant themes that emerged from the data relevant to Research Question 2 (see Appendix K). Job programs, education/retraining, networking, and support groups were the main themes that emerged from the data relevant to Research Question 3 (see Table 6).

I reviewed the findings of this study to address Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 in Chapter 4, and I conducted an analysis of the findings to Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 to address Research Question 4. I highlighted distinctions made between men and women in Research Question 4. Chapter 5 includes interpretations of the findings and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Further Research

Job loss is a prevalent problem negatively affecting large numbers of workers yearly (Gowan, 2014). Organizational downsizing has affected many workers in the United States, which has dramatically increased the overall unemployment and long-term unemployment rates of older workers (Itkin & Salmon, 2011). How reemployment prospects and future retirement of older workers be impacted by long-term unemployment is a concern (GAO, 2012). Older workers have experienced a harder time recovering from the economic crisis and are more susceptible to displacement and downsizing than younger workers are (Jolkkonen et al., 2012; Shearer, 2009). Organizational leaders tend to hire older workers less than younger workers (Humpert, 2013), and older workers remain unemployed longer than younger counterparts (GAO, 2012). Reemployment rates are lower for older workers (BLS, 2014c).

Negative stereotypes toward older workers, age discrimination, organizational practices, and technological challenges are barriers to reemployment for older workers (Armstrong-Stassen & Cattaneo, 2010; Buckalew et al., 2012; Jyrkinen & McKie, 2012; Rizzuto, 2011). Stereotypes attached to older workers include being less productive, less flexible, and harder to train with new technology (Karren & Sherman, 2012; Lyons et al., 2014). Reduced pensions, an extended lifespan, the current economic crisis (Brandan et al., 2013) and the need for health insurance are causing older workers to stay in the workforce longer (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2012).

Older workers will likely be the first to lose their jobs, face more difficulty seeking reemployment than younger workers, and experience substantial earnings losses upon reemployment (Cha & Morgan, 2010; GAO, 2012; Gringart et al., 2013; Jolkkonen et al., 2012). Changes in family structure have caused older workers to work longer (Parris & Vickers, 2010). Male providers in families have become less prevalent (Lewchuk, 2013). More women entered the workforce or increased working hours, as the men who were the breadwinners in the family lost jobs (Mattingly & Smith, 2010).

Women have become the "target population for job loss" and unemployment due to the increase of women in the workforce (Nuttman-Shwartz & Gadot, 2012, p. 275). The impact of the economic crisis is likely to be more detrimental for women in terms of unemployment rates in most regions of the world (Fildis, 2011). The earnings of wives are typically lower than their husbands' earnings (Mattingly & Smith, 2010). Women are working multiple jobs to make ends meet (BLS, 2013; Hodges, 2103). Women traditionally experience less job security (Lewchuk, 2013) and are likely to be without a job longer than men are (Michniewicz et al., 2014). When compared to men, women are more likely to receive a lower salary and a greater loss in earnings upon obtaining another job (Jolkkonen et al., 2012).

Researchers have conducted studies on men and job loss, but limited studies exist on women, specifically women over 50, and job loss. One study included the experiences of men and women following job loss, the barriers men and women faced to reemployment, and the ways men and women overcame the barriers to reemployment (Blustein & Connor-Kellgren, 2013). No other researchers described all three constructs

regarding women over 50, as done in this study. Research on the experiences of older women, specifically women over 50, is lacking.

A limited body of knowledge on the experiences of older women and job loss was the motivation for conducting this study. The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe the lived experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss, the barriers faced to reemployment, the ways the women overcame these barriers to reemployment, and compare their experiences to research studies relating to men over 50. Women and men experience and cope with job loss differently (Michniewicz et al., 2014). More women have entered the workplace, yet women are still lagging behind men in the top management positions of the U.S. workforce (Carnes & Radojevich-Kelley, 2011). Men exclude women from networks that create job opportunities because they do not see women as one of the guys (Caceres-Rodriguez, 2013). In male-dominated organizations, women lack equal representation in leadership roles (Schuh et al., 2014). Whereas researchers have conducted studies on men and job loss, research on the experiences of women and job loss is lacking.

A qualitative interview methodology was suitable for conducting this study in natural settings to interpret the meaning of lived experiences of women over 50 who experienced job loss in terms of how these experiences were perceived by them (e.g., Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). I employed a phenomenological approach to describe the lived experiences of women over 50 who had incurred involuntary job loss. I addressed the lack of information on the lived experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss using this phenomenological approach. I addressed the gap in

literature by looking at the phenomenon from the perspective of women over 50. Coping efficacy (Bandura, 1988) and coping behaviors (Leana & Feldman, 1992) informed the exploration of the participants' experiences, informed the way they faced barriers, and revealed the ways they overcame barriers to reemployment. This qualitative study involved looking at all three constructs in an attempt to provide insight into the lived experiences of women over 50 following job loss, the barriers faced to reemployment, and what women over 50 did to overcome the barriers to reemployment. No researchers had previously looked at all three constructs specifically regarding the experiences of women over 50 and job loss.

The research questions generated for this study were as follows:

1. How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe the experiences of involuntary job loss?
2. How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe the barriers to reemployment?
3. How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe how they overcame the barriers to reemployment?
4. How do these experiences compare to reports on the job losses of men over 50?

A phenomenological approach was my preferred method for this study to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of women over 50 who had experienced involuntary job loss. The value in the phenomenological approach is in the ability of the

method to capture individual experiences of job loss from the perspective of the participants.

Chapter 5 includes the summary of research study findings, the significance of the study, and the interpretations drawn from the study. I provide the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study, as well as a detailed analysis of the research questions and the themes associated with each research question. The chapter also includes implications of the study, recommendations for future research, and conclusions.

Summary of the Findings

The phenomenological study included 10 women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city. The semistructured interview protocol included open-ended questions to elicit detailed responses from 10 study participants. The transcendental phenomenology method was suitable for analyzing the participants' responses, focusing on the participants' experiences, and eliminating prejudgments. I analyzed the data gathered to answer Research Questions 1, 2, and 3.

The results of the analysis produced four dominant themes relevant to Research Question 1: emotions, financial impact, family, and social impact. The majority of the women spent a good deal of time talking about the severe emotional impact of job loss ranging from depression and lack of confidence to shock and surprise. Most of the women suffered a significant financial impact and struggled to meet financial and personal needs. The majority of the participants were the breadwinner of the family with no savings or spousal support. For some of the women, pressure and stress on family

members to help increased. Some women experienced a significant impact on their social life, although a few women remained in contact with friends and coworkers.

Four dominant themes emerged relevant to Research Question 2: age, organizational practices, technology, and stereotypical beliefs. Age was a major barrier to reemployment for the majority of women in this study. Changes in technology forced women to seek additional education and training to gain reemployment. Organizational practices and stereotypical beliefs hindered the ability of the women to find reemployment.

Numerous themes emerged relevant to Research Question 3. Job programs, education/retraining, networking, and support groups emerged as major strategies used by women in this study to overcome barriers to reemployment. Women used temporary agencies, workforce centers, recruiters, and outplacement programs to seek reemployment. Additional training and additional skills helped women to obtain another job. Some women were successful in networking with friends, associates, previous coworkers, and professional organizations and overcame barriers to reemployment. Friends, associates, coworkers, church, and outreach programs were a good support base for the women in the study.

I conducted an analysis of the findings for Research Questions 1, 2, and 3 to address Research Question 4. Though men studied in the literature experienced many of the emotions experienced by women in this study, the women in this study did not mention anger and failure (Parris & Vickers, 2010; Root & Park, 2009). Based on the literature, men were angrier than women following job loss and saw themselves as

failures due to the inability to provide for their families. Contrary to the findings of the literature, the majority of the women in this study had the role of breadwinner in the family and did not view themselves as failures. Job loss affected both men and women psychosocially. A loss of community, loss of identity, a sense of inadequacy, and a lack of self-worth were some of the psychosocial experiences that emerged for both men and women. I did not compare men and women regarding barriers to reemployment and ways to overcome barriers to reemployment, as no studies on men only included these constructs.

Interpretation of Findings

Based on a comparison of these findings to peer-reviewed literature, this study extends the body of literature related to the experiences of women over 50 and job loss. I found only four studies exclusively on older women (Hodges, 2013; Hodges & Lentz, 2010; Hossfeld et al., 2012; Jyrkinen & McKie, 2012). Consistent with Hodges and Lentz (2010), women in this study found themselves financially strained and had to cut back on expenses.

Aligned with Hodges and Lentz (2010), the majority of the women received lower wages upon reemployment. The majority of the women in this study did not expect to be out of a job and experienced a range of emotions from depression to shock. Many of the emotions experienced by the women mirrored the emotions described in the literature. For some women the loss of a job was traumatic and devastating. Confirming the themes of Hodges and Lentz (2010), women felt disbelief and devastation following job loss. A few participants felt relief following job loss, which did not agree with the findings of the

literature. In agreement with the literature, the women in this study lost a strong women-centered support network (Hossfeld et al., 2012). Confirming the findings of Hodges and Lentz (2010), women in this study missed the social enjoyment that daily interaction with coworkers provided. In agreement with Hossfeld et al. (2012), one woman compared the loss of contact with coworkers and associates to the loss of family.

Comparing my findings to peer-reviewed literature, my study extends the body of literature related to the barriers to reemployment women over 50 faced. I found only two studies exclusively on older women (Hossfeld et al., 2012; Jyrkinen & McKie, 2012). Women in this study experienced numerous barriers to reemployment ranging from age discrimination to stereotypical beliefs. The findings of this study indicated age discrimination was a major barrier to reemployment, whereas caretaker responsibilities were a major barrier in the literature (Hossfeld et al., 2012).

Researchers have indicated that caring for immediate family member prevented women from obtaining additional training and education opportunities (Hossfeld et al., 2012). A comparison of my findings to previous peer-reviewed literature indicates my study extends the body of literature by looking at all three constructs: experiences women over 50 faced to reemployment, barriers faced to reemployment, and the ways they overcame barriers to reemployment. My findings were in agreement with Hodges and Lentz (2010), who indicated women used education, retraining, change of job type, and local government supports to overcome barriers to reemployment. Women in this study also used the Internet, cold calling, church, self-employment, support groups, volunteer work, and a positive attitude and accepted lower paying positions to gain reemployment.

I based this interpretation of the findings on findings of the first three research questions. Research Question 4 was a comparison of my research findings to previous literature on men and is not part of the interpretation of findings. The interpretation of findings includes a discussion of the findings of Research Questions 1, 2 and 3 within the context of the theoretical framework. The theories of coping efficacy (Bandura, 1988) and coping behaviors (Leana & Feldman, 1992) served as the foundation for this study, and I use them to provide insights to the findings. Leana and Feldman (1992) built their coping behaviors upon Bandura's (1988) coping efficacy theory, and I used the coping behaviors as the principal guide to determine similar characteristics and meanings as they relate to the findings of this study.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was as follows: How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe the experiences of involuntary job loss?

Finding I: Research Question 1 involved exploring how the study participants described their experiences of involuntary job loss. People who have experienced job loss often experience feelings such as depression, anger, apathy, anxiety, and signs of physical illness (Leana & Feldman, 1992). Within the context of Leana and Feldman (1992), the participants in this study experienced a wide range of emotions following job loss. One participant described signs of emotional illness as a result of job loss. With the exception to the experience of anger, the women in this study mirrored the feelings indicated by Leana and Feldman (1992). The majority of the participants exhibited control over their feelings by taking action to address the situation of involuntary job loss. The participants'

beliefs about their abilities influenced their behaviors. Efficacy beliefs and the impact efficacy beliefs have on coping behaviors control stress and anxiety (Bandura, 2012). Efficacy beliefs affect attentiveness toward potential threats and the way individuals perceive and process potential threats (Bandura, 2012). The actions of the participants were consistent with Bandura (2012), who indicated the stronger the senses of efficacy are, the bolder people are in taking on a problematic situation. Taking on the difficult situation of job loss led to stress for many of the participants. This experience of stress was consistent with Bandura (2012), which indicated that taking on problematic situations often led to stress.

Finding II: Some of the participants were initially confident in their abilities to obtain reemployment due to education levels and years of experience in the industry. The level of stress for the participants increased upon discovering that education and years of experience did not increase opportunities to obtain reemployment at equal or higher pay. Organizational leaders wanted experience but did not want to pay the participants what the participants perceived they were worth. For some of the participants, the level of stress led to depression. The level of stress experienced by the participants was consistent with Bandura (2012) which indicated the level of stress and depression experienced by individuals in threatening situations is impacted by how strong individuals believe they can handle difficult situations.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was as follows: How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe the barriers to reemployment?

Finding I: For the majority of the participants, the barriers faced to reemployment were a source of stress. Coping techniques helped the participants to reduce stress caused by barriers faced to reemployment. Bandura's (2012) concept of coping efficacy is a person's belief that he can handle potentially harmful circumstances. People will possibly apply actions that are useful and perceive the situation as less threatening (Bandura, 2012). The degree of efficacy perceived by the participants directly affected their actions to address the barriers faced to reemployment. Some of the participants exhibited a greater degree of coping efficacy and were positive in their abilities to control their responses to barriers to reemployment. Some participants exhibited a lesser degree of efficacy and felt challenged in their abilities to cope with job loss. Despite the many barriers to reemployment they faced, the majority of participants did not give up and took steps to take control of their lives following job loss.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 was as follows: How do women over 50 in a northeastern metropolitan city describe how they overcame the barriers to reemployment?

Finding I: In employment, coping behaviors are attempts to regain employment or regain some semblance of psychological well-being (Leana & Feldman, 1992). People who view themselves as having a higher ability to cope with a stressful situation, will more likely adopt a strategy to change threatening environments into more favorable environments (Bandura, 1988). The higher the person's view of his ability to cope with a stressful situation, the more likely the person will adopt a strategy to change threatening situations into more favorable ones (Bandura, 1988). As reflected in the findings of this

study, some of the participants maintained a positive attitude and level of confidence and depended on their faith for favor in overcoming the barriers to reemployment. Participants used strategies that ranged from participation in job programs to support groups.

Finding II: Participants in this study realized that taking action could help with reemployment (Leana & Feldman, 1992). For example, some participants changed careers or became self-employed. Participants in this study exhibited two classes of coping behaviors described by Leana and Feldman (1992), problem-focused coping behaviors and symptom-focused coping behaviors, which study participants used in an attempt to regain employment or psychological well-being. Participants performed problem-focused coping behaviors such as searching for a new job via temporary agencies, recruiters, and the Internet and obtaining additional education/training. Problem-focused coping behaviors helped participants to control and eliminate the cause of the stress experienced following job loss (Leana & Feldman, 1992). Symptom-focused behaviors helped participants reduce the negative feelings of isolation, depression, or financial stress associated with job loss (Leana & Feldman, 1992). Participants displayed symptom-focused behaviors such as volunteer work, participating in job programs, joining support groups, and applying for government benefits. Job programs were the strategy participants used most frequently to overcome barriers to reemployment.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations of the Study

I assumed that the study participants openly shared their experiences and were straightforward in their responses to the interview questions. Another assumption was

that organizational leaders and policy makers might benefit from the knowledge gained from the experiences shared by the participants when addressing policies that directly affect older workers. I assumed that older workers who are experiencing or have experienced involuntary job loss would benefit from the experiences shared by the participants and better prepare for the obstacles resulting from losing a job. I was unbiased, with no connection to the participants.

I interviewed 10 participants for the study. The focus of the study was the experiences of women over 50 who experienced involuntary job loss, the barriers faced to reemployment, and the ways they overcame the barriers to reemployment. I limited the study to a small sample size in a metropolitan area. As the experiences of women are unique compared to those of men, I limited the boundaries of the study to women over 50. The findings of this study are transferable only to similar populations of women who are the same age and share the same experiences of involuntary job loss. Though the sample size was small, I was able to interpret the meaning of the participants' lived experiences through the in-depth descriptions they shared regarding the impact of involuntary job loss.

Implications and Recommendations for Action

The basis of the implications of this study for positive social change was the premise that organizational leaders and policy makers could use the findings to gain a more in-depth understanding of the experiences of women over 50 who have experienced involuntary job loss. More women have entered the workforce or increased work hours to make up for the loss of spousal income and have become the breadwinner in the family.

A societal shift from the traditional role of men as the breadwinner in the family indicates a need for a better understanding of the needs of women over 50 who have taken the place of breadwinner in the family.

Organizational leaders are offering lower paying jobs with decreased benefits upon reemployment. Older workers are staying in the workforce longer to make ends meet due to decreased wages, pension, and benefits. The implications of older workers remaining in the workforce longer are that organizational leaders will need to take action and address an aging workforce.

Families of women in this study who had experienced involuntary job loss experienced emotional, financial, and psychosocial effects. The women in this study found it difficult to seek reemployment. Organizational leaders were not willing to pay older women for their education and years of experience. Women in this study simplified their skills and education and accepted lower level positions, and lower wages to obtain reemployment. The women were not ready to conduct a job search in a changing job market and found it difficult to meet financial and family responsibilities. The implications of little to no support by organizational leaders to assist older workers with the process of transitioning from having a job to unemployment indicate a need to address the organizational policies and procedures that negatively affect older workers. The implications of the barriers faced to reemployment for women in the job market indicate a need for programs that will adequately prepare and assist older workers for a changing job market. I recommend programs such as job coaching, job placement, mentoring, and educational programs that will assist with training for a new career.

Social change could occur from reexamining the hiring practices of organizations and policies that directly affect older workers. Research conducted predominantly on the experiences of men and job loss indicated a need to conduct additional studies using a qualitative approach to explore the experiences of women over 50 and job loss. To have a better understanding and to address the needs of women over 50 and job loss, researchers might also explore the experiences of women over 50 and job loss on a wider scale as the roles of women are changing due to economic and societal changes.

Recommendations for Further Research

Downsizing is still occurring in many organizations (Gowan, 2014). More women are entering the workforce following the job loss of a spouse (Mattingly & Smith, 2010). As more women enter the workforce, they also become targets for job loss. Hodges and Lentz (2010) noted that understanding the impact of unemployment on women is imperative due to large-scale layoffs in the 20th and 21st centuries. Although researchers have focused on the experiences of older men and job loss, research on older women, specifically women over 50 and job loss, is lacking. Due to limited research related to how older women perceived job loss, it is important to acquire additional knowledge regarding women's experiences of job loss. Researchers might explore the needs of women over 50 and job loss on a wider scale, as society moves from the traditional role of men as the breadwinners in the family. Researchers might also address the experiences of women over 50 and job loss over an extended period of time during changes in the economy to address the needs of older women adequately. Further research such as

regional and national studies might lead to a better understanding of the impact of job loss on older women.

Conclusions

The overall unemployment and long-term unemployment rates of older workers have increased dramatically (GAO, 2012). Additionally, long-term unemployment has risen at a greater rate for older workers than for younger workers (GAO, 2012; Sousa-Ribeiro, Sverke, & Coimbra, 2014). Older workers suffer a greater loss in wages than younger workers (GAO, 2012), and older workers have a harder time recovering from economic crises and delay retirement or return to work (Shearer, 2009). Older workers are the only group in the workforce whose participation rate has risen significantly (Toossi, 2012). The rise in the number of older workers in the workplace is due to healthier people and people living longer, the elimination of age specific retirement for a certain group of people, and the passage of age discrimination laws (Toossi, 2012, p. 62). Factors such as an unstable economy and the negative impact on financial assets contributed to higher participation of older groups in the workforce (Toossi, 2012, p. 62). Other factors such as the removal of mandatory retirement, and a reduction in pension and health benefits have caused older workers to stay in the workforce longer (Toossi, 2012). Jobs appear to be less secure, and the days of company loyalty to employees appear over based on the findings of this study. Older workers will likely be the first to lose their jobs, will likely face more difficulty seeking reemployment than younger workers, and will likely experience substantial earnings losses upon reemployment (Cha & Morgan, 2010; GAO, 2012; Gringart et al., 2013; Jolkkonen et al., 2012).

A dramatic change in the workforce participation of older women in the United States has occurred since the 1970s (Macunovich, 2012). The workforce is older and composed of more women in comparison with the workforce of past decades (Toossi, 2012). The number of working women is predicted to grow to 51% of the total workforce between 2008 and 2018 (BLS, 2011a). More women have entered the workforce, have increased the hours worked, and are working more than one job following the job loss of a spouse (BLS, 2013; Mattingly & Smith, 2010). Women earn wages at a much lower rate than men do (Jolkkonen et al., 2012; Mattingly & Smith, 2010). Though more women have entered the workplace, they are still lagging behind men in the top management positions of the U.S. workforce (Carnes & Radojevich-Kelley, 2011). Men exclude women from networks that create opportunities because they do not see women as one of the guys (Caceres-Rodriguez, 2013). Women lack equal representation in leadership roles, which creates a challenge to society, specifically businesses (Schuh et al., 2014). To have a better understanding of the experiences of women and job loss, specifically women over 50, it is critical to focus on their individual experiences following job loss.

Based on the review of literature, a gap exists in the body of knowledge regarding women over 50 who have experienced involuntary job loss. Prior research regarding the impact of job loss predominantly involved men. An important factor to recognize is that women and men experience job loss differently. Previous research indicated women had a higher level of agreeableness than men did in accepting specific outcomes of job loss (Michniewicz et al., 2014; Weckstrom, 2011). The majority of women were

breadwinners of their families. Though the women took on the traditional breadwinner role of men, the majority of women did not see themselves as failures the way men did due to their inability to provide for their families after job loss (Parris & Vickers, 2010). It is critical to continue to explore the situations that women face, specifically older women, reentering the workforce and becoming the primary provider of the family. As sole breadwinner of the family, losing their jobs affected the women in this study emotionally, and they struggled financially to meet the needs of their families. A burden fell on the women in this study who did not have savings or spousal support. The majority of women in this study experienced a significant social impact due to job loss. Many of the women no longer had a social network, and many had a difficult time finding another job and adjusting to an unstable and competitive job market.

Long-term job loss is a life crisis that women struggle with more than men do (Shearer, 2009). Women face numerous barriers to reemployment that present a huge challenge for women who are breadwinners of the family. Higher levels of education or extensive years of experience do not increase opportunities for women over 50 to obtain another job with equal or higher pay. Organizational leaders do not want to pay older women for their many years of experience or education based on the findings of this study. Many older women who are sole providers of the family take a substantial cut in pay upon reemployment, which creates a strenuous financial burden while attempting to meet family responsibilities. Older women face major barriers to reemployment such as age discrimination, stereotypical beliefs, organizational practices, and technological changes based on the findings of this study. To overcome the barriers to reemployment,

job programs, education/retraining, networking, and support groups have become major strategies used by women over 50 based on findings of this study.

An in-depth understanding regarding the impact of job loss on women over 50 is essential as more women are entering the workforce and becoming the breadwinners of the family. Women are becoming the "target population for job loss" and unemployment due to the economic crisis and increase of women in the workforce (Nuttman-Shwartz & Gadot, 2012, p. 275). The findings of this study indicated concern for the well-being of women over 50 following job loss. The focus of most of the literature regarding the adverse effects of job loss was on men, and the common assumption was that job loss is less serious for women (Nuttman-Shwartz & Gadot, 2012). Researchers have not conducted many studies on the experiences of older women and job loss (Hodges & Lentz, 2010; Hossfeld et al., 2012; Nuttman-Shwartz & Gadot, 2012), and researchers have not focused specifically on the barriers older women face and the ways they overcome barriers to reemployment. To have a better understanding of the societal impacts of job loss on women over 50, it is crucial to pay attention to the experiences of job loss shared by the women in this study.

The findings of this study indicated the majority of the participants were not ready for a competitive and changing job market. Participants experienced a profound emotional impact following job loss that entailed loss of income, loss of financial security, change in role as provider of the family, and change in social activities. Job loss impaired the psychological and physical well-being for some participants. Technological changes required women in the study to acquire new skills to reenter the job market. The

majority of the participants were not aware of programs that would assist them with the transition from employment to unemployment. Based on findings of this study, prejudices regarding older workers, underemployment, and concerns about the ability to obtain reemployment following job loss were important issues to the participants. The barriers older women faced to reemployment are a problem, and organizational leaders and policy makers should understand and address the concerns of older workers as they transition from having a job to unemployment. Greater emphasis on reexamining the hiring practices of organizations, policies that directly affect older workers, and programs offering solutions to support the employment and economic well-being of older workers is critical. Recommendations include programs on financial planning for an unpredictable future, job coaching, job placement, mentoring, and educational programs to obtain skills needed for a new career and changing job market. I recommend additional research to explore the experiences of women over 50 and job loss, the barriers faced to reemployment, and the ways women overcome the barriers to reemployment.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Lived Experiences of Women Over 50 Who Have Experienced Involuntary Job Loss

The demographic information will be obtained before the audio recording of the interview begins to protect the identity of the participant.

Demographics

1. What is your highest degree?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your race?

   African American ___ Asian ___ Caucasian ___ Hispanic ___
   American Indian ___ Biracial ___ Other ___ Decline to state ____
4. What is your marital status?
5. Do you have children?
6. What industry did you work in?
7. What is your occupation?
8. What position did you hold in the organization prior to losing your job?

   Nonmanagement ____ Entry Level___ Midlevel___ Executive Level ___
9. If you are reemployed, what position do you now hold in the organization?

   Nonmanagement____ Entry Level___ Midlevel___ Executive Level___
10. If you are seeking employment, how long have you been unemployed?
11. If you have found employment, how long were you unemployed before finding another job?

12 How many years of experience in the industry do you have?

13. Did you participate in a workforce development program?

Based on the experiences of the study participants, the probing questions of the interview protocol will be modified. If the study participant is seeking employment, that will be the focus of the probing questions. If the study participants have found employment, the probing questions will be modified to explore their experiences reflecting on job loss and where the participants are now.

Question 1: How do study participants describe the experiences of involuntary job loss?

Probes:

- Please take a moment to describe the emotions you felt after losing your job.
- How would you describe the financial experiences of losing your job?
- What circumstances changed, if any, in your life as a result of losing your job?
- What has been the impact, if any, on your family as a result of job loss?
- What has been the impact, if any, relating to socializing with friends, associates, and coworkers as a result of losing your job?

Question 2: How do study participants describe the barriers faced while seeking reemployment?

Probes**:**

- What roadblocks or challenges, if any, have you experienced while looking for a new job?
- What technological challenges, if any, have you experienced?
- What other difficulties, if any, did you face while looking for a new job?
- Please tell me about any educational or skillset challenges, if any, you have experienced?
- How have you been impacted by stereotypical beliefs (judgments of you), if any, regarding older workers?
- What challenges, if any, did you experience relating to your age?

- How have organizational practices, if any, relating to older workers impacted you?

- How would you describe the challenges, if any, you experienced relating to the position and level of pay while looking for reemployment?

- If you have found reemployment, what changes, if any, did your experience in the position and level of pay that you worked at before? Is it the same or did you have to take a pay cut?

Question 3: How do study participants describe strategies to overcome barriers to reemployment?

Probes:

- Please describe the methods or strategies that are helping you to find reemployment?

- How is networking helping you to find reemployment?

- How are job programs helping you to find another job?

- How are support groups helping you to find a new job?

- How is education and retraining helping you to find another job?

- If you have found reemployment:

    a. What methods or strategies did you use to find reemployment? Did you have to change fields or get additional training?

    b. How has networking helped you to find reemployment?

    c. How has job programs helped you to find a new job?

    d. How has support groups helped you to find a new job?

    e. How has education helped you to find a new job?

Thank you for participating in this interview. Your responses from this interview and any future interviews will be kept confidential

Appendix B: Flyer – Solicitation of Study Participants

Request for Research Study Participants

Research Project: Lived Experiences of Women Over 50 Who Have Experienced Involuntary Job Loss

I am a doctoral student at Walden University and would like to invite you to participate in my research study, which will describe the lived experiences of women over 50 who have experienced involuntary job loss. The study will consist of forty-five to sixty minute interviews to gather data for my research study. Participation in the study is voluntary and if you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during or after the study. Your name and any personal information will not be used in the research study and any information you provide will be kept strictly confidential.

The requirements for this study are: you must be a woman over 50 who has experienced involuntary job loss (example, laid off, downsized).

Your participation will not pose a risk to your safety or wellbeing. Benefits of being in the study may lead to a greater understanding of the needs of older women who have experienced involuntary job loss. If you are interested in participating in this study or have questions regarding this study, please contact Roxine Phillips at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or e-mail xxxx.xxxx@xxxx.xxx.

Thank you for your consideration!

CONTACT INFORMATION:
Roxine Phillips
Phone:
E-mail:

Appendix C: Written Feedback From Expert Panel

Lived Experiences of Women Over 50 Who Have Experienced Involuntary Job Loss

After reviewing the attached interview protocol, please provide written feedback regarding the content of the interview protocol as it relates to demographics and each central and probing question.

Based on your experience working with career center clients, please comment, for example, on the clarity of vocabulary and language use, if the interview protocol is complete with demographic information and central and probing questions that will capture the experiences of the study participants. What central questions, if any, would you suggest be added to the interview protocol?

Feedback on Demographic Information

Feedback on Central and Probing Questions

Feedback on Central Question #1

Feedback on probing questions related to Central Question #1

Feedback on Central Question #2

Feedback on probing questions related to Central Question #2

Feedback on Central Question #3

Feedback on probing questions related to Central Question #3

Appendix D: E-mail Request for Study Participants

Research Project: Lived Experiences of Women Over 50 Who Have Experienced Involuntary Job Loss

I am a doctoral student at Walden University and would like to invite you to participate in my research study, which will describe the lived experiences of women over 50 who have experienced involuntary job loss. Your name was referred to me as a possible study participant. I have attached a copy of a flyer that gives a brief description of my research study. If you are interested in participating in the study, please contact me at xxx-xxx-xxxx or via e-mail, xxxx.xxxx@xxxx.xxx. If you have any questions after reviewing the attached information, I will answer your questions at the time of your call. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Roxine Phillips
PhD Student Walden University

Appendix E: E-mail Reminder

Lived Experiences of Women Over 50 Who Have Experienced Involuntary Job Loss

You were previously invited to participate in a research study describing the lived experiences of women over 50 who have experienced involuntary job loss. You were chosen for this study because you meet the criteria for the study: (a) women over 50, and (b) experienced involuntary job loss.

This e-mail serves as a reminder of our meeting for an interview that will be conducted on (Day, Date, Time). Your participation in the study is voluntary and all information collected will be kept confidential. If you have any questions or concerns about the details of the study and your participation in the study, please contact me. I can be reached at xxx-xxx-xxxx or xxxx.xxxx@xxxx.xxx.

I look forward to our meeting and learning about your experience as it relates to involuntary job loss. Your participation in this study will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Roxine Phillips
Walden University Doctoral Student

Appendix F: Consent Form

Lived Experiences of Women Over 50 Who Have Experienced Involuntary Job Loss

You are invited to take part in a research study that will describe the lived experiences of women over 50 who have experienced involuntary job loss. The experiences of women over 50, barriers to reemployment, and how the barriers to reemployment were overcome will be explored. You were chosen for the study because you meet the study requirements of being a woman over 50 who has experienced involuntary job loss. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Roxine Phillips who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to describe the lived experiences of women over 50 who have experienced involuntary job loss and explore the experiences, barriers faced to reemployment, and how the women overcame the barriers to reemployment, and compare the experiences of women over 50 to the research studies of men over 50.

Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a 45 to 60 minute audio recorded interview and reflect on your experiences of job loss. Recording of interview will not begin until after identifiable demographics are obtained in order to protect the identity of the participant.

- Participate in a follow up interview or telephone call, if needed after the initial interview.
- Provide your view of the accuracy and credibility of my findings and interpretations of your interview, which may take approximately 10 minutes.

Here are some sample questions:

1. How did you learn you would be losing your job?
2. How would you describe your feelings when you lost your job?
3. How were you impacted (financially, emotionally, and physically) by the loss of your job?
4. What barriers did you experience when seeking reemployment?
5. What methods or strategies did you use to overcome the barriers to reemployment that you experienced?

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at the career centers will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during or after the study. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as stress or becoming upset. The data gathered will only be used or disclosed for research activities. The results from data gathered will not be

used to identify participants in the research study. Your participation in the study will not pose a risk to your safety or wellbeing.

Benefits of being in the study may lead to a greater understanding of the phenomenon by organizations and provide guidance to organizations as they address organizational challenges and policies that directly impact older workers.

Payment

No payment will be given to participants in the study. Participants will be thanked at the end of the interview as appreciation for time taken to participate in the study.

Privacy

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. However, an immediate referral will be made to the designated contact from workforce development career center, if while conducting the interview the study participant shares information related to harming themselves or someone else, or if the study participant shares illegal activity with me**.** The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. The researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by storing written and digital data collected in a locked file cabinet to maintain participant confidentiality. Data will be kept for a period of at least 7 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via telephone xxx-xxx-xxxx or e-mail xxxx.xxxx@xxxx.xxx. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani

Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is xxx-xxx-xxx. Walden University's approval number for this study is 06-20-14-0124534 and it expires on June 19, 2015.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant _____

Date of consent _____

Participant's Signature _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Appendix G: Recruitment Site Agreement

Lived Experiences of Women Over 50 Who Have Experienced Involuntary Job Loss

Date:

Dear Mrs. Phillips,

I give permission for you to conduct recruitment and research activities at our workforce locations based on my review of your research study description (Lived Experiences of Women Over 50 Who Have Experienced Involuntary Job Loss).

I understand that clients who participate in your study will do so voluntarily and according to their own judgment. It is understood that the privacy and confidentiality of all participants will be maintained throughout the research project and data will be kept secure for a period of at least 7 years as required by Walden University.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve the use of our property as a recruitment and research cite. We reserve the right to withdraw permission to perform recruitment or research activities at any time it is deemed necessary.

_____	_____
Name/Title	Name/Title
_____	_____
Organization	Organization
_____	_____
Address	Address
_____	_____
Phone	Phone

Appendix H: E-mail to Expert Panel

Lived Experiences of Women Over 50 Who Have Experienced Involuntary Job Loss

This e-mail is to invite you to participate as a member of the expert panel. Please review the interview protocol, written feedback form and copy of the flyer, which gives a brief description of the research study. Please return via e-mail your written comments regarding content and clarity of all questions in the form provided. Your participation as an expert panel member is greatly appreciated. Please contact me at xxx-xxx-xxxx or via e-mail, xxxx.xxxx@xxxx.xxx, if you have any questions after reviewing the attached information.

Roxine Phillips
PhD Student Walden University

Appendix I: Experience Table

Participants	Emotions	Financial Impact	Family Impact	Social Impact: Friends	Social Impact: Associates and Coworkers
P1—Iva	First emotion was not upset because felt needed some time for body to heal due to health issues. Didn't go through emotions most people go through; was able to get money to be ok for a year. Felt like you're expendable	Initially no impact because received money from company worked for; had to manage money better because did not know when money would run out. Approx. $20,000 decrease in salary upon reemployment, had to cut back on spending; accumulated bills, ran up credit cards	Didn't think children felt impact; initially had enough money to provide for herself and two girls; later had to stop spending as much on children	Still socialized with friends	Did change, kept in touch with only one person
P2—Kate	Shock, depression, frustration, sense of loss of identity and dignity; some level of drifting due to lack of structure due to not having a job to go to, lost confidence, terrified	Lost financial partner after divorce; concerned about getting son through last years of college; gave up house, had to reduce social things such as traveling which was a passion	Went through a divorce, terrible impact, felt like it was a big disappointment to them because she was primary wage earner, unnerving from a security point of view, diminishing in terms of status and credibility, disposed of family home which displaced son and made him feel he no longer had a home	Hard to always be humbling yourself when friends want to subsidize you when going out; it is hard in the sense that friends don't want to pay for you to have to do things all the time; friends are hesitant about what they want you to do with them because they know you do not have the financial wherewithal to do much	Stopped receiving calls from people that worked for her; missed people who worked for her; was like losing her family; was hard because loss of contact with associates and coworkers happened simultaneously with losing her family

(table continues)

Participants	Emotions	Financial Impact	Family Impact	Social Impact: Friends	Social Impact: Associates and Coworkers
P3—Sabrina	Felt bad, shook me to the core, shook confidence, overwhelmed, depressed, scared, also felt the reverse feeling cocky, a little over confident, they don't need me, I don't need them either	Impossible to replace income dollar for dollar, if you have to touch things like 401K, you incur penalties; you don't qualify for any kind of assistance, almost like you are slapped in your face every turn; had to watch every penny and become incredibly frugal, had to find free things to do and do it with buddies that have lost their jobs because they are the ones that get you now	Family was concerned, no immediate impact to anyone else, child was older and living on his own	Tremendous impact; would lunch with friends on a regular basis, which stopped, people that have disposable income don't understand why you're not coming out to play.	There is a stigma associated with being downsized, it's embarrassing and humiliating and you want to withdraw from that, people want to ask you questions and you don't want to talk about it, work relationships went on hold for quite a while

(table continues)

Participants	Emotions	Financial Impact	Family Impact	Social Impact: Friends	Social Impact: Associates and Coworkers
P4—Cathy	Unnerving, uncertain about how long and how next job would look like; very uncomfortable, self-doubt, in the beginning a little bit daunting, anxiety, stress, depression, sense of shame	Didn't really impact me financially, received generous package, eligible for unemployment, didn't feel like I had to get another job right away, but didn't want to run out of money so tried to get another job as soon as possible	Husband did not understand why she would want to take a package	People alienate you, can't hang out or go for drinks, friends don't want to ask you out because they don't want to buy you a drink or dinner; you don't hear from the same people, there's a stigma about losing your job, you can have all the friends in the world, but as soon as something happens you don't have any friends, you don't have any social network, you are forced to deal with other unemployed people who mentally and psychologically may not be in the same space you're in.	Nobody wants to talk to you or have time to get together for lunch, they feel like you betrayed them or you left them, you become very much alone, you develop new networks with other people that are not working

(table continues)

Participants	Emotions	Financial Impact	Family Impact	Social Impact: Friends	Social Impact: Associates and Coworkers
P5—Janay	Very emotional, was let go the same date she had buried her son, devastated, betrayal because had always been a loyal employee, always worked, was honest and did my job and made sure everybody else did their jobs,	At first ok, received paid time off, received unemployment, but unemployment only lasted 6 months. Didn't understand that because worked 30 years and only received 6 months unemployment, was at retirement age, did not want to but was forced to receive social security because of no job, worked 30 years and did not receive severance pay, savings is starting to dwindle being unemployed for over a year	Son deceased	Still socialized with friends, loss of son and loss of job seemed to merge together so my friends and family were there for me.	Still socialized with some coworkers
P6—Jean	Quite surprising, unsettling, frustrated	Had savings at the time, mother and grandparents were financial support, needed a car but did not buy the car she really wanted, had to be more practical because did not know how long would be out of work	Loss of job brought family closer together	Did volunteer work at church, friends took her to dinner or to a movie	Some associates and coworkers are still friends today

(table continues)

Participants	Emotions	Financial Impact	Family Impact	Social Impact: Friends	Social Impact: Associates and Coworkers
P7—Yolanda	Was an unexpected layoff, a lot of anxiety trying to find another job and trying to better organize finances, had questions "why me" when it seemed others were still working, frustrated	Had to change spending habits and lifestyle as far as vacation and things, had to make sure mortgage would be taken care of, had to keep track of spending and cut back on spending, became detail oriented in keeping track of spending, no financial impact related to children who were grown	Family was concerned about her that she would be ok, children were grown	Friends that are tight, you're going to stay tight with regardless of whether you're working or not	Didn't go places you would go with people you work with such as out to lunch, you were home alone

(table continues)

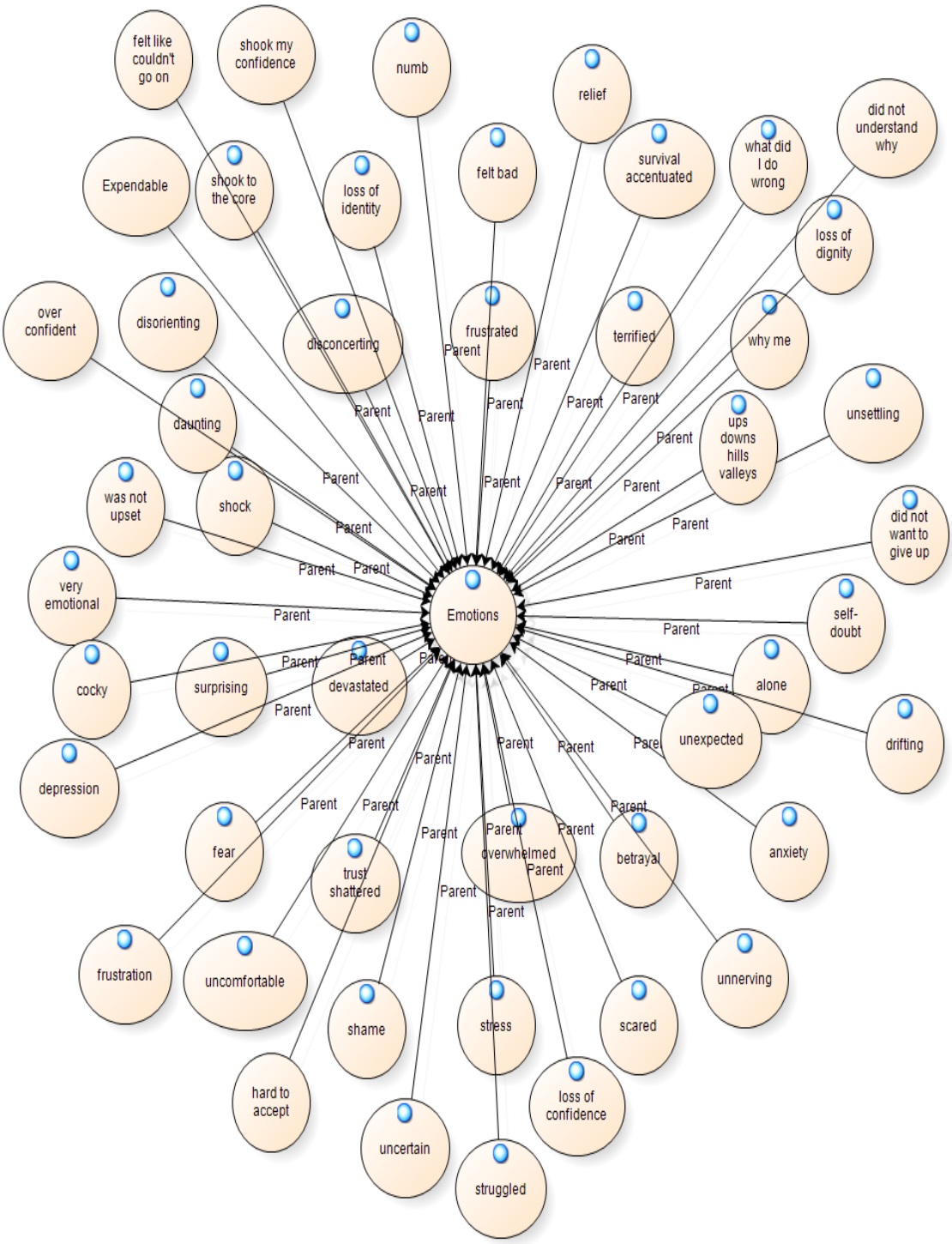
Participants	Emotions	Financial Impact	Family Impact	Social Impact: Friends	Social Impact: Associates and Coworkers
P8—Dana	Initially felt relief, at the time under a lot of stress and felt relieved, felt freedom for a little while, depression, experienced ups and downs, hills and valleys	Initially it was ok, down the road when employment benefits run out it became a problem, had to find alternate ways of getting finances, no luxuries, you scale way back and have to compromise on things, boils down to just the very basics (roof over your head, gas in your car, go to an interview, store, or whatever, you don't run out and charge up credit cards, get new outfits, books, or music), had financial help through family and a good friend who is like a sister, they were just excellent for me getting through and now I can kind of pay it forward being back in the workforce	With the loss of employment benefits, more pressure on the family that you're getting help from, very stressful for the family and friends to help out	It can be a very small world that you live in when you go through job loss, your inner circle becomes even tighter, people are afraid to reach out, they are afraid you might ask them for help, they might ask you for help but don't really want to help	First couple of weeks had conversation with coworkers and as time goes on, you don't hear too much. You might get a call from a select few during holidays

(table continues)

Participants	Emotions	Financial Impact	Family Impact	Social Impact: Friends	Social Impact: Associates and Coworkers
P9-Idelia	Pretty traumatic, surprised, pretty much depressed, not really knowing what to do, trust of people shattered (mistrust), devastated, it was a struggle but I just didn't want to give up, felt like I couldn't go on but I did, felt alone, felt numb most of the time, didn't understand why	Was devastated and wouldn't tell anybody about it except for a couple of people who offered to have her stay with them, worked in shops for minimum wage, worked in stores for 20 bucks a day, sometimes dated just to get a decent meal	Had pride and did not want to show defeat and did not tell three well educated children who lived in another part of the United States or other family members who lived in Europe	Had two really good friends, but pulled back from others, stayed to myself	Never felt could connect with people, everybody seemed to have a path to go somewhere, go to work in the morning, I didn't
P10-Kacey	Disconcerting, disorienting, fear, isolated, feeling of what did I do wrong, what happened, why, what did I do? Nothing was certain anymore, unsettling, feeling of trying to survive was accentuated, hard thing to accept	Fairly large impact; was able to survive mostly through help of family, benefits were gone, no health insurance for self or kids, children's education was impacted because would have received education free at university	Children confused and a little scared, a little worried	Didn't have a huge impact, didn't have much of a social life, I wasn't good company related to socializing with friends	Was cut off from socializing with associates and coworkers

(table continues)

Appendix J: Figure Depicting Emotions



Appendix K: Barriers to Reemployment

Barriers	P1 Iva	P2 Kate	P3 Sabrina	P4 Cathy	P5 Janay	P6 Jean	P7 Yolanda	P8 Dana	P9 Idelia	P10 Kacey
Age	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Glass Ceiling										X
Health										X
Not Knowing Where to Look for Jobs	X									X
Organization Practices	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Recession/ Number of People Unemployed	X		X				X	X		
Stereotypical Beliefs			X	X	X		X	X		X
Technology	X	X		X	X		X	X		X
Travel							X			

Appendix L: Strategies to Overcome Barriers

Strategies	P1 Iva	P2 Kate	P3 Sabrina	P4 Cathy	P5 Janay	P6 Jean	P7 Yolanda	P8 Dana	P9 Idelia	P10 Kacey
Accept lower pay			X						X	X
Cold calling									X	
Education/ retraining	X	X			X			X	X	X
Internet	X		X		X		X			X
Networking		X	X	X		X	X		X	
Job Programs	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Positive Attitude				X				X	X	
Religion	X					X		X		
Self-employment									X	
Social Security benefits					X					
Support Groups		X			X	X	X	X		X
Unemployment Benefits	X			X	X		X	X		
Volunteer Work			X		X	X		X	X	