

Report on workshop "**Career-related transitions: Perspectives on well-being, interventions and methodology**" in 18-19th September 2014 at University of Jyväskylä, Finland.

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The main objective of this workshop was to bring together researchers in the field of working life and occupational health to discuss the current state of the art and existing evidence related to career-related transitions (i.e., entrance and exit of labor market) and interventions with a particular emphasis on the research methodology in the field. The workshop consisted of four keynote lectures and three paper sessions including 11 oral presentations. The workshop was well attended: 19 researchers from six different countries participated in the workshop.

Early career transitions and interventions

The first day of the workshop focused on young employees and entrance to labor market. All the presentations underlined the fact that transition to work life is nowadays challenging due to economic downturn and the rise of global youth unemployment rate. In the first keynote lecture, Professor Katariina Salmela-Aro (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) presented diverse pathways from education to employment by highlighting the roles of initial education and school well-being. Recent international comparisons have revealed a gap between Finnish students' academic success and their well-being: students have high achievements while wellbeing has dropped. Polarization threatens: some young people flourish in the educational system and during the transition to adult roles while others struggle, especially those in danger of marginalization, or dropping out of society and encounter problems in the transition to adulthood. Salmela-Aro stressed that we need to develop effective interventions already at schools in order to avoid the possible long-term negative effects of marginalization.

In the second keynote lecture, Professor Richard Price (University of Michigan, USA) presented a conceptual framework to implement effective career interventions aiming to increase well-being. This conceptual framework was illustrated by a detailed case example called "Winning new jobs". Via his presentation the "Winning new job" intervention program, Professor Price presented step by step the phases, which are crucial in implementing effective interventions. The extensions of the "Winning new job" intervention program have been applied for unemployment and for young employees to support their school to work transitions.

The paper session 1 included five individual papers focused on presenting interventions for school to work transition and young employees. Studies also focused to find protective and risk factors for successful educational pathways and early career transitions. Luisa Barthauer (Technische Universität Braunschweig, Germany) introduced an intervention study conducted among postgraduate students that successfully increased career planning and optimism, and indirectly affected career success. Mikko Nykänen (Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, Finland) presented intervention program in progress for enhancing safety preparedness of young workers. Gorana Panic (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) presented an action research conducted in Bosnia-Herzegovina among social work graduates. The focus of this ongoing research is to investigate transition to work in the context of high youth unemployment and job precariousness. School to work transition was also investigated by Florencia Sortheix who demonstrated the differentiated role of young employees extrinsic and intrinsic work values that facilitated transitions. Eva Selenko (University of Sheffield, United Kingdom) analysed the risk factors for dropping out from the employment program

among Austrian apprentices. It was found that young age and poor relationship with parents predicted suspension from the employment program.

Late career paths and retirement

The second day focused on later career stages, including also retirement as well as methodological aspects in researching careers and well-being in later life. There were two keynote lectures and six oral presentations in two paper sessions. The first keynote lecture was held by Prof. Marianna Virtanen from the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. Her topic related to the relationship between work-related experiences and retirement, more specifically whether and how work-related experiences/factors predict well-being and health in retirement. Three theoretical models in explaining health and well-being in a transition to retirement were presented; role theory, continuity theory, and life course theory. Research evidence, based on large-scale cohort and longitudinal studies (e.g. Whitehall II Study, GAZEL cohort study and Kunta10 study), was presented and discussed in relation to these theoretical models. Many interesting findings were presented and a few of them are next summarized. First, one of their study indicated that antidepressant use decreased when a person retired, suggesting that a transition to retirement may include some recovery from job strain, resulting in lower needs for medication. Furthermore, lower socioeconomic status and poorer standards of living predicted higher depression in retirement. Thus, an accumulation of adversities in earlier life stages may increase depression in later life stages, after retiring. Second, another longitudinal study showed that mental fatigue declined right after retirement, suggesting again some signs of job strain recovery when work is left behind. This effect seemed to be strongest in those employees who had experienced high job stress; mental health improved most among them after a transition to retirement. A third interesting finding in this keynote lecture was that work time control reported by employees related to extended time to retire. Thus, if society wants to have longer careers/higher retirement age, employees should be allowed to have better possibilities to control their working hours (e.g. to work reduced hours). Prof. Virtanen also noted that all three theories on retirement have gained some support in their empirical studies. Overall, this lecture presented quite firm longitudinal evidence on how work life experiences and earlier life conditions may affect subsequent well-being and health in retirement.

The second keynote lecture by Prof. Asko Tolvanen from University of Jyväskylä concerned different advanced statistical methods that can be utilized in examining careers and well-being at work. Specifically, he presented three different methods, i.e., structural equation modeling, multi-level structural equation modeling and mixture modeling that can be used in this research area. He also used research examples to illustrate each of these statistical modeling. However, he also emphasized that theory and conceptual argumentation should always guide selected statistical methods. Consequently, some research questions need more explorative analyses, whereas some others would benefit more from confirmatory approaches, depending always on theory and specific research questions. Of the analyzing methods presented, structural equation modeling is perhaps the most well-known and used method in psychological career research. One important message in this lecture was that in examining psychological phenomena (e.g. self-rated occupational well-being or job stress or their relationships), there might be different sub-populations in the sample, implying that phenomena or their inter-relationships may not be similar for all workers. For this reason, a person-oriented analysis (e.g. mixture modeling) methodology fits well for many psychological research questions. Moreover, Tolvanen also highlighted that many psychological phenomena have social foundations, and they are created and maintained in social interactions, for instance in work groups or in teams. Typically individuals belong to

different groups. This means that there is often a nested structure in the sample, which should be considered in statistical methods. This nested structure can be taken into account in multi-level analyses where between- and within-group phenomena and their inter-relationships can be simultaneously analyzed. Altogether, this lecture provided a good overview on methods than can be applied in career and well-being research.

After these keynote lectures there were two paper sessions (II and III). In the second paper session, Ellen Ek (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) presented a research plan how to investigate different career pathways in Northern Finnish cohort, which seemed to be a good longitudinal data to examine career paths. This presentation did not cover research findings yet. Mikaela Bonsdorff (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) focused on how prenatal development (low birth weight) relates to disability pension, showing that only in men low birth weight predicted early disability pension. Monica Bonsdorff (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) presented a study on the relationships between hospital in-patient care (a 3 year pre- and post-retirement period) and health and well-being. The results were somewhat mixed but the overall conclusion was that disability pension may result in negative health effects in terms of more frequent hospital in-care.

In the third paper session, three study examples (presentations) on longitudinal person-oriented analysis were presented. Taru Feldt (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) showed that effort-reward imbalance (an indicator of job stress) and work over-commitment constituted different long-term patterns (or profiles) over time. A high risk profile group (those who had stable high effort-reward imbalance and high over-commitment) reported lower well-being and poorer recovery than other groups. Kaisa Kirves (University of Tampere, Finland) presented a longitudinal study on trajectories of perceived employability. She had found different long-term patterns/trajectories on employability; stable high and low employability groups as well as groups, in which employability improved or impaired during the follow-up period (4 groups). Overall, those who had high stable employability over time reported higher occupational well-being compared to the stable low employability group. The final presentation in this third paper session by Ulla Kinnunen (University of Tampere, Finland) introduced a longitudinal study on perceived job insecurity and well-being. Also this study has examined long-term patterns of job insecurity via a person oriented analysis. Eight distinct patterns/profiles of job insecurity were identified, and of these six groups showed some changes in the level of job insecurity over time. The groups differed in turnover intentions and job exhaustion; typically an increase in job insecurity was related to an increase in exhaustion and turnover intentions. This study showed that job insecurity may also change over time (if analyzed via a person-oriented approach) even though earlier longitudinal studies (if analyzed via a variable-oriented approach) have indicated that job insecurity is relatively stable over time.

Evaluations

The participants also provided instant feedback on the workshop program. The feedback was overall encouraging, especially the structure of the program and high quality of the presentations were mentioned. The participants also made some recommendations to further improve the workshops in the future, for example, allowing more time for discussions and concrete research plans. Overall, the presentations in this workshop showed that both early and later career stages might constitute challenging periods in a person's life. There are both threats and possibilities, which might be affected via proper interventions, e.g. by developing working life and easing a transition from school to work or from work to retirement.