

The value of not-working among unemployed persons aged 45+; a qualitative study

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Introduction

- Longterm unemployment is increasing among older workers
- How do they deal with this situation?
- What is valuable/important now that they no longer participate in paid work?
- What are markers for a meaningful and healthy life?

Theoretical framework

Latent Deprivation Theory (Jahoda, 1981)

- Latent benefits:

Time structure, activity, collective purpose, social contacts, identity

Capability Approach (Sen, 1980)

- Approach to well-being assessed in terms of *real* opportunities to do the things a person has reason to value.
- *Capability is the extent to which a person is able and enabled to achieve valuable outcomes.*

Aim of the study

To gain insight into what are valuable life domains of older unemployed persons from a capability approach.

Sub aims are to identify:

- 1. How they succeed in obtaining the things they value (capability).*
- 2. What is necessary to promote well-being in this group.*

Method

- 20 semi-structured interviews
- Unemployed individuals aged 45+ receiving benefits
- Purposeful sampling
- Data analysis conform Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
- ATLAS.ti 7
- Latent Deprivation Theory and Capability Approach as frameworks

Respondent characteristics

Variable	N	Variable	N
Gender:		Living area:	
Male	11	Rural	9
Female	9	Urban	11
Age: 46-64		Duration of unemployment:	
46-49	4	≤ 5 years	10
50-54	6	6-10 years	3
55-59	6	≥ 10 years	5
60-64	4	Employed	2
Educational level:			
Low	13		
Medium	5		
High	2		

Daily activities

- 'Work' (16)
e.g. voluntary work, informal caregiving
- Passive leisure (11)
e.g. watching TV, reading, computer
- Active leisure (9)
e.g. walking, bicycling, gardening

Valuable life domains

Valuable life domains resembled Jahoda's latent benefits of employment:

Being active, structure, social contact,

having a goal, meaningfulness,

feeling useful, being healthy, doing things I enjoy, freedom, independence, money.

→ paid work

Capability

- People differed in their success of achieving the outcomes they valued.
- Capability independent of the type of activities performed.
- Capability lower when paid work was valued more.
- Capability was related to well-being.

Conclusion

- Access to work-related benefits possible with non-work activities.
- Access to benefits \neq capability
- Focus on access to valuable outcomes!
- Further research on the relation between life domains, access to benefits and capability

Thank you for your attention!

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Questions?