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Job Demands, Job Resources and Well-Being of Staff in Extended Education Services in Switzerland: A Longitudinal Study

Regula Windlinger, Laura Züger

Abstract: Extended education services are expanding in Switzerland. Their quality depends on the working conditions and well-being of staff. This study examined the relationships between job demands, job resources and well-being using the job demands-resources (JD-R) model. 655 staff members from 113 extended education services from three Swiss cantons participated in the three-wave study. Overall, staff reported low levels of job demands and high levels of resources except for autonomy. Results provided support for the motivational and health impairment processes proposed by the JD-R model, although not consistently for both measurement intervals. The findings highlight the importance of focussing on working conditions, especially when extended education services expand in the future.

Keywords: Job Demands-Resources model, job characteristics, staff well-being, extended education

Introduction

High quality extended education depends largely on skills and competencies of staff (Schüpbach, 2016; Vandell & Lao, 2016). To work professionally, apply these skills and competencies, engage with the children, and provide a supportive environment, staff must be in a workplace that fosters their motivation and well-being. Working conditions influence the perception of job demands and resources at work and these in turn are connected to staff well-being (Viernickel, Voss, Mauz, Gerstenberg, & Schumann, 2013). Staff well-being is seen as "individuals' positive evaluations of and healthy functioning in their work environment" (Collie, Shapka, Perry, & Martin, 2015, p. 746). Healthy and satisfied employees perform better, have a higher commitment and less turnover intentions (Rudow, 2017). This is good for the children, as they benefit from lasting and trusting relationships with staff (Bloechliger & Bauer, 2016). Furthermore, research in schools shows that teachers' well-being is related to student outcomes (e.g. Arens & Morin, 2016).

So far, we do not have any substantive knowledge about levels of job demands and resources in Swiss extended education. Moreover, studies investigating effects of job demands and resources with a longitudinal design are lacking. The present study aims to fill that gap. To better understand and to investigate how aspects of the working environment have an impact on the well-being of employees in extended education, we use the Job demands-

resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017, see Figure 1). This model explains how job demands and job resources affect outcomes by combining a health impairment and a motivational process. The motivational process is driven by resources, which lead to work engagement. Work engagement, in turn, is related to positive personal and organisational outcomes, such as commitment or job satisfaction (Lesener, Gusy, & Wolter, 2019). Job demands on the other hand can have a negative effect on health-related outcomes, especially when resources are low. Being exposed to high job demands over time depletes employees' resources, which leads to emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion is the core component of burnout and is related to negative health-related outcomes over time (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Therefore, understanding the working conditions of extended education staff and their connection with staff well-being helps to improve the quality of these services. Hence, this study aims to analyse (1) the perceptions of extended education staff in three Swiss cantons regarding the levels of a range of relevant job demands and job resources and (2) the relationships between job demands, job resources and positive and negative indicators of well-being over time.

Context of the Study: Extended Education in Switzerland

In Switzerland, many extended education services have been established and/or expanded their services in recent years (Schüpbach, 2014). These extended education services are workplaces of teachers and other educational staff with a range of different qualifications in education plus a large proportion of staff with a background outside education. To date, little is known about their characteristics and working conditions.

In the Swiss federal system, the cantons have primary responsibility for education (Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education, 2018). Accordingly, the organization of Swiss extended education services (and thereby the extent to which they are integrated into schools) depends on the regulations of cantons but also on the initiative of the municipalities. This means that services are very heterogeneous even within the country (Schüpbach, 2019). The services are open to children and adolescents from the age of 4 (school entry) to the age of 16 (end of compulsory schooling), but not all services provide for all age groups. The extent of services offered by different providers varies greatly. All services offer at least lunchtime care (which includes lunch) on some days. Some also offer after-school and/or before-school care. The focus of the extended education services is mostly on social competencies and supervised recreation. Many also offer homework support. The services are often located within the school but can also be located elsewhere, depending on the infrastructure of the school, the municipality, but also on who the provider is (Schüpbach, 2019).

"It's not about the grades!" On Shadow Education in Denmark and How Parents Wish to Help Their Children Get Ahead

David Thore Gravesen, Sidse Hølvig Mikkelsen

Abstract: This article is about shadow education in Denmark. Based on qualitative interview data with families that purchase private supplementary tutoring, we analyse how this tutoring is related to child-rearing strategies in the families. With theoretical inspiration from Annette Lareau, we analyse the parents' involvement in their children's education as aspects of *concerted cultivation.* With the concept *parentocracy,* we shed light on the role parents' *wealth* and *wishes* play in their children's educational life. Finally, we look to contemporary educational youth research and the concept *performance culture*, to address implications such as stress, pressure, competitiveness, and a strong focus on grades among students in Danish upper secondary education.

Keywords: Shadow education, private supplementary tutoring, child-rearing strategies, youth education, inequality in education

Introduction

In recent decades, the use of private supplementary tutoring, especially in East Asia, has intensified and is now worldwide a part of many parents' and students' educational choices (Bray, 2013). In the hope of improving their academic achievements and pass exams, students who attend fee-free public schools sign up for private, fee-based tutoring. The phenomenon is called *shadow education*, as it mimics, or shadow, formal schooling. The practice is popular at all levels of schooling, especially in North America, West- and Central Asia, Europe, and Africa (Bray, 2013; 2020). In the Scandinavian countries, private tutoring has not drawn much research attention – though it may have substantial policy implications. It is a private market for education growing (more or less) unregulated, in the shadows, where only the service providers and their users know much about it. In this article, we will discuss the societal implications, and reflect on whether shadow education reduces inequalities in education – or whether it increases the gap between high and low achievers, with the socioeconomically strongest pupils getting ahead (again)?

This article is based on newly initiated qualitative research, where we examine the scope of shadow education in Denmark and how it affects the daily lives in Danish families, including the child-rearing strategies parents choose. We ask the following research questions: *Which role does private supplementary tutoring play in child-rearing strategies? And which personal and societal implications, if any, do parents and students see private supplementary tutoring have?*

This article is an extension of a prior work we conducted (Mikkelsen & Gravesen, 2021), in which we reflected on the fact, that in Denmark, shadow education is growing at a slower pace than in many other parts of the world. That work was primarily based on historical

literature and we implied that due to a solid tradition of democracy, welfare and scepticism towards competition in the Danish society, the conditions for growth in the private tutoring business is limited. With this article, based on interviews with Danish families that purchased private tutoring, we wish – from a qualitative perspective – to further examine the shadow education phenomenon in Denmark.

The article has five sections. In the first section, we introduce the background and aim of the project, as well as a status on Danish and international research on private supplementary tutoring. In section two, we present our methodological approach, followed by section three, in which we concretize our theoretical framework and analytical take. In the fourth section, we bring our analysis, in which we investigate our research questions by examining our empirical findings theoretically. The analysis is structured around three categories; respectively *the choice*, *the time* and *the money.* Finally, we present our conclusion in which we discuss implications and perspectives on further studies.

Section 1. Background, aim, and other research on private supplementary tutoring

The background of this article is a growing research interest in private supplementary tutoring in Denmark. Quantitative comparisons show that Denmark is among the countries with the lowest use of so-called *shadow education*, with participation rates -over the last three decades – well under, or just around, 10% (Baker et al, 2001; Southgate, 2009; Entrich, 2020). However, during the last 5–6 years, the private tutoring market in Denmark has developed and grown faster than before (Egmont Foss, 2019; Christensen & Williams Ørberg, 2015; Mikkelsen & Gravesen, 2021). This development follows an international tendency of a general intensified use of fee-paying out of school tutoring (Byun, Chung, & Baker, 2018). Using data from the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment Byun et al. (2018) show that approximately one third of all 15-year-old students in 64 countries across the world use private supplementary tutoring.

Although the phenomenon is not new in Denmark, according to statistics, and private tutoring companies enter the Danish educational stage at a fast rate, there is very little research analysing and discussing the market and its users (Christensen, 2020; Mikkelsen & Gravesen, 2021). In his research paper *From Homework Support to Learning industry?,*[1] Søren Christensen discusses how private supplementary tutoring in Singapore used to focus solely on grades and exams, but today includes pedagogical principles that emphasizes personal development and holistic values (Christensen, 2019). This, we believe, is important in trying to understand the rise of private tutoring services in a Danish context, as international research also emphasize that the specific local contexts of families and education are important in understanding the use and parental involvement in private tutoring (Park, Byun, & Kim, 2011). Historically, Denmark has had a strong focus on unity, equality, democracy and a child-centred, holistic approach in schools (Mikkelsen, Degn, & Dorf, 2018; Mikkelsen & Gravesen, 2021). In the Danish welfare society, and among Danish parents, there is scepticism towards competition and inequality in education (VIVE, 2000). The idea of the Danish primary and lower secondary school system, dating back 200 years, is the notion that students

1 [In Danish: *Fra lektiehjælp til læringsindustri?*]

Exploring Playful Participatory Research with Children in School Age Care

Bruce Hurst

Abstract: Participatory research methods that focus on children's right to form and express views about research topics have grown in popularity in recent decades. It is less common for play to have a central role in participatory research. This article provides an account of a small, participatory research project conducted in a School Age Care setting in Melbourne, Australia where play had a more central role in the method. The decision to embed the research in a play-based setting contributed to a fluid, playful research environment where play and work became entangled in complex ways. This article draws on poststructural theories to make sense of what happened during the research. It contemplates whether there is a place for playful research in extended education settings and if there are any benefits.

Keywords: Extended education, school age care, participatory research, play, Foucault

Introduction

Participatory research methods with children have grown in popularity in recent decades (Gallagher, 2008). Participatory methods involve children in research by making available roles to them as informers, data collectors and sometimes designers and analysers, roles that have traditionally been occupied by adults (Clark & Moss, 2001; Lundy, McEvoy, & Byrne, 2011). Rationales for participatory research frequently draw upon Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), that children have a right to form and express a view, a right that extends to having a voice in research (Alderson, 2008). Participatory research can also be informed by an emancipatory desire to correct a historical inequity, which commonly positions children as the objects of study by adults (Gallagher, 2008; James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998).

Participatory researchers have applied a variety of approaches in extended education. Some researchers invite children to contribute their views via conversation (Klerfelt & Haglund, 2015), whereas others use visual media such as photography, map-making, slide shows, drawing and collage to give children choice over how they express their views (Author, 2020; Elvstrand & Närvänen, 2016; Smith & Barker, 2000). Participatory methods are a good philosophical match with extended education settings in cultures such as Sweden where children's civic participation has greater cultural acceptance (Elvstrand & Lago, 2019; Haglund, 2015) or Australia where it is supported by government policy (Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2011). Less common in participatory methods is attention to play. Whilst researchers might sometimes adopt methods they hope children will find fun, play is rarely employed as a means of investigation.

This article investigates one participatory research project conducted with a small group of children in their first year of primary school at a School Age Care (SAC) program in

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Melbourne, Australia. SAC is an important and under-researched extended education setting that provides care, leisure and education for children in the hours outside school (Author, 2020; Cartmel & Hayes, 2016). In 2017, approximately 364,000 Australian children aged 5 to 12 years attended SAC (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Depending on operating hours, children can spend up to 5 hours per day in SAC making it a significant site of play and learning.

In this project, play was a central feature of the research method. The research activities were embedded in a play-based SAC setting, presenting the research as one of several play options available to children. As the research progressed, it became increasingly playful, disrupting many of the conventions traditionally associated with research. This article presents a poststructural analysis of two vignettes from the conduct of the research. The analysis explores an approach where the work-like activities of research and children's play became entangled and intersecting. This playful approach to participatory research had multiple implications for a range of matters relating to assent processes, terminologies and distinctions between research and play. This purpose of this article is to consider possible connections between work and play during research with children and whether there is benefit in playful, participatory research methods, particularly in play-based extended education and early childhood settings.

Play and Playfulness in Research with Children

Play is synonymous with childhood and considered the primary activity that children engage in during free time (Grieshaber & McArdle, 2010). Its centrality in children's lives is reflected by it being accorded the status of a 'right' in the UNCRC (United Nations, 1989). Play is also fundamental to extended education curriculum in Australia and other locations such as Sweden (Author, 2019; Bae, 2019). Despite its perceived importance, play is not often considered in research methods with children.

Play is discussed in research literature in a variety of ways. One common theme is that research activities can be successful if children consider them "fun" (Punch, 2002b). Enjoyable research activities are believed to ease the labour of participating in research (Punch, 2002a) or make it more desirable to children (Punch, 2002b). Researchers commonly choose activities like photography, drawing and puppetry that they hope children will find fun. Whilst fun and enjoyment are considered characteristic of children's play, it is debatable whether fun research activities possess other elements of play, such as being freely chosen, controlled by children or intrinsically motivated (Lester & Russell, 2014; Eberle, 2010). Also, whilst some activities assumed to be fun, they may not always succeed. Play is a slippery concept to define and what is considered fun can differ across individuals (Smith, 2009).

Fewer researchers adopt methods that aspire to incorporate play beyond providing fun activities. Koller and San Juan (2015) adopt 'play-based' interviewing using dramatic play with dolls to facilitate interviews. The method has other play-like characteristics, in that it is imaginative, and children could choose activities. In another study, Blaisdell, Arnott, Wall, and Robinson (2019) add other dimensions of play, using arts-based activities that are em-