



Multiple Salient Goals Pursued by Jobseekers in Mandatory Continuing Professional Education

Anne Jacot¹ · Isabel Raemdonck² · Mariane Frenay¹ · Katrijn Van Deun³

Received: 18 July 2017 / Accepted: 31 October 2018 / Published online: 17 November 2018
© Springer Nature B.V. 2018

Abstract

Continuing professional education (CPE) is viewed as the main strategy to tackle unemployment and to improve the weak position of jobseekers with few qualifications on the labour market. However, the mandatory nature of these programmes raises questions regarding jobseekers' motivation to enrol for and engage in training and – by extension – the effectiveness of the programmes. Moreover, until now, researchers have failed to address the different personal goals that unemployed people bring to CPE. Yet goals are viewed as a central determinant of motivation and behaviour. To overcome these limitations, the purpose of this present paper is to investigate the content of the multiple goals that jobseekers with few qualifications pursue in CPE programmes and to examine the dynamics of multiple goal pursuit. Based on the taxonomy developed by Carré (1998, 2001), jobseekers were asked to rank a list of goals in order of importance when enrolling for the training. Next, an explorative multidimensional unfolding method was used to identify several subgroups of jobseekers, depending on the combination of salient goals that they strive for simultaneously. Particular attention is paid in this study to the impact of the mandatory context on the goals pursued by jobseekers (i.e. the dictated goal). Self-report data was collected from a sample of 112 jobseekers from seventeen social-professional education training centres. Results indicated that few participants attribute importance to the dictated goal, and that they pursue multiple goals, oriented primarily towards learning and to a lesser extent towards participation. In addition, four subgroups of jobseekers were distinguished, based on their different combinations of goals. Only one subgroup explicitly reported external pressure as a factor that motivated them to enrol in training. The implications of applying an approach whereby multiple goal pursuit by jobseekers is considered, and the impact of this multiple goal pursuit on their motivation in mandatory CPE programmes are discussed.

Keywords Personal goals · Jobseekers · Multiple goal pursuit · Motivation · Mandatory training

✉ Anne Jacot
anne.jacot@uclouvain.be

Introduction

The modern labour market has changed drastically over the last few years, and is now characterized by a high degree of instability. Part of the population is being impacted by the harmful consequences, which include the massive increase in unemployment (Jaminon and Herman 1998). This is also the case in Belgium, where the unemployment rate stands at 7.9% (SPF économie 2017). Moreover, the low education level of jobseekers in the French-speaking part of Belgium increases the risk of them facing long-term unemployment. Four out of ten jobseekers in this region are inactive for more than two years. Of this group, six out of ten have few qualifications. It would therefore seem that a high qualification level increases the chances of finding a job and coming out of unemployment (Manfron et al.¹ 2014).

Against the background of this economic climate, the European employment policy identified the development of the skills of jobseekers with few qualifications as one of the most important strategies for tackling unemployment and for improving labour market (re)integration. Proneness to learn became therefore a precondition to personal adaptability, which is a key determinant of finding a job (Berntson et al. 2008; Fugate et al. 2004). In order to implement this policy, welfare programmes offer individuals a large number of education and training courses. Institutions offering CPE are under pressure to integrate their trainees (who embark on CPE with very diverse school, training and career profiles) into the active labour market as quickly as possible (Dalla Valle et al. 2005), and expectations are high.

According to the jobseeker activation plan defined in the Belgian decree of July 4, 2004, unemployed individuals need to be actively engaged in the job-seeking process and are expected to accept a suitable job offer or (re)training. The mandatory nature of these CPE programmes raises questions pertaining to jobseekers' motivation to enrol for and engage in the training and – by extension – the effectiveness of the programmes. Are jobseekers pushed into engaging in CPE programmes irrespective of whether they are interested or not in the training? The response to this question is crucial, while the foundations of adult learning theories emphasize the importance of adults' autonomy and initiative in their learning process (Knowles et al. 2005). Generally speaking, the motivational literature has demonstrated that the decision to enrol for training on one's own initiative is essential for the motivation and learning process (Blume et al. 2010; Curado et al. 2015; Eccles 2006; Gegenfurtner et al. 2016). As Pintrich and Schunk (2002) stress, without motivation no learning is possible. So, training motivation and learners' behavior during and after the training would be partially determined by the status of participation in training (mandatorily or voluntarily). However, not all empirical results go in the same direction (Jacot et al. 2018a, b; Curado et al. 2015). Some previous studies showed that that status of participation has no effect on the learning process (Jacot et al. 2018a, b; Baldwin et al. 1991; Dysvik and Kuvaas 2008) while a few researchers even observed a positive effect of mandatory participation on training motivation (Tsai and Tai 2003) and intention to transfer (Baldwin and Magjuka 1991). One possible explanation is that individuals, despite being forced to enrol in a programme, perceive the value of the training and pursue their own goals. The training may still be a means to reach personal goals.

¹ The French-speaking Belgian occupational training and employment welfare programme

This is in line with the personal agency perspective where individuals “are not fully subjugated by surrounding structural forces; rather, they are able to make choices and to act on these choices [...] in order to exert control on their lives and the environments they are living in” (Goller and Paloniemi 2017, p. 1). Therefore, agentic jobseekers are responsible for learning activities in which they participate (Raemdonck et al. 2017; Smith 2017). Personal agency is a crucial element for learning and development of individuals and it empowers them (Paloniemi and Goller 2017).

It is therefore important to examine the personal goals jobseekers pursue in a mandatory CPE context and to know the implications in terms of motivation. This is not yet been investigated in previous research. This study aims to understand the significance and instrumentality that jobseekers attribute to CPE through the study of their personal goals. Specifically, this study explores the content and salience of multiple goals that jobseekers set and pursue in mandatory CPE by using the entry motive taxonomy developed by Carré (1998, 2001).

Theoretical Framework

Jobseekers Strive for Multiple Goals

Personal goals refer to internal representations of desired and undesired future states (Ford 1992). They are defined as “*future-oriented representations of what individuals are striving for in their current life situations and what they seek to attain in various life domains*” (Maier and Brunstein 2001, p. 1034). These different life spheres include the training and education, work, health, social relationships and the family domain. In each of these life domains, individuals pursue diverse personal goals (Emmons 1986; Little 1989). In any kind of learning situation, adult learners mostly pursue multiple goals simultaneously (Unsworth et al. 2014) such as learning goals, social goals, well-being goals and performance goals (Gonçalves et al. 2017; Minnaert 2013; Wosnitza and Volet 2012).

Although authors in adult education literature have examined the various reasons for participation in adult education programmes (e.g. Carré 1998; Cross 1981), researchers have neglected unemployed populations and the different personal goals they bring into mandatory continuing professional education. As the goal selection process may be affected by major career or life events such as unemployment (Klein et al. 2008) and as we know that goals are a central determinant of motivation and behaviour (Gonçalves et al. 2017; Klein et al. 1999; Unsworth et al. 2014), it might be especially interesting to examine the personal goals that jobseekers pursue simultaneously in CPE programmes. This will allow us to better understand their motivation and the impact of the mandatory context on their commitment in these programmes.

Content of Jobseekers’ Goals: Entry Motives

Several empirical taxonomies have been created to characterize the content of goals (e.g. Emmons 1986; Ford and Nichols 1991), particularly in the field of personality and motivational psychology (for a review, see Austin and Vancouver 1996). However, research that assesses goal content remains scarce (Austin and Vancouver 1996) and to

the best of our knowledge, the goals pursued by jobseekers in CPE programmes have never been empirically examined on the basis of an existing theoretical framework.

When attempting to gain insight into the content of goals pursued specifically in training contexts, the adult education literature offers a relevant conceptual framework. This literature introduces the “entry motive” concept. Authors use entry motive as a construct to express the motivational processes that act as the genesis of commitment and the reasons given by adults to justify their enrolment for training. The “entry motive” concept is related to the “goal” concept. Boutinet (1998) assumes a close relation between entry motives and goals, both of which influence commitment. People enter training with various entry motives. During the training, these motives develop further to become goals.

Carré (1998, 2001) conducted a survey among both employed and unemployed adults in CPE in France and identified ten entry motives which are classified along two dimensions. The resulting model is displayed in Fig. 1. Based on the self-determination theory (see Deci and Ryan 2002), the first dimension distinguishes the intrinsic or extrinsic orientation of the motives. Intrinsic motives imply that people engage in training because they find it interesting and enjoyable. When extrinsically motivated, people engage for instrumental reasons and not for reasons which are inherent to the training (Carré 1998). The second dimension refers to the work of Houle (1961) which differentiates between learning-oriented motives and participative motives. Learning-oriented motives aim to develop skills or knowledge, while participative motives refer simply to registration for and/or presence during training. Carré (1998, 2001) makes three assumptions about adult learners’ entry motives: they are situational and not dispositional, they evolve during training depending on individual experiences and training perceptions and they are not exclusive of one another. They can co-exist to form a constellation proper to each individual.

The model created by Carré (1998, 2001) highlights seven extrinsic motives and three intrinsic motives. Each motive is oriented toward learning or participation. These two dimensions distinguish four types of entry motives (see Fig. 1). Firstly, the only entry motive oriented toward learning and intrinsic motivation is the *epistemic* motive (interest in the content of the training). Secondly, the two intrinsic entry motives

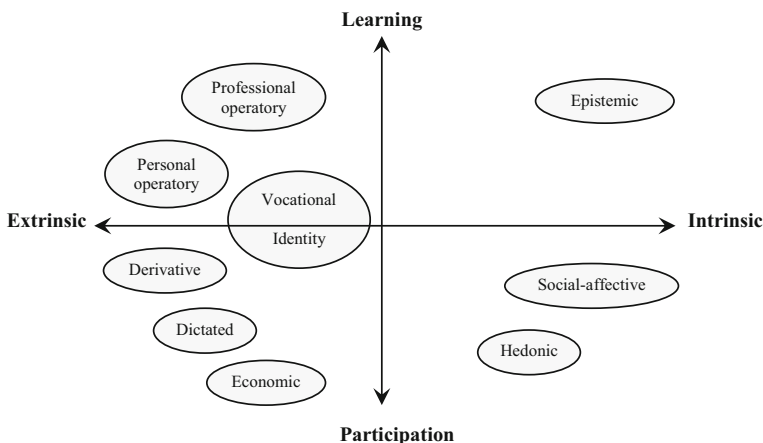


Fig. 1 Orientation and entry motives in training (Carré 1998)

oriented toward participation are the *social-affective* motive (the desire to meet people) and *hedonic* motive (enjoyment related to practical and environmental conditions). Thirdly, the three extrinsic entry motives oriented toward learning refer to the *vocational* motive (the desire to acquire professional skills and/or symbolic acknowledgment necessary to obtain, retain or change a job), *personal operator* motive (the desire to develop skills necessary for non-work-related domains) and *professional operator* motive (to develop skills necessary for work improvement). Finally, the four extrinsic entry motives oriented toward participation are *economic* (financial impact), *dictated* (engagement under pressure), *derivative* (aimed at avoiding unpleasant situations or activities) and *identity* motives (to prove to oneself that one is capable and/or to obtain social recognition).

In an exploratory study, Beder and Valentine (1990) specifically address the entry motives that drive adults with few qualifications to engage in adult basic education. The categories identified by Beder and Valentine (1990) largely overlap with those of Carré, except that they add one motive relating to community involvement (to become more proactive in religious and secular communities; “*I want to be a smarter voter*”, “*I want to be able to read the Bible better*”). In Carré’s taxonomy, this *community* goal fits in the extrinsic learning dimension, whereby individuals desire to acquire knowledge and skills for instrumental reasons. From here onwards in this article, the term “goals” is used to refer to the above mentioned motives.

Multiple Goals as a System

If we speak of people pursuing goals in various life domains, this implies that people pursue multiple goals at the same time in their life. When an individual considers multiple goals, those goals may be in conflict with each other or either support the attainment of another goal. Their interrelations are critical (Austin and Vancouver 1996; Gonçalves et al. 2017). Yet to date, educational researchers have only studied the influence of isolated goals on an individual’s commitment. Therefore, some authors recommend considering the multiple goals that learners strive for, focussing on how these different goals interact with each other (Boekaerts 2009).

To investigate this issue, researchers have assessed goal attractiveness (or goal importance) to examine the goal prioritising system used when an individual has to handle goal conflicts and choose from among several goals. In this system, goal conflicts are resolved on the basis of the importance attributed to the goal. The attainment of the chosen goal is perceived as more important than the attainment of the other goals (Kernan and Lord 1990) and determines goal commitment, goal commitment being defined as the determination and effort invested in striving for a specific goal (Boudrenghien et al. 2014; Hollenbeck and Klein 1987).

In a similar way, the work of Carver and Scheier (1998) examines the relation between goal importance and goal commitment and provides insight into the relations between different goals. Their hierarchical structure of goals aims to explain that goals are not equivalent in their importance. They assume that goal importance is a crucial determinant of goal commitment. Therefore, the choice of a specific goal can only be understood in the context of the set of goals, and not in isolation (Boudrenghien et al. 2014; Klein et al. 2008). In this vein, Abraham and Sheeran (2003) have suggested examining *relative goal importance* instead of assessing single goal intentions in order

to identify goal structures and predict goal choice accurately. In the context of CPE programmes, it is therefore relevant to examine the importance that jobseekers attribute to different personal goals and to the dictated goal and to what extent these goals relate to each other. The goal structure is therefore the cornerstone of the process by which jobseekers make choices and direct their learning process.

Research Questions

The aim of this study is to examine the content of jobseekers goals in mandatory CPE and the dynamics of their multiple goal pursuit. This objective generates the following research questions:

1. What type of goals do jobseekers prioritize while embarking on mandatory CPE? Specifically, what is the relative importance of the dictated goal in mandatory CPE? To explore this question, the relative importance jobseekers attribute to goals they pursue in training will be examined.
2. Based on the framework created by Carré (1998, 2001), how do the different types of goals interact with each other and which systematically appear simultaneously? Can different goal configurations be identified in mandatory CPE? To investigate this question, we will explore the position of each goal in relation to the others, determine the distances and link the configurations to the two dimensions as identified by Carré.
3. Which subgroups of jobseekers can we distinguish in mandatory CPE, based on the combination of salient goals they strive for? Because of the influence of individual experiences on goals pursued during the training, we will assume that the goals pursued by jobseekers can differ from one individual to another. To investigate this, several subgroups of jobseekers will be distinguished, based on their different combinations of goals.

Method

Respondents

112 respondents attended social professional integration training in the French-speaking part of Belgium. The aim of the training sessions was to help jobseekers to enhance their professional skills and to increase their chances of finding a job. The majority entered training in order to meet the requirements of the Forem, the French-speaking Belgian occupational training and employment welfare programme. Therefore, the jobseekers' enrolment could reflect different forms of obligation, ranging from a tacit agreement to an explicit obligation. Unemployed individuals were recruited in 17 training centres specialized in construction or horticulture. The training courses varied in duration but were given over several months (from six to eighteen months). Data were collected in December 2011 and January 2012.

All the participants were male. Their ages ranged from 18 to 50 years, the mean age being 28.14 years ($SD = 8.77$). 70% ($N = 78$) had few qualifications (i.e. primary

education or grade 9), 20.5% ($N=23$) had a secondary education diploma, 3.6% ($N=4$) had a college degree, 1.8% ($N=2$) had another type of diploma and 4.5% ($N=5$) did not provide information about their level of education. With regard to the length of time they had been employed/unemployed, 9.8 ($N=11$) percent reported that they had always (or almost always) been employed, 26.8% ($N=30$) had been employed most of the time with occasional periods of unemployment, 12.5% ($N=14$) had experienced equal periods of employment and unemployment, 24.1% ($N=27$) had been unemployed most of the time with periods of employment, 17.9% ($N=20$) had always (or almost always) been unemployed and 8.9% ($N=10$) did not fill out this item.

Measurement and Procedure

Data was collected through self-reports. Participants were asked to provide information on socio-demographic characteristics and the importance they attributed to goals that they strive for in CPE. As problems might arise within a sample with few qualifications in terms of comprehension of the French language, the conditions of the questionnaire administration and the items were adapted to the particularities of this population.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics Respondents were asked to report their age, gender, highest diploma obtained and perceived length of time spent in employment / unemployment.

Goal Investigation In order to investigate participant's prioritized goals, jobseekers received 14 cards. The cards represented the goal taxonomy developed by Carré (1998, 2001). The categories of goals explored were epistemic, hedonic, social-affective, personal operatory, vocational, identity-related, dictated, derivative and economic. Given the unemployed status of jobseekers, the professional operatory goal was not investigated. Based on Beder and Valentine (1990), the community goal was added (see Table 1). Each goal was formulated in the same neutral wording 'The pursuit of...' in order not to influence the interpretation of the statements. To take into account the low educational level of the participants (i.e. possible problems relating to reading level and cognition), each goal was assessed using only one item, except for vocational and identity goals, as in these two cases the goal content could not be covered with one item. The questionnaire was pre-tested on two jobseekers. The item pool was screened by five scientific experts and field experts for suitability in terms of the reading and comprehension level and for the representativeness of the goal categories. Based on their recommendations, we added an extra card with the text 'The pursuit of structure in my life', as this appeared relevant to unemployed people. Although structure goals are not categorized in the taxonomy developed by Carré (1998, 2001), the structure goal corresponds to the intrinsic participation dimension. Jobseekers might view their presence in training as a means of acquiring a schedule that gives rhythm to the day. To make sure that we explored all the goals that can be pursued by jobseekers, we added an additional empty card. If the participants' goal was not included in the goal cards, the respondents were invited to write their goal on this additional card. In practice, however, few participants made use of this option ($N=13$) and the content written on the few additional cards that were submitted could actually be classified under the existing categories anyway. The survey was pre-tested on two jobseekers. It

Table 1 Number of times (in percentages) that goals are perceived as most important, less important and not important ($N = 112$) ranking in descending order

	The importance attributed to each goal (%)			Items	Definition	Goal dimension
	Most important goals	Less important goals	Not important goals			
Vocational 1	78.9	13.8	7.3	professional skills	To acquire professional skills and/or symbolic acknowledgment necessary to obtain a job	Ext. learning
Vocational 2	90.1	5.4	4.5	a future job	To acquire professional skills and/or symbolic acknowledgment necessary to obtain a job	Ext. learning
Vocational 3	75.5	13.6	10.9	professional qualification, certificate or diploma	To acquire professional skills and/or symbolic acknowledgment necessary to obtain a job	Ext. learning
Epistemic	57.0	29.0	14.0	interest in learning new things	Interest in the content of the training	Int. learning
Structure	56.4	25.5	18.2	structured time	To have a schedule that gives days rhythm, to have time markers, a structure in time.	Int. participat.
Identity 1	54.5	22.7	22.7	a place in society	To obtain social recognition from others	Ext. participat.
Identity 2	47.7	35.5	16.8	a positive self-image	To prove to oneself that one is competent	Ext. participat.
Economic	33.6	30.9	35.5	direct or indirect financial profit	Financial impact such as unemployment allowance, paid training hours, minimum insertion income.	Ext. participat.
Personal operatory	30.6	37.0	32.4	useful skills related to non-work-related domain (family, leisure)	To develop skills necessary for non-outside work-related domains	Ext. learning
Community	30.6	44.1	25.2	useful skills for community or associative life	To acquire useful skills, e.g. to serve the church, understand community problems, become a better citizen.	Ext. learning
Hedonic	25.5	38.7	35.8	pleasure associated with certain equipment, material or a comfortable space	Enjoyment related to practical and environmental conditions	Int. participat.
Social-affective	20.4	48.1	31.5	making new friends	To meet people, benefit from social contacts	Int. participat.

Table 1 (continued)

	The importance attributed to each goal (%)			Items	Definition	Goal dimension
	Most important goals	Less important goals	Not important goals			
Dictated	17.4	28.4	54.1	“The pursuit of...” requirements from my family and/or institutions	Engagement under pressure from environment	Ext. participat.
Derivative	16.7	35.2	48.1	an occupation, a distraction	To avoid unpleasant situations or activities	Ext. participat.

Ext. learning = Extrinsic learning, Int. learning = Intrinsic learning, Int. participat. = Intrinsic participation, Ext. participat. = Extrinsic participation

was decided that researchers should read the items aloud in order to overcome any problems related to reading level.

On each card, a specific goal was stated (e.g. ‘The pursuit of professional qualification’ or ‘The pursuit of pleasure or interest in learning’; see Table 1), and participants were asked to rank the cards in order of importance in terms of influencing participation in socio-professional training. Participants could create as many stacks as they wanted (from the first stack with the most important goals to the last stack with the not important goals). Then, all the stacks were reordered into three piles: the pile with “most important goals” (Pile 1), the pile with “not important goals” (Pile 3), and the remaining middle stacks with “less important goals” (Pile 2). Each card, including the card for the dictated goal, was assigned a score ranging from 1 for the most important goals to 3 for not important goals. A more detailed description of this method can be found in Lang and Carstensen (2002). The researchers explained the research objectives to the participants and responded to questions for clarification. The participants signed an informed consent before completing the questionnaire and submitted the questionnaire in a sealed envelope.

Analyses

First, frequencies were calculated (first research question). Next, multidimensional unfolding (MDU) was used to examine the prioritized goals pursued by jobseekers participating in training. This technique has two advantages. Firstly, in relation to the second research question, it makes it possible to examine within a single configuration the position of the different goals in relation to each other and to identify how goals cluster together, following the taxonomy developed by Carré (1998, 2001). Secondly, with respect to the third research question, MDU makes it possible to observe the position of the goals in function of the importance that each participant attributed to each of the goals and so to identify subgroups of jobseekers based on their goal preferences.

MDU is an exploratory technique for ranking data, and can be seen as a special type of multidimensional scaling. The MDU technique aims to represent preference data in a low-dimensional space, enabling the user to visualise the relations between participants’ responses (referred to as ideal points) and the set of objects (i.e. goals) in an optimal configuration. The unfolding data can be seen as proximities between the points representing each individual and each object such that the distances between an individual and the objects reflect the individual’s preferences. The smaller the distance between the individual and the objects, the higher the individual’s preference for these objects. Large distances indicate low preferences. As a result, the interpretation of the preference configuration is based on the ideal points in relation to each object and the proximity of the objects to one another. It should be noted that MDU does not require a large sample, as the individual preferences are analysed as single entities. MDU analyses were performed using the PREFSCAL procedure with SPSS 20 software (Boekaerts et al. 2012; Borg and Groenen 2005; Busing 2010; Van Deun et al. 2005, 2007).

We used the variance accounted for (VAF), the Spearman’s Rho (r_s) and the recovered preferences order as goodness-of-fit indices to test the fit between the configuration and the data (Van Deun et al. 2005). The model explained 48% of the

variance. The Spearman's rank order correlation reflects a strong positive relation ($r_s = .65$) between the distances and the original preferences values. Van Deun et al. (2005) define the recovered preference order as "the proportion of pairs of objects for which the preference order in the data is reproduced by the configuration" (p. 51). This index ranges from 0 to 1, with a value of 1 indicating a perfect correspondence between the data and the solution. The recovered preference order had a value of .89. Degeneracy indices were also taken into account, and showed a non-degenerate solution. DeSarbo's index was close to 0 ($= .38$) indicating that the solution is intermixed. Shepard's index, which indicates the percentage of different distances, was 81%. Thus, there were sufficiently different distances (Busing 2010).

Results

RQ 1: Pursuit of Salient Goals by Jobseekers

To obtain a preliminary picture of the prioritized goals jobseekers strive for, we calculated the frequencies of each goal and evaluated which goals were most important, less important and not important (see Table 1).

We observed that jobseekers strive for different salient goals at the same time. More than three out of four participants perceived the *vocational goals* as the most important (between 75.5% and 90.41%) while one in two jobseekers attributed the most importance to *epistemic* (57%), *identity* (between 47.7% and 54.5%) and *structure* goals (56.4%). Although 20–30% of the sample attributed the most importance to social-affective, community and hedonic goals, the majority of the respondents evaluated them as less important goals. Furthermore, despite the mandatory context, we observed that the goals least often valued as the most important were the dictated (17.4%) and derivative (16.7%) goals. These goals seem to be not important for almost half the sample. Finally, it should be noted that the economic goal and personal operator goals were spread more or less evenly between the three preference piles. These figures also reveal that each jobseeker has a preference for a specific combination of different goals.

RQ 2: Goal Dimensions of Carré's Taxonomy

The second objective of this research was to examine how these multiple salient goals relate to each other in a single configuration. This allows us to identify how groups of goals cluster together, according to the taxonomy developed by Carré (1998, 2001) and so to further deepen our understanding of the goal configurations that jobseekers strive for.

The joint plot in Fig. 2 contains the individuals and the goals. The fourteen goals are represented as points and the jobseekers are represented as triangles. The smaller the distance between two goals, the more similar the goals are perceived to be in terms of preference. Therefore, the goals close to each other comprise an identifiable group. We can identify configurations of goals according to the axes (i.e. learning-participation and extrinsic-intrinsic) distinguished by Carré (1998, 2001) to classify the goals (see Fig. 1). In total, three circles are identified on basis of Fig. 2.

Some goal configurations can be clearly identified according to the axes distinguished by Carré (1998, 2001), namely extrinsic goals related to participation

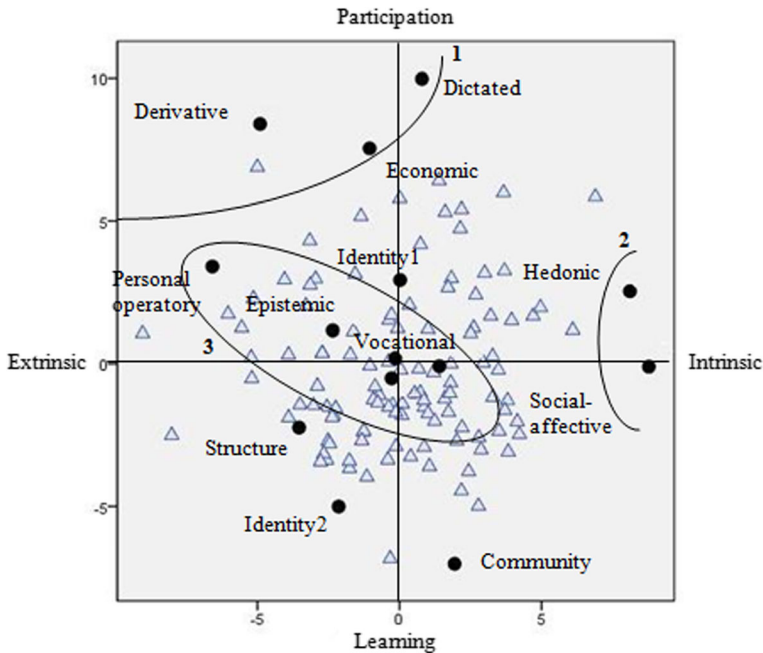


Fig. 2 Map resulting from MDU, showing jobseekers and goals ● = goals, Δ = participants, $N = 112$

(derivative, dictated and economic goals, see circle 1) and intrinsic goals related to participation (hedonic and social-affective goals, see circle 2). Each of these groups of goals is perceived as similar in terms of importance. For learning (see circle 3), the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic goals cannot be identified: Vocational, epistemic and personal operator goals are close to each other and most of them are located at the centre of the graph. This shows that intrinsic and extrinsic learning goals are highly important for jobseekers.

RQ 3: Subgroups of Jobseekers Based on the Combinations of Goals they Pursue

The third objective of the present research was to identify subgroups of jobseekers based on the combination of goals that they strive for. Based on Fig. 3, we observe that the majority of the jobseekers value many goals at the same time. However, the distance between the respondents and these goals varies. We can identify several subgroups of jobseekers according to their location based on how these individuals are positioned in relation to the different goals. The smaller the distance, the more important the goals are.

As can be seen in Fig. 3, almost all respondents attach importance to the three vocational goals located in the centre of the graph. This suggests that these unemployed individuals prioritize the acquisition of professional skills and/or a professional qualification and getting a job. However, most of jobseekers attach value not only to vocational goals but also to other goal contents. The respondents are distributed over each part of the joint plot (see Fig. 3), and four subgroups of jobseekers can be identified on basis of their goal combination.

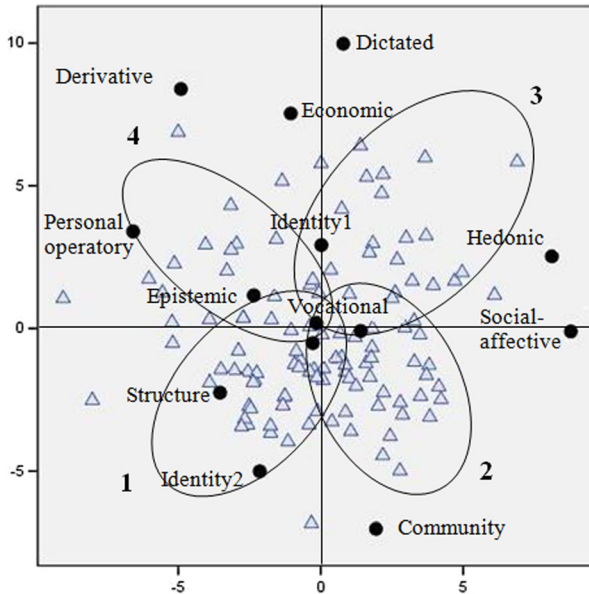


Fig. 3 Map resulting from MDU, showing jobseekers and goals ● = goals, △ = participants, $N = 112$

Jobseekers in circle 1 attach additional value to epistemic, structure and identity2 goals. We can assume that in order to develop a positive self-image of themselves, these jobseekers need to pursue a professional project and to learn new things in a structured timeframe but are less concerned about intrinsic and extrinsic participative goals (see Fig. 2 circles 1, 2). The most prominent goals strived for by this subgroup of jobseekers are clearly the “identity goals”.

Jobseekers located in circle 2 value vocational goals but also attach importance to social-affective and community goals. They do not attach importance to the extrinsic participative goals (see Fig. 2 circle 1). This suggests that some jobseekers want to learn useful skills for their professional and community projects in a friendly learning environment. The combination of goals pursued by this subgroup of jobseekers is especially characterized by the importance of “social goals”.

Jobseekers in circle 3 attach supplementary value to hedonic, identity1 and economic goals. These jobseekers have a preference for participative-related goals. This suggests that some respondents seek to find a place in society by means of the development of professional skills and finding a job and enjoying the practical, environmental and social conditions. In addition, those who prefer the pursuit of a place in society (identity1) also seem to attribute importance to the economic and dictated goals. This makes this the only subgroup to perceive its enrolment in training as being related to financial motives and to external requirements from family and/or institutions. The goals put forward by these jobseekers are labelled the “participative goals”.

A few respondents are plotted close to vocational, epistemic, identity1 and personal operator goals and to a lesser extent close to derivative and economic goals. *This group of respondents in circle 4* are oriented towards learning and extrinsic participation. This combination of goals suggests that these jobseekers, who attach value to pursuing a place in society, are interested in the content of the training and want to learn

in professional and personal spheres. Some of them also attach value to pursuing training for financial reasons and as a means of avoiding unpleasant situations or activities. The combination of goals that they pursue is particularly characterized by “learning and participative goals”.

Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of this study was to improve our understanding of what motivates jobseekers to enrol in mandatory CPE, and to examine goal configurations and subgroups of jobseekers on basis of their salient goals they strive for.

Nature of Goals Despite the mandatory character of the training programme, the dictated goal does not seem to be salient for most of the jobseekers surveyed. The jobseekers who participated in this study are engaged in training for professional and personal benefits, since vocational, epistemic, structure and identity goals were identified as their most important goals. This result is in line with the literature on personal agency which considers that adults strive for personal goals above and beyond external pressures and exert control over their lives (Goller and Paloniemi 2017) and are therefore viewed as active learners (Raemdonck et al. 2017). On other hand, this result contradicts the observation that unemployed people with few qualifications often state that they have been forced to enrol in training (Daehlen and Ure 2009). A possible explanation for this contradictory result lies in the cognitive theories that are relevant to understanding how jobseekers legitimate their enrolment in mandatory training. They state that a cognitive dissonance between personal projects and external pressures is overcome by internalizing the external pressures to engage in training (i.e. dictated goal) and turning them into personal challenges (Bourgeois 2000, 2009; Boutinet 1998). Moreover, as Niessen et al. (2009) emphasize, jobseekers need to find a job and so, from an agentic perspective, are prompted to re-assess and adjust their personal goals.

Specifically, the descriptive analysis revealed that these unemployed individuals pursue training primarily for professional goals. Acquiring professional skills or symbolic acknowledgment necessary to obtain a job are their main reasons for engaging in mandatory CPE. The epistemic, identity and structure goals were the second most valued goals. We can conclude that the jobseekers interviewed are intrinsically interested in the courses and view it as a means to reach goals related to dynamics of identity which involve the self-image of learners. From a personal development perspective, the CPE may, for example, be relevant for the construction of a positive self-image for the jobseeker who wants to get a certificate and achieve a new identity. Next, the fact that jobseekers value having a structured timeframe points to the negative effects of unemployment (see for a review McKee-Ryan et al. 2005). Jobseekers can suffer from a lack of the structure and sense of satisfaction usually derived from the work context (Vansteenkiste et al. 2004). Finally, given that the majority of the participative-related goals were the least valued, we can conclude that these jobseekers have adopted the goal to learn, and not just to participate in the training.

Taken together, these results relating to goals are promising in terms of the motivation these jobseekers are likely to develop during training. Indeed, enrolment for mandatory CPE is perceived as an instrumental step towards achieving personal goals,

most of which are related to the professional career. Moreover, Vertongen and colleagues showed that the goals are associated with the subjective task value described by Eccles and Wigfield. Adults participating in training for the pleasure of learning new things (epistemic goal) show a greater interest in the content of training than individuals who do not justify their commitment to training for intrinsic reasons. Similarly, the authors observed a positive correlation between the identity goal and the importance attributed to training (Vertongen et al. 2009). Yet, educational researchers have repeatedly demonstrated the positive effect of subjective task value on the learning process (Eccles and Wigfield 2002; Robbins et al. 2004).

Subgroups of Jobseekers on the Basis of their Goal Configuration The present study showed several combinations of goals that the jobseekers interviewed pursue simultaneously in learning situations. This is in line with previous findings (Carré 1998, 2001; Gonçalves et al. 2017; Minnaert 2013; Unsworth et al. 2014; Wosnitza and Volet 2012) and underlines the necessity to consider the multiple goals that learners strive for instead of studying the influence of isolated goals on an individual's commitment (Boekaerts 2009).

Three main conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, this study identified four jobseeker profiles, based on their goal configuration. However, striving for vocational goals was not found to be discriminant, since all the subgroups attributed high importance to these goals. Each subgroup of jobseekers is oriented towards a combination of specific goals. Although the jobseekers in circles 1 and 2 primarily pursue goals related to identity (circle 1) and social benefit (circle 2), those in circles 3 and 4 specifically strive for participative goals. Jobseekers in circle 4 attach additional value to goals oriented towards learning.

Furthermore, in spite of the mandatory context of participation, the results highlighted the fact that all goal configurations were composed of goals oriented towards both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This result is consistent with the observation that motivation for many of our activities is composed of both intrinsic and extrinsic components (Lens et al. 2009). More specifically, in an undergraduate context, Kasworm (2003) found that adult students reported a motivation for learning characterized by both intrinsic and extrinsic goals. On the one hand, the adult learner can be intrinsically interested in learning for the sake of knowledge acquisition and pleasure. On the other hand, adult students can justify their entry into training for reasons related to their professional lives (e.g. to obtain a qualification necessary to promote their career or to gain financial incentives) and not for reasons which are inherent to the courses (Carré 1998, 2001; Hensley and Kinser 2001).

A last key observation relates to the dictated goal. Only the jobseekers in the subgroup in circle 3, labelled "participative goals", explicitly report the importance of external pressure when explaining the reasons behind their enrolment in training. Moreover, it seems that the mandatory context is experienced differently by different jobseekers and will therefore result in different professional projects. According to Diethert et al. (2015), the issue of participation status needs to be contextualised. In line with this finding, several authors emphasize that mandatory or voluntary participation is not an objective reality, and that a distinction needs to be made between the formal status of participation in training and the subjective perception of the individual (Baldwin and Magjuka 1991, 1997; author 2018). In many studies, this distinction is not made explicit and this might explain the mitigated results found up to now. It should therefore be made explicit in future research if mandatory participation is taken

into account as objective measure (mandatory formal status) or as subjective measure (perception of mandatory training).

Limitations and Future Research

Although this research adds to the understanding of the nature of conscious goals pursued by jobseekers and how these goals relate to each other in the context of mandatory training in the French-speaking part of Belgium, several limitations can be identified. Firstly, the sample was composed of men only. Results cannot be generalized to a female population. A further study should explore whether women attribute value to the same goals as men. In a similar way, we assume that the nature of training (professional or general) can have an impact on the content of the goals jobseekers pursue. Yet, this study only addressed training aimed at developing professional skills. For these reasons, caution should be exercised in the interpretation of the results, recognising that they cannot be generalised to all jobseekers. Secondly, multidimensional unfolding is an explorative statistical technique which generates a visual representation of data. 'Unfolding' implies a first step only toward the understanding of the multiple goals pursued in a mandatory CPE context. Thirdly, the cross-sectional design only gives a snapshot of personal conscious goals pursued by jobseekers in mandatory CPE. Yet, as Carré (1998) emphasised, goals depend on the training contexts and evolve during training depending on individual experiences and training perceptions. Future longitudinal research would help to better capture the dynamic of goal pursuit over time. Finally, despite the precautionary measures incorporated into the methodology, it could be that jobseekers' responses were socially desirable. To overcome these different limitations, future research would benefit from multi-resource data (e.g. from the trainers), and interviews with a sample of participants so that they can expand on their position in the multidimensional map and give a more holistic and contextualised description of the reasons why they are engaged in CPE training (Miles and Huberman 1994).

Furthermore, results showed that unemployed individuals strive for multiple goals and perceive the instrumentality of the training programme in reaching their personal goals. However, we need to examine thoroughly the impact of their professional project on their motivation and learning process. As Bourgeois et al. (2009) emphasised, the instrumentality literature reveals two viewpoints which seem to contradict each other. On the one hand, Lens et al. (2006) emphasize the importance of the learner developing and pursuing specific and concrete goals to be able to perceive the utility and the value of the training. On the other hand, Neuville (2004) observed the negative effect of a specific project on the motivation of freshman students. Students with an unspecified project were better able to assess the utility value of the learning activities as these activities allowed them to further clarify their future prospects. Although their research was not conducted in the field of adult education, we may wonder what type of professional project (somewhere on a scale ranging from very specific to general goals), is likely to be most effective in motivating jobseekers in mandatory training aimed at labour market re(integration).

In addition, future research could examine the multiple goals that unemployed individuals strive for in mandatory CPE as part of the self-regulation process of job search behaviour. Over the past 15 years, there has been an increase in research on job search behaviour and employment outcomes. Job search is conceptualized as a self-regulatory

process which is directed toward obtaining an employment goal (Kanfer et al. 2001). We would argue that the willingness of these jobseekers to attend a training programme to obtain employment (i.e. training flexibility; see Van den Broeck et al. 2010) and the multiple goals pursued during training may be a part of the job search behaviour process. Job search behaviour may indeed require new learning to reach the employment goal.

Generally speaking, these issues address the ability of jobseekers to manage their professional future and self-direct their work-related learning process. This entails diagnosing learning needs, setting goals, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies and monitoring the learning process with a long-term focus, in order to safeguard employability, anticipate future problems and opportunities and respond to environmental changes (Raemdonck et al. 2017). However, at the same time, unemployed individuals face an uncertain future, and this could affect their ability to set goals in the distant future (Dupuy et al. 2006). Investigating how jobseekers manage this uncertainty and the type of goals they set is a promising avenue of research.

Implications

The results of this study make it possible for employment organizations and training centres to better understand the goals pursued by individuals when engaged in mandatory CPE. For this study, we developed an instrument that allows us to assess more easily the different goals pursued by jobseekers and to evaluate their relative importance. In developing the instrument, the specificities of the target group were taken into account. To our knowledge, no such instrument can be found in literature. Further research is needed to further establish the validity of the measurement instrument. Ranking the goal cards may allow jobseekers to reflect on their training commitment, making jobseekers and their trainers aware of the nature of the multiple goals that they pursue. This could serve as a basis to help trainers and trainees to define a professional development plan in a jobseeker's search for employment. In addition, assessing the goals pursued at the start of and during the training course might allow the trainer to verify whether the training has met the jobseeker's personal goals. This exercise might improve demand-supply fit. We can assume that if the training satisfies their pursued goals, jobseekers will value the training. The goals impact the perceived value of the learning task (Neuville 2004; Wigfield and Eccles 2000). Trainers could take into account the goals to enhance the motivation of jobseekers. Moreover, when exploring the goals that jobseekers are striving for, trainers should not only identify the goals but also gain insight into how those goals interact with each other and integrate them into the individual's professional project. Finally, the results of this research might mitigate existing stereotypes that jobseekers in mandatory training are unmotivated.

With regard to learning through and for work, understanding what motivates individuals to act and engage in training entails considering their subjectivity and what they bring to the training context. Jobseekers can be motivated by the desire to attain personal goals, and so training environments and trainers might afford jobseekers opportunities to learn based on their personal projects. By recognising their capacities and dispositions to adopt an active approach in their learning processes – namely in making intentional choices, initiating actions based on these choices and in exercising control – jobseekers may be more inclined to genuinely engage in training, which is a prerequisite for continuous learning (Billet et al. 2015; Raemdonck et al. 2017).

References

- Abraham, C., & Sheeran, P. (2003). Implications of goal theories for the theories of reasoned action and planned behaviour. *Current Psychology*, *22*(3), 264–280.
- Austin, J. T., & Vancouver, J. B. (1996). Goal constructs in psychology: Structure, process and content. *Psychological Bulletin*, *120*(3), 338–375.
- Baldwin, T. T., & Magjuka, R. J. (1991). Organizational training and signals of importance: Linking pretraining perceptions to intentions to transfer. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *2*(1), 25–36. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.3920020106>.
- Baldwin, T. T., & Magjuka, R. J. (1997). Training as an organizational episode: Pretraining influences on trainee motivation. In J. K. Ford, S. W. J. Kozlowski, K. Kraiger, E. Salas, & M. S. Teachout (Eds.), *Improving training effectiveness in work organizations* (pp. 99–127). Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Baldwin, T. T., Magjuka, R. J., & Loher, B. T. (1991). The perils of participation: Effects of choice of training on trainee motivation and learning. *Personnel Psychology*, *44*(1), 51–65.
- Beder, H. W., & Valentine, T. (1990). Motivational profiles of adult basic education students. *Adult Education Quarterly*, *40*(2), 78–94.
- Berntson, E., Näswall, K., & Sverke, M. (2008). Investigating the relationship between employability and self-efficacy: A cross-lagged analysis. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *17*(4), 413–425. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13594320801969699>.
- Billet, S., Smith, R., & Wegener, C. (2015). Understanding learning through and for work: Contributions from francophone perspectives. In L. Filliettaz & S. Billett (Eds.), *Francophone perspectives of learning through work: Conceptions, traditions and practices* (pp. 347–365). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Blume, B. D., Ford, J. K., Baldwin, T. T., & Huang, J. L. (2010). Transfer of training: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Management*, *36*(4), 1065–1105.
- Boekaerts, M. (2009). Goal-directed behavior in the classroom. In K. R. Wenzel & A. Wigfield (Eds.), *Handbook of motivation at school* (pp. 105–122). New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Boekaerts, M., Smit, K., & Busing, F. (2012). Salient goals direct and energise students' actions in the classroom. *Applied Psychology*, *61*(4), 520–539.
- Borg, I., & Groenen, P. J. F. (2005). *Modern multidimensional scaling* (2nd ed.). New York: Springer.
- Boudrenghien, G., Frenay, M., Bourgeois, E., Karabenick, S., & Eccles, J. (2014). A theoretical model of the antecedents of educational goal commitment. *The Canadian Journal of Career Development/Revue Canadienne de Développement de Carrière*, *13*(1), 60–69.
- Bourgeois, E. (2000). Le sens de l'engagement en formation [The sense of enrolment in training]. In J.-M. Barbier & O. Galatanu (Eds.), *Signification, Sens, Formation* (pp. 87–106). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Bourgeois, E. (2009). Apprentissage et transformation du sujet en formation [Learning and transformation of individual in education]. In J.-M. Barbier, E. Bourgeois, G. Chapelle, & J.-C. Ruano-Borbalan (Eds.), *Encyclopédie de la Formation* (pp. 31–69). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Bourgeois, E., de Viron, F., Nils, F., Traversa, J., & Vertongen, G. (2009). Valeur, espérance de réussite, et formation d'adultes: Pertinence du modèle d'expectancy-value en contexte de formation universitaire pour adultes [Value, expectancy of success and adult education: Relevance of the expectancy-value model in an adult education university context]. *Savoirs*, *20*, 75–92.
- Boutinet, J.-P. (1998). L'engagement des adultes en formation et ses formes de légitimation [the enrolment of adults in training and its forms of legitimization]. *Education Permanente*, *136*, 91–100.
- Busing, F. M. T. A. (2010). *Advances in multidimensional unfolding (unpublished doctoral dissertation)*. The Netherlands: Leiden University.
- Carré, P. (1998). Motifs et dynamiques d'engagement en formation [entry motives and dynamics of enrollment in training]. *Education Permanente*, *136*, 119–131.
- Carré, P. (Ed.). (2001). *De la motivation à la formation [from motivation to training]*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Carver, C. S., & Scheier, M. F. (1998). *On the self-regulation of behavior*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Cross, K. P. (1981). *Adults as learners: Increasing participation and facilitating learning*. San Francisco: The Jossey-Bass.
- Curado, C., Henriques, P. L., & Ribeiro, S. (2015). Voluntary or mandatory enrollment in training and the motivation to transfer training. *International Journal of Training and Development*, *19*(2), 98–109. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijtd.12050>.
- Daehlen, M., & Ure, O. B. (2009). Low-skilled adults in formal continuing education: Does their motivation differ from other learners? *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *28*(5), 661–674.

- Dalla Valle, C., Desmette, D., Liénard, G., & Herman, G. (2005). Actions, publics et effets de dispositifs d'insertion sociale: Analyse de l'opération "pour Une participation citoyenne" [actions, publics and effects of social integration devices: Analysis of the operation "for citizen participation"]. *Les Cahiers du Cerisis*, 25.
- Deci, E.-L., & Ryan, R.-M. (Eds.). (2002). *Handbook of self-determination research*. Rochester: The University of Rochester Press.
- Diethert, A. P., Weisweiler, S., Frey, D., & Kerschreiter, R. (2015). Training motivation of employees in academia: Developing and testing a model based on the theory of reasoned action. *Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft*, 30, 29–50.
- Dupuy, R., Le Blanc, A., & Mégemont, J.-L. (2006). Incertitudes au cours de la carrière et construction des perspectives temporelles [Uncertainties during the career and construction of temporal perspectives]. *Psychologie du travail et des Organisations*, 12, 167–183.
- Dysvik, A., & Kuvaas, B. (2008). The relationship between perceived training opportunities, work motivation and employee outcomes. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 12(3), 138–157. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2419.2008.00301.x>.
- Eccles, J. S. (2006). A motivational perspective on school achievement: Taking responsibility for learning, teaching, and supporting. In R. J. Sternberg & R. F. Subotnik (Eds.), *Optimizing student success in school with the other three Rs* (pp. 199–224). Greenwich: Information Age Publishing.
- Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Motivational beliefs, values, and goals. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53(1), 109–132.
- Emmons, R. A. (1986). Personal strivings: An approach to personality and subjective well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(5), 1058–1068.
- Ford, M. E. (1992). *Motivating humans: Goals, emotions and personal agency beliefs*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Ford, M. E., & Nichols, C. W. (1991). Using goal assessments to identify motivational patterns and facilitate self-regulation. In M. L. Maehr & P. Pintrich (Eds.), *Advances in achievement and motivation* (Vol. 7, pp. 51–84). Greenwich: JAI Press.
- Fugate, M., Kinicki, A. J., & Ashforth, B. E. (2004). Employability: A psycho-social construct, its dimensions, and applications. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65, 14–38.
- Gegenfurtner, A., Könings, K., Kosmajas, N., & Gebhardt, M. (2016). Voluntary or mandatory training participation as a moderator in the relationship between goal orientations and transfer of training. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 20(4), 290–301.
- Goller, M., & Paloniemi, S. (2017). Agency at work, learning and professional development: An introduction. In M. Goller & S. Paloniemi (Eds.), *Agency at work: An agentic perspective on professional learning and development* (pp. 1–14). Cham: Springer.
- Gonçalves, T., Niemivirta, M., & Lemos, M. S. (2017). Identification of students' multiple achievement and social goal profiles and analysis of their stability and adaptability. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 54, 149–159 <http://dx.doi.org.proxy.bib.ucl.ac.be/10.1016/j.lindif.2017.01.019>.
- Hensley, L. G., & Kinser, K. (2001). Rethinking adult learner persistence: Implications for counselors. *Adultspan Journal*, 3, 88–100.
- Hollenbeck, J. R., & Klein, H. J. (1987). Goal commitment and the goal-setting process: Problems, prospects, and proposals for future research. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 72, 212–220.
- Houle, C. (1961). *The inquiring mind*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Jacot, A., Frenay, M., & Raemdonck, I. (2018a). Conceptualizing transfer of training from a constructivism approach: Contribution of the subjective task value and engagement concepts. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Jacot, A., Raemdonck, I., & Frenay, M. (2018b). Intra-individual differences in offenders' motivation and behavioral change after a driver rehabilitation program. *Transportation research Part F*, 58, 302–318.
- Jaminon, C., & Herman, G. (1998). Parcours d'insertion et dispositifs. Analyse des pratiques d'insertion socio-professionnelle à La Louvière [Pathways to integration and devices. Analysis of socio-professional integration practices in La Louvière]. *Les Cahiers du Cerisis*, 5.
- Kanfer, R., Wanberg, C. R., & Kantrowitz, T. M. (2001). Job search and employment: A personality-motivational analysis and meta-analytic review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(5), 837–855.
- Kasworm, C. (2003). Adult meaning making in the undergraduate classroom. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 53(2), 81–98.
- Keman, M. C., & Lord, R. G. (1990). Effects of valence, expectancies, and goal-performance discrepancies in single and multiple goal environments. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75(2), 194–203.
- Klein, H. J., Wesson, M. J., Hollenbeck, J. R., & Alge, B. J. (1999). Goal commitment and the goal-setting process: Conceptual clarification and empirical synthesis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 84(6), 885–896.

- Klein, H. J., Austin, J. T., & Cooper, J. T. (2008). Goal choice and decision processes. In R. Kanfer, G. Chen, & R. D. Pritchard (Eds.), *Work motivation: Past, present, and future* (pp. 101–150). New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Knowles, M. S., Holton III, E. F., & Swanson, R. A. (2005). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development* (6th ed.). Burlington: Elsevier.
- Lang, F. R., & Carstensen, L. L. (2002). Time counts: Future time perspective, goals, and social relationships. *Psychology and Aging, 17*(1), 125–139.
- Lens, W., Bouffard, L., & Vansteenkiste, M. (2006). À quoi sert d'apprendre ? [what is the use of learning?]. In E. Bourgeois & G. Chapelle (Eds.), *Apprendre et faire apprendre* (pp. 261–269). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Lens, W., Vansteenkiste, M., & Matos, L. (2009). Motivation: Quantity and quality matter. In A. Blachnio & A. Przepiorka (Eds.), *Closer to emotions III* (pp. 111–135). Lunlin: Wydawnictwo KUL.
- Little, B. R. (1989). Personal projects analysis: Trivial pursuits, magnificent obsessions, and the search for coherence. In D. M. Buss & N. Cantor (Eds.), *Personality psychology: Recent trends and emerging directions* (pp. 15–31). New-York: Springer-Verlag.
- Maier, G. W., & Brunstein, J. C. (2001). The role of personal work goals in newcomers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*(5), 1034–1042. <https://doi.org/10.1037//0021-9010.86.5.1034>.
- Manfron, J.-M., Debecker, F., Dussart, A., Hindlet, E., Marchal, J.-F., Pion, G., et al. (2014). Etat des lieux socio-économique 2014 de la Wallonie [State of socio-economic situation in 2014 of Wallonia]. Retrieved from https://www.leforem.be/MungoBlobs/283/852/ELSE2014_Wallonie_publication.pdf.
- McKee-Ryan, F., Song, Z., Wanberg, C. R., & Kinicki, A. J. (2005). Psychological and physical well-being during unemployment: A meta-analytic study. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 90*(1), 53–76.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Minnaert, A. (2013). Goals are motivational researchers' best friend, but to what extent are achievement goals and achievement goal orientations also the best friend of educational outcomes? *International Journal of Educational Research, 61*, 85–89.
- Neuville, S. (2004). *La perception de la valeur des activités d'apprentissage: étude des déterminants et effets [The perception of value in learning activities: A study investigating determinants and effects] (Unpublished doctoral dissertation)*. Belgique: Université Catholique de Louvain.
- Niessen, C., Heinrichs, N., & Dorr, S. (2009). Pursuit and adjustment of goals during unemployment: The role of age. *International Journal of Stress Management, 16*(2), 102–123. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015683>.
- Paloniemi, S., & Goller, M. (2017). The multifaceted nature of agency and professional learning. In M. Goller & S. Paloniemi (Eds.), *Agency at work: An agentic perspective on professional learning and development* (pp. 465–478). Cham: Springer.
- Pintrich, P. R., & Schunk, D. H. (Eds.). (2002). *Motivation in education: Theory, research, and applications* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs: Merrill-Prentice Hall.
- Raemdonck, I., Thijssen, J., & de Greef, M. (2017). Self-directedness in work-related learning processes. Theoretical perspectives and development of a measurement instrument. In M. Goller & S. Paloniemi (Eds.), *Agency at work. An agentic perspective on professional learning and development* (pp. 401–423). Cham: Springer.
- Robbins, S. B., Lauver, K., Le, H., Davis, D., Langley, R., & Carlstrom, A. (2004). Do psychosocial and study skill factors predict college outcomes? A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 130*(2), 261–288. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.130.2.261>.
- Smith, R. (2017). Three aspects of epistemological agency: The socio-personal construction of work-learning. In M. Goller & S. Paloniemi (Eds.), *Agency at work: An agentic perspective on professional learning and development* (pp. 67–84). Cham: Springer.
- SPF économie (2017). Évolutions positives sur le marché du travail belge en 2016 [Positive developments on the Belgian labor market in 2016]. Retrieved from <https://statbel.fgov.be/fr/nouvelles/evolutions-positives-sur-le-marche-du-travail-belge-en-2016>.
- Tsai, W.-C., & Tai, W.-T. (2003). Perceived importance as a mediator of the relationship between training assignment and training motivation. *Personnel Review, 32*(1/2), 151–163.
- Unsworth, K., Yeo, G., & Beck, J. (2014). Multiple goals: A review and derivation of general principles. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 35*(8), 1064–1078. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1963>.
- Van den Broeck, A., Vansteenkiste, M., Lens, W., & De Witte, H. (2010). Unemployed individuals' work values and job flexibility: An explanation from expectancy-value theory and self-determination theory. *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 59*(2), 296–317.

- Van Deun, K., Groenen, P. J. F., Heiser, W. J., Busing, F. M. T. A., & Delbeke, L. (2005). Interpreting degenerate solutions in unfolding by use of the vector model and the compensatory distance model. *Psychometrika*, *70*, 45–69.
- Van Deun, K., Heiser, W. J., & Delbeke, L. (2007). Multidimensional unfolding by nonmetric multidimensional scaling of spearman distances in the extended permutation polytope. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, *42*(1), 103–132.
- Vansteenkiste, M., Lens, W., De-Witte, S., De-Witte, H., & Deci, E.-L. (2004). The 'why' and 'why not' of job search behaviour: Their relation to searching, unemployment experience, and well-being. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *34*(3), 345–363.
- Vertongen, G., Nils, F., Traversa, J., Bourgeois, E., & de Viron, F. (2009). Les motifs d'entrée en formation des adultes en reprise d'études universitaires [Entry motives in training of adults returning to university]. *L'orientation scolaire et professionnelle*, *38*(1), 25–44.
- Wigfield, A., & Eccles, J. S. (2000). Expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *25*, 68–81.
- Wosnitza, M., & Volet, S. (2012). Editorial introduction: Multiple goals in learning contexts. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, *61*(4), 513–519. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2012.00503.x>.

Anne Jacot received the PhD degree from the Université catholique de Louvain (Belgium) in 2017. Based on literature derived from educational and organizational psychology, her doctoral dissertation examines the learning and training transfer processes when enrolment is mandatory for adult learners. Her fields of interest are motivational processes in adult learning and transfer of training. Since 2017, she is a lecturer at the Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium.

Isabel Raemdonck received her MA degree from the Ghent University in 1998 and the PhD degree from the Ghent University in Belgium in 2006. Her Phd focused on self-directedness in learning and career processes in low-qualified employees. From 2006 to 2010, she was assistant professor in 'Corporate Learning' in the Institute for Child and Education Studies at the Leiden University, The Netherlands. Since 2010 she is associate professor in 'Adult Education and Learning' at Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium. She is associated editor of the EARLI book series 'New Perspectives on Learning and Instruction'. Her current research interests are workplace learning, self-directed learning, motivational processes in adult learning, transfer of training, employability and aging at work.

Mariane Frenay, PhD, is a Full Professor at the Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium. Her research interests include students persistence and academic achievement, learning and professional development in higher education. More information about her can be found on <http://www.uclouvain.be/mariane.frenay>. She can be reached at: mariane.frenay@uclouvain.be.

Katrijn Van Deun is associate professor at the department of Methodology & Statistics, Tilburg University. Her current research concerns the development of statistical tools for the analysis of Big Data in the social sciences.

Affiliations

Anne Jacot¹ · Isabel Raemdonck² · Mariane Frenay¹ · Katrijn Van Deun³

¹ Psychological Sciences Research Institute (IPSY), Université catholique de Louvain, Place Cardinal Mercier 10, bte L3.05.01, 1348 Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium

² Institute for the Analysis of Change in Contemporary and Historical Societies (IACCHOS), Université catholique de Louvain, Place Cardinal Mercier 10, bte L3.05.01, 1348 Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium

³ Department of Methodology and Statistics, Tilburg University, Warandelaan 2, PO Box 90153, 5000 LETilburg, The Netherlands