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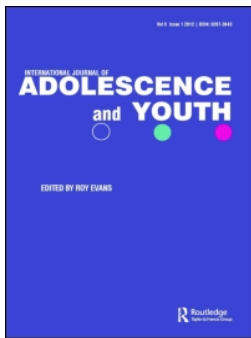
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Youth jobs: Young peoples' experiences of changes in motivation regarding engagement in occupations in the Swedish public sector

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the influence of a programme with the purpose of increasing young people's motivation to engage in professions with labour shortages in the Swedish public sector. The data collection methods used were qualitative and quantitative. The study shows that employment quality (skills, learning opportunities and social interaction) is essential to young people in relation to labour market interventions targeted at professions with labour shortages in the public sector. There appears to be heterogeneity in how young people value different factors. In addition, the motivational profile of young people seems to be an evolving process, but also in what way participation in a programme with focus on professions with labour shortages may contribute to such changes. The results indicate that, when planning a programme aimed at young people, individual differences should be taken into account in order to motivate them to work in professions with labour shortages.

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Youth jobs; motivation;
professions; public sector

Introduction

The present study aims to investigate young peoples' experiences of change in motivation to work in different occupations in the public sector after they participated in a programme aimed at increasing their motivation to work in such occupations. One important part of young peoples' transition to adulthood is to establish themselves on the labour market (Jones, 2005). In many European countries including Sweden, there is high youth unemployment due to an unstable labour market and where available jobs for young people are often temporary. The unemployment rate amongst young people in Europe is well over 20%, and the unstable and temporary character of the labour market can lead to marginalization of young people if they, for example, experience difficulties in finding a job (Wolbers, 2014).

In addition, youth unemployment also increases the risk of other difficulties. Research from Scandinavia shows that young people who neither work nor study have an increased risk of physical and mental illness (National Board of Health and Welfare, 2010; SOU, 2003). It is not only short-term mental health that is likely to deteriorate because of youth unemployment but also long-term mental health. According to Strand, Winefield, Nilsson, and Hammarström (2014), unemployment at a young age has long-term consequences for their mental health later in life in terms of nervous symptoms, sleep

problems and depressive symptoms. The authors argue that this may be due to adolescence being a sensitive period, where exposure to unemployment could lead to permanent effects on mental health.

A potential work area for (unemployed) young people in Sweden is the public sector where there is a general need to recruit employees. Almost half a million people need to be recruited over the next 10 years. Therefore, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions. (SALAR) informs and promotes opportunities to work in the public sector and the area with the greatest need to recruit staff is eldercare. The main reasons for the need to recruit staff are retirements and an increasing number of older people (SALAR, 2006, 2014a). Other areas where there are large recruitment needs are within the school and childcare sectors. As a result of increasing numbers of children and young people in the population, and the fact that many teachers, preschool teachers and other childcare workers are reaching retirement age, there is an increasing need to recruit staff (SALAR, 2014b). In relation to eldercare as well as school and childcare, promotions and opportunities for young people to try out the work (e.g. internship) are considered to be ways to recruit staff (SALAR, 2014a, 2014b).

These circumstances, high youth unemployment, labour shortages in the public sector and forecast difficulties in recruiting staff to these occupations, has led to an employment project in a medium-sized municipality in the north of Sweden. The main purpose of the project was to motivate young people of between 16 and 25 years to work in and/or study to become careers primarily in eldercare and the school/preschool sector. By motivating young people, the ambition was to counteract both youth unemployment in the municipality and a future labour shortage in those occupations. Based on these ambitions, the present article focuses on the possibility of motivating young people to engage in such occupations in the Swedish public sector, namely eldercare, schools and preschools.

Even though motivation theory has influenced research and practice in health promotion (Ajzen, 2005), education (Maehr & Meyer, 1997) and psychology (Ryan & Deci, 2000), it has not really been incorporated into research on young peoples' transition to adulthood in general and the labour market in particular. However, one of the few studies has been carried out by Stauber (2007), who examined changes in young peoples' work motivation through participation in different types of projects targeted at young unemployed people. The aim of the study was to show how young people can be remotivated to develop a pro-active attitude to their transitional biographies, but also to identify modes of participation as a prerequisite for such a motivational change. The study included three projects in three different European countries (the Netherlands, the UK and Italy) and with different types of approaches. One project primarily focused on young people living in deprived neighbourhoods or who had been released from detention centres where the objective was to provide life perspectives beyond unemployment. Another project had the objective of opening up individual paths for each participant through workshops, different practices and voluntary work. The third project was a so-called employment project and included a trainee programme for young mothers between 16 and 25 years. The project combined empowerment and support with formal training guaranteeing their inclusion in future employment as community leaders in order to support other young mothers. Even if the projects had different approaches, Stauber (2007) concluded there were two common aspects that could be seen as driving forces for motivation; individual needs and interests, and the ability to achieve self-chosen goals. Stauber argues, however, that the formulation of objectives may vary in terms of their openness between different types of project. Although projects aimed at young people at risk should have open goals, it is not assumed to be important in so-called employment projects because these young people have clear goals that attract them and what they want to achieve (Stauber, 2007).

However, there are limited studies on how labour market interventions regarding occupations in the public sector, which may be considered as having a low attractiveness, can change young people's motivation to work in those occupations. Eldercare is an area with low attractiveness and is characterized by low wages, minimal benefits, high turnover and low formal education (Westerberg & Tafvelin, 2014). The Swedish National Agency for Education (2014) reports that only 1 out of 20 teachers considered their profession to have a high status. In addition, one of the trade unions for teachers reports that the attractiveness of the teaching profession is low, and that the teaching profession has difficulties in attracting students (National Union of Teachers, 2012). Also, the preschool teaching profession suffers

from low attractiveness and the Swedish Government stresses a need for action to raise the profession's attractiveness (RFR 2012/13:RFR9). These circumstances could be different from labour market interventions in general because low attractiveness may influence the possibilities of increasing young peoples' motivation. The question of how to motivate young people to work in these occupations is of particular relevance because of the need for the welfare state to recruit labour to those occupations but also due to the impact of unemployment on young peoples' future health.

Young peoples' work motivation

Motivation refers to different aspects of activation and intentions such as energy, direction or persistence (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In that sense, motivation relates to peoples willingness to perform or not perform a specific behaviour (Ajzen, 2005). Human motivation can be influenced by external factors such as punishment or rewards, but also by subjective needs and interest in or the possibility of reaching subjective relevant outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Within self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000), it is postulated that the quality of motivation is generally more important than the amount for predicting important outcomes. A distinction is made between autonomous types of motivation and controlled types of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Autonomous motivation (i.e. intrinsic and identified regulation) is characterized by engaging in activities (e.g. work) with a full sense of volition and choice, whereas controlled motivation (introjected and external regulation) involves pressure and demand towards specific outcomes that originates from forces outside oneself. Amotivation, in contrast to motivation, reflects a lack of intention to act and stems from not valuing a behaviour or outcome or not linking a valued outcome to specific behaviours. In relation to work motivation among young people, a major challenge in our time is to attract, motivate and retain young workers, because they may or may not be motivated by the same factors that motivated previous generations (Loughlin & Barling, 2001). According to the authors, employment quality is essential to young people, which includes jobs providing *skill use and learning*, *usefulness* in the future, opportunities for *social interaction* and opportunities for *autonomy*. The employment quality factors proposed by Loughlin and Barling (2001) are factors that can influence young peoples' satisfaction with their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness as proposed within SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In addition, factors such as leadership, job content, work climate and individual differences are important factors for work motivation among young people (Gagné, 2014).

Young peoples' entrance to the labour market is not an isolated event or process, but rather one of several parts of their transition into adulthood (Jones, 2005). Nor is the transition a linear process where education is followed by work in any obvious way. Instead, the transition to the labour market is characterized by complexity and ambiguity. There is an increased risk of unemployment (EGRIS, 2001), and formal qualifications are necessary, but no longer sufficient (Stauber, 2007). European research shows that the transition to a great extent rests on destandardization, individualization and fragmentation (Walther, 2006), and that young people's transition to adulthood is frequently more of a yo-yo process where they can leave school, but start again, finding a job that they may lose, or else they revise their career plans (EGRIS, 2001; Lundahl & Olofsson, 2014). For young people, this results in the fact that the present is not only a bridge between past and future, but will also include a dimension of preparing for the future (Leccardi, 2006). The future is a space to construct a life plan. Because uncertainty and change dominates in the social environment, Leccardi (2006) argues that it may seem pointless to carry out long-term planning. Therefore, it is important, step by step, to make adequate biographical decisions rather than having long-term goals (Leccardi, 2006).

Aim

The overall aim of this study was to investigate young peoples' experiences of change in motivation to work in different occupations with forecast labour shortages in the public sector after they participated in a programme aimed at increasing their motivation to work in such occupations. Motivation

is often studied with the support of quantitative methods, but qualitative methods can contribute by highlighting the processes through which motivation changes. In this study, we have used quantitative methods to examine young people's motivational profiles after they participated in a programme aimed at motivating them to work in occupations with labour shortages in the public sector, such as eldercare, school and preschool. This part of the study can answer the following question:

- What is the quality and quantity of young people's work motivation profiles after participating in a programme with focus on occupations in the public sector?

With the support of qualitative methods, we have also examined how the programme can contribute to changes in their motivational profile regarding those occupations. This part of the study can answer the following research questions:

- Differ the young people's reasons for working in occupations in the public sector between their experiences of applying and completing the programme and if so, how?
- How can young people's participation in a programme with focus on occupations in the public sector contribute to changes in their motivational profile?

The project and its context

The municipality in which the project took place is located in northern Sweden and has more than 110,000 inhabitants. The municipality has one of the largest universities in the country with approximately 37,000 students. The municipality has 11,000 companies. The largest employer, however, is the municipality with over 9000 employees, of whom more than 80% operate in schools, preschools and social work including health, social and eldercare (Andersson & Eriksson, 2006).

The background to the project was a private actor in the local business community donated SEK 20 million to the municipality and the entire amount would be disbursed in full-time youth jobs. Furthermore, the municipality invested an additional SEK 60 million in youth jobs.

One of the main reasons for the project was to create opportunities for youth to gain a foothold on the labour market due to high youth unemployment. This motive also coincided with the municipality's need to recruit staff to the public sector. According to the recruitment forecast that was available at the time of the project, there would be a need for staff in the future, both as a result of increased volumes and as a result of retirements. According to the recruitment forecast, the municipality would have to conduct extensive recruitment, and major recruitment areas were eldercare, preschool and school (Andersson & Eriksson, 2006). Therefore, one of the main objectives for the project was to stimulate young people to choose a career in the public sector.

The project was implemented in three rounds of recruitment between 2010 and 2013 and was directed primarily at young people between 18 and 24 years who were registered at the local employment office. The young people themselves had to apply for the youth jobs they were interested in. Then, a sample of three young people was called for an interview for each job. After that, the work was offered to one of these three young people. During the youth job, the young person was supervised by their manager and colleagues in order to gradually develop skills to perform various regular duties on their own. Length of employment was, in most cases, seven months. After the job was completed, the young person got a certificate of the employment. When the project ended, 576 young people had youth jobs in several different fields. Of these, 311 young people had worked in school, childcare or social services, but primarily in eldercare.

The content of the project was that young people would be working with duties that regular staff performed within each profession. However, they would be supported by a designated supervisor who, together with other employees, would support and help them to gradually develop the skills needed in the profession. After completion of the project, 118 youth were offered continuing employment in the municipality, and of these 72 young people were working in eldercare, schools or childcare. Primarily,

these were temporary positions, but there were also examples of young people who had been offered permanent employment.

Method

In the present study, we relied on the relatively broad definition of mixed methods research put forward by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) stating that 'Mixed methods research is formally defined here as the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study' (p. 17). The quantitative survey data provide a snapshot of the participants' motivation for work after the programme, but it does not provide information about how their motivation may have changed during the programme or the lived experiences of participating in the programme that may have had motivational consequences. These latter aspects can instead be captured using qualitative data obtained through interviews with the participants. Qualitative and quantitative research have been argued to be incommensurate approaches but that does not mean that they cannot be combined in a single study for complementary purposes (Sale, Lohfeld, & Brazil, 2002). Each method studies different phenomena. In the current study, the quantitative data provide a 'measure' of motivation for work after the programme and the qualitative data provide the participants' lived experiences of motivation during the programme (Sale et al., 2002). The study was approved by the ethics committee of Umea University (2012-434-31Ö).

The quantitative analysis

Participants

The participants in the quantitative analysis were 128 participants selected from a larger sample of 426 responders to a survey aimed at evaluating the programme. The 128 participants (64.8% females) included in the analysis were the ones reporting that they had had a youth job during the project period. The participants' ages ranged from 21 to 29 years ($M = 24.24$, $SD = 2.22$). In terms of highest education, 34 (26.5%) had a university degree, 84 (65.6%) had a high school degree, and 7 (5.5%) had elementary school as their highest completed education (3 did not report). Almost half of the participants were employed and working (48.4%); 14.1% were unemployed and looking for a job, 33.6% were studying at a university and 4% reported other occupation.

Instrument

We used a modified version of the 12-item volunteer motivation scale developed by Millette and Gagné (2008) to assess the participants' motivation for work. This scale contains four subscales: external regulation (e.g. So other people would approve of me), introjected regulation (e.g. Because I would feel guilty if I didn't), identified regulation (e.g. Because it really feels personally important for me to do this) and intrinsic motivation (e.g. Because it is fun). We also added three items to measure amotivation (e.g. There might be good reasons to work, but personally I can't see any). Omega coefficients (McDonald, 1999) of the five subscales were amotivation = 0.62, external regulation = 0.63, introjected regulation = 0.88, identified regulation = 0.85 and intrinsic motivation = 0.87.

Analysis

Latent profile analysis (LPA) was conducted with Mplus version 7.3 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2016). LPA was used to uncover homogenous subgroups in the sample based on their scores on the motivation variables (Marsh, Lüdtke, Trautwein, & Morin, 2009). We estimated solutions with varying numbers of classes, and selected the solution that made most sense in relation to theory, previous research, interpretability of the classes and statistical criteria (Marsh et al., 2009). We estimated 1–5 classes to identify the appropriate number of classes and used a nested model comparisons approach in order to test whether more complex models (i.e. more classes) fit the data better than more parsimonious models (i.e. fewer classes). A number of statistical criteria were used to assess model fit. The Bootstrap

Likelihood Ratio Test (BLRT) was used to compare a k -class model with a $k-1$ class model. A significant BLRT p value indicates that the k -class model has a better model fit compared to the $k-1$ class model (Nylund, Asparouhov, & Muthén, 2007). We also used the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) and sample-size adjusted BIC (SSA-BIC), which are relative measures of how well a model fits the data. Lower BIC and SSA-BIC values indicate a better model fit (Raftery, 1995). Entropy values, ranging from 0 to 1, were used to examine the precision of the classification of the participants into classes with a higher value indicating better precision (Berlin, Williams, & Parra, 2014). The numbers of cases within each class was also considered when determining the appropriate number of classes, as small numbers are considered less feasible (Berlin et al., 2014). We used 500 random start values for each model, with the 50 best retained for the final solution. To avoid local maxima, the final solution was replicated with 1500 random start values (Geiser, 2013).

The interview study

The young people who were selected for interviews were contacted by telephone and asked whether they were willing to participate in an interview about how they experienced the youth job. They were also informed that participation was voluntary, that they could at any time interrupt their participation, and that their participation in the interview was confidential. This information was repeated at the time of the interview. Respondents were also informed that they, through their participation, participated in a prize draw for an eReader.

The sample of respondents was both strategically and random. Strategic in the sense that young people who had youth jobs in eldercare, and school/childcare, was chosen because it was in these areas that there was forecast labour requirements. However, the sample in each area was carried out randomly by every third name was selected from a list of all the young people who had been given jobs in eldercare, and school/childcare in the project. If the person who was contacted did not wish to participate in an interview or did not respond to repeated phone calls, the next person on the list was contacted. Overall, 20 young people (9 males and 11 females) were interviewed because the material had then reached saturation. The respondents were between 20 and 25 years and the average was 21 years. Ten of the respondents were recruited from eldercare and 10 of the respondents were recruited from school/preschool area. In total, there were 311 youth workers in those areas (school/preschool = 129, eldercare = 182). Of these youth workers, 133 were men and 178 were women. They were between 18 and 25 years old at the time for the youth work and the average was 21 years.

All interviews were carried out between October 2013 and November 2013. The interviews were conducted with the support of an interview guide including questions that referred to the objectives of the project. The interview questions were open-ended and developed by the authors on the basis of relevant aspects of the young people's engagement in the project. In total, the interviews covered 11 themes. Based on this study's explicit focus on young people's motivation to engage in occupation with labour shortages in the public sector, only empirical data from three themes were included in the analysis: Reason to apply for the job, Work motivation and Motivation for education. The interview questions were formulated as follows:

Reason to search the job: What was it that made you seek this job?

Work motivation: Could you imagine working with this job in the future? Are you more or less motivated than before the job? Has the job influenced your motivation in any way?

Motivation for education: Would you be willing to undergo training in this profession? Are you more or less motivated to train for this profession than before the job? Has the job influenced your motivation to train for this profession in any way?

The interviews were conducted in a location chosen by the respondents. In some cases, the interviews were carried out in rooms that the researchers provided, while in other cases they were carried out at other places. The length of the interviews varied between 20 min and 1 hour. All interviews were recorded digitally with the respondents' permission and were transcribed verbatim. After the interviews

were completed and an initial analysis had been made, the material was judged to be saturated, for example, no new aspects in relation to youth jobs appeared in the material.

Analysis

The analysis was inspired by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps for a qualitative thematic analysis. A thematic analysis can be performed inductively as well as through deductive category application (Mayring, 2000). In our case, the broad categories of SDT formed the basis for categorization of the material, more specifically: Amotivation, External regulation, Introjected regulation, Identified regulation and Intrinsic regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, the sub-codes were evolved from the empirical material.

The *first step* was a reading to obtain a sense of the material as a whole.

The *second step* was coding and categorization of the reasons respondents gave to apply for youth jobs, but also how they described their motivation to work and/or undertake training in the professional field after the youth job ended.

After the initial coding and categorization, the codes were reviewed and refined by the researchers in a *third step*. The codes were also related to different types of motivation according to SDT.

In the *fourth step* a comparative analysis was made of the young people's reasons for participating in the project but also the motivational profile after they participated in the project.

In a *fifth and final step* was then carried out an analysis of how, according to the young people, the project contributed to a change in their motivational profile. The codes and categories in this part of the analysis evolved inductively. However, in the same way as for the other material, the codes and categories were reviewed and refined by all the researchers.

During the process of analysis, Open Code (a software package for analysis of qualitative data; 2009) was used. The use of software package can create a more systematic process of analysis and facilitate comparison and identification of codes in the material (Barry, 1998).

Results

Quality and quantity of motivational profiles

The LPA showed that there were heterogeneous subgroups of people with different work motivation profiles in the sample. Based on the LPA and the nested model comparisons, a four-class solution provided the best fit to the data, given the statistical criteria, substantive meaning and interpretability (Figure 1 and Table 1). The four classes differed in their quality and quantity of motivation and descriptives for each class are shown in Table 2. Class 1 was labelled 'high quality motivation' and displayed relatively high levels of autonomous motivation, relatively low levels of controlled motivation and low levels of amotivation. Class 2 was labelled 'high quantity motivation' and displayed relatively high levels of all types of motivation, except amotivation. Class 3 was labelled 'low quantity motivation' and displayed relatively low levels of all types of motivation. Class 4 was labelled 'low quality motivation' and displayed relatively high levels of controlled motivation, and low levels of autonomous motivation. These results indicate that there is heterogeneity in the sample with regard to work motivation despite the young people participating in the same programme, but they also show that a large portion of the sample had relatively high levels of motivation for work, as indicated by class 1 and class 2 that constituted approximately 80% of the sample.

Changes in motivation

According to the qualitative interviews, 18 of 20 respondents said the youth job had increased their motivation to work in the professional field concerned. In that sense, it is in line with the indications of the quantitative material on relatively high levels of motivation. The material also showed that the reasons for motivation changed between the phase where the young people applied to the programme

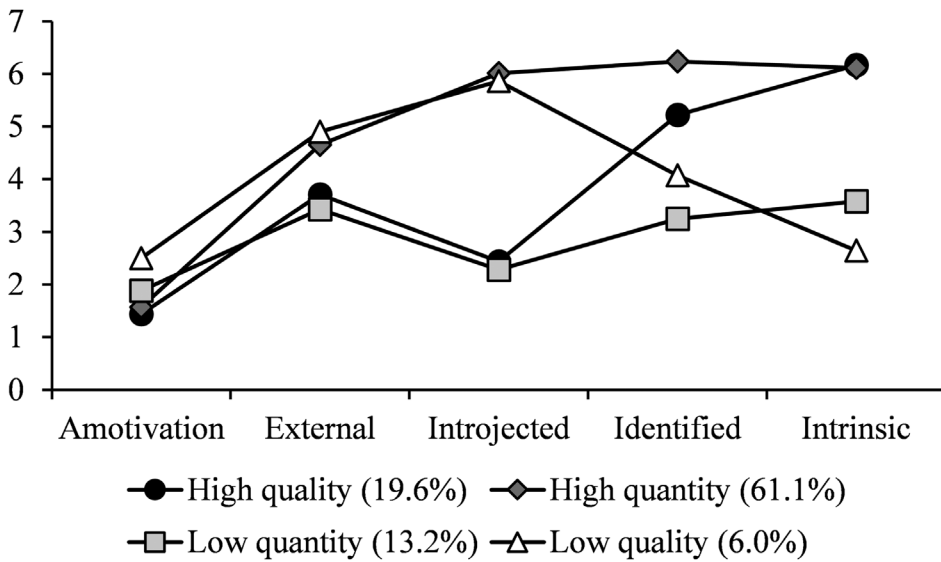


Figure 1. Graphical description of the four latent classes.

Table 1. Fit indices of the different latent profile solutions ($N = 128$).

Classes	AIC	BIC	SSA-BIC	Entropy	BLRT <i>p</i> value	
1	2199.561	2228.081	2196.456	NA	NA	
2	2064.799	2110.431	2059.831	.918	.000	
3	2037.123	2099.868	2030.292	.864	.000	
4	2007.475	2087.332	1998.781	.914	.000	
5	1986.123	2083.092	1975.565	.892	.000	
Average latent class probabilities for most likely latent class membership						
<i>Two-class model</i>	$\approx n^a$	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5
Class 1	32	.957	.043			
Class 2	96	.016	.984			
<i>Three-class model</i>						
Class 1	26	.957	.035	.008		
Class 2	20	.026	.875	.100		
Class 3	82	.001	.048	.951		
<i>Four-class model</i>						
Class 1	24	.923	.056	.021	.000	
Class 2	79	.025	.973	.000	.002	
Class 3	18	.056	.001	.912	.032	
Class 4	7	.000	.005	.002	.992	
<i>Five-class model</i>						
Class 1	5	.995	.002	.000	.000	.003
Class 2	23	.004	.947	.036	.002	.012
Class 3	46	.000	.013	.919	.067	.000
Class 4	47	.000	.001	.066	.930	.002
Class 5	7	.000	.018	.001	.000	.981

Note: NA = Not applicable, AIC = Akaike's information criterion, BIC = Bayesian information criterion, SSA-BIC = Sample-size adjusted Bayesian information criterion, BLRT = Bootstrapped likelihood ratio test.

^aApproximated class sizes based on the average latent class probabilities. The final four-class model is highlighted in bold.

Table 2. Descriptives of the four latent classes

	Class 1: high quality motivation	Class 2: high quantity motivation	Class 3: low quantity motivation	Class 4: low quality motivation
<i>Sex</i>				
Males	13 (54.2%)	21 (26.6%)	7 (38.9%)	4 (57.1%)
Females	11 (45.8%)	58 (73.4%)	11 (61.1%)	3 (42.9%)
Age (SD)	24.2 (2.20)	24.3 (2.29)	23.8 (2.32)	24.7 (1.25)
<i>Education</i>				
Compulsory school	2 (8.3%)	4 (5.1%)	0 (0%)	1 (14.3%)
Upper secondary school	14 (58.3%)	47 (59.5%)	18 (100%)	5 (71.4%)
University	8 (33.3%)	26 (32.9%)	0 (0%)	1 (14.3%)
<i>Current occupation</i>				
Working	14 (58.3%)	40 (50.6%)	7 (38.9%)	2 (28.6%)
Unemployed	4 (16.7%)	10 (12.7%)	2 (11.1%)	1 (14.3%)
Student	6 (25%)	24 (30.4%)	9 (50.0%)	4 (57.1%)
Other	0 (0%)	5 (6.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<i>Motivation mean scores (SD)</i>				
Amotivation	1.44 (0.61)	1.57 (0.89)	1.88 (0.88)	2.50 (1.11)
External	3.71 (0.98)	4.65 (1.33)	3.43 (0.86)	4.90 (1.29)
Introjected	2.44 (1.02)	6.01 (0.93)	2.28 (1.15)	5.86 (0.90)
Identified	5.22 (0.88)	6.24 (0.65)	3.25 (1.12)	4.07 (0.90)
Intrinsic	6.17 (0.89)	6.11 (1.06)	3.58 (0.99)	2.64 (1.14)

and the phase in which they completed their participation in the programme. Regarding those changes, there appeared to be three overarching themes during the analysis (see Figure 2):

- (1) Themes within each type of motivation that were mentioned in both phases.
- (2) Changes in types of motivation mentioned.
- (3) Themes within each type of motivation that were mentioned only in relation to one phase. Themes that are 'unmarked' refer to those mentioned in both phases. Themes that are marked with an asterisk (*) are those mentioned in relation to one phase only.

Several themes did not change between the phases. Regarding *income* (External regulation) the respondents talked about this in general terms but also as a source of increased freedom. One young person said that the income was important to be able to move from the parental home, while another young person felt able to do more things in their spare time as a result of the income.

When the young people talked about *security* (Introjected regulation), it was an emotional aspect. Being unemployed were described as a life characterized by uncertainty, desperation and anxiety. Hence, it was nice to get a job for a relatively long time. They knew then what they would do during the day and they had a structure to their existence.

Those who mentioned *practical circumstances* (Identified regulation) were not primarily interested in the profession, but their motivation could relate to having the same working hours as a partner, or that the job was appropriate due to the fact it was close to home. It is worth noting that neither income, security nor practical circumstances relate to the unique characteristics of the professions in the programme. Rather, the motivation stems from other aspects in the lives of the young people. You need money to be self-sufficient, you need a structure in life to reduce anxiety and it is beneficial to have a workplace that is close to home. Those themes mentioned suggest that it is not always goals related to the vocational area that motivate young people to work in those occupations in the public sector covered by the study. Instead, it seems that controlled motivation may be important.

However, there are also themes related to the professions mentioned in both phases. *Employment/education* (Identified regulation) means having a goal to your work and/or study further in the field

Type of motivation	Phase 1: Motivational themes mentioned in relation to applying youth jobs.	Phase 2: Motivational themes mentioned in relation to the completion of the youth job.
Amotivation		Educational and vocational amotivation*
Controlled types		
External regulation	Income Prompted*	Income
Introjected regulation	Secure	Secure
Autonomous types		
Identified regulation	Practical circumstances Employment/education Suitability	Practical circumstances Employment/education Suitability Meaningfulness* Sense of competence*
Intrinsic regulation	Interest Curiosity*	Interest Enjoyment*

Figure 2. Changes in motivational profile between phases.

which young people described in terms of, for example, the fact that the profession was a 'realistic goal', or 'an opportunity for continued employment'. In addition, *suitability* (Identified regulation) was described by the respondents in terms of personal attributes such as 'disciplined', 'responsible' or 'flexible', which more clearly relates to the relationship between the individual and the characteristics of the profession. Regarding intrinsic regulation, the analysis indicates that *interest* was mentioned in both phases. Interest was generally described by the young people in relation to the service users, such as, for example 'enjoy working with children'.

Changes between phases

In total, one can see that the variety refers not as much to a variation between which types of motivation that was mentioned in relation to different phases, but rather to different themes within each type. The only change between the phases regarding type of motivation was that Amotivation emerged in relation to young people completing the youth work.

When it comes to applying a youth job, one reason was that respondents were *prompted* to do so (External regulation). It was mainly the employment service who prompted them to apply for the job, but also parents were mentioned. In contrast, no one emphasized that they had been prompted to

continue working in the profession after the programme even though most of the respondents were more motivated after the completion of the programme. As to Intrinsic regulation, several young people said that they applied for the project out of *curiosity*. In the material, two kinds of curiosity appeared as a motive for the young people to apply to the project. There were those who related it to their personality only. Those respondents saw themselves as curious by nature and they wished to try something new. Then there were those who in various ways had been in contact with the profession earlier, and had a feeling that it could be something for them. At the same time, those young people were not convinced and, therefore, they wanted to try working in the profession.

A number of themes also appeared that were mentioned only in relation to the young people who completed their participation in the project. Regarding Amotivation, this was related to the discovery of an *unwillingness to work in or study to the profession*. One young person described it in this way.

I do not want to study to become an assistant nurse. I feel that I do not aspire to be anything higher in this profession. (ip 12, eldercare)

Apart from Amotivation, themes mentioned only in relation to the second phase were all different types of autonomous motivation, and all were related to the profession in different ways. This was also a prominent type of motivation in the two dominant motivational profiles of the quantitative material. Regarding Identified regulation, increased *sense of competence* was stated as a reason for increased motivation to work in the profession in relation to the completion of the programme. Sense of competence, however, was not mentioned as a reason for applying to the project. In addition, *meaningfulness* was perceived as a reason for increased motivation after the project had been completed.

Also, Intrinsic regulation was changed regarding the themes that the young people mentioned in relation to the completion of the youth job. The respondents said that, after the youth job, they discovered that they *enjoyed* the profession, which they did not mention as an incentive for applying the project. The enjoyment was often described in general terms, such as or that they had fun and a laugh at work.

The contribution of programme participation

Overall, there were several changes in the motivational profile between the phases. According to the material, a couple of young people were unmotivated to work in the profession after the programme, but most of the young people felt an increased sense of competence, meaningfulness and/or enjoyment. They mentioned none of these themes in the initial phase as a reason for applying youth jobs. But how did the young people describe the contribution of programme participation to these changes?

Those who felt *amotivated* considered that the opportunity to try to work in the profession helped them to realize that the profession was not for them. One young woman described her newly gained insights in the following manner.

I have never really thought about what I want to study, so I was open to a lot of occupations. It is now I feel I do not want to study to be a nurse, so I have deleted it from the list of possible professions. It is not that I have got a negative opinion about the profession through the youth job. It is just that I do not think it is, for me. (ip 12, eldercare)

According to several respondents, the *competence and skills support* from the staff contributed to an increased sense of competence. The young people felt that both the management and staff approach contributed to an increased sense of competence., partly because they gave advice on how to carry out the work, but partly also that they praised the work conducted by the young people. One of the young people described it in the following way:

'I want to commend my work place and most of all my colleagues. I am very happy. I have learned a lot and that is what is most important'. (ip 4, childcare)

In addition, a progressively greater degree of *autonomy* at the workplace contributed to the increased sense of competence. As the regular staff felt that the young people managed the tasks, several respondents said they had more opportunities to perform on their own. The increased degree of autonomy was interpreted by the young people as a sign of confidence in their skills on the part of the regular staff.

When the young people mentioned that the profession had become *meaningful* to them, they related it to the *interaction with the users*, but also to the fact that the rationale of the profession had become evident to them during the youth job. Through *practical experiences* they now had a comprehensive picture of what you do at such a workplace, but also why you do it. According to several respondents, this contributed to the meaningfulness of the profession. One young person who had been working in childcare described it as follows:

I think many people think that preschool teachers are only those who do not have any plans for the future. The view was changed pretty quickly, because I saw how much time they (preschool teachers, own remark) actually put into, for example, planning and how much time they spend on the children./ – /My view changed quite drastically. It is actually a very important job, and it is something I want to work with. (ip1, childcare)

Regarding *enjoyment*, there were several contributions mentioned by the respondents. As for meaningfulness, *practical experiences* had contributed to the enjoyment because they gained a more comprehensive picture of what the work entailed. Also, the *interaction with the users* was seen as a source of enjoyment, especially in childcare, where the young people said they had fun with the children. In addition, the *membership of the working group* was seen as a source of enjoyment. Several young people emphasized that they felt like one of the staff and therefore they had enjoyed working at the workplace. There were also examples where the staff had spent leisure time together, which was also considered to contribute to the enjoyment. One of the respondents described the importance of fellowship as follows:

'I really liked it. They were all very nice colleagues. Everyone was very welcoming, so it was no problem to go to work at all. It was really fun, actually'. (ip16, eldercare)

In conclusion, the contribution of programme participation could be summarized as shown in Figure 3.

Promoting themes	Educational and vocational amotivation	Sense of competence	Meaningfulness	Enjoyment
Concrete experiences of the job.	Concrete experiences contribute to the realization that you are not interested in the profession.		Concrete experiences of the profession contribute to the visibility of its rational.	A complete picture of the work not only contributes to meaningfulness, but also enjoyment.
Interaction with the users			Interaction with users contributing meaningfulness in work.	The interaction not only contributes to meaningfulness; it is also fun.
Competence and skills support		Support and affirmation from management and staff contributes to a sense of competence.		
Belonging				The sense of belonging to staff may not only contribute to enjoyment at the workplace, but sometimes also in leisure time.
Autonomy and autonomy support		The possibility of gradually being given greater responsibility for performing tasks contributing to an increased sense of competence.		

Figure 3. The contribution of programme participation.

Discussion

As mentioned in the introduction, motivation theory has not really been incorporated in research on young people's transition to adulthood. Furthermore, there are limited studies that focus on labour market interventions where there is a forecast need for labour in certain occupations, which tries to motivate young people to work in these occupations. This article was intended to examine this knowledge gap. The overarching aim was to explore the influence of a programme with the purpose of increase young people's motivation to engage in occupations with labour shortages in the public sector. One of the research questions was to examine the quality and quantity of young people's work motivational profiles after participating in the programme. Previous research shows that employment quality is essential to young people, and this includes factors such as skills, learning opportunities, social interaction and autonomy (Loughlin & Barling, 2001). The importance of these factors for young people's motivation is confirmed by this study. What this study adds is that it shows that, in relation to labour market interventions targeted at occupations with labour shortages in the public sector, there appears to be heterogeneity in how young people value different factors. For many young people, employment quality appears to be central, but the findings from this study suggest also that other types of motivation, such as external regulation, are important for their work motivation. The four motivational profiles identified in this study suggest that the participants' work motivation after participating in the programme differ in terms of both quality and quantity. These findings mirror previous studies in work (Van den Broeck, Lens, De Witte, & Van Coillie, 2013) and school settings (Vansteenkiste, Sierens, Soenens, Luyckx, & Lens, 2009) where these four profiles have also been identified. In school settings, students with a high quality motivation profile displayed the most optimal learning outcomes and reported the highest scores on perceived need-supportive teaching (Vansteenkiste et al., 2009). In the study by Van den Broeck et al. (2013), workers in the high quality and the high quantity motivation profile reported most job satisfaction, highest work engagement and lowest levels of burnout, whereas the low quality and low quantity profiles displayed the opposite pattern with low job satisfaction, low engagement and higher levels of burnout. These findings suggest that autonomous work motivation is important for performance and well-being, and also stresses the importance of creating an environment that fosters autonomous motivation.

The second research question was to examine whether and if so how, young people's reasons for working in occupations in the public sector differed between their experiences of applying and completing the programme. This study shows that young people's motivational profile seems to evolve over time. It is not quite the same reasons that contribute to young people applying to occupations with labour shortages in the public sector that contribute to motivation to continue working in these occupations. For example, a sense of competence and meaningfulness were not mentioned as reasons for applying for youth jobs, but were mentioned as reasons to increased motivation after the youth job was completed. This means there are not necessarily the same 'triggers' that motivate young people to engage in occupations with labour shortages in the public sector than there are to enable them to remain in these occupations. One could also see that it was primarily the autonomous motivation that was changed. This type of motivation is characterized by engagement, volition and choice (Loughlin & Barling, 2001). This suggests that, even though these are occupations with relatively low attractiveness, it may be possible to change the perceived attractiveness through opportunities for young people to try out the work.

In addition, the results also indicate that young people's motivation to participate in employment projects aimed at occupations in the public sector may differ from employment projects in general. Stauber (2007) argues that young people who apply and participate in employment projects have clear goals for their participation and what they also want to achieve, which distinguishes them from other types of youth transition projects. Based on this study, there may be a need to nuance this picture regarding low attractive occupations in the public sector. Even if some of the young people applied to the project out of interest or had a goal to work with the occupation, some of them applied because of exhortations from people around them, such as parents or their contact at the employment office.

Other young people applied to the project because other areas of life were considered more important than the work itself. Therefore, some young people chose their workplace on the basis of working hours, or that it is located near their homes rather than an interest in the work itself. In addition, some of the young people did not know whether the work was for them, but after the project was completed they had come to the insight that the occupation was not for them. All in all, this indicates young people's reasons to apply and participate in projects involving occupations in the public sector tend to be heterogeneous and may differ from employment projects in general.

The last research question was in what way participation in a programme with focus on occupations with labour shortages in the public sector contributes to changes in their motivational profile. In line with previous research competence support, autonomy support and the sense of belonging seem to be central for changes in motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Stauber, 2007). What this study adds is that concrete experiences of the work may contribute to changes in the motivational profile. This may be interpreted as a consequence of the fact that participation in workplace activities are opportunities for experiential learning in order to obtain a broader picture of the work, but also an understanding of its underlying rationale (Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 2001). Such indications were evident in the material, where the experiences could contribute to both young people's subjective meaningfulness and enjoyment. This means that the study adds to previous research by identifying in what way participation in a labour market intervention may contribute to changes in young people's motivation to work in occupations in the public sector. This knowledge is particularly important in the light of the recruitment needs and ambitions to recruit young people to such occupations that exist in Sweden (SALAR, 2014a, 2014b).

In conclusion, this study shows that in a study of labour market interventions it may be valuable to combine qualitative and quantitative methods (cf. Walther, 2006). While the quantitative material shows heterogeneity in the motivational profiles after the programme, the qualitative material demonstrates the processes of intervention that appear to be central to motivate young people to work in occupations with labour shortages in the public sector. We concur with the notion that quantitative and qualitative approaches capture different phenomena (Sale et al., 2002). In the present study, we captured a 'measure' of motivation and the 'lived experiences' of motivation, and combining a quantitative and qualitative approach provided a deeper understanding of the motivational consequences of participating in the programme and illuminated the complexity and nuances of motivation for work in young people.

Implications for practice

The results indicate that young unemployed people are not a homogenous group when it comes to their motivational profiles, and the same kind of interventions are not suitable for all. When planning a programme directed towards young people, these differences should be taken into consideration and possibilities should be considered to individually tailor the intervention. If the ambition is to motivate young people to choose professions with labour shortage in public sector, this may be even more important. These professions are seldom the first vocational choice for a young person, but the motivation can change when the job is tested. Here, it is vital to address aspects that are assumed to contribute to motivational changes during a programme. In the present study, there are indications that important aspects are interactions with users, colleagues and the understanding and experience of the profession this interaction leads to.

Taken together, future labour market interventions can benefit from taking a motivational perspective, such as SDT, into account when designing the programme and trying to optimize the work environments need-supportive features, which leads to high quality motivation, well-being and long-term commitment (Gagne, 2014).

Limitations and future research

This study is cross-sectional and there is always a risk of recall bias when participants are asked to describe events in the past. Furthermore, the study includes only those who got a youth job and therefore there is no comparison group. Future research is suggested to use longitudinal data and comparison groups that would provide baseline information and more knowledge of the long-term effects of these types of programmes. In general, the shortage of staff in eldercare and preschools is a well-known phenomenon in the Swedish public sector. Therefore, it is important to know more about what aspects contribute to the willingness to remain in a profession as well as the motivation to choose a particular profession in occupations with forecast labour shortages. These organizations invest a great deal of effort and resources into recruiting new staff, but the flexibility on the labour market as well as the impact of work conditions are of interest.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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