Employability and health and well-being

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This symposium brings together four papers on the topic of employability and employees' health and well-being. Employability is defined broadly as the individual's likelihood of obtaining and maintaining a job. Employability may take the form of individual competences (e.g., Van der Heijde & Van der Heijde, 2006), dispositions (e.g., Fugate & Kinicki, 2009), employability-enhancing activities (e.g., Van Dam, 2004) or perceptions of employment opportunities (i.e., perceived employability; e.g., Bernston, Sverke, & Marklund, 2006). Common to these approaches is the idea that employability provides the workers with a sense of control over his/her job and career. Control, in turn, is known to relate positively to health and well-being. The aim in this symposium is to probe the relationship between employability and health and well-being in more detail.

Paper 1 and paper 2 investigate employability in relation to well-being among different groups. In particular, Richter, Mauno, Mäkikangas, Kinnunen, De Cuyper and Bernhard-Oettel (Paper 1) test the assumption that perceived employability relates to well-being and moreover, that it carries the relationship between occupational group with clearly different career profiles (i.e., nurses, academics and temporary agency workers) and well-being. Chambel, Castanheira and Sobral (Paper 2) continue along these lines by demonstrating a relationship between employability-enhancing training and well-being in samples of temporary and permanent workers.

Paper 3 and 4 take a different route in that they question the role of health and well-being as an outcome variable. More specifically, Berntson, Näswall, Sverke, and Bernhard-Oettel (Paper 3) argue and demonstrate that possible reversed causation should be accounted for, so that well-being causes employees to feel more employable. De Coen, Forrier, and De Cuyper advance health as a possible moderator of the relationship between perceived employability on the one hand and job search intensity and wage flexibility on the other hand.

Berntson, E., Sverke, M., & Marklund, S. (2006). Predicting perceived employability: Human capital or labour market opportunities? *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 27(2), 223-244.

Fugate, M., & Kinicki, A. (2009). A dispositional approach to employability: Development of a measure and test of implications for employee reactions to organizational change. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 81, 503-527.

Van Dam, K. (2004). Antecedents and consequences of employability orientation. *European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology*, 13(1), 29-51.

Van der Heijde, C. M., & Van der Heijden, B. (2006). A competence-based and multidimensional operationalization and measurement of employability. *Human Resource Management*, 45(3), 449-476.