Time Use of Unemployed Adults: Exploration of Temporal Structure

Student no: 0687278
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Module Leader: Dr. Judi Pettigrew
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Abstract
The purposeful use of time has the potential to maintain health and enhance well-being. Job loss dramatically disrupts temporal pattern and routines of daily life. Currently 14.4% of the Irish population are unemployed. This study explores how the experience of unemployment affects temporal structure.

Four participants were recruited, all of whom were over 18, unemployed and had been for less than two years. A descriptive case study design was utilised and quantitative data was collected via Economic and Social Research Institute Time Use Survey. Participants recorded their time use over 24 hours marking off pre-coded activities categories.

The findings show that participants in the study engaged in sport and leisure activities, self care, and productivity activities in the form of household management tasks. Over 75% of their time was spent in the home. Participants introduced new leisure and social activities following the OT intervention.

The overall time use pattern’s of the four participants in this study reflects their ability to establish a balanced daily structure. Participants adapted to unemployment by restructuring their daily routine. Further research is warranted into the development of occupational therapy interventions focusing on the quality of time with the aim of living well while unemployed.
Introduction

It is becoming increasingly hard to ignore the impact of unemployment on society. Currently 14.4% of Ireland’s population is unemployed (CSO 2012). Unemployment disrupts daily routines and may constitute an occupational disruption in an individual’s life (Hammell 2004). The time use of individuals has been studied within the social, economic and policy research quarters for many years. According to Harvey (1993) time use is an indicator of quality of life. Occupational Therapy is founded on the belief that purposeful use of time has the potential to be both health maintaining and health generating (Wilcock 2006). Time use has been studied by occupational therapy researchers in a range of contexts primarily focusing on older adults and individuals with enduring mental illness (Fricke and Unsworth 2001 and Harvey et al 2006). As rates of unemployment continue to increase on a local, national and international level there is a key role for occupational therapists in supporting individuals to establish a meaningful and health promoting pattern of activities (Scanlon et al 2010, AOTA 2009). Unemployment is associated with an increased likelihood of morbidity and mortality and has a major impact on psychological wellbeing (Bambura 2010, McKee-Ryan et al 2005). The negative health consequences and sparse literature within occupational therapy and occupational science relating specifically to time use and unemployment given its prominence in today’s culture, reflects the reasoning for developing this research study.

This study is one strand within a larger piece of research. The overall project aim was to evaluate an eight week occupational therapy Work Ready Programme for unemployed people facilitated by the Occupational Therapy Department at UL. The occupational therapy programme focus was to support wellness during unemployment. It included sessions on: understanding the benefits of activity/ occupation, establishing structure and routine, community exploration, stress management, physical activity, career exploration and job seeking/ job skill development. The focus of this study is to develop an understanding of how unemployed adults utilize their time and to identify any changes in time use in the aftermath of completing the Work Ready Programme.

For the literature review the following keywords were searched: time use, diary, unemployment, occupation, health and well-being, balance, disruption, occupational therapy, lifestyle redesign, intervention, meaningful occupation and temporal. The electronic databases searched included: Cochrane, Psychinfo, Medline, Psycharticles, Nursing & Allied
Health Collection, and Cinahl, Academic Search Complete. The literature selected for the review included papers published in scholarly journals over the past 30 years. This time frame was chosen as much of the unemployment research was conducting during economic recession in the 1980’s

The literature review is going to focus on the effects of unemployment on individual’s daily routine, time use from an occupational therapy perspective and the benefits of occupation.

**Unemployment**

Unemployment disrupts daily routines and may constitute an occupational disruption in an individual’s life (Hammell 2004). Occupational disruption is associated with the loss of engaging in activities that previously gave structure, meaning and purpose to people’s lives (Becker 1997, Whiteford 2000). Unemployment has an association with poor psychological and physical health (McKee-Ryan et al, 2005). Research has shown that unemployed people often have difficulty filling their days spending long periods sitting, sleeping or watching television. A study on the time use of unemployed Australian 18-25 year olds found that unemployed groups spent large amounts of time watching television or doing nothing (Scanlan et al 2010). These deficits in the perceived use of time may be linked to a lack of purpose and reduced structure in daily activities (Zemke & Clark 1996)

Feather & Bond (1983) using a time structure questionnaire to measure perceptions of structure and purpose in everyday life reported that structured and purposeful use of time was positively correlated with self esteem and negatively correlated with depressive symptoms among both unemployed and employed groups. They also proposed that time structure is related to role demands and personality variables. The loss of the worker role for individuals often reflects a change in their perception of time (Pemberton and Cox 2011) and in their identity (Blair 2000). However people can also live well during unemployment a study by Fryer and Payne (1984) demonstrated that participants used meaningful activities to cope positively with the effects of unemployment.
Time Use

Time use focuses on what people do with their time and why. In order to develop an understanding of people as occupational beings it is important to analyse how they use their time. The purposeful use of time has the potential to be both health maintaining and health generating (Wilcock 2006). Exploring patterns of time use provides a unique insight into the well being of populations (Christiansen 1996, Farnworth 2004). Burda and Hamermesh (2009) proposed that the unemployed population may face significant challenges in establishing fulfilling daily routines.

Temporality refers to an individual’s subjective perception of time. Jahoda (1982) considers the loss of time structure the principal predictor of psychological well-being. Temporal dysfunction can transpire due to psychological factors and cause problems in the organisation of daily life (Pemberton and Cox 2011). Job loss dramatically disrupts temporal pattern and routines of daily life (McKee-Ryan et al, 2005). The ability of unemployed people to structure daily routines in their lives and remain active has been linked to positive mental health (Wanberg et al, 1997). There is agreement across a number of disciplines sociology, occupational science, philosophy and psychology that individuals experience time not as a figure in terms of minutes, days or years, but as participation in meaningful activities (Larson 2004). The meaningfulness of an occupation refers to the subjective experiences of engagement in occupation (Kramer et al, 2003). A qualitative study by Ball and Orford (2002) explored the experience of 24 unemployed individuals. They found that those who were best able to recreate meaningful patterns of time use were least affected by their experience of unemployment.

Occupational balance is a concept associated with time use. There is no consensus in the literature on how to define occupational balance. Some researchers refer to a balance between work, rest and play measured in time (Christiansen 1996, Farnworth 2004). In contrast Backman (2004) and Pierce (2001) focus on the subjective experience of balance in relation to health and well-being. In relation to occupational balance time use diaries provide data that precisely identifies what activities an individual is engaged in and highlights areas where occupational imbalance may be present.
**Occupation Health and Wellbeing**

Occupational therapy focuses on enabling individuals and groups to participate in everyday occupations that are meaningful to them, provide fulfilment, and facilitates engagement in everyday life (Law 2002). Kielhofner (2002) noted that occupation has an essential role in human life and is a vital link between mind and body. He proposed that lack of occupation could result in poor health and dysfunction and conversely that occupation could be used to restore health and function. A systematic review of 23 studies by Law et al. (1998) found moderate to strong evidence of a relationship between occupation, health and wellbeing, where the removal of occupation had a detrimental effect. In contrast to this the lack of such participation in meaningful occupation leads almost inevitability to poor health and the absence of a feeling of wellbeing (Kronenberg et al., 2005). Clark and her colleagues (1997) reported a randomised controlled trial involving 361 older adults which demonstrated that preventative occupation could maintain or enhance health status.

In relation to the health and well-being of individuals the research to date has tended to focus on the effects of unemployment on health rather than the positive effects of employment. Jahoda (1982) argues that employment provides people with a daily time structure, a sense of purpose and status, opportunities to socialise and engage in activities. Ross and Mirowsky (1995) suggest that employment protects and fosters health. They analysed data from United States probability health questionnaire (N= 2436) comparing employment status with perceived health and physical functioning of individuals. Full-time employment predicts significantly slower declines in perceived health and physical functioning, compared to unemployment. This finding is supported by Waddel and Burtons (2006) literature review ‘Is working good for your health and well-being’. Working is associated with positive effects on physical and mental health and well-being. They also found that work can be therapeutic and can reverse the adverse health effects of unemployment.

Given the current rate of unemployment in Ireland and the negative health effects associated with this, this study will explore the how participants use their time over a 24 hour period. Until recently (Scanlon et al, 2010) there has been limited research within the field of occupational therapy exploring time use in relation to unemployment. In analysing how people utilise their time during unemployment we can identify what activities they engage in and why. This the first Irish study to be conducted focused on an occupational therapy intervention for unemployed individuals.
The main purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the temporal structure of unemployed adults. The research objectives are:

1. To identify how unemployed people use their time over a 24 hour period.

2. To identify any changes in the time use patterns of participants after completing an occupational therapy work ready programme

Methodology

Research Design
Initially a quantitative research design was chosen for this study using the ERSI Time-Use Survey (McGinnity et al, 2005) as time-use diaries are recognised to be the most effective tool for gauging the time people spend on activities (Molineux 2004). It was anticipated that the study would include twenty participants. However eight people completed the intervention with only two participants completing the pre and post time use survey. As a result of low numbers, the methodology was changed from a pre-post test design to a case study to facilitate a more indepth analysis of the time use of the participants.

Case study research aims to provide a rich description and analysis of a phenomenon to illustrate and describe the phenomenon in detail and to show its complexity (Yin 2003). A descriptive case study analyzing the quantitative data from the time use survey was undertaken in this study. For the purpose of this study the four participants reflect the cases. The phenomenon being explored is how they utilize their time. Salminan et al, (2006) proposed that case study research is a relevant approach within occupational therapy practice. It can be utilized to study a small number of participants as is often the case in practice. Limited demographic information was gathered due to the unforeseen use of the case study methodology.

Participants
Participants of the intervention programme were recruited through advertisements (Appendix A) in unemployment offices, various public offices in Limerick city and through the Tus Nua website. The inclusion criteria included anyone who was over 18, unemployed at the time of recruitment and had been for less than two years. It excluded unemployed people who had never experienced employment. Individuals expressed an interest in the programme by contacting the project manager. If they met the selection criteria they were sent information
on the programme (Appendix B) and a consent form (Appendix C). For inclusion in this element of the research project the participants must have completed the time use survey. Two men and two women completed the pre intervention time use survey. The post intervention time use survey was completed by one man and one woman. They were aged between 37 and 53 with a mean age of 43.6.

**Data Collection**

Data collection required the participants to complete one weekday and weekend time use diary each (Appendix D). Time use diaries are categorised as heavy or light in relation to the content. They are associated with much less error than questions which ask the respondent directly to estimate how much time they spend on any given activity per week (Gershuny 2003). The light diary was chosen for the purpose of this study, it provides less detailed information than the heavy diary format but it is much easier to fill out and is also less expensive (Farnworth 2004). The light time use diary contains a short but comprehensive list of pre-coded activities categories and respondents are required to indicate which they were involved in for each period of the day. The diary is designed for self-completion and its structure facilitates respondents to record multiple activities reflecting the reality that individuals often carry out more than one activity at a time (Gershuny 2003). The use of the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) time use survey also facilitates the comparison of the results of this study with that of the wider population. The ESRI conducted the first time use study of Irish population in 2005. The fact that the ESRI time use survey has been completed by 1089 people in 2005 and only 6% of respondents recorded problems in completing the diary strengthens the rigour of the research (McGinnity et al, 2005).

The time use survey contains a 26 item activity index including sleep, employment, housework, caring for children, socialising and sport. The weekday diary was yellow coloured diary and recorded how the respondent used his/her time over 15 minute intervals throughout one week day. The weekend day diary was a white diary (it is colour coded to help respondents distinguish it from the week day diary) and is otherwise similar to the weekday diary. It began at 4 am, concluding at 4 am the following morning and includes 96, 15 minute blocks of time for the respondents to complete. Respondents were asked to tick a box for each 15 minute time slot to indicate which activities from the list of 26 that they were engaged in throughout the day. Each participant was directed on how to fill out the diary and
provided with a completed sample diary and instructions (Appendix E). Investigations by Robinson (1999) of whether time use diaries produce reliable, comparable and replicable results produced results of correlation coefficients of .85 to .95 and agreements between 80-90%

Data analysis
Data was transferred from the time use surveys to Excel this method was chosen due to the small sample size. The data was condensed and analysed the total time was recorded in hours and minutes (hh:mm) for each activity throughout the day. Much of the results relied heavily on descriptive statistics. This analysis was most appropriate to this study due to the descriptive nature of the case study methodology and small sample size.

Ethical Considerations
Ethical approval for this study was granted by the University of Limerick Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants. Absolute anonymity could not be ensured due to the nature of a group intervention but confidentiality was assured throughout the process. The substitution of the participants name for ID numbers on study records and computer files insured there was no breach of confidentiality. Participants were informed they could withdraw from the study at any stage.
Results
This research aims to identify how participants utilize their time and if any changes in time use occur following participation in an occupational therapy work ready intervention. The time use patterns of all participants will be explored on a weekday. Their interaction with the physical and social environment will also be explored. The effect of the work ready programme will be analysed on two participants only.

Participants
Table one presents the participant information; four participants completed the time use measure for this strand of the research study, 2 males and 2 females. All 4 participants completed the pre intervention weekday and weekend time use diary however only 2 participants completed the post intervention weekday and weekend time use diary.

Table 1. Participant Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant ID</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Completed Pre Intervention Diary</th>
<th>Completed Post Intervention Diary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 presents the patterns of time use of the participants. The total time participants engaged in each activity is recorded in hours and minutes. Of the 26 activities by far the longest time is spent on sleeping followed by cleaning, sport activities, cooking and eating. There is a high proportion of unspecified time use especially for participant one. The average unspecified time for participant two, four and five is 1 hour 45 minutes.
Table 2 Patterns of Time Use of Unemployed Adults (hh:mm)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities/Participants</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>05:00</td>
<td>07:00</td>
<td>08:00</td>
<td>06:30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>00:45</td>
<td>01:15</td>
<td>00:30</td>
<td>01:15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Care</td>
<td>00:45</td>
<td>00:45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating</td>
<td>01:45</td>
<td>00:15</td>
<td>00:45</td>
<td>01:30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>00:30</td>
<td>01:00</td>
<td>01:00</td>
<td>00:15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>01:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>00:15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>02:30</td>
<td>01:15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>02:00</td>
<td>02:45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning</td>
<td>02:00</td>
<td>01:00</td>
<td></td>
<td>02:45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIY, Gardening</td>
<td>00:55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping/Appointments</td>
<td>00:30</td>
<td></td>
<td>02:45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td></td>
<td>02:15</td>
<td></td>
<td>01:15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting with friends and family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoning/texting</td>
<td>00:20</td>
<td></td>
<td>00:45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to Pubs/Restaurants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport/Outdoor activity</td>
<td>02:00</td>
<td>02:30</td>
<td>01:15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>01:00</td>
<td>00:45</td>
<td>02:30</td>
<td>00:45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies</td>
<td>01:30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>01:00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>03:00</td>
<td>03:45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading/Radio</td>
<td></td>
<td>01:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unscheduled</td>
<td>06:45</td>
<td>01:15</td>
<td>02:25</td>
<td>01:45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Utilizing the information from Table 2 it is possible to compare the participants by gender. The male participants spent much more time 3 hours and 3 hours 45 minutes respectively watching TV in comparison to their female counterparts of zero hours. Three of the participants engaged in cleaning activities for an average of 1 hour and 45 minutes. Exercise
features in three of the participant’s days for an average of 1 hour 38 minutes. Socialising and chatting to friends and family does not feature for any of the participants.

**Evaluating Impact of Work Ready Programme on Weekday Patterns of Time Use Pre Intervention**

*Figure 1. Participant 1 Weekday Time Use (hh:mm)*

![Graph showing time use pre and post intervention](image)

In order to examine time use the initial 27 categories were combined into the groups: personal care/resting (sleeping, resting/relaxing, personal care, eating), travel, paid employment/study (paid employment, study/education, breaks from study), housework/household tasks (cooking, cleaning, house repairs), shopping and appointments, caring for others (childcare, playing/talking with children, caring for adults), voluntary and religious tasks (voluntary activities, religious activities), socialising and going out (chatting with friends/family/neighbours, phoning/texting, eating out going to the pub, going out), sports and leisure (playing sports, exercising and outdoor activity, hobbies) and TV/radio/reading/computer use.

In analyzing Figure 1 it is apparent that participant’s one weekday activity pattern focused on personal care, housework, sports and leisure with a very high proportion on unspecified time. Their activity pattern post the intervention included a greater variety of activities caring for others, engaging in shopping/appointments and introducing sports and leisure activities.
Figure 2 highlights how Participant 4 engaged in activities pre the intervention. Personal care activities accounts for over 10 hours of their day. Participant 4 spent a similar amount of time engaged in TV and computer activities and household tasks pre and post the intervention. The increase in time of 1 hour 45 minutes spent engaged in leisure activities post the intervention and decrease in unspecified time use reflects changes that occurred in participants 4 time use patter over the course of the intervention.

*Figure 2. Participant 4 Weekday Time Use (hh:mm)*

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**Evaluating Impact of Work Ready Programme on Weekend Patterns of Time Use Post Intervention**

Figure 3 and 4 highlight the time use patterns of both participants over the weekend. Personal care and resting reflects the number one activity. Participants engaged in a greater range of activities over the course of the weekend introducing shopping and socialising activities. This increase is balanced out with a decrease in sports and leisure actives when compared to weekday activities.
Figure 3. Participant 1 Weekend Time Use (hh:mm)

Figure 4. Participant 4 Weekend Time Use (hh:mm)
Where People Were and Who they were with
Sections B and C of the diaries ask the participants to record who they were with and where there were. This provides us with information on their physical and social environment. Table 3 highlights where participants were located throughout the day. All participants spent over 75% of their time in the home.

Table 3. Physical Environment of Unemployed Adults Total time per day (hh:mm)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>At Home</th>
<th>Away from Home</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>18:00</td>
<td>02:00</td>
<td>04:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>08:00</td>
<td>00:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>20:30</td>
<td>01:30</td>
<td>02:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>21:00</td>
<td>03:00</td>
<td>00:00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Social Environment of Unemployed Adults Total Time per day (hh:mm)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No-one/I was alone</th>
<th>Spouse/partner</th>
<th>Own Children</th>
<th>With Others</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 1</td>
<td>05:30</td>
<td>15:00</td>
<td>02:30</td>
<td>00:00</td>
<td>02:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3</td>
<td>18:00</td>
<td>00:00</td>
<td>02:30</td>
<td>03:00</td>
<td>00:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 4</td>
<td>02:30</td>
<td>08:00</td>
<td>00:00</td>
<td>00:00</td>
<td>13:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>08:00</td>
<td>07:30</td>
<td>04:00</td>
<td>00:30</td>
<td>04:00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 reflects who participants engaged with throughout the day. There is a high level of missing data in this section therefore results should be interpreted with caution. Participant one, four and five spent an average of 3 hours with their children. The findings highlight that having a spouse or partner greatly reduces the amount of time spent alone.
Discussion

In the literature review it was highlighted individuals who appear to cope with the experience of unemployment most effectively were those who were able to establish balance between productivity and leisure activities (Fryer and Payne 1984). The result of the overall time use patterns of the four participants in this study reflects their ability to establish a balanced daily structure. This finding supports Wilcock’s (2008) and Clark’s (1997) view that occupation is a natural user of time. All participants engaged in sport and leisure activities, self care, and productivity activities in the form of household management tasks. This finding supports a study by Feather and Bond (1983) which found structured and purposeful use of time and involvement in activities among the unemployed, resulted in higher levels of self reported health and well being. It should be noted that the background literature in relation to unemployment is quite dated most studies referring to the 1980’s. The way in which time is used has changed considerably over the past 20 years, so it can be assumed that the relationships between health and engagement in certain activities may also have changed.

It is possible to deduce that the participants of this group could be referred to as active unemployed as they were self motivated to participate in the programme with no monetary incentive and their time use patterns reflect engagement in a range of activities throughout the day. Scanlan (20) identified two groups of unemployed individuals, active and passive. He argues that the active group were significantly healthier than the passive group. The present findings appear to be consistent with other research by Ball and Orford (2002), Walsh and Jackson (1995) and Winefield et al, (1992) which found that individuals who coped well with unemployment were those who were able to fill their time with meaningful activities.

A key finding is the notable difference in the average times spend on household work. In the ESRI (2005) survey the average time was 1 hour 50 minutes. In comparison participants in this study spent an average of 3 hours engaged in household tasks. This trend was also highlighted by Krueger and Muller (2008) who reported an increase in domestic work and child care among unemployed adults. Individuals experience and express meaning in their lives through their occupations (Jonsson et al, 2000). Individuals possess the potential to generate new meanings for occupations throughout their lifespan. This may reflect the participant’s attitudes to cleaning activities. Household work has the potential to be a valued productive occupation that may fill the void of their previous working role. This finding may also reflect a new temporal structure of the participants. This experience was highlighted in a
qualitative study by Jonssom et al, (2000) when exploring the occupational transition of retirees (N= 29). Occupations that were previously done in the evenings and weekends such as cleaning the house and laundry took place during daytime on weekdays.

The second question in this study was to identify any changes in the time use patterns of participants after completing the work ready programme. The activity pattern of participant’s one and four post the intervention reflected a greater variety of activities caring for others, engaging in shopping/appointments and introducing sports and leisure activities into their daily routines. The increase in time of 1 hour 45 minutes spent engaged in leisure activities post the intervention and decrease in unspecified time use, reflects changes that occurred in participants 4 time use pattern over the course of the intervention. It can thus be suggested that the work ready programme had a positive impact on the time use of both participants in relation to enhancing their occupational balance.

Occupation is contextualised within and is affected by the physical environment (Kielhofner 2002). Research has shown unemployed people tend to spend more time in and around the home than employed people (Hayes and Halford 1996). This trend is also evident within this study as participants spent over 75% of their day in the home. Warr (1984) associated this trend with the financial constraints of unemployment. He found that most available activities to unemployed people are those that can be done around the home, or which cost little.

Participants in this study spent a large proportion of their time alone specifically participant two. Socialising and chatting to friends and family does not feature for any of the participants. Law (2002) referred to the need for early intervention as patterns of social restriction and isolation begin early after a significant disruption in occupation. Fisher (2003) highlighted the benefits of social contact in relation to quality of life of individuals. However each participant utilized the computer for an average of 1 hour 15minutes. The development of technology enables people to communicate with social networks 24hours a day. Pemberton and Cox (2011) draw attention to the fact that it is increasingly difficult to segregate time into different occupations within a social context.

A consideration within this study is that relying on quantitative tools such as diaries or surveys limits the opportunity for the researcher to find out other important information specifically the subjective experience of time use. Prentland and colleagues (1998) alluded to the fact that a little time spent engaged in a highly personally satisfying activity achieving flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1992) may have a greater impact on an individual’s health and
wellbeing than more time spent in minimally satisfying activities. A full discussion of the subjective nature of time use lies beyond the scope of this study. To gain a complete understanding of how this population is coping with the occupational disruption of unemployment both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of this project should be reviewed.

Utilising the time use studies within this study enabled the researcher to capture the context and flow of activities inherent in the occupation patterns of unemployed adults (Christiansen and Townsend 2010). The findings reflect that it is possible to live well with unemployment. The fact that the participants demonstrated motivation to engage in the intervention reflects their ability to adapt to the occupational and temporal disruption of being unemployed.

Limitations
A number of limitations can be identified in this study. The findings of this study need to be interpreted with caution and cannot be assumed generalizable to the unemployment population at large due to the small sample size. The reader should bear in mind that voluntary participation in the programme might have biased the findings towards participants with high motivation and positive attitude towards return to work (Schuring et al, 2009).

If replicating this study in the future the time use survey would require some modification. Despite positive reports from the ESRI on utilizing this survey with a cohort of over 1000 people the participants of this study reported that the survey was not user friendly and on first impression looks quite complicated and time consuming. This may have been a factor in the low number of participants with only 50% completing the measurement. The layout of the pages is quite messy in appearance some participants reported that it felt like time slots were missing when flicking pages. A larger format breaking the day down in to self reported time slots as opposed to 15 minute intervals may contribute to a more comprehensive completion of the survey. I would suggest more comprehensive assessments of time structure focusing more on the occupational therapy language self care, productivity and leisure should be used in future studies for example utilizing the Modified Occupational Questionnaire currently in press (Scanlon and Bundy in press).

An additional limitation could be that the surveys were completed immediately after the programme was completed. This may not have been adequate time for the participants to have fully implemented changes in their lifestyle.
Implications for occupational therapy practice and future research

In relation to occupational therapy researching time use of individuals and populations can be utilised in the development of intervention programmes and in the development of policy supporting the health benefits of occupational engagement (Farnworth 2004).

Literature in relation to unemployment within the field of Occupational Therapy and Occupational Science has primarily focused on unemployment in relation to disability and illness. This study provides information the time use patterns of people who are unemployed as a result of redundancy. As this is a growing trend in Ireland and worldwide Occupational Therapists may have a prominent role working with this client group. Therefore there is a need to develop understanding of the occupational needs of this client group. Interventions aimed towards enhancing the well being of unemployed people are essential, interventions focused on improving the quality of time use focusing on positive temporal adaptation may be one solution.

This study is intended to add to the limited evidence on unemployment interventions within the field of Occupational Therapy, extending to a well population. Further advancement of this study would primarily involve a larger sample, as was originally intended. In future investigations it might be possible to use a different time use diary that is more user-friendly and elicits both quantitative and qualitative information. Occupational Therapists possess the unique skills that can assist this population group in living well while unemployed hence reduce long term health effects of unemployment. The extensive literature on the negative implications of unemployment for health and wellbeing provide strong evidence to support occupational therapy interventions with unemployed populations. Increased knowledge of how occupational adaptation occurs following unemployment will assist occupational therapists to support individuals through this transition. It will also enable health promotion initiatives to maintain health and wellbeing while unemployed.

Conclusion

In summary, the findings of this research are tentative due to the small sample size. The study met its aim’s by identifying how participants utilize their time during unemployment. It demonstrates that engagement in meaningful occupations is essential for a positive
occupational adaptation to unemployment. Participants adapted to unemployment by restructuring their daily routine. This confirms the findings in the literature review that having structure and routine facilitates living well while unemployed.

Overall, the findings highlighted some subtle changes in the patterns of time use of participants. However due to the small sample size it is not possible to generalise how effective occupational therapy interventions are in promoting living well while unemployed. The findings highlighted that the physical and social environment, in relation to where and with whom people utilize their time, should be a key consideration in any future research with unemployed population. The research gained an insight into the patterns of time use of participants. These findings add to the limited literature that occupational therapy has the potential to facilitate occupational change in unemployed populations. Considering unemployment is a major issue globally and its health-related consequences, far too little has been done to develop effective interventions aimed at facilitating the concept of living well while unemployed. Interventions specifically targeting unemployment are a potential area of research and practice for Occupational Therapy. This provides the occupational therapy profession with the opportunity to work beyond the typical boundaries of healthcare.
References:


Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Poster

Returning to Work:
Staying Job Ready

If you are:
- Currently unemployed
- Over 18 years old
- Unemployed for less than 24 months

This programme is for you!

From May to July 2011 the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of Limerick is offering weekly 3 hour group sessions designed to help people who are unemployed stay healthy.

Sessions include:
- stress management • time management
- career exploration • job seeking • being part of your community and • job skill development.

To learn more about this programme and the research study, please contact Nancy Salmon at:

Phone: (061) 734275
Email: nancy.salmon@ul.ie
Appendix B

Volunteer Information Sheet

Evaluation of an Occupational Therapy Programme for People who are Unemployed

You are invited to take part in a study evaluating an occupational therapy intervention programme for unemployed people run by the Occupational Therapy Department at the University of Limerick. You can take part in the programme without taking part in this evaluation of the programme.

Taking part in the study will involve filling out a time use diary before and after the program. This diary will reflect how you spend time on one weekday and one weekend day before and after the programme. It will take 30 minutes to complete each individual diary.

There are no risks associated with taking part in this study. Getting involved in this programme will not affect your benefit/allowance. All of the information you provide as part of the research study will be kept confidential at all times. However, because you will be involved in a group occupational therapy program anonymity is not possible. Your name or identifying information about you will not be reported in any publications arising from this research. There is no compensation or payment for taking part in the study.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and everyone is completely free to refuse to participate. Participants can withdraw or stop the study at any time without any consequences. You can simply contact Nancy Salmon via email or phone and say you don’t want to continue with the research study. No questions will be asked.

Please contact Nancy Salmon if you have any questions about this study nancy.salmon@ul.ie

Occupational Therapy Department

University of Limerick

(061) 234275)

If you have any concerns about this study please contact:

Chairman Education and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee

University of Limerick

Tel (061) 23410
Appendix C

Volunteer Consent Form

Evaluation of an Occupational Therapy Programme for
People who are Unemployed

I ______________________am aware that I am being invited to participate voluntarily in a research study evaluating the effect of an occupational therapy intervention on the time use of unemployed people.

- I have read and understand the volunteer information sheet.
- I have been informed by the project manager, Nancy Salmon or her designate that:
  - The purpose of this research is to assess the effectiveness of the 8 week occupational therapy intervention programme.
  - My participation will involve filling out a time use diary before and after the programme.
  - My participation and responses will be kept confidential at all times. I will not be identified, nor will identifying information about me be reported in any publications or presentations arising from this research.
  - My participation in this research is completely voluntary and I am free to refuse to participate.
  - If I agree to participate, I can withdraw at any time without consequences.
  - If I do withdraw from the study I can still remain in the occupational therapy intervention programme.

I UNDERSTAND THAT BY SIGNING THIS FORM I AM GIVING MY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY DESCRIBED ABOVE.

I have received two copies of this form, one for me to keep and one to return to the researcher, Nancy Salmon or her designate.

_________________________________________ ____________________________
Signature of Participant Date

_________________________________________ ____________________________
Signature of Researcher Date
Appendix D: ESRI Time Use Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Code</th>
<th>EARLY MORNING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.00 am 15 30 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>PERSONAL CARE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>PERSONAL CARE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>PERSONAL CARE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>TRAVEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>PAID EMPLOYMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>STUDY, EDUCATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>BREAKS FROM WORK OR STUDY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>COOKING &amp; preparing food (including making lunches),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>CLEANING the house, doing the laundry, ironing, hoovering, tidying up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>HOUSE REPAIRS &amp; maintenance, DIY, gardening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>SHOPPING, MESSAGES/ERRANDS &amp; APPOINTMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>CARING FOR OTHERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>PLAYING AND TALKING WITH CHILDREN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>CARING FOR ADULTS with special needs or elderly persons,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOLUNTARY AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY Attending religious services, prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIALISING AND GOING OUT</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>PHONING/TEXTING FAMILY, FRIENDS, NEIGHBOURS include writing a letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>EATING OUT/GOING TO THE PUB include going to cafes, bars, restaurants, nightclubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>GOING OUT to concerts, theatre, cinema, galleries, sporting events, bookies, bingo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPORTS &amp; LEISURE</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>COMPUTER/INTERNET FOR PERSONAL USE e.g. play station, x-box, surfing the net, email, using computer for leisure, shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>HOBBIES AND OTHER LEISURE ACTIVITIES e.g. playing musical instruments, playing cards, other games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV, RADIO, READING</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>READING a book, magazine or newspaper or LISTENING to radio or music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. WHO WERE YOU WITH?</td>
<td>No-one/I was alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spouse/partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Own children under 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other person or people I know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. WHERE WERE YOU?</td>
<td>At home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Away from home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E

Instructions for diary completion

How to complete the diary

The aim of this diary is to show what you were doing, where you were and who you were with for each 15 minutes in the day in question. The diary starts at 4 am. Please take it with you and fill it out now and then during the day.

A. What you were doing

A number of activities are listed on the side of the page for each 15 minutes. We want you to mark what you were doing with a tick (✓).

We are particularly interested in your main activity during each quarter hour. If you were doing two things at once, tick (✓) both. If you were doing more than two things, decide which two activities took most of your attention. If you make a mistake please just cross it out.

Sometimes it is difficult to decide which category an activity falls into. If this is the case, tick the box that comes closest to what you were doing. Please ensure you have some activity ticked for every 15 minutes, even if this is ‘sleep’ (code 1) or ‘resting/relaxing’ (code 2).

Note that people who are travelling in the course of their work, e.g. delivery men, sales people should code this as paid work (code 6). Similarly people who are paid for caring, e.g. childminders or care workers should code this as paid work.

B. Who you were with?

Please show if you were with anybody by ticking the appropriate box at the bottom of the diary for every 15 minutes. By being with someone we mean either doing something together with them or just being around someone you know.

C. Where you were?

Tick whether you were at home or elsewhere for every 15 minutes.

Questions about your diary day

When you have filled in the diary, please answer the questions on the last page. These questions will provide us with important information about you and your diary day.