The process of coping with dismissal: A study of the life control and resources of dismissed female

The aim of the study was to chart the resources and background factors involved in the life control of dismissed, unemployed women, previously working in the budget account centre of the Kouvola office of Finnish National Savings Bank and dismissed in 1993. The study is a continuation of the Master's Thesis written in 1995, dealing with the same group. The aim of the study was to describe the changes in the central features of the life control of the employees after the dismissal. A particular emphasis was put on the stability/changes in various sub-groups of the dismissed employees, categorized on the basis of their life control resources, as well as their "coping" during years 1995-1999, the period after the dismissal. Another point of focus was whether it was possible to make predictions about the coping vs. alienation on the basis of the situation in 1995 - whether the dismissal had led to one inevitable outcome. The frame of reference of the study was based on previous research into unemployment. The outlining key concepts were life control and resources of life control. Life control was described in terms of both internal and external life control. Both social background factors and social support were viewed as external life control resources. The description of internal life control resources was based on a reliance on the manageability of life and a feeling of happiness. The material studied in the research was gathered using a standardized telephone interview questionnaire, and the method used in the gathering of the material was telephone interview. The total number of observations in the original material was 119, and the telephone inquiry yielded 98 responses. The basic quantitative and qualitative methods used in the field of social studies were applied in the analysis of the material, the main emphasis being on the quantitative approach. The definition was mainly based on viewing the variables in terms of distribution, averages and deviations. At the first stage of the study, correlation coefficients and factor analysis were applied in order to clarify the parameters of the various conceptual fields and to emulate the compound variables. At the second stage of the study (1999), the subgroups were classified on the basis of a cluster analysis, and the significance of life control in the various subgroups was charted through cross-tabulation. The open-ended questions of the qualitative material were mainly used for the purpose of illustrating the quantitative approach. Despite the constant uniformity of the subgroups observed during the years 1995-1999 in terms of coping/alienation, a survey of case studies carried out in 1999 seems to have confirmed the outcome of the study made in 1995, namely that alienation and coping can be experienced in a variety of ways. It seems that previous strength in terms of life control does not necessarily imply coping with life after the dismissal. On the other hand, previous deficiencies in life control do not seem to imply a lack of solutions in problematic situations. In addition to the material based on telephone interviews, the primary sources used in the research process were studies to which unemployment was observed from the viewpoint of life control/alienation.

Keywords: unemployment, life control, alienation