An Examination of PIAAC Data for Unemployed Adults Aged 45 to 74

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• Middle-aged and older adults important segment of U.S. labor force
• Dynamic job market requires continuous skill-upgrading
• Little previous research has focused on these age groups
• Current study fills important gap in research
Study Purpose

• To examine associations between key human capital indicators and employment in the second half of adult life
• Focused on ages 45 to 74
Research Questions

1. Lifelong learning by employment status: Are there differences in participation in adult education and training (AET) based on employment status?

2. Literacy skills and use by employment status: Are there differences in literacy skills or use of reading and writing skills at home based on employment status?
Research Questions

3. **Literacy skills and use by retirement status**: Are there differences in literacy skills or use of reading and writing skills at home among the retired, employed, and unemployed?
Methodology

- Key variables examined include demographic characteristics, employment and health status, literacy, lifelong learning, and skill use at home.
- Indices for skill use at home (e.g., reading books and newspapers) derived from series of PIAAC survey items.
- Skill use at home examined to understand informal learning.
Methodology

- Used SAS macro program to account for complex survey design
- Weighted descriptive statistics
- Binary logistic regression
Findings: Research Question 1

• Overall, employed participate more in AET than unemployed or out of the labor force
• For all employment groups, people with higher levels of education were more likely to participate in AET
Findings Research Question 1: Participation in AET Ages 45 – 65 (percent)

Overall
- Employed: 64.2%
- Unemployed: 43.0%
- Out of the Labor Force: 21.8%

Associate’s degree or higher
- Employed: 81.4%
- Unemployed: 62.0%
- Out of the Labor Force: 36.7%

Less than an associate’s degree
- Employed: 51.4%
- Unemployed: 33.1%
- Out of the Labor Force: 15.7%

1. Reference Group
Findings Research Question 2: Literacy Skills and Employment Status Ages 45 - 64

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Literacy Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed$^1$</td>
<td>279.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>259.5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of the labor force</td>
<td>272.3*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Reference group
Reading/Writing Skill use at Home and Retirement Status: Ages 45 - 65

- There was a significant difference between employed (2.11) and retired (1.93) in the use of writing skills at home
- There was no significant difference between employed and retired in the use of reading skills at home
Findings Research Question 3: Literacy Skills and Retirement Status
Ages 45 - 64

1. Reference group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Literacy Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>273.6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>280.5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed¹</td>
<td>247.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Reference group
Reading/Writing Skill use at Home and Employment Status: Ages 66 - 75

- There was no significant difference between employed and retired in the use of reading skills at home
- There was no significant difference between employed and retired in the use of writing skills at home
Policy and Practice Implications

- Programs are needed to better inform middle-aged and older adults about the importance of lifelong learning and continuous skills upgrades.
- More targeted outreach for lifelong learning opportunities are necessary, especially for the unemployed, out of the labor force, and retired.