

“Working longer in Germany?”

Dr. Melanie Ebener
University of Wuppertal, Germany



Department of
Occupational Health Science
University of Wuppertal, Germany

Research funded by:



Bundesministerium
für Arbeit und Soziales

Overview

1. Background & Questions
2. Methods
3. Results (descriptive/explorative)
 - work ability and motivation among older workers
 - reasons for early exit
 - Under which circumstances would older workers be willing to work longer?
4. Findings/conclusions/limitations



Background: *(early) exit in Germany*

- Germany is one of the fastest ageing societies in Europe.
- In the next ten years > 9 Million baby boomers (born 1955 – 1965) will reach retirement age.
- For 20 years, employment rates among older workers in Germany have been greatly increasing
 - but not for the “older old” > 63 years.

→ What are the reasons for early labour market exit among baby boomers in Germany?



lida („leben in der Arbeit“)

German Cohort Study on work, age, health and work participation



- Participants

- birth cohorts 1959 and 1965 and 1971_(2022/23, W4)
- representative for socially insured workers of that age

- Wave 1 $N_{2011} = 6.585$

- Wave 2 $N_{2014} = 4.244$

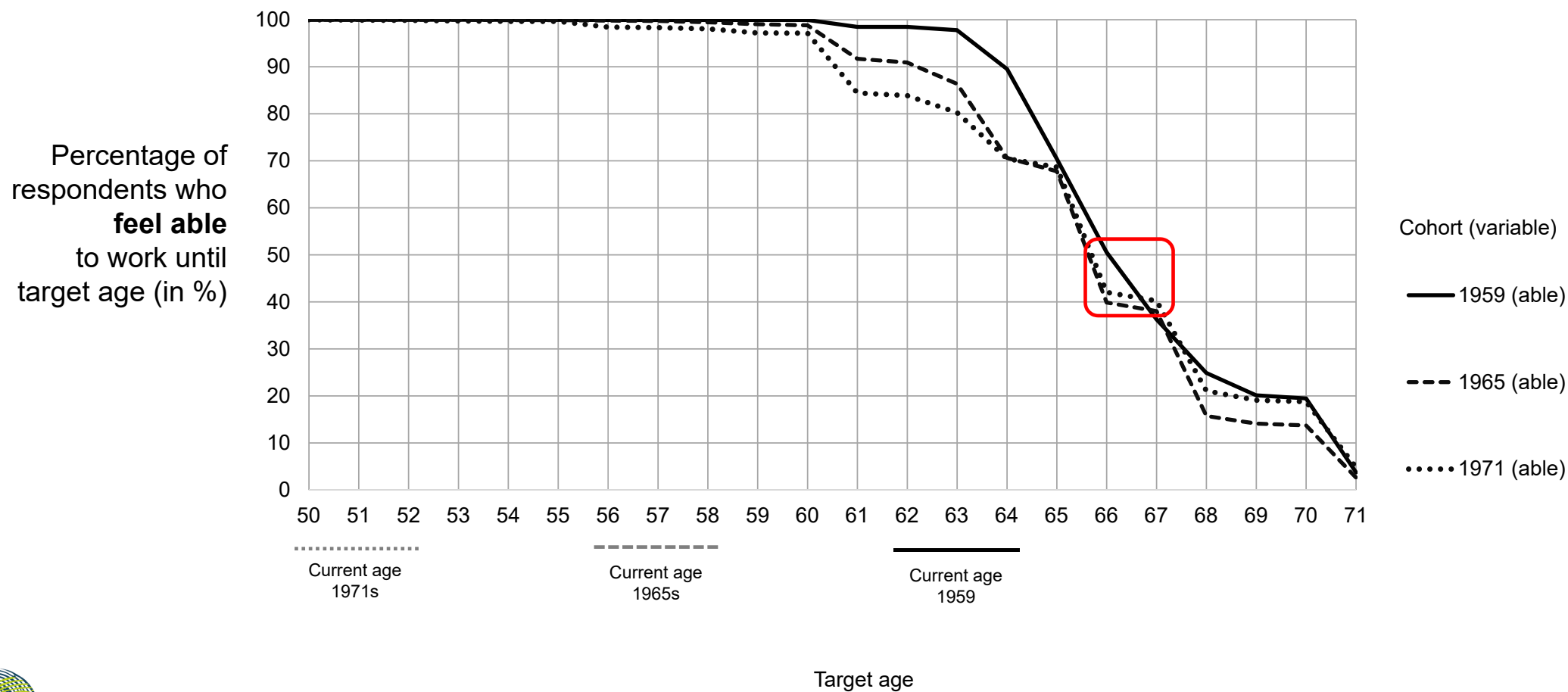
- Wave 3 $N_{2018} = 3.586$

- Wave 4 $N_{2022/23} = 8.884$ this presentation

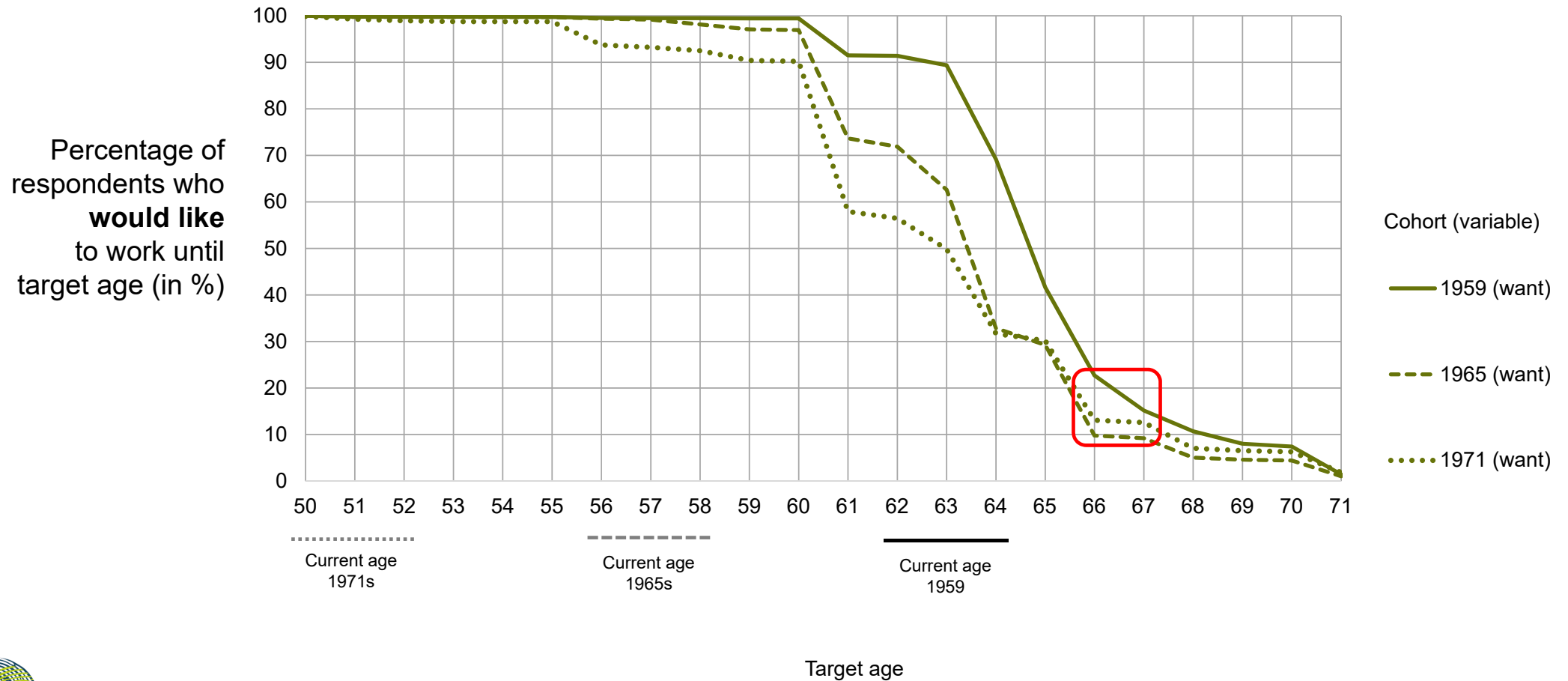
- every 3 years: personal interview (CAPI) at home (2022/23 also CAPI-by-phone)
- content: work, health, perspectives, private life...
- more: www.lida-studie.de



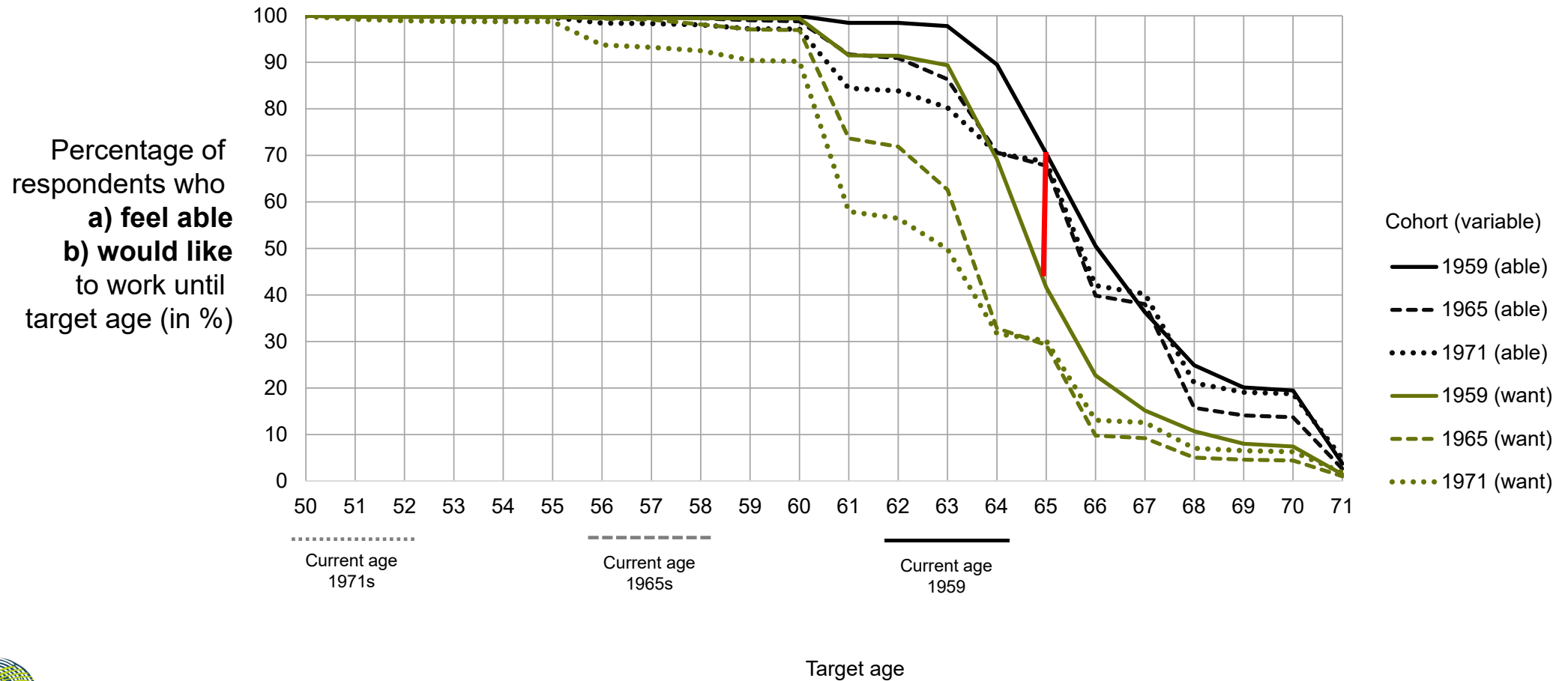
„How long do you **feel able** to work?“ (*work ability*)



„How long **would you like** to work?“ (*motivation*)



Comparison work ability / motivation to work



Why do many older workers want to leave early (in the future)?

“this reason plays a major role“



Only workers wanting to work until max. 64 years, 2022/23



Under which circumstances would they work longer?

I might be willing to work longer if ...



77%

“Could this be a reason for you to work longer than you wanted to?”



Findings

- Only a minority of older workers in Germany feels **able** to work till statutory retirement age.
- However, the percentage of people who are **motivated** to do so is even lower in different cohorts.
- Dominant reasons point to a **need of self-determination** and **feeling of entitlement**, rather than **poor work & health**.

Conclusions

- Maybe we should consider “early exit” (more than before) as a cultural phenomenon.
- If political and economic forces in Germany wish to retain more older workers in employment, they have to succeed in making them *want* to.
- An approach that includes re-consideration of working conditions seems important for that.

Limitations

- Self-report measures, single items
- Study not designed to detect “culture” as such.



References

Early exit culture in Germany (lidA findings Wave 4, 2022/23, in German)

- Hasselhorn HM, Ebener M (2023) Frühzeitiger Ausstieg der Babyboomer aus dem Erwerbsleben – Ergebnisse der lidA-Studie. Deutsche Rentenversicherung 02/2023 152-174

lidA study

- Hasselhorn HM, Peter R, Rauch A et al. (2014) Cohort profile: The lidA Cohort Study – a German Cohort Study on Work, Age, Health and Work Participation. International Journal of Epidemiology, 2014, 1736-1749. doi: 10.1093/ije/dyu021

Role of health

- Hasselhorn HM, Leinonen T, Bültmann U, Sivesind Mehlum I, du Prel JB, Kiran S, Majery N, Solovieva S, de Wind A (2022) The differentiated roles of health in the transition from work to retirement – conceptual and methodological challenges and avenues for future research. Discussion Paper. Scand J Work Environ Health. 2022;48(4):312-321. doi:10.5271/sjweh.4017



Thank you!

Dr. Melanie Ebener
Department of Occupational Health Science
University of Wuppertal
Gaußstraße 20, D-42119 Wuppertal, Germany
Phone +49 (0)202 439 3017
www.arbwiss.uni-wuppertal.de
ebener@uni-wuppertal.de



**BERGISCHE
UNIVERSITÄT
WUPPERTAL**



What are the reasons for early exit among early retirees?

	early old age retirement (with and without deductions, n=370)	disability retirement (n=269)
Motivation	more time with family / friends wanted to stop as early as possible	
Work Ability	work was too hard had reached pensionable age	
Health	health made it necessary more time for myself	
	no financial need to continue working double burden: household / job work was no fun anymore partner already retired caring obligations for dependents got a good leaving offer wanted to do something else commuting was too far wasn't needed at work any longer became unemployed others pressed me to leave	

proportion of retirees stating:
"this reason has contributed *somewhat or a lot*"

