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Temporary contracts: effect on job satisfaction and personal lives of recent PhD graduates / Cathelijn J. F. Waaijer

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Abstract

In this study, we assess the effects of temporary employment on job satisfaction and the personal lives of recent PhD graduates. Temporary employment is becoming increasingly prevalent in many sectors, but has been relatively common in academia, especially for early career scientists. Labor market theory shows temporary employment to have a conspicuous negative influence on the job satisfaction and well-being of employees, but also identifies groups that may be exempt from these negative influences, such as the highly educated. Here, we study the effect of temporary employment on the highest educated group in the labor force, PhD graduates. We present findings of a survey of 1133 respondents who obtained their PhD from one of five Dutch universities between 2008 and 2012. Compared to PhDs employed on a permanent contract, PhDs on a temporary contract are less satisfied with their terms of employment, especially if they have no prospect of permanence. Temporary contracts with no prospect of permanence also decrease satisfaction with job content. Conversely, self-employment increases satisfaction with job content. Educational level required for the job also

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influences job satisfaction to a large degree: working below PhD level negatively affects job satisfaction. Finally, the type of contract affects different aspects of the personal lives of PhDs, such as the ability to obtain a mortgage, the stability of family life, and the possibility to start a family. In conclusion, we show that the highest educated, i.e., PhD graduates are not exempt from the negative influences of temporary employment.(HRK / Abstract übernommen) Waajer, Cathelijn J. F., E-Mail. C:F:J:WAAIJER@CWTS:LEIDENUNIV:NL