

How knowledge is power: researchers link education, personal control

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Well-educated people feel a greater sense of personal control in their lives and new University of Toronto research pinpoints some of the reasons why.

A study conducted by U of T sociology professor Scott Schieman and PhD candidate Gabriele Plickert used data from a 2005 sample of 1,800 working adults in the United States.

The study found there are a number of reasons why well-educated people feel more personal control over outcomes and events in their lives:

- The nature of their work is different. Well-educated people tend to have higher status occupations with significantly more control over their work schedules.
- They are also involved in work that is challenging, interesting and enriching.
- Their wages are higher.
- Education gives them a greater sense of trust in people and traditions, so they are more effective at using relationships to help them succeed.

"We already know that people who feel personal control over situations in their lives are happier and healthier, so it's clear that this sense of control is extremely valuable," Schieman said. "This study helps us to understand how and why education contributes to building the critical resource that determines psychological and physical well-being."

Provided by University of Toronto

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