

Spaniards choose stable jobs over ones related to their training

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Spaniards choose stable jobs over ones related to their training. Credit: SINC

"If you study, you are more likely to get a stable job, even if it doesn't have anything to do with your training". This is the thinking of workers living in Spain, according to a research study by the Pompeu Fabra University (UPF), which studied the level of over-education in Spain, Italy and France, and the relationship between this and temporary work.

"This can be explained by the high levels of employment [insecurity](#) in Spain in comparison with other European countries", Luis Ortiz, author of the study and a researcher at the UPF, tells SINC.

The study, which has been published in the journal *Work, Employment and Society*, shows that in Spain, unlike Italy or France, workers can end up "using their education in a distorted way" to obtain a permanent job,

even if this is not related to their studies. Employers also tend to use education as a filter to recruit the most educated people for permanent [jobs](#), instead of choosing those with the actual studies required for the post.

"I chose three countries (France, Italy and Spain) to study the impact of temporary employment on the likelihood of over-education, given that these countries' education systems are similar in terms of standardisation and stratification, but have very different levels of temporary employment and conversion of temporary contracts into permanent ones", says Ortiz.

The study used data provided by the European Community Household Panel (ECHP), which the Spanish State as a whole takes part in. The researcher studied the data for the 1994 - 2001 period for respondents who reported that they were working.

Although the rate of temporary employment has risen in all three countries, Spain still has the largest proportion of temporary employees in the whole of Europe, at more than 30%. In addition, the rate of conversion of temporary contracts into permanent ones is very low (in 1987 it stood at 18%, fell to 5% in 1996, and currently stands at 14%).

The UPF researcher adds: "The excessive levels of temporary employment, rather than simply unemployment, in Spain lead to distortions in the education system. If the labour market is not improved, the education system will not improve either. People in Spain feel that the more education they have, the better, when we should be aiming for better [education](#) that is more suited to labour market requirements".

Temporary work and over-education

"You could think that, as most temporary workers in Spain are young,

the probability of being over-educated is likely to be among this age group. However, the results of my study show the opposite to be the case. In Italy and France, having a temporary job increases the likelihood of a person being over-educated. However, in our country, it reduces it", Ortiz explains.

"In Spain, having a temporary job doesn't guarantee you easy access to a secure job as it does in other countries. People don't see anything strange in avoiding temporary jobs by taking competitive exams to enter the public service or choosing stable jobs that they are over qualified for", the researcher concludes.

More information: Luis Ortiz, "Not the right job, but secure one: over-education and temporary employment in France, Italy and Spain", *Work, Employment and Society* 24 (1): 47 - 64, marzo de 2010.

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