

Self-employed happier at work despite long hours and more uncertainty

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Self-employed people are happier at work. Credit: University of Exeter

New research has identified a key ingredient to securing a happy and fulfilling career - working for yourself.

A new study has shown the self-employed both enjoy their [work](#) more and find it more rewarding – despite longer hours and less [job security](#) - than those who work for others.

The research, carried out by Business experts from the Universities of Sheffield and Exeter, showed self-employed people felt more engaged with their work, predominantly because they enjoyed more freedom to innovate, and influence their working environments.

The study is published in the journal *Work, Employment and Society*.

Professor Ilke Inceoglu, from the University of Exeter Business School and co-author of the study said: "Being engaged in their [jobs](#) makes people feel energised and pleased with their own contribution".

"Measuring how engaged people are in their work is therefore a really useful way to gauge their wellbeing and shows we must move beyond just looking at job satisfaction."

For the study, the researchers examined data collected with 5,000 workers in the UK, the United States, Australia and New Zealand across a number of sectors including health, finance and education. A further analysis was undertaken of employees across four job grades - non-managerial workers, supervisors, middle managers, and senior managers and directors. The self-employed workers who took part in the research worked in a range of sectors, including management consultancy, financial services, retail, education, insurance and real estate.

The study found that those who were self-employed were not only amongst the most engaged, but also experienced greater opportunities for innovation, achieving challenging targets and meeting high standards. Non-managerial company workers were the least satisfied and engaged.

Co-author Professor Peter Warr, from the Institute of Work Psychology at the University of Sheffield, added: "Professional workers who are self-employed really value the autonomy they have. They have the freedom to innovate, express their own views, have influence beyond their own role and compete with other companies and [people](#)."

"They really get to use their own expertise, so don't seem to mind working long hours. They can find meeting high standards really fulfilling."

More information: Work orientations, well-being and job content of

self-employed and employed professionals is published in the journal *Work, Employment and Society*.

Provided by University of Exeter

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