

Study identifies way for employers to retain casual workers

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Job enrichment may be an important tool for retaining seasonal frontline staff, according to a new University of Waterloo study.

"Managers can use job enrichment to make work more engaging and to develop a bond between staff and the organization," says David Drewery, a Ph.D. candidate in Waterloo's Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies. "Job enrichment aims to design [work conditions](#) in ways that maximize meaning, responsibility and knowledge."

The study surveyed 124 seasonal student workers who had just completed a four-month-long summer job to find out whether they intended to return the following year, and the motivations behind their intentions.

It found that positive feelings about work in general (work engagement) and a psychological attachment to the organization accounted for a strong desire to return to work. Both [work engagement](#) and [organizational commitment](#) were higher when students perceived that their [jobs](#) were enriched.

"Commitment was particularly important, which means that simply making work 'fun' is not enough to retain staff," said Drewery. "Staff need to find their work meaningful, and must feel a [deep connection](#) to the organization.

"Retaining contingent staff is a key management issue because turnover

is very expensive," Drewery said. "We already know that job enrichment can have great benefits for full-time employees, but this is the first study to show that [part-time](#) and casual frontline staff also benefit from job enrichment."

The research did not study the role of compensation in job retention, but rather other motivations of employees who were at the beginning of their careers.

"These results show that managers need to set clear expectations, remind frontline staff of the positive impact they have on their clients, give staff the tools they need and then trust them to use them appropriately," said Drewery. "These are the building blocks of job enrichment."

The study, "Retaining contingent frontline staff through job enrichment: the case of seasonal student workers," was authored by David Drewery and published in *Managing Sport and Leisure*.

More information: David Drewery. Retaining contingent frontline staff through job enrichment: the case of seasonal student workers, *Managing Sport and Leisure* (2019). [DOI: 10.1080/23750472.2019.1684835](#)

Provided by University of Waterloo

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