FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

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> '40% of office workers were lonely at work even before the pandemic'
>
> NOREENA HERTZ
> Economist, honorary professor at University College London and author of 'The Lonely Century'

DOES LONELINESS LURK IN TEMP WORK?

- Loneliness (at work) is a hot topic.
- It has not yet been empirically tested whether temporary workers experience more loneliness at work as opposed to permanent workers.
- The share of temporary employees in the EU is on the rise.
- The association between working temporarily and job satisfaction is complex. De Cuyper at al. (2008) invite researchers to investigate its mediators. Loneliness at work is such a possible mediator.

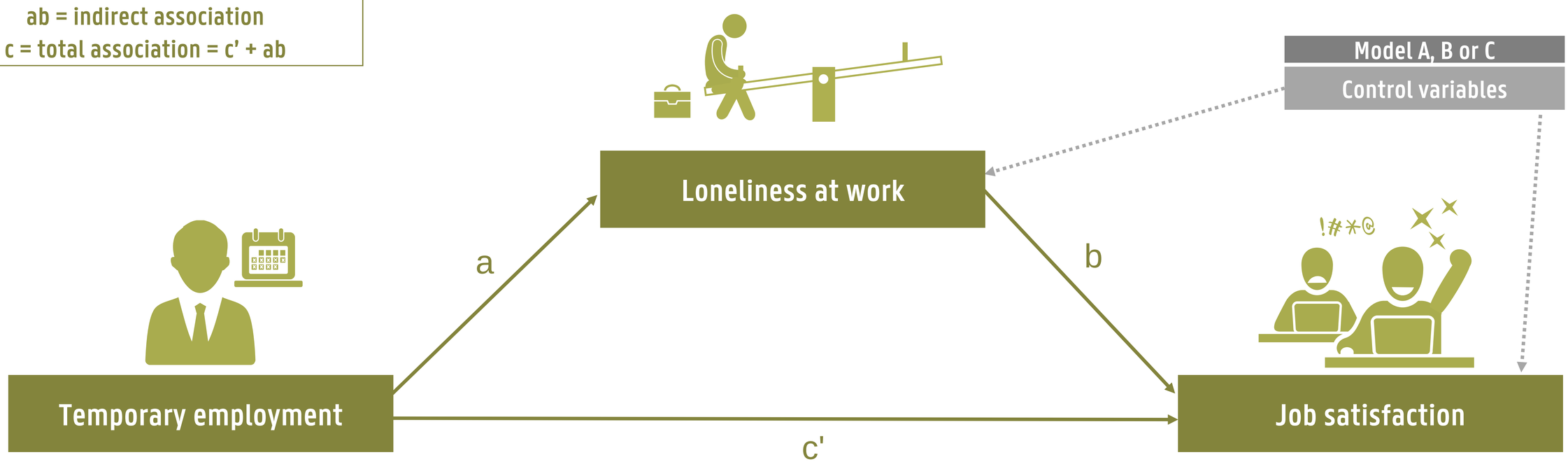
RQ 1: Is there an association between working temporarily and loneliness at work?

Investigate association a in the mediation model below

RQ 2: Does loneliness at work mediate the association between working temporarily and job satisfaction?

Investigate association ab in the mediation model below

c' = direct association
ab = indirect association
c = total association = c' + ab



Three versions of the mediation model

Model A: Indisputably exogenous control variables

- Gender
- Age
- Educational level
- Personality traits
- Religious
- Rural / urban

+

Model B: Presumably exogenous control variables

- Relationship
- Children
- Living together
- Good health
- Good social life
- Good family life

+

Model C: Presumably endogenous control variables

- Full-time or part-time
- Job tenure
- Homeworking
- Job complexity
- Specialized knowledge
- Interaction outside the organisation
- Supervisory position

Key findings

RQ 1	Model A	a = 0.32***	(SE = 0.11)	Answer to RQ 1:	Yes!
	Model B	a = 0.28***	(SE = 0.11)		Yes!
	Model C	a = 0.23**	(SE = 0.11)		Yes!
RQ 2	Model A	ab = −0.14***	(SE = 0.05)	Answer to RQ 2:	Yes!
	Model B	ab = −0.11***	(SE = 0.04)		Yes!
	Model C	ab = −0.09**	(SE = 0.04)		Yes!

Data

Survey | (N = 1,358) | Flanders | Private sector employees | FEB / OCT 2019

Quota on:

(i) part-time / full-time
(ii) educational level
(iii) gender
(iv) age

Temporary (code 1) or permanent contract (code 0)

0 (not satisfied at all) to 10 (totally satisfied)

Factor based on four items (short version of the R-UCLA loneliness scale (e.g. 'No one at work really knows me well'): strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

Conclusion

First research that empirically concludes temporary employees experience more loneliness at work as opposed to permanent employees.

We shed light on the complex association between working temporarily and job satisfaction by concluding that loneliness at work mediates this association.

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