Impact of training on people’s employability: Denmark

This is the Danish contribution to the topic report on the impact of training on people's employability coordinated via questionnaire by AWWW GmbH for the European Working Conditions Observatory.

1. General remarks

Please describe the methodology of the survey(s) and the definitions used.

Labour Force Survey (Statistics Denmark)

Based on quarterly interviews of 15,000 people of the Danish population aged 15-66 years. Each person selected participates in two quarters and in one quarter a year afterwards. Those who cannot be reached by telephone are asked to fill out a written questionnaire sent to them by mail. Data concerning job type are given most recently in ‘The Labour Force Survey’, 1. Quarter 2004, Statistics Denmark.

The Danish Work Environment Cohort Study 2000 (National Institute of Occupational Health)

An ongoing national interview survey, carried out so far in 1990, 1995 and 2000. The interviewees are chosen at random. In 1990, 8,664 participated. For 1995 and 2000, the figures were 8,583 each year.

The Danish Work Environment Cohort Study 2000 (DWECS) also contains data about temporary employment (Question B12).

2. Extent and structure of the non-permanent workforce

Give data on the extent of employment in a fixed-term or a temporary agency job.

According to Statistics Denmark and the Danish Labour Force Survey, as many as 240,000 wage earners or 10% of all wage earners are working on a fixed-term contract.

With regard to temporary agency workers, data extracted from Statistics Denmark (2001) determine the number of temporary agency workers to be 30,565 persons, which is equivalent to 1.1% of the working population.

Between 1993 and 2001, there was a rapid and constant increase in the number of temporary agency workers. In 1993, an estimated total of 1,538 persons were employed by temporary work agencies, rising to 30,565 in 2001 (http://www.eurofound.eu.int/ewco/reports/DK0408TR01/DK0408TR01_4.htm).

An article from October 2003 argues that the actual figure of temporary agency workers is as high as 110,000 persons (http://politiken.dk/VisArtikel.iasp/PageID=290836#Scene_1).

The latest data that this report has been able to obtain about temporary agencies, to indicate their size and how many people they employ, are from 2003. Statistics Denmark figures show that temporary agencies had a total revenue of 3,250.9 million DDK in 2003 (Danmarks Statistik, www.dst.dk).
Give data on the structure of the workforce on non-permanent contracts, by education, occupation, age, sex, sector or company size.

There are no quantitative or qualitative data available covering the question.

It must be noted that the following questionnaire responses are based on the DWECS, from which it is not possible to distinguish between temporary agency workers and people on temporary contracts. It is only possible to know whether people are employed in a temporary position or permanently employed.

3. Company training initiatives

3.1 General

- Give data on training initiatives provided by the company according to contract status and, in the case of non-permanent employees, according to fixed-term or temporary agency employment.
- Give data on training measures according to the structure of the workforce on non-permanent contracts by education, occupation, age, sex, sector or company size.
- Give information on in-company training measures by the duration of the non-permanent contract regarding access to company provided training.
- In the case of temporary agency workers, training can take place in the user company and can be provided by the temporary work agency. Are data available as to who provides for the training and/or where it takes place?

Question B26 in the DWECS deals with in-service training: ‘Have you within the last 12 months, while being employed at your current workplace, attended courses or in-service training?’

Pull out data on the following variables: temporary employment (DWECS Question B12), education level, job type, age, sex, business and company size.

There are no data in the DWECS about who pays for in-service training. See, if necessary, publication by LO ‘Kompetenceløft 2004’ [link]. Pages 23-26 give an overview of who pays for in-service training and whether it takes place during working hours or after hours (the general picture). EVA writes about something similar in the following report: [link].

3.2 Type, place and duration of training

- Give information on type of training provided by the company: internal training measures; course/measure organised by external training institutions; on-the-job training.
- Please distinguish between training hours during and outside working hours.
- Is the training measure paid for by the employer?
- What is the duration (number of days) of training measures provided by companies?

There is no information about internal/external training and place of education in the DWECS. It is, however, possible to get data about how many days the individual employee has participated in in-service training during the last 12 months (see Question 26 in the DWECS).
3.3 Content and target of training

The content and target of training can differ. Therefore, the focus is on corresponding questions in the national working conditions surveys. Please provide examples of questions and data if possible.

- Is the training provided company-specific or of a more general nature?
- Is the training provided aimed at short-term adaptation to skills needs for the current job? Or is the training transferable to other jobs/employment?
- Is the training provided appropriate for the current job?

There is no information about the content in in-service training according to the DWECS.

3. Newcomers to the job – (Re)entry to the labour market and occupational biography

- Provide information on the phase prior to the (re)entry into the current job (first job, non-employment, education, unemployment, etc).
- Are the ‘newcomers’ employed in the job educated or trained?
- Provide data on specific trends on newcomers in the job on non-permanent contracts as regards training measures.

Data about newcomers are available in Question B6 in the DWECS: ‘For how long have you been employed at your current workplace?’ It may be possible to extrapolate data about what the person did before his/her current employment.

There is no information in the DWECS about whether newcomers are employed in a job they are educated for, but it is possible to get data about which education the newcomers have and the businesses they work in. It is also possible to obtain data about whether the newcomers can use their qualifications or not: Question B75: ‘Can you use your competence and skills in your work?’ (To a very considerable extent, to a considerable extent, to a partial extent, to a poor extent, to a very poor extent).

The DWECS also provides data about newcomers in temporary/permanent employment as well as how much they participate in in-service training.

5. Job–skills match

Do the skills of the workers match the demands of their jobs, or are the demands of the job too high or too low?

The DWECS contains data about the following aspects. It is possible to get data about those who are employed on a permanent basis and those on a temporary contract:

Question B185: ‘How do you estimate your current working ability compared to the physical demands in your job?’ (Very good, good, fairly good, bad, very bad).

Question B186: ‘How do you estimate your current working ability compared to the mental demands in your job?’ (Very good, good, fairly good, bad, very bad).
6. Competence and on-the-job skills development

Competence and on-the-job skills development can be assessed by a number of indicators. Describe relevant questions in the national working conditions surveys and provide data as far as available.

- Is the employee involved in competencies development plans/talks in the company?
- Is the current job in line with the profession trained for/educational attainment level?
- Does the current job provide the opportunity for further qualification by learning new things on the job?
- Does the job entail complex tasks?
- Is the employee involved in task rotation / team work, etc?
- What is the judgment of occupational prospects as regards:
  - promotion within the current job/company?
  - further course training?

The DWECS contains data about the following aspects. It is possible to get data about those who are employed on a permanent basis and those on a temporary contract:

Question B75: ‘Can you use your competence or skills in your job?’ (To a very considerable extent, to a considerable extent, to a partial extent, to a poor extent, to a very poor extent).

Question B73: ‘Do you have the possibility to learn something new through your work?’ (To a very considerable extent, to a considerable extent, to a partial extent, to a poor extent, to a very poor extent).

Question B54: ‘Does your job demand all your attention or concentration?’ (Almost all the time, about 75% of the time, about 50% of the time, about 25% of the time, very little or none of the time).

Question B99a: ‘Are you worried about being unemployed?’ (Yes/No).

Question B99d: ‘Are you worried about finding it hard to get a new job with your qualifications?’ (Yes/No).

Question B94: ‘Do you have future possibilities in your job?’ (To a very considerable extent, to a considerable extent, to a partial extent, to a poor extent, to a very poor extent).

Question B187: ‘Do you want to continue working?’ (Yes most certainly, yes certainly, possibly, no probably not, no certainly not).

The DWECS contains no data about the following:

- involvement in competence development plans on the workplace;
- involvement in teamwork and job rotation;
- future promotions;
- future in-service training.
7. Training, competence development and employability

This question focuses more generally on the impact of training and competence development on people’s career development and perception of employment security.

Describe questions and/or provide data on the following issues:

- (expected) transition from non-permanent into permanent employment;

See also Question 6 above.

In a report published by Oxford Research in 2003 about temporary agencies, the agencies were asked to provide information with regard to how often a temporary job led to permanent employment. According to the agencies, about 10% of all temporary agency workers are offered a permanent employment (Source: *Nemme at hyre, nemme at fyre* (Easy to hire, easy to fire), Oxford Research, 2003).

- perception of employment opportunities and job security (or risk of unemployment).

Temporary agency workers are often referred to as the modern day labourer because of the resemblance to 18th century workers who could be laid off without notice. However, collective agreements nowadays provide some job security and a wage minimum, i.e. the comparison would not be appropriate under further investigation. Collective agreements by the social partners in their respective areas ensure that temporary agency employment does not necessarily equate to job insecurity. Nonetheless, some temporary agency workers, especially those who are employed for a short period, feel that they are under pressure to perform. They state that they feel that they cannot be too demanding or question what they are asked to do, and that they cannot afford to have an ‘off-day’ because it may jeopardise their opportunity for permanent employment.

8. Legal obligations on training measures

Give information on any legal obligations or specific national regulations related to training measures for employees on fixed-term or temporary agency contracts.

In 2002, the government approved a law preventing discrimination of short-term employees. Hence, according to Law 370 for short-term employment from 28 May 2003, implementing the 1999/70/EF Directive, employers of employees on temporary work contracts are encouraged to make it easier for employees to access appropriate education in order to improve their employability and mobility. However, it should be mentioned that Law 370 does not include temporary agency workers.

9. Recent studies results

Provide results of recent studies in your country on the issue of training and competence development and employability of non-permanent employees.

The most recent national study on non-permanent employees was performed by PLS Ramboll Management for the Ministry of Labour in 2002. However, this study did not touch upon the issue of competence enhancement. The study defines atypical employees rather narrowly as freelance workers who take up an estimated 1% of the active labour force. (Source: http://www.ug.dk/uvmmages/atypiske_beskaeftigelse_sammenfatning.pdf)

In 2000, a study published by the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions, based on a survey carried out in cooperation with the Danish National Institute of Social Research, showed that non-permanent employees (in the broad sense) amounted to an estimated 12% of the active labour force. (Source: http://www.lo.dk/mediafiles/newdoc/ORGANISATIONSDUVIKL/6/LO-dok 2-
As noted above under Question 7, a study concerning temporary agency work performed by Oxford Research in 2003 touches upon the issue of competence enhancement and non-permanent employees. It indicates that temporary job agencies do not normally provide training for their employees.

10. National context, initiatives and company best practice

Describe the national context and the evolution of non-permanent employment.

Since the early 1990s, the Danish labour market has seen an increase in temporary agency employment. Thus, from 1992 to 2003 the number of temporary work agencies increased from 73 to 604 (Statistics Denmark) Source: http://www.ugebreveta4.dk/smcms/Ugebrevet/1900/3503/3526/3534/3665/Index.htm?ID=3665

From 2001 onwards, temporary work agencies have experienced even further growth. Hence, in 2003, the number of temporary agency workers was estimated at 110,000, approximately 25% of which are employed within production and storage, 25% within administration, and 50% within health care (primarily nurses). Source http://politiken.dk/VisArtikel.iasp?PageID=290836#Scene_1, http://www.arf.dk/NR/rdonlyres/emdhuhekgj4djxhytfwhwwyvchihsglx6a4scdio46gtog7zjpspyykbkb47kgdgyoejewvf32tl5zvotgase6hdmrtae/sygeplejerskevikarer.pdf

Describe initiatives by social partners, ministries, TAW associations, training organisations/ foundations etc. in your country aiming specifically at the promotion of training of fixed-term or temporary agency workers. This can also include measures that explicitly emphasise the equal treatment of a non-permanent workforce.

In 2000, the Danish Ministry of Labour established a working group in order to gather knowledge about the so-called third employment groups, i.e. temporary employees, freelancers, etc.

During the Danish presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers, in 2000, high priority was given to these new forms of employment in the Danish labour market, characterised by a more flexible use of labour on behalf of employers.

References


Danish Regions (Amtsrådsforeningen), Rapport om anvendelse af sygeplejerskevikarer, 2001. Available at: DK0506TR01.doc


Politiken: *More day labourers in industry (Flere daglejere I industrien)*, 18 October 2003
Available at: [http://politiken.dk/VisArtikel.aspx?PageID=290836#Scene_1](http://politiken.dk/VisArtikel.aspx?PageID=290836#Scene_1)
