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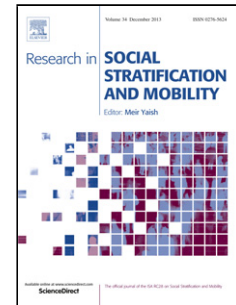
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## Overeducation, Perceived Career Progress, and Work Satisfaction in Young Adulthood\*

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\*Direct correspondence to Koji Ueno, Department of Sociology, 526 Bellamy Building, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2270. Email: [kueno@fsu.edu](mailto:kueno@fsu.edu). This research uses data from Add Health, a program project directed by Kathleen Mullan Harris and designed by J. Richard Udry, Peter S. Bearman, and Kathleen Mullan Harris at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and funded by grant P01-HD31921 from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, with cooperative funding from 23 other federal agencies and foundations. Special acknowledgment is due Ronald R. Rindfuss and Barbara Entwisle for assistance in the original design. Information on how to obtain the Add Health data files is available on the Add Health website (<http://www.cpc.unc.edu/addhealth>). No direct support was received from grant P01-HD31921 for this analysis.

## Abstract

Some people work in occupations that require lower levels of education than their attained education, and these “overeducated” workers tend to be less satisfied than those who work in occupations that match their attained education. This study sought to extend the previous finding by answering the following previously unexplored questions: (1) Does the association depend on the level of attained education?; and (2) Does perceived career delay account for overeducated workers’ lower work satisfaction? Data from U.S. young adults (the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Study) showed that the association between overeducation and work satisfaction was limited to severely overeducated workers with bachelor’s or graduate degrees and moderately overeducated workers with high school degrees. These people also assessed their career progress more negatively, which accounted for their lower work satisfaction. Analysis of marginal effects demonstrated that among people with bachelor’s degree, the effect of severe overeducation was strong enough to cancel out the benefit of holding the degree to improve work satisfaction.

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