

An Exploration of Engagement Levels in Permanent and
Contingent Workers, with a Focus on Psychological Contract
and Industry Type.

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Abstract

The traditional employment relationship as it was once known, full time, permanent 'job for life' type roles are becoming progressively less prevalent in modern organisations. Businesses are choosing to adopt non-standard work arrangements, for increased flexibility in their workforce. This research attempts to further explore the dynamic of temporary and permanent employees in the workplace, with specific focus on the engagement and psychological contracts. The research also concentrates on exploring if these variables differ dependent on the industry; at present there is not an abundance of research or literature with a focus on variances across different industries.

It is the hope that this research will provide great practical intelligence for leaders and managers within organisations to better understand the employer-employee relationship for contingent and permanent employees; it is the hope that this information be utilised to adapt HR practices and management styles to suit the psychological contracts of employees, in order to maintain an engaged and productive workforce, whether that be in an industrial or commercial organisation.

The study involved a sample of workers from two separate client organisations, an industrial and a commercial, which included both temporary and permanent employees. The sample were surveyed to assess their engagement levels and asked questions relating to the measurement of psychological contract. The hypotheses were tested using general linear and non-parametric analysis. The results demonstrated that the engagement levels for temporary and permanent employees, do not differ significantly, contrasting many of the concepts suggested in previous literature. The data also shows that more permanent employees perceive relational psychological contract obligations, as opposed to temporary employees; which offers insight into the types of exchange relationships present. However, in terms of the variance across industries, the results do not offer significant evidence to suggest that the engagement level or types of psychological contracts present in temporary or permanent employees, differ depending on the industry they are working in.

Keywords: Psychological Contract, Transactional, Relational, Engagement, Employment Type, Temporary Employee, Permanent Employee, Contingent Worker, Industrial, Commercial

Declaration

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Section 1: Introduction and Background

According to the CSO, in Q1 of 2017, 121 000 workers were employed on a temporary basis in Ireland, accounting for a total of 7% of the work force (Central Statistics Office, 2017). Temporary or contingent work, as it is also named, has become a well-established aspect of the labour market worldwide. Some European countries such as Poland and Spain boast some of the highest temporary employment rates globally, with 2016 statistics at 27.5% for Poland and 26.1% for Spain (European Commission, 2017). Therefore, taking into account that contingent work is prevalent in many companies and industries, there have been various studies conducted into the differences in these types of employment and what it can mean for both businesses and its employees. The problem lies in that it is unclear whether the two types of workers may vary in their work attitudes and behaviours due to the differences in their work arrangements (Broschak, Davis Blake, & Block, 2008).

Engagements levels are key to the success of an organisation; 'Engaged employees are more productive and less often absent due to sickness' (Effectory, 2014; Guthrie, 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2009, Cited in van Elst & Meurs, 2015, p41). It is therefore pivotal for businesses to address engagement levels within the organisation and to understand how they may be affected. The idea that contingent workers are less engaged than permanent workers is one that reoccurs throughout the literature, and stems from the concept that workers with the perception of different obligations when it comes to their employment will possess differing levels of commitment depending on the status of employment (Hughes & Palmer, 2007). The Psychological Contract is pivotal if addressing the factor of obligations in the employment relationship.

It is essential to understand how the psychological contract of a contingent worker may differ to that of a permanent worker, and to explore the relationship between this factor and employee engagement. As Schein indicates, the Psychological Contract is an important determinant of people's behaviour, despite its information and unwritten nature (Cited in McDonald and Makin, 2000, p84). By studying the different types of Psychological Contract present in the employment relationship, in addition to observing and analysing the results of both permanent and temporary workers, it will be possible to present findings on the

relationship between the two. The results of which can be instrumental for management in understanding and getting the most out of their workforce, as Rousseau (2004) explained that 'understanding and effectively managing these psychological contracts can help organizations thrive', hence the focus of this study (p120).

This study will take the seminal ideas of Rousseau in relation to Psychological Contracts and the later studies such as those of McDonald & Makin (2000) and Hughes & Palmer (2007) in an attempt to derive a more definitive conclusion to the topic; taking into account the various limitations identified in these studies such as the isolation to Customer Service roles belonging to only the holiday industry in McDonald and Makin's research, which was not able to establish an answer to the research question that could be applied to other industries or contingent workers in a more general way, rather than being exclusive to the holiday industry.

In order to obtain a more conclusive result, a minimum of two companies in separate industries will be included. There is a potential research gap here as there is not a prominent level of research in this particular area, which involves not only the Psychological Contracts and Engagement level, but also includes the factor of industry as a potential contributor in terms of the types of contract that may be at play and how this may affect the engagement levels.

The two companies selected for this study are both medium sized organisations, one operating within the industrial industry and the second one part of the commercial/financial sector, which offer two different work environments and therefore opportunity to draw further parallels or comparisons. In this case we would compare those conducting more mechanical roles in the industrial organisation and those working for the finance organisation in the commercial sector to represent either side of the case. The inclusion of this comparison is significant if we consider the theory that workers in these manual, mechanical roles are more likely to be motivated by compensation (Pink, 2010). Therefore, taking into account that the literature indicates psychological contracts that are transactional in nature place a higher value on the monetary rewards and compensation aspects of the employment relationship, it would be possible to draw conclusions that

involved engagement level and monetary reward as a motivating factor, linked with psychological contract.

This study will attempt to provide a concise understanding of how the psychological contract present in an employment relationship can have an effect on employee engagement, and how this may differ depending on the type of role and industry. This knowledge can be instrumental for organisations and employers, 'by understanding the elements of psychological contract and recognizing that it is continually changing and evolving, organizations are better placed to create the kind of contract which would lead to highly committed and motivated workforce.' (Sharma and Thakur, 2016). In order to achieve this objective, the below hypotheses will be put to test.

- H1: Contingent workers have more transactional psychological contracts
- H2: Permanent workers have more relational psychological contracts
- H3: Temporary workers display lower levels of engagement compared to permanent workers
- H4: The differences in levels of engagement, based on types of employment relationship, are more prevalent in the industrial industry
- H5: The proportion of employees that have a transactional psychological contract, is higher in the industrial industry

As the hypotheses H1,H2,H3 suggest, the expectation that a relational Psychological Contract is associated with higher engagement levels and a transactional Psychological Contract is representative of an employee who is less engaged, is linked to the employment type as being either contingent or permanent.

H4 outlines the expectation that the levels of engagement in the industrial organisation between contingent workers and permanent employees display a more significant difference than that of the commercial organisation.

Finally, H5 assumes that employees in the industrial organisation are more likely to have a transactional psychological contract, than those employees in the commercial organisation.

Section 2: Literature Review

2:1 Importance of defining the Employment relationship (Temp vs Perm)

As a basis for the research, it is first important to attempt to define temporary employment, in order to secure an understanding of the term. This can be described as ‘any job in which an individual does not have an explicit or implicit contract for long-term employment or one in which the minimum hours worked can vary in a non-systematic manner’ (Polivka & Nardone, 1989, p. 11). Temporary workers can also be defined as people ‘[...] who are employed by or have a contract for services with the employment business and who work on assignment with a third party hirer’ (BERR, 2009, p. 15). They can essentially be characterised as workers who are ‘interchangeable, disposable, recallable and transferable’ (Szabó & Négyesi, 2005, p. 63). However, these definitions are quite broad as contingent work is heterogeneous and within the category, it can be said that there are 4 sub categories: Agency workers, direct hires, contractors and seasonal workers (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004). This is important to note as different types of contingent workers may experience varying levels of job satisfaction and engagement (Wilkin, 2012).

The importance of recognising different types of contingent work is especially significant in relation to temporary agency workers; Claes (2005) study suggested that a temporary agency worker forms dual psychological contracts with both the employing agency and the host client organisation, judging breach or fulfilment of each separately. Similarly, this has been described as a triangular work arrangement, where the employee is involved in simultaneous exchange relationships (Kalleberg et al, 2000; Liden et al; 2003; McKeown, 2003; Slattery & Selvarajan, 2005). It could be argued that the significance of the dual psychological contracts lies in the concept that contingent workers who are ‘affectively committed to their agency will be more likely to adopt discretionary behaviours at the client’s site as this would be beneficial to the agency (Lapalme et al, 2011). This notion has been supported by a number of investigations in which temporary workers have given indication of a positive association between agency and client commitment (Coyle-Shapiro & Morrow, 2006; Moorman & Harland, 2002). However, there is some debate as to whether

temporary workers will develop affective commitment towards the host client; Gallagher and McLean Parks (2001) express the opinion that there is no theoretical basis for this. Various researchers express thoughts in relation to this topic, highlighting a range of affecting factors, such as voluntary temp worker vs involuntary temp worker (Connelly et al, 2007) the idea that those workers who adopt temporary work arrangements voluntarily, are more likely to demonstrate commitment to the agency. However, those workers whose ultimate aim is to become a permanent employee, who may be 'looking to gain "relational" rewards by pursuing longer tenures, training opportunities and permanent transitions gained little from the flexibility inherent in agency working' (Toms & Biggs; 2014, p637). In contrast, Von Hippel et al. (1997) conducted a study that indicated an increased commitment in the contingent worker, if they possessed a desire for conversion to permanent employee in the organisation. If the type of contingent worker, is best described as that of a 'Contractor', there could be a high possibility that the worker aspires to become a permanent employee (Wilkin 2012).

In terms of understanding what defines a permanent employee, it can be assumed that the nature of the work is 'full time', performed on an indefinite basis and that instructions are given to the worker by a supervisor or manager (Kalleberg, 2000). It can also be said that employees with a permanent contract of employment, are fundamental to the organisations core function and so are often characterised as having the most desirable and stable jobs in the business (De Cuyper, Notelaers & De Witte, 2009).

2:2 Psychological Contract

In relation to this specific investigation it is crucial to gain a good understanding of the research surrounding psychological contracts (PC), as they have been deemed a valuable foundation for assessment, when considering the new types of contingent work relationships (De Cuyper et al, 2008). Guest (2004), states that the 'concept of the psychological contract is commonly traced back to the early work of Argyris (1960) and to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964)' (p 544). However, it is widely renowned that the seminal work of Rousseau is most influential in the construction of a conceptual framework. Rousseau outlined that a psychological contract will exist between an individual and an

organisation when there is an expectation of reciprocal exchange 'promise', or belief in mutual obligations between the parties, (such as an individual and an employer) in relation to the employment terms (Rousseau, 1995; Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998; Dabos & Rousseau, 2004). In other words, a subjective view of the employment exchange relationship, whereby the employee and employer expectations may be juxtaposed (Conway and Briner, 2005). It is for this reason that the PC can be said to be utilised to 'explore the processes and content of the employment relationship through a focus on more or less explicit deals' (Guest, 2004, p545).

However, there are some alternative ideas presented regarding the definition of PC; Robinson (1996) offers the opinion that a distinction can be observed between expectations and the PC, arguing that it is possible for expectations to exist without the presence of a contract or 'perceived promises' (p575). A more recent paper identifies three simultaneous definitions belonging to the PC, to be 1) expectations, 2) obligations and 3) perceived promises by the employee (Roehling 2008). Other studies link the concept of social exchange theory to PC in that trust lies the foundation of the relationship. Taking into account that, when a social exchange takes place, there is no guarantee that both parties will reciprocate, there must be a level of trust present (Blau, 1964, Chambel et al; 2016). This concept was central to the earlier ideas proposed by Fox (1974) who used Gouldner's 'norm of reciprocity' (1965) as a tool to analyse employment relations. Fox investigated the possibility of establishing a positive psychological contract and employment relationship, by implementing a high trust environment in the workplace as opposed to low trust (cited in Guest, 2004).

In continuation of the current research by Rousseau, it is proposed that there are four types of psychological contracts that can be identified in theory (1995). These consist of transactional, relational, balanced and transitional. Whilst any PC will include at least one of these dimensions, the scale of them may differ. These ideas are similar to those of McDonald and Makin (2000) who offered the view that psychological contracts exist on a continuum, with the PC lying somewhere in the range between transactional and relational.

It is widely regarded that most PC's will have the transactional element and economic focus, with the relational type only being introduced once there is perceived fulfilment of the

transactional, (Atkinson, 2007; Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000; Herriot et al, 1997). This can be linked to Hertzberg's 2 factor theory of motivation (Hertzberg et al, 1993), showing the significance of considering psychological contracts in relation to engagement. Furthermore, it is important to note that in the view of some authors, it is the psychological contract that is the affecting factor for the attitudes and behaviours of employees, rather than their worker status (Chambel and Castanheira, 2006; Guest, 2004).

Further research on psychological contracts, offers insight into the idea that contingent workers are more likely to have PC's of a transactional nature and permanent employees of a relational or balanced type (De Cuyper et al, 2008a). According to the literature, the transactional PC is said to be more economically focused and typically lacking in involvement and long term commitment. Rousseau, 1995 cited in Chambel et al, 2016). However, as the world of temporary workers evolves there seems to be more on offer in the form of HR services, for temporary workers, if reciprocated with positive attitude and flexibility in the workplace (Smith and Neuwirth, 2008). In contrast, the characteristics of a relational PC are based on 'open-ended and long-term relationships and, potentially, considerable investment (socio-emotional as well as economic)' for both employer and employee (Chambel et al, 2016, p81). In theory, this is why the employment status and psychological contracts are often assumed to link in this way, due to the short nature of temporary work and the longer tenure of permanent roles. It can be said that development from transactional PC to increasingly becoming more relational, can occur when the contingent worker spends more time at an organisation (Lee and Faller, 2005).

Figure 1 Demonstrates the Transactional and Relational characteristics of Psychological Contracts as illustrated by Rousseau (1990).

TRANSACTIONAL CONTRACT	RELATIONAL CONTRACT
Focus Economic, extrinsic	Economic and Non-economic, socio-emotional, intrinsic
Time frame Close-ended, specific	Open-ended, indefinite
Stability Static	Dynamic
Scope Narrow	Pervasive
Tangibility Public, observable	Subjective, understood

Figure 1: Transactional and Relational Psychological Contract Characteristics (Rousseau, 1990)

When it comes to measuring the psychological contract the literature refers to two views, the bilateral and unilateral perspectives. The view of Rousseau that has already been outlined above represents the unilateral view; the employee perspective on an individual level, whereas the bilateral represents a perception that includes both employee and employer as a whole (e.g. Herriot & Pemberton, 1995; Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl, and Solley, 1962; Schein, 1965); (cited in Freese and Schalk, 2008). Freese and Schalk (2008) recommend that a unilateral perspective is most appropriate when measuring the psychological contract, due to the literal nature of them being psychological; they refer to the approaches outlined by Rousseau and Tijoriwala (1998), the feature oriented, content oriented and evaluation oriented. ‘The feature-oriented approach: the description of characteristics of working arrangements and the definition of resulting types of psychological contracts’ is prevalent in the method of this study (Freese and Schalk, 2008, p271).

To develop on this further, Rousseau (2004) details that ‘it is necessary to drill down into the beliefs which workers and employers hold as well as the information sources they use to

interpret the work environment' in order to determine the type of psychological contract help by the employee (p123).

2:3 Engagement: Temporary vs Permanent Workers

There has been much discussion on the topic of contingent workers, with many different views being conveyed, in general the extant literature has provided indications that those employed on a contingent basis experience less favourable work conditions than those employed on a permanent basis, however the conclusions have been varied (Wooden and Warren 2004). Taking into account the studies presented to date, some research has shown that contingent workers are more satisfied in their roles (Guest & Clinton, 2006; McDonald & Makin, 2000), however other research indicates the contrasting view that contingent workers are in fact less satisfied in their roles compared to their permanent counterparts (Tak & Lim, 2008; Forde & Slater, 2006). The final outcome of studies in this area, report no variance in the satisfaction of contingent and permanent workers (Guest, Oakley Clinton & Budjanovcanin, 2006; Feather & Rauter, 2004). Job satisfaction can be directly linked with 'task performance, contextual performance and turnover' (Wilkin, 2012, p47), therefore this research is relevant to this study on engagement.

2:4 Contract Breach or Fulfilment

A reoccurring theme in the literature on the topic of psychological contracts and engagement is that of a perception of contract breach and fulfilment of obligations. Contract breach has been described as 'a cognitive appraisal of the extent to which the organization should or should not fulfil its obligations' (Chambel et al, 2016, p82). Several researchers endorse the concept that fulfilment of the psychological contract, i.e. the entirety of the employee's expectations, will result in increased job satisfaction (Zhao et al, 2007) and increased engagement (Parzefall and Hakanen, 2010). Similarly, that a contract breach will result in decreased trust, job satisfaction, loyalty, commitment and engagement at work (Deery et al, 2006; Robinson, 1996; Suazo, 2009; Zhao et al, 2007). Sharma and

Kalpna (2016) expressed the similar view that violation of psychological contract 'make employees cognitive views of their job more negative, reducing their motivation level and decreasing their effort and activation at work' (p21).

2:5 Social Comparison Theory

A final theme that is significant in the subject of assessing the engagement of contingent and permanent employees is that of social comparison theory. Social comparison theory details the process of self-evaluation, in which a contingent worker compares their work situation with that of a permanent referent (Festinger, 1954). Contingent workers will often draw comparisons between their individual work outcomes and the outcomes of a proximate worker; in many cases temporary staff work alongside their permanent counterparts and so naturally become the referent (De Cuyper et al, 2008; Beard & Edwards, 1995). Social comparison theory is significant when focusing on the engagement of temporary and permanent staff; if a contingent worker feels that their work outcomes are less favourable than those of a permanent employee it is likely that they will feel devalued and consequently less productive (Guest et al, 2006). However, Wilkin (2012) highlights the possibility that contingent workers do not think on their permanent counterparts as the referent in employment. She outlines the idea that if the contingent worker were to choose an unemployed individual as the referent, the use of social comparative theory may produce significantly different results.

2:6 Industrial VS Commercial: Links to Motivation Theory

Motivation can theoretically be closely linked to engagement; Dan Pink is notable for his ideas surrounding motivation theory and what drives employees. A particular underlying theory that supports the exploration of industrial vs commercial, presents the concept that compensation can increase motivation, unless the task at hand requires any amount of cognitive ability. Once the task is more routine or manual, for example an industrial role, the idea of completing the task for monetary gain is more successful as a driving factor. However, 'for work that is non-routine, for work that isn't algorithmic but is more conceptual, that requires big picture thinking, that requires a greater degree of creativity,

that requires solving more complicated, complex challenges, the if-then motivators don't work very well at all.' (Pink, 2010).

The study that Pink refers to in his motivation theory involving 'carrots and sticks' is the investigation conducted by Dan Ariely and colleagues which involved MIT students and a range of tasks that would test their performance when provided with different monetary rewards 'they found that when the task called for "even rudimentary cognitive skill," a larger reward "led to poorer performance." But "as long as the task involved only mechanical skill, bonuses worked as they would be expected: the higher the pay, the better the performance." (cited in Pink, 2010, p62)

The theory is pivotal to the aspect of this study that would aim to compare the engagement levels of temporary/permanent workers in an industrial role to temporary/ permanent workers in a commercial organisation to explore any variations depending on employment type.

Section 3: Methodology

3:1 Overview

This section outlines the thought processes and rationale behind the methodological choices made in conducting this study and outlining how those decisions were made with the research aims and objectives in mind.

It will set out the reasons for adopting a positivist epistemological approach and the justification behind selecting a quantitative survey method, in addition to exploring the strengths and limitations of the research design.

The hypotheses of the research study will also be included alongside a summary of the research objectives and explanations as to how these hypotheses will be tested to fulfil these specific aims. Finally, this section will include description of the distribution process and brief details of the participating organisations.

3:2 Research Philosophy

As Saunders et al (2016) explain the philosophical choices made when compiling the research methods are significant in contributing to the development of knowledge within the study. It is important to be aware of the research assumptions that could be made in terms of ontology, epistemology and axiology.

Recognition of the possible assumptions that could be made as result of the researchers position to the research study is pivotal, for example, the organisations involved in the study are direct clients of the researchers own work organisation and therefore there could be an element of bias (Quinlan, 2011). For the purpose of this study, a philosophical stance of epistemological positivism was adopted, which seemed to be the most suitable approach given these reasons. The development and testing of hypotheses within this research study, has been based on information of previous studies and existing theories. 'Epistemologically you would focus on discovering observable and measurable facts and regularities, and only phenomena that you can observe and measure would lead to the production of credible and meaningful data' (Crotty, 1998: Cited in Saunders et al, 2016, p136). Gill and Johnson (2010)

propose a 'correspondence theory of truth', whereby 'if a theory corresponds with a researcher's observations of these facts its truthfulness is taken to be established. If it fails to correspond, it is discarded as mistaken or false' (p193).

It is therefore evident that the study follows a deductive logic, with the formulation of a hypothesis which is then tested through data collection and analysis, as per the Figure below.

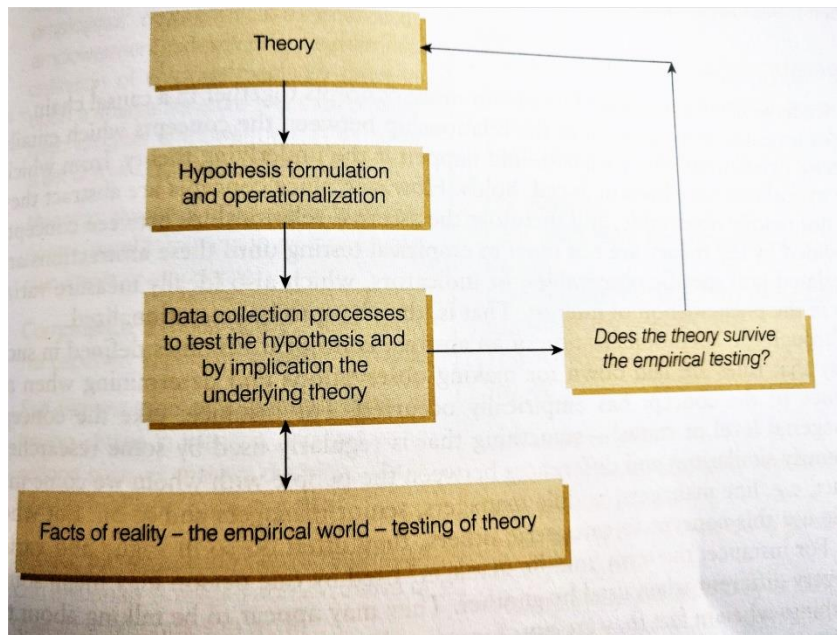


Figure 2: The Processes of Deductive Logic (Gill & Johnson, 2010, p47).

3:3 Research Question and Objectives

The research objectives, hypotheses and what needs to be measured, in order to accept or reject the hypotheses set out earlier, are clear.

The questions that the study attempts to answer are:

- Do contingent workers have more transactional psychological contracts?
- Do permanent workers have more relational psychological contracts?
- Do contingent workers display lower levels of engagement compared to permanent workers?

- Is the difference in levels of engagement, between temporary and permanent workers, more prevalent in the industrial organisation?
- Is the proportion of employees who are classed as having a transactional psychological contract, higher in the industrial organisation?

If notable results have been recorded, the question that should certainly be asked, is if these results could be generalised across all permanent and contingent workers, aside from these two industries alone. This was one of the unanswered questions from previous investigations and would be essential in providing a more conclusive result.

Aside from the obvious questions being asked in relation to the hypotheses and research objective, it is also crucial to consider additional factors that are potentially affecting the data collected. How could the demographics have influenced the outcome? The question included in the psychological contract scale based on contract fulfilment will also be an important contributor in explaining the results.

3:4 Research Design and Limitations

The cross-sectional design of the research method was appropriate due to the various variables that needed to be measured simultaneously, specifically the type of psychological contract present, the level of employee engagement, the type of employment relationship and additionally to record the industry of the worker. It was essential for the purposes of the study that the data for each variable was collected at a single point in time in order to draw reliable references between them (Saunders et al, 2016).

The cross-sectional design was also beneficial due to the time constraints of this study, a key advantage being that a substantial amount of data could be collected in a short time period. A longitudinal design would have required a lengthier process, meaning that unnecessary pressure would be placed on the analysis and findings section of the study, in order to conclude and complete the final results by the deadline.

However, it can be said that the limitations to this design are prevalent when attempting to define causality to associations that can be made between these variables. Bryman and Bell (2015) express that it would not be possible to determine a causal inference and as a result of this the results would lack internal validity.

3:5 Quantitative VS Qualitative: The Rationale

When conducting a study in a cross-sectional design, it is common for a quantitative approach to be employed, the reason for this is that 'in order to establish variation between cases (and then to examine associations between variables...), it is necessary to have a systematic and standardised method for gauging variation' (Bryman & Bell, 2015, p62).

The ultimate question to consider in this case is whether the research objectives could be fulfilled through the collection and analysis of quantifiable data. Taking into account the variables that would be measured, the employment type and type of industry are relatively simple to collect via quantitative processes. The measurement of the psychological contract and employee engagement required more in-depth deliberation and it was useful to consult the methods used in previous similar studies.

For the measurement of psychological contract, it was clear that the required results could be achieved with quantitative means as various studies had proved successful, including Svensson & Wolven (2010), Chambel and Alcover (2011), Chambel et al (2016), McDonald & Makin (2000), Hughes & Palmer (2007), Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler (2000), to name but a few. The use of a survey was consistently used in each of these academic studies and as Conway & Briner (2005) state this method is the most common when it comes to investigating psychological contract (cited in Freese & Schalk, 2008). For that reason, the form of a quantitative survey for this variable can be considered a well-tested and reliable method of data collection.

Additionally, when exploring the range of studies previously conducted which focused on the measurement of engagement levels, it was positive to discover that a number had also implemented quantitative methods in their study and produced a satisfactory outcome.

These include but are not limited to, Mazzetti et al. (2018), Chambel et al (2016), Breevaart et al. (2012) and Schaufeli et al. (2006).

As it has already been acknowledged, the timeframe for this research study was relatively limited, which had to be taken into account when deciding using either qualitative or quantitative. The quantitative survey method provided a quicker and more efficient way of reaching as many respondents as possible in minimal time. Qualitative methods such as interviews could have yielded some interesting results, however in the interest of ensuring a speedy process, quantitative is more effective. It is also possible that using a technique such as interviews to gather information would produce less reliable results due to the fact that the subject may be conscious of judgement and answer questions less truthfully.

In order to ensure validity and reliability of the survey distributed to workers, a number of scales were chosen that were used successfully in existing studies.

The study conducted by McDonald and Makin (2000) included a psychological contract measure that focused on identifying whether an employee possessed a more relational or transactional psychological contract. McDonald and Makin used the previous research ideas of Rousseau (1990), Robinson et al. (1994), Robinson and Morrison (1995) and Herriot et al. (1997), in order to construct an effective survey (cited in McDonald & Makin, 2000, p.87). The foundation of the survey came from the identified features of transactional and relational psychological contracts, as conveyed by Rousseau (1990) and Robinson et al. (1994). However, McDonald and Makin stated that ‘, their scales were narrow in scope’ and they were constructed on a small number of interviews with a number of organisations (2000, p.87). It is for this reason that they made the decision to incorporate the works of Herriot et al. (1997) into the survey, which they argued added a ‘more expansive and interpretative’ perspective, due to the large number of interviews conducted with a variety of organisations. Therefore, ‘some of the more relevant items highlighted by Herriot et al. (1997) were added to broaden the scope and depth of the questionnaire’ (2000, p.87).

In this case McDonald and Makin appear to have combined two techniques in the construction of their questionnaire to ensure it contained all the desired features. As Freese and Schalk (2008) outlined ‘interviewing employees and then constructing a questionnaire is a solid theoretical method’; Similarly, ‘an alternative method is composing dimensions

based on previous theoretical work' (p.273). Therefore, it is evident that by combining the works of Rousseau (1990), Robinson et al. (1994), Robinson and Morrison (1995) and Herriot et al. (1997); the survey constructed by McDonald and Makin include aspects of each of these methods.

The final scale that McDonald and Makin (2000) used in their study consisted of 12 items which included features of both a relational and transactional nature. The survey assessed which of these items were thought to be an employer obligation in the opinion of the employee. A five-point Likert scale extending from 'not at all obligated to provide' to 'very highly obligated to provide' was used to determine the level of perceived obligation in each case. An identical version of this scale was used in this current research study, based on the reassurance of its reliability and validity, with a Cronbach alpha score of 0.86. Whilst the scores provided in the previous study are strong indicators, it was also useful to conduct a reliability test through SPSS for this study and its 153 respondents. As the scale contains some factors that are aimed to assess the transactional elements and some factors that are aimed at assessing relational, it was useful to conduct separate tests for each, as this is the way they would be measured later. The Cronbach alpha score generated for the relational features of the scale was 0.899, and the score for transactional was 0.824. Both scores uphold the guaranteed reliability of this measure.

The second primary concept to measure as a key aspect of this investigation is that of Engagement level; It is essential to measure the level of engagement with a scale that has proven reliability and validity in previous studies. For this reason, the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale – shortened version (UWES-9) was selected for the purpose of this investigation. This scale focuses on three core elements which are said to construct the concept of engagement; Vigor, Dedication and Absorption, including three items from each aspect (Schaufeli et al, 2006). The subjects are provided with a 7-point Likert scale to record their responses. 'Reported reliabilities (Cronbach's) of the UWES-9 total score across 10 different countries varied between .85 and .92, with a median of .92'(De Bruin & Henn, 2013, p790). The strong Cronbach alpha value proven here is indicative of internal consistency, given that the value is above 0.7 (Saunders et al, 2016). As with the Psychological Contract scale, it was important to conduct a reliability test through SPSS for the Engagement scale including the 153 participants of the study, which produced a

Cronbach alpha score of 0.948. This extremely strong Cronbach alpha score provides certainty in the solid reliability of this scale.

In addition to the scales, it was important to record demographics of the respondents, such as age, gender, industry, employment type and length of tenure. It is possible that through the recording of these demographics, other trends could be noticeable in the data set. Not only this, but certain a number of the demographics may be pivotal to explaining findings of the investigation. An example of this is the length of tenure, as Rousseau (2004) states 'changing circumstances mean that not all contingencies can be foreseen. As a result, psychological contracts tend to become more elaborate over the course of the employment relationship' (p121). Hence a longer tenure may influence the state of the psychological contract. Please refer to Appendix 1 to view the survey in full.

3:6 Sampling and Distribution

The survey was distributed to the workers of selected clients available through the researchers work organisation, using email administration which had the benefit of being extremely cost and time effective; this was a strong requirement for this investigation. The sampling technique represents that of non-probability sampling, selected on the basis of availability and judgement. Probability sampling is often considered to be preferential to non-probability, due to the fact that 'the chance or probability, of each case being selected from the target population is known and is usually equal for all cases' (Saunders et al, 2016, p275). However, whilst random sampling has the advantage of ensuring a sample selected without bias, it is not always realistic with the limitations of research studies and often without the ability to 'map' the population of available samples data (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

It was essential to ensure that the sample size obtained was substantial enough in order to draw inferences from the data, therefore the questionnaire was distributed to every available worker in the chosen organisations by convenience sampling. Both the clients and workers were specifically selected due to ease of access. However, there are criticisms to this approach in that it is vulnerable to unconscious bias (Saunders et al, 2016). In addition

to this, the problem with the process of self-selection, as alike to the study of Hughes & Palmer, 2007, is that it is possible the responses obtained are provided only by conscientious employees and so credibility of the results can be questionable.

However, taking into account that convenience sampling is a practical method; it was the most suitable in this situation due to limited access to a pool of participants, in addition to time and funding constraints. However, it is important to acknowledge that the contingent workers included would all be classed as 'contractors', due to the nature of work that the client engages in. They would not be considered as seasonal or ad hoc temporary workers. However, despite the fact that they are contracted to work in the organisations for a specific period of time, they are also paid by the recruitment agency. This is significant to note as it has been established that different types of contingent workers may have alternative outlooks on the employment relationship, for example Temporary Agency Workers could be affected by factors such as the dual psychological contract with the agency they are employed by. Additionally, as highlighted by McDonald and Makin (2000), employee outlook on their work situations could be skewed if the nature of the industry they interact with is typically seasonal or ad hoc. By ensuring that the only contingent workers included in the sample are all agency employed Contractors, and eliminating any potentially influential factors like this, it is possible to cast some sort of control over this variable.

3:7 Data Analysis

Due to the quantitative nature of the research study and the form that the data has been collected in, it was most effective to adopt a method of data analysis that involved the use of IBM SPSS software. The two scales most dominant in the research were nominal and ordinal so these can be coded into SPSS with ease and then be subjected to various analysis.

3:8 Ethical Considerations

When considering the ethics of this study there were several aspects to take into account. Primarily, the issue of anonymity which would be applicable to both the clients participating and to the employees responding to the survey.

The topic of engagement is relatively sensitive and is personal to each individual respondent; by ensuring anonymity and eliminating threat of judgement or repercussions, there is a higher chance that respondents will answer the questions honestly and the results will reflect a true depiction. 'Establishing trust with respondents is pivotal to allaying their fears about confidentiality' (Gill & Johnson, 2010, p133). Therefore, it was crucial to - reassure the participant that the data could not be identified as belonging to one individual and that there would not be any negative consequences as a result of their answers.

In addition to this, the organisations involved in the research study would have their own data protection regulations in terms of providing email addresses for the recipients of the survey. To protect the data of the employees, it was arranged that my contact in each organisation would forward the survey link personally to the participants, ensuring to 'BCC' them in the address bar and protect their identities. From the clients' perspective, it could also have been a concern that negative responses to engagement or possible breach of psychological contracts perceived within the employees questioned, could reflect negatively on the reputation of the organisation. Therefore, it was also necessary to reinforce that the organisations involved would not be named and the results of the survey would not be published other than for academic use.

Another consideration from an ethical perspective relates more to the effect that a study with this focus could have emotionally on the respondent, for example if the items on the questionnaire prompt a realisation of unhappiness with the current employment situation or cause negative feelings to surface. In the case that any form of distress is caused as result of this study, the researcher provided several contacts for support, in the final page of the survey.

Section 4: Results

4:1 Findings and Analysis

The aim of this study was to conduct an in-depth exploration of both temporary and permanent employees, in two organisations within different industries; the main focus being on Psychological Contracts and Engagement. The data for this study, gathered through the use of quantitative methods, has been consolidated and analysed in an effort to offer insight into the interactions between each variable. The primary aim to decipher whether there are differences in engagement levels and whether there are notable findings for transactional and relational contracts, in respect to industrial/commercial and contingent/permanent employees. The survey which was constructed through Lime Survey was exported into SPSS and numerically coded to allow the running of various analysis and statistical tests.

4:1:1 Overview of Respondents

The survey was issued to a total of 252 employees across the two chosen organisations, 128 to the commercial and 124 to the industrial. From those surveys distributed, 171 responses were received, however 17 of these were incomplete and so had to be disregarded. Therefore, the total number of complete and usable responses was 154, securing a response rate of 67.9%.

Of the total complete responses 53.6% were Female and 37.3% were Male. The ages of respondents fall predominantly below 40 years old with 78.4%, the most common age bracket being 26-30 years old which contained 31.4% of the sample group.

From the two organisations participating in the research study, there were significantly more responses from employees working in the commercial industry who made up 68% of the respondents, compared to the industrial industry whose response totalled only 32% of the overall number.

Looking at the employment type variable, it was clear that the majority of respondents were permanent employees, contributing 58.2 % compared to 41.8% of employees with temporary worker status.

The Graph below shows the respondent figures when looking at both the employment type and industry variables simultaneously, showing which categories the respondents fall into.

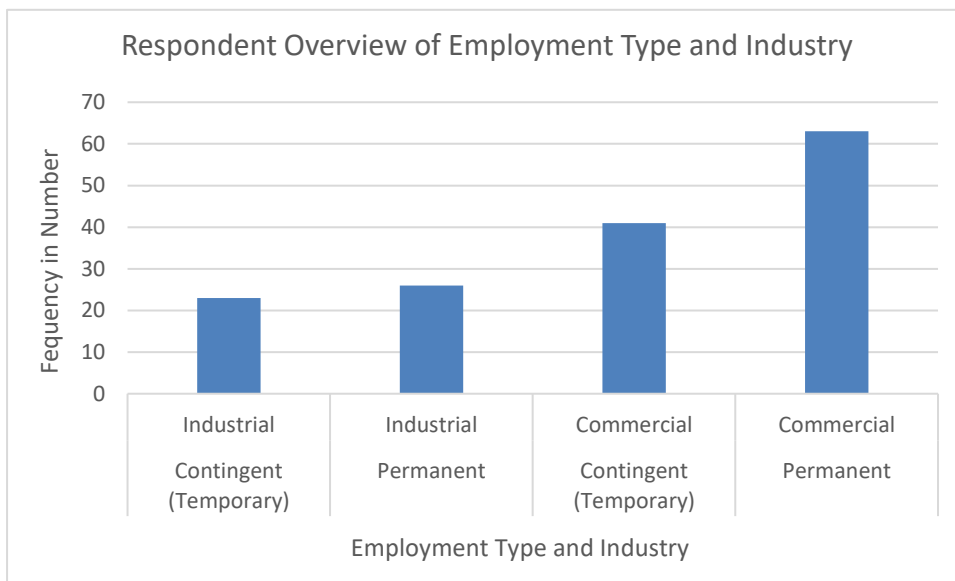


Figure 3. Summary of Respondents for Employment Type and Industry.

The significantly higher number of respondents from those in the Commercial organisation is unsurprising; these participants are likely to spend more time based at a computer, checking emails more regularly and it is likely to take less time and effort to complete the survey. In comparison those in the Industrial organisation who are completing manual jobs, are not likely to be situated at a computer on a daily basis, check emails less often and would need to take more time out of their day to complete the survey.

It is clear that the proportion of respondents who classed themselves as permanent employees rather than temporary, was higher in both industries. There are a number of reasons that could be suggested to explain this particular trend. It could be argued that permanent employees would feel more comfortable taking time out of daily duties to complete a non-work-related task, due to their increased job security, it could also be

argued that temporary staff are less conscientious in general and so would not take the effort out of their day to complete a non-mandatory request. However, it is difficult to be certain about the reason for this difference in responses, without further research.

In terms of seniority level, most respondents identified themselves as being at Associate level, totalling 68% of the sample, compared to 32% of respondents who classed themselves as being at Management level. If this demographic was analysed it could be used to explain possible reasons for differences in Psychological Contract or Engagement levels, so it was useful to record as a possible clarifying variable.

The final question collecting data on the demographic of respondents was to find out the length of tenure for each participant. The results are outlined in the graph below which shows the most common tenure being between 0 and 2 years. The Bar Chart includes the employment type variable to demonstrate whether length of tenure differs depending on employment type, as expected the higher number of temporary respondents have the shortest time within the company. Again, this demographic was important to collect as it could be of assistance when attempting to explain possible results and outcomes of the investigation further on in the analysis.

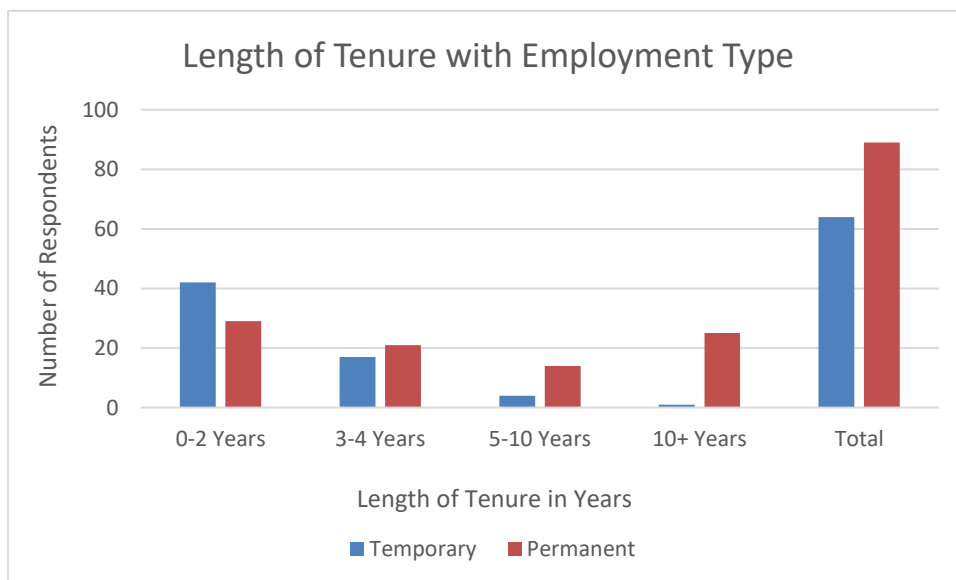


Figure 4 Summary of Respondents for Employment Type and Tenure.

4:1:2 Summary of Results and Analysis

The Psychological Contract scale contained specific items to assess the transactional contract and items to assess the relational contract. As it is a research objective to be able to compare the frequency of each contract, it was necessary to be able to produce the average score for both groups of items, from the five-point Likert scale included in the survey. Therefore, in order to do so it was first beneficial to create composite variables in SPSS for transactional contracts and relational contracts. Additionally, the same needed to be repeated with the items on the Engagement scale, to gain an average level of engagement for each respondent.

It was then possible to put each hypothesis to the test, using SPSS to conduct specific analysis beginning with H1. An alpha level of 0.05 was used for all statistical tests in the process.

Hypothesis 1: Contingent workers have more transactional psychological contracts.

When testing this hypothesis, the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality provided evidence to suggest a violation of the assumption of normality with a Sig. value of 0.037 for temporary employees and Sig. value of 0.006 for permanent employees; both below the alpha level of 0.05. The distribution of both temporary and permanent workers in relation to transactional contracts is negatively skewed as can be seen in the two histograms below for each employment type, see Figures 5 and 6.

Average Transactional Contract Scores for Temporary Employees

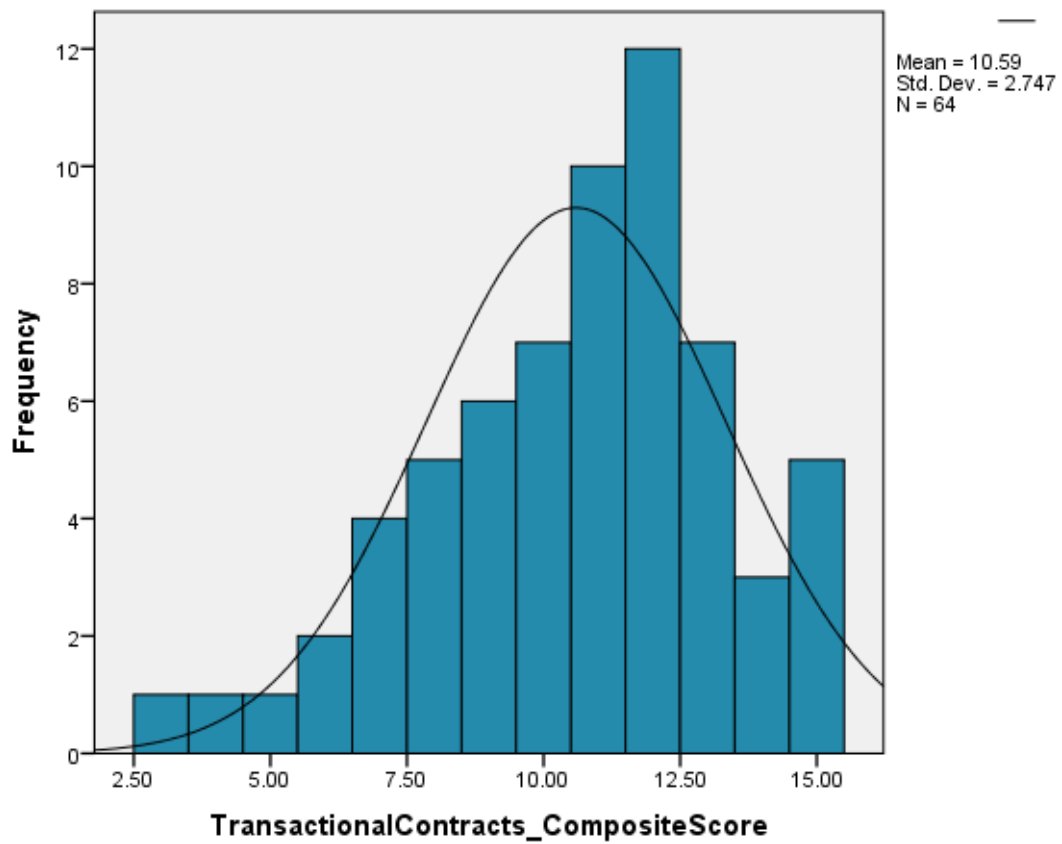


Figure 5: Distribution of Transactional contract for Temporary Workers

Average Transactional Contract Scores for Permanent Workers

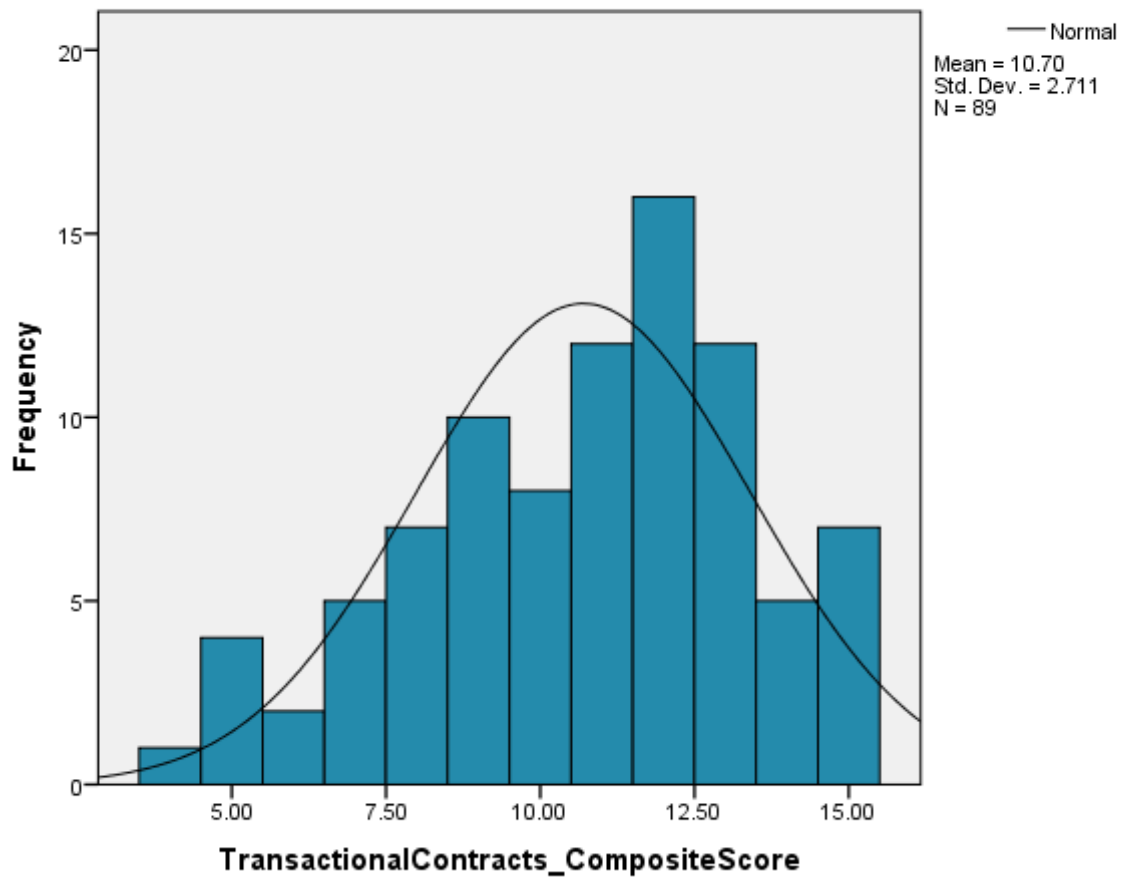


Figure 6: Distribution of Transactional contract for Permanent Workers

The non-normal distribution prompted the use of the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U Test, which is not sensitive to outliers.

In the Mann Whitney test for this hypothesis, which is displayed in the table below, there did not appear to be a significant difference between the two groups, $U=2783$, $z= -0.242$, $p=0.809$.

TransactionalContracts_CompositeScore	
Mann-Whitney U	2783.000
Wilcoxon W	4863.000
Z	-.242
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.809

a. Grouping Variable: EmploymentType

Table 1: Results of Mann Whitney U Test for Hypothesis 1

The $p > 0.05$, with a value of 0.809; therefore, does not give reason to accept that there is a significant difference between transactional contracts in temporary and permanent workers.

Hypothesis 2: Permanent workers have more relational psychological contracts

When testing this hypothesis, the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality indicated that the distribution for temporary employees concerning relational contracts could be accepted as following a normal distribution, with a score of 0.445. The normal distribution curve can be seen in the histogram, figure 7.

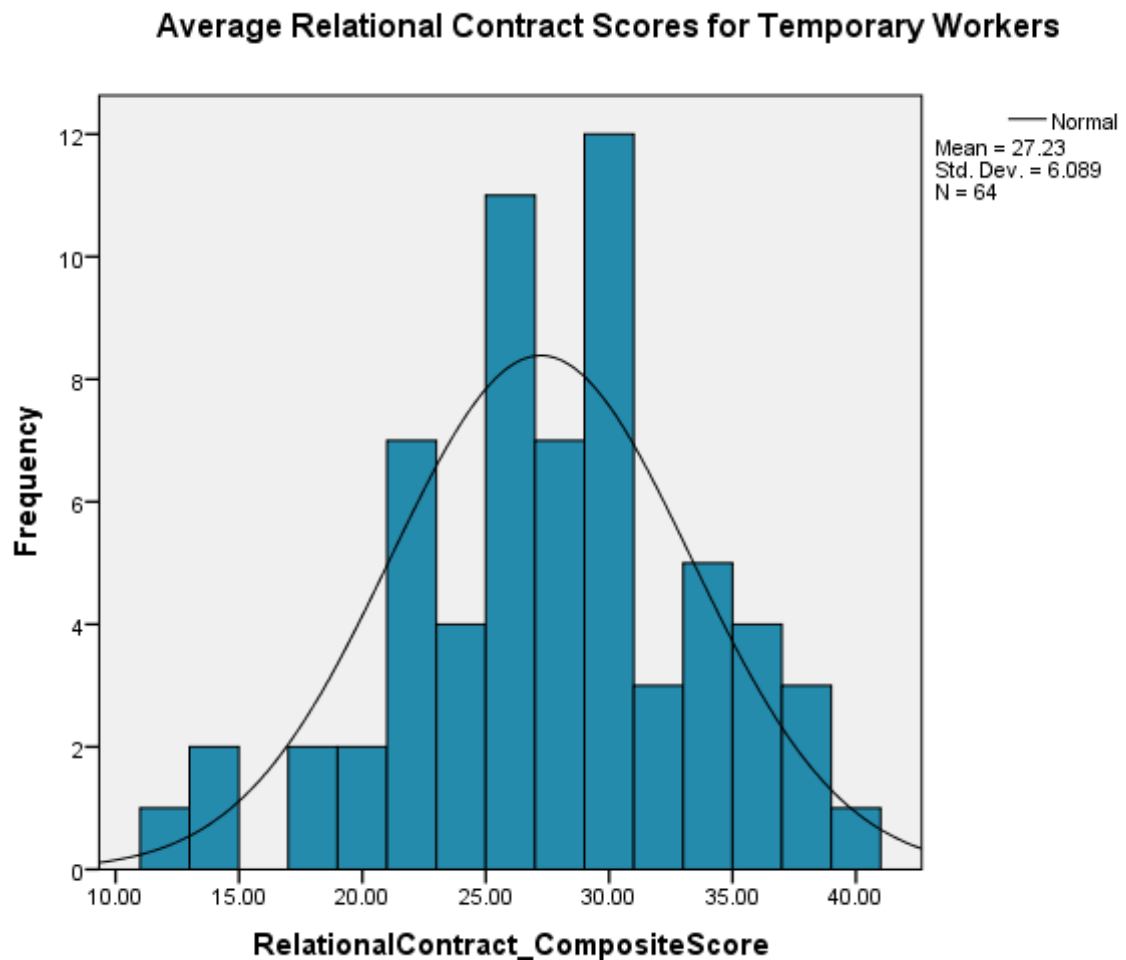


Figure 7: Distribution of Relational contract for Temporary Workers

However, the Shapiro- Wilk test also provided evidence to suggest a violation of the assumption of normality for the independent variable, permanent employees which had a value of 0.006; clearly below the alpha level of 0.05. The distribution curve for permanent workers concerning relational contracts is negatively skewed as can be seen in the histogram below, figure 8.

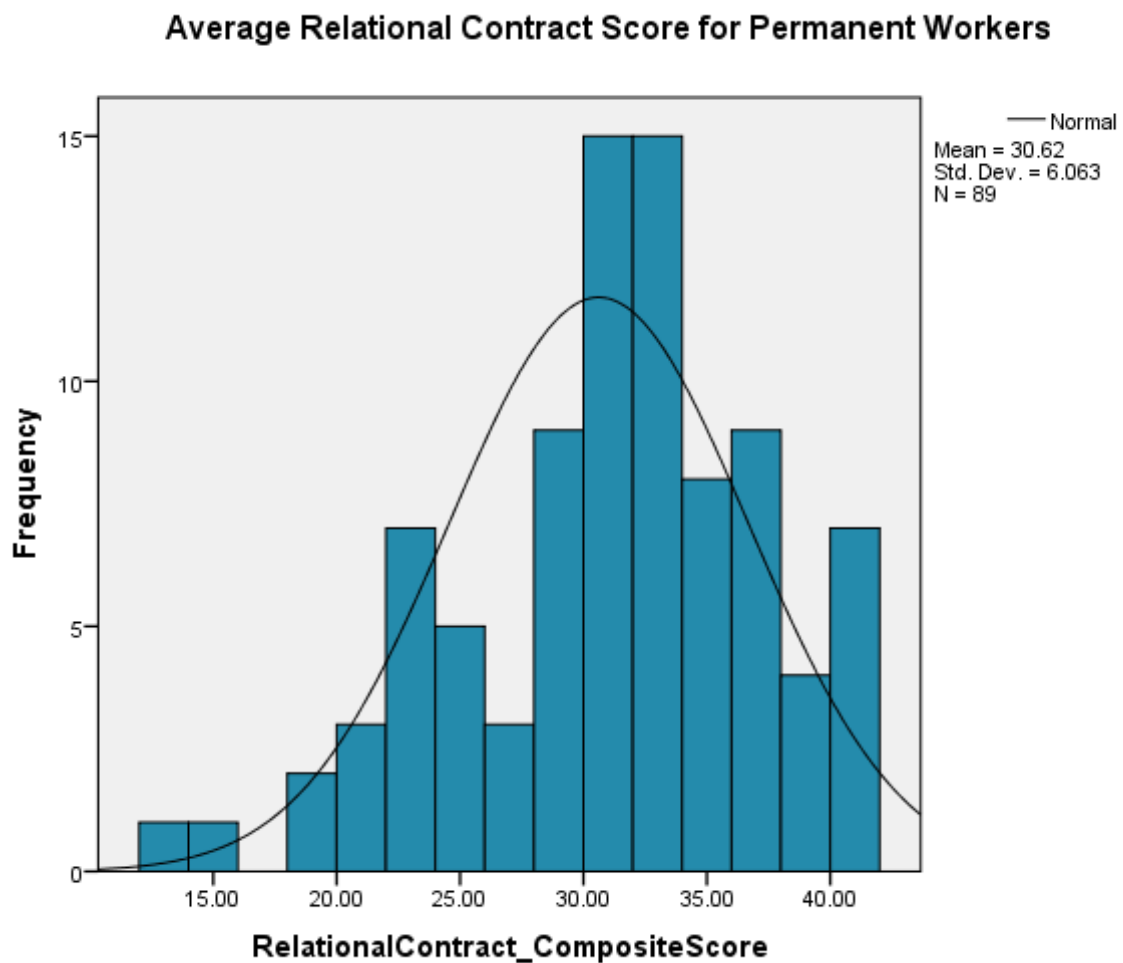


Figure 8: Distribution of Relational contract for Permanent Workers

The non-normal distribution of permanent workers again prompted the use of the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U Test, which is not sensitive to outliers.

In the Mann Whitney test for this hypothesis, which is displayed in Table 2, $U=1897.5$, $Z=-3.521$, $p=0.00$, therefore it is clear that there is reason to believe the two groups differ significantly.

RelationalContract_CompositeScore	
Mann-Whitney U	1897.500
Wilcoxon W	3977.500
Z	-3.521
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

a. Grouping Variable: EmploymentType

Table 2: Results of Mann Whitney U Test for Hypothesis 2

The $p < 0.05$, with an extremely low value of 0.000; therefore, it can be accepted that a significant difference is present concerning the relational contracts of temporary and permanent employees.

Hypothesis 3: Temporary workers display lower levels of engagement compared to permanent workers

When testing the third hypothesis, the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality indicated that the distribution for temporary employees in relation to engagement levels could be accepted as following a normal distribution, with a score of 0.096. The normal distribution curve can be seen in the histogram, figure 9.

Average Score of Engagement Level for Temporary Workers

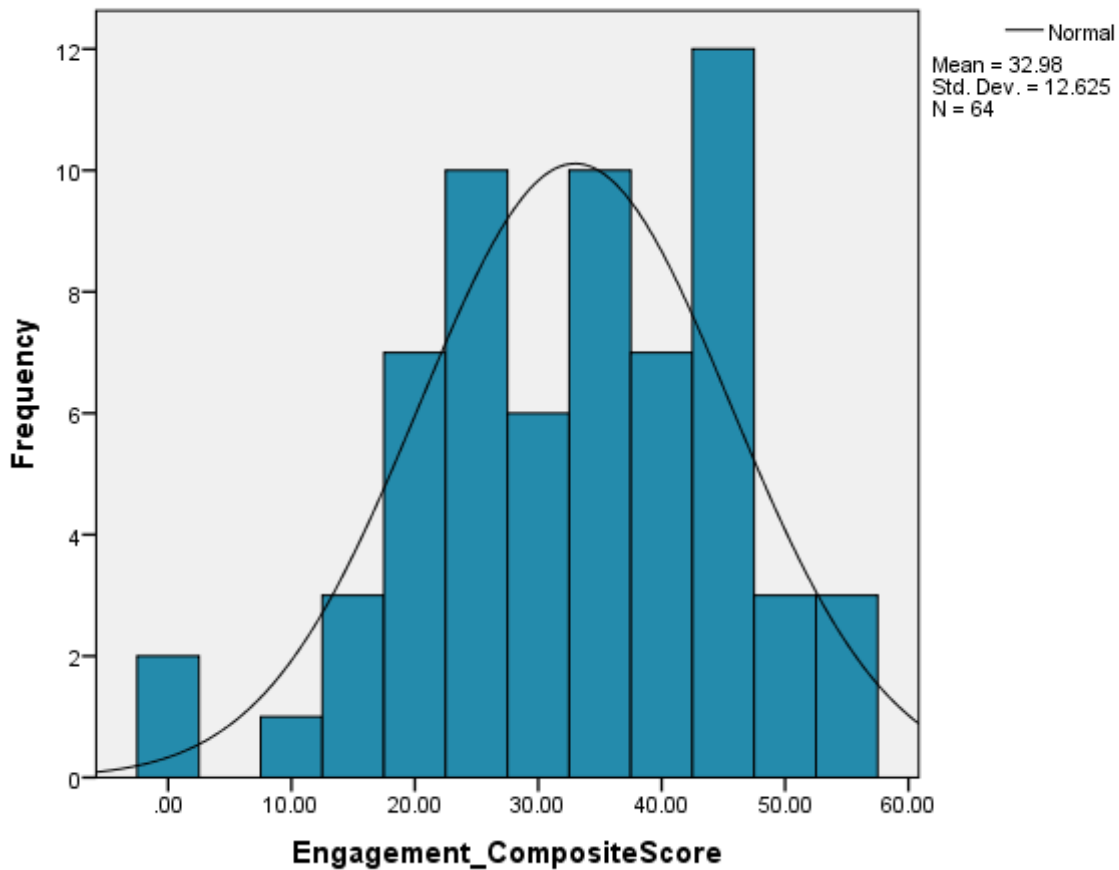


Figure 9: Distribution of Engagement Levels for Temporary Workers

However, the Shapiro- Wilk test also provided evidence to suggest a violation of the assumption of normality for the independent variable, permanent employees which had a value of 0.032; therefore, below the alpha level of 0.05. The distribution curve for permanent workers in relation to engagement level is negatively skewed as can be seen in the histogram below, figure 10.

Average Score of Engagement Level for Permanent Workers

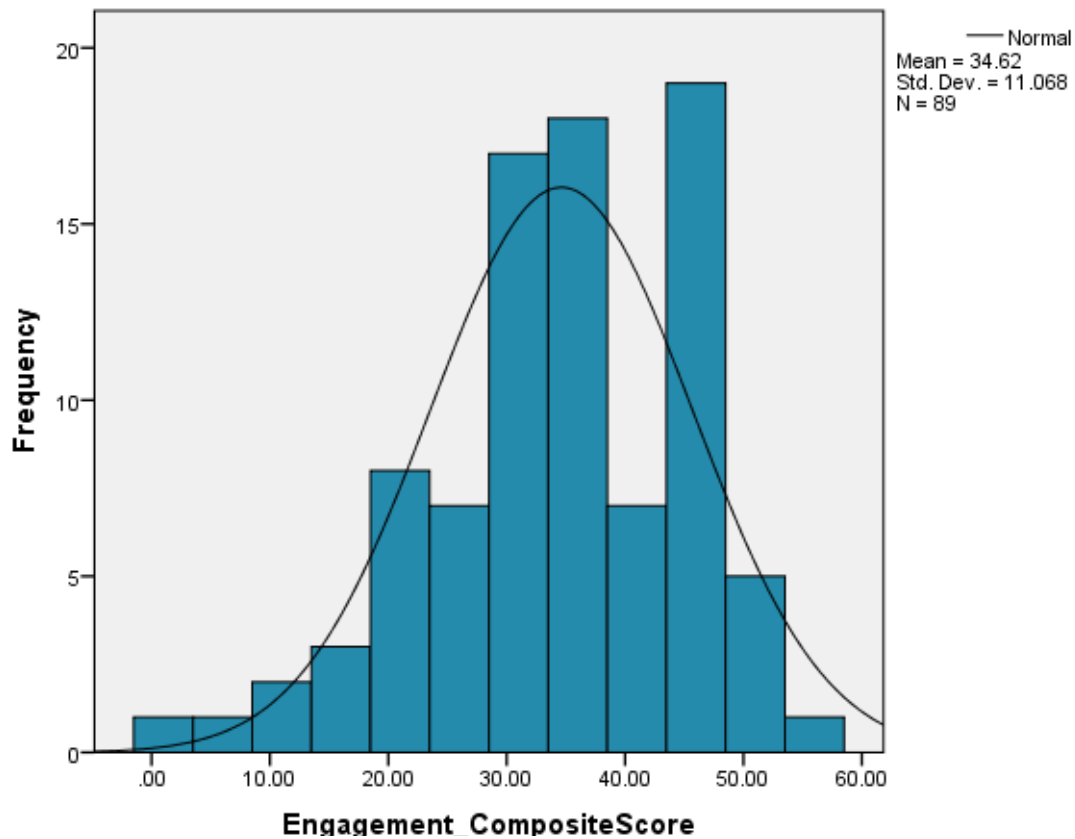


Figure 10: Distribution of Engagement Levels for Temporary Workers

Another non-normal distribution meant that the use of the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U Test, was again the most appropriate form of analysis to use here.

In the Mann Whitney test for this hypothesis, which is displayed in Table 3 below, there did not appear to be a significant difference between the two groups, $U=2642$, $z= -0.762$, $p=0.446$.

Engagement_CompositeScore	
Mann-Whitney U	2642.000
Wilcoxon W	4722.000
Z	-.762
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.446

a. Grouping Variable: EmploymentType

Table 3: Results of Mann Whitney U Test for Hypothesis 3

The $p > 0.05$, with a value of 0.446; therefore, does not give reason to accept that there is a significant difference between engagement levels in temporary and permanent employees.

Hypothesis 4: The differences in levels of engagement, based on types of employment relationship, are more prevalent in the industrial industry

In order to test this hypothesis, an analysis must be carried out which tests the interaction effect between employment type and industry when looking at the levels of engagement present in the workers. The presence of two independent variables (employment type and industry) and two sub-groups within them (contingent, permanent and industrial, commercial), in addition to one dependent variable (engagement), indicates that the most effective analysis to perform here was a Two Way Anova. This gave the advantage of being able to test the 'main effect' for employment type and industry in addition to exploring a potential 'interaction effect' (Pallant, 2016).

The results of the analysis indicated a non-significant difference in the variables. As can be seen in Table 4, the main effect for Industry Type yielded an F Ratio (1,149) = 0.669, $p=0.415$, indicating that the mean change score was not significantly different, Industrial ($M=32.98$, $SD=13.57$) and Commercial ($M=34.38$, $SD=10.80$). The main effect for Employment Type yielded an F ratio (1,149) = 1.781, $p=0.184$, indicating that the mean change score was not significantly different, Contingent ($M=32.98$, $SD=12.62$) and Permanent ($M=34.62$, $SD=11.07$). The interaction effect was non-significant yielding an F ratio (1,149) = 2.868, $p=0.092$. A visual representation of the interaction effect can be seen in Figure 11 and 12 below.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Engagement_CompositeScore

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	546.590 ^a	3	182.197	1.332	.266
Intercept	148044.855	1	148044.855	1082.648	.000
Industry	91.519	1	91.519	.669	.415
EmploymentType	243.499	1	243.499	1.781	.184
Industry * EmploymentType	392.198	1	392.198	2.868	.092
Error	20374.757	149	136.743		
Total	197110.000	153			
Corrected Total	20921.346	152			

a. R Squared = .026 (Adjusted R Squared = .007)

Table 4: Demonstrating Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (Two Way Anova Results)

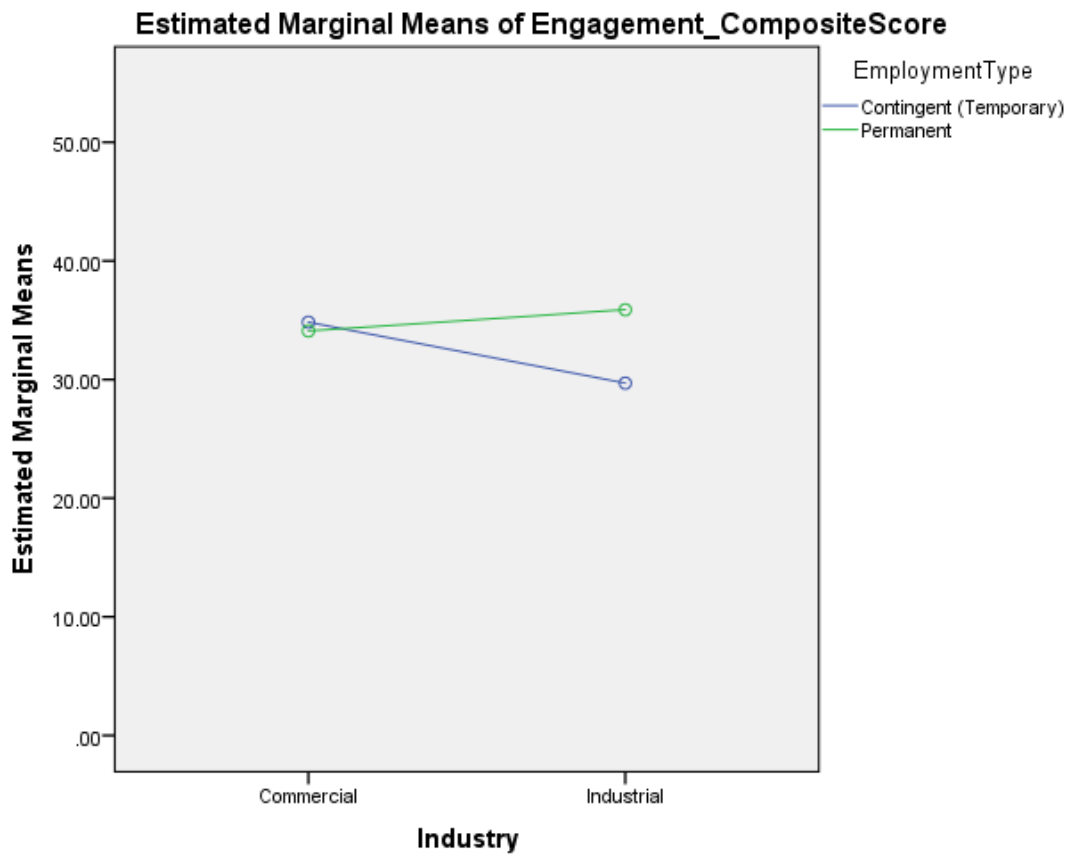


Figure 11: Plots showing the interaction of Industry and Engagement levels with Employment type

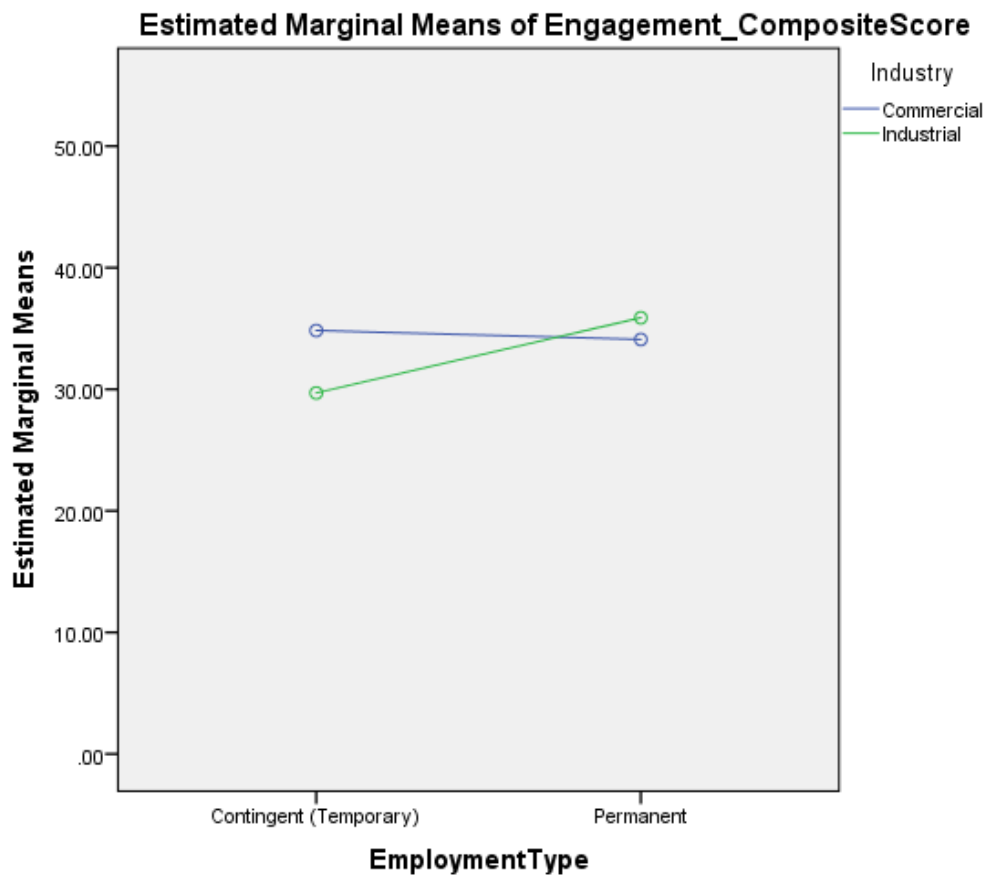


Figure 12: Plots showing the interaction of Employment type and Engagement levels with Industry

Hypothesis 5: The proportion of employees that have a transactional psychological contract, compared to relational, is higher in the industrial industry

When testing the final hypothesis, the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality indicated that the distribution for employees belonging to the industrial industry in relation to transactional contract, could be accepted as following a normal distribution, with a score of 0.053. Whilst this is only slightly above the alpha level the normal distribution curve can be seen in the histogram, figure 13.

Average Transactional Contract Score for workers in the Industrial Industry

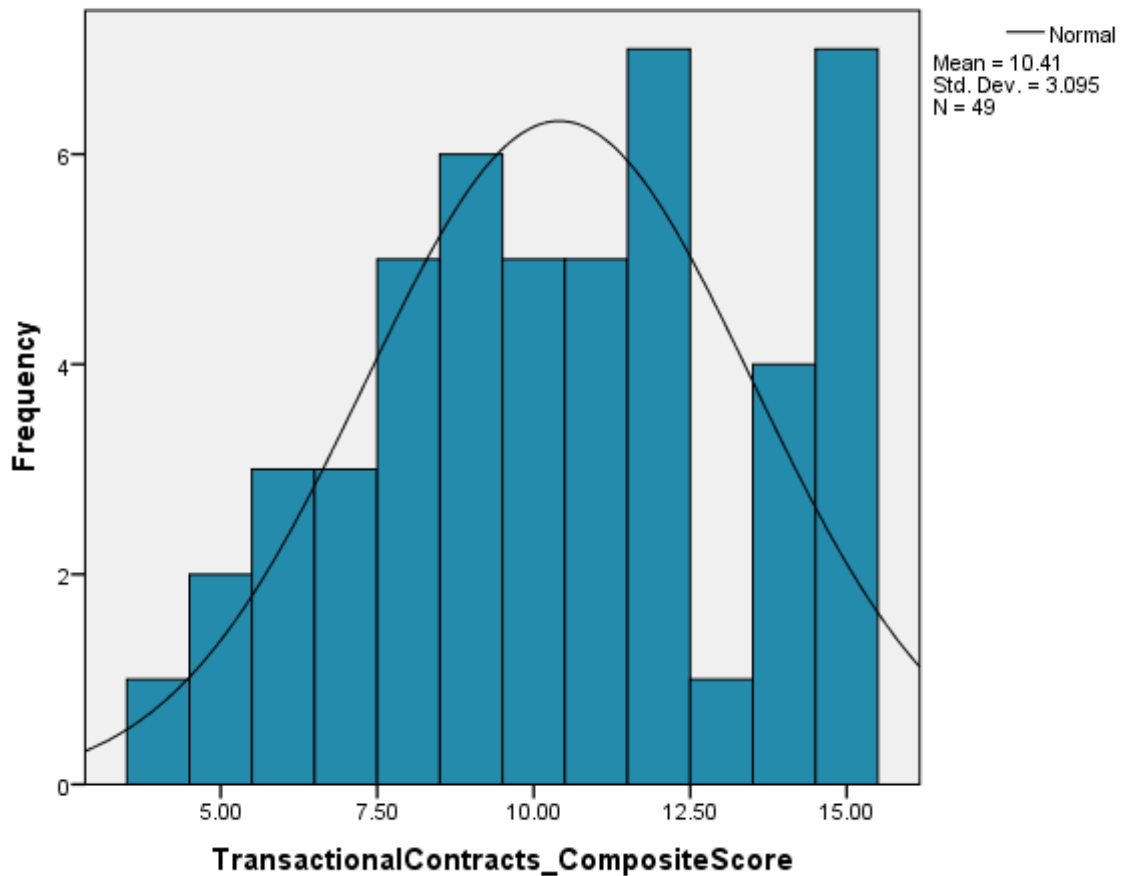


Figure 13: Distribution of Transactional Contract Scores for Industrial Workers

However, the Shapiro- Wilk test also provided evidence to suggest a violation of the assumption of normality for the commercial industry in relation to transactional contracts, which had a value of 0.000; therefore, clearly below the alpha level of 0.05. The distribution curve for employees of the commercial industry in relation to transactional contracts is negatively skewed as can be seen in the histogram below, Figure 14.

Average Transactional Contract Scores for Employees in the Commercial Industry

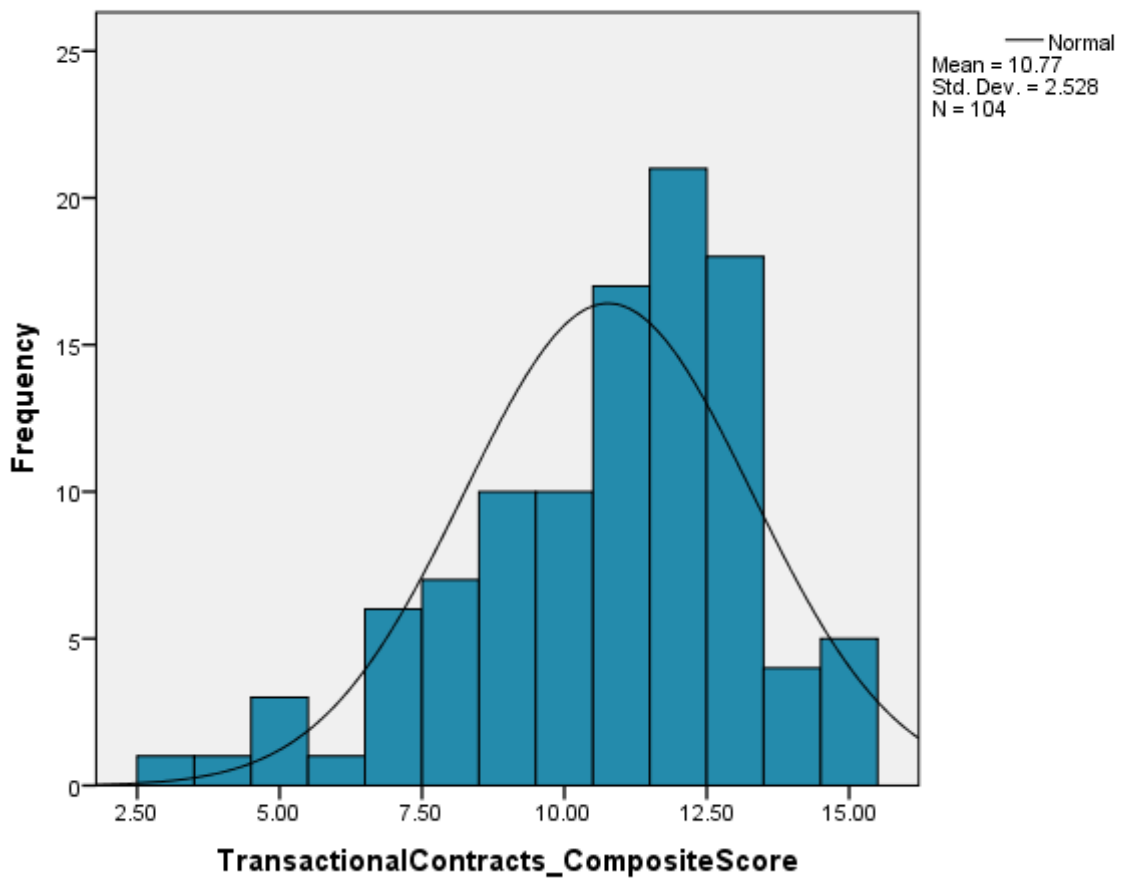


Figure 14: Distribution of Transactional Contract Scores for Commercial Workers

Another non-normal distribution meant that the use of the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U Test, was again the most appropriate form of analysis to use here.

In the Mann Whitney test for this hypothesis, which is displayed in Table 5 below, there did not appear to be a significant difference between the two groups, $U=2331$, $z= -0.855$, $p=0.393$.

	TransactionalContracts_CompositeScore
Mann-Whitney U	2331.000
Wilcoxon W	3556.000
Z	-.855
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.393

a. Grouping Variable: Industry

Table 5: Results of Mann Whitney U Test for Hypothesis 5

The $p > 0.05$, with a value of 0.393; therefore, does not give reason to accept that there is a significant difference between transactional contract scores and the two industry groups.

Although it isn't explicitly stated as part of the hypothesis, it is useful to repeat the steps, but instead looking at the relational contract. The information gained here could be useful for drawing conclusions and would be an interesting observation. The Shapiro-Wilk test for normality indicated that the distribution for employees belonging to the industrial industry concerning relational contract, could be accepted as following a normal distribution, with a score of 0.149. The histogram in Figure 16 shows this distribution below.

Average Relational Contract Scores for Employees in the Industrial Industry

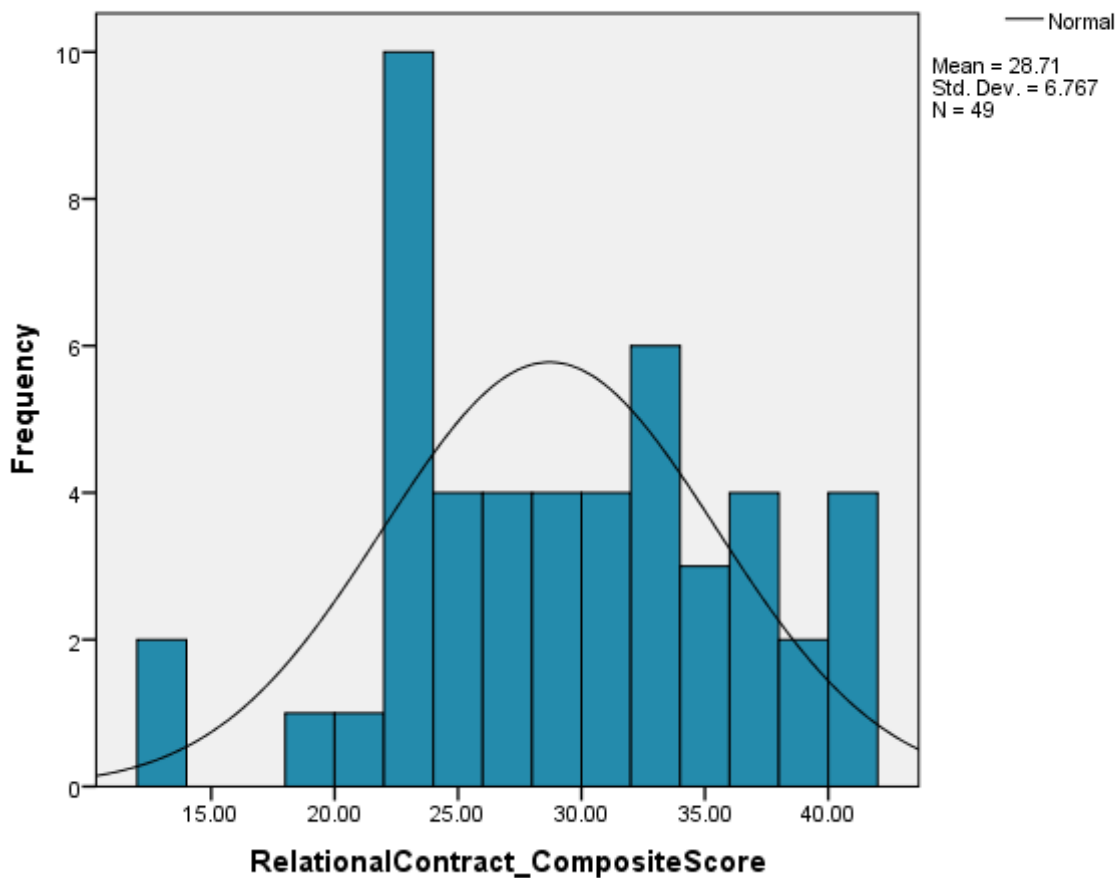


Figure 15: Distribution of Relational Contract Scores for Industrial Workers

However, the Shapiro- Wilk test also provided evidence to suggest a violation of the assumption of normality for the commercial industry concerning relational contracts, which had a value of 0.008; The negatively skewed distribution line can be seen in the histogram below, Figure 17.

Average Relational Contract Scores for Employees in the Commercial Industry

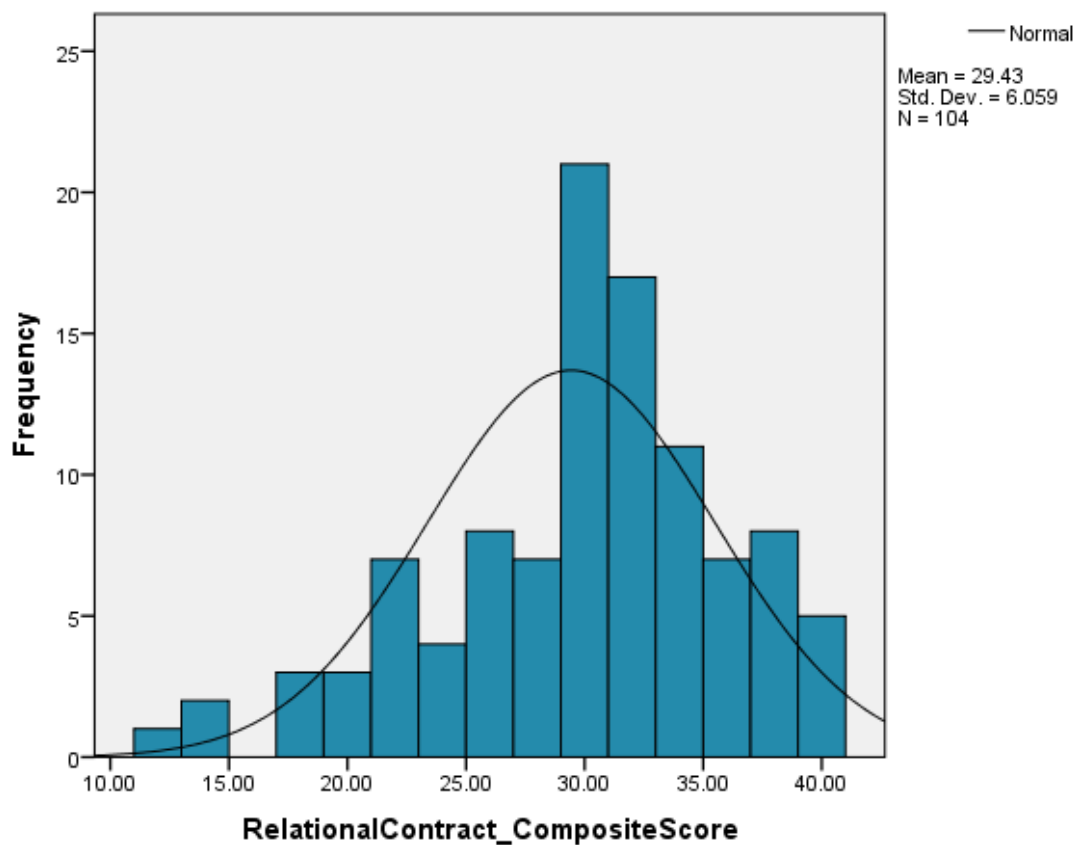


Figure 16: Distribution of Relational Contract Scores for Commercial Workers

The most suitable form of analysis, due to the skewed distribution, was the use of the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U Test.

The Mann Whitney U test, of which the results are displayed in Table 6 below, does not appear to show a significant difference between the two groups, $U=2359.5$, $z= -0.738$, $p=0.460$.

RelationalContract_CompositeScore	
Mann-Whitney U	2359.500
Wilcoxon W	3584.500
Z	-.738
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.460

a. Grouping Variable: Industry

Table 6: Results of Mann Whitney U Test for Development of Hypothesis 5

4:2 Discussion

As outlined at the onset, the objective was to reach a more conclusive understanding of the employment relationship for temporary and permanent workers, in terms of their psychological contracts and engagement levels, specifically with industrial and commercial workers as comparators. Each Hypothesis has been tested and the findings analysed in order to accept or reject the null statement, however it is essential to now consider how these findings relate to the current literature and how the results of this study compare to previous investigations.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that Contingent workers have more transactional psychological contracts. The results of the analysis showed that the null statement: *There would be no significant difference in transactional contracts for temporary workers*, would be accepted in this case. The results did not offer any notable evidence that suggested temporary workers scored higher on the transactional contract scale than permanent employees.

These findings are contradictory to a number of authors ideas, who have noted significant differences in this area. Chambel et al (2016) conducted a study in which they found that a higher percentage of temporary workers were allocated to the transactional psychological contract dominant profile, in comparison to permanent employees.

This was also supported by De Cuyper et al (2008a) who stated that due to the length of contracts being characteristically short-term for temporary workers, this is more closely related to developing PCs of a more transactional nature.

The ideas proposed by Rousseau have been seminal in the concepts surrounding Psychological Contracts, providing a formative basis for following research and subsequent theories. In terms of this, 'Rousseau believes that non-permanent staff will have a predominantly transactional psychological contract. She states that the transactional contract is typically made up of "specific monetizable exchanges between parties over a

specific time period as in the case of temporary employment" (Rousseau, 1990 – cited in McDonald & Makin, 2000, p85).

The overall approach within the literature surrounding temporary workers and psychological contracts, 'takes the stance that they maintain a transactional relationship based on a purely economic exchange with the organization for which they work' (Matusik and Hill 1998; Rousseau and Wade-Benzoni 1995, Cited in Lapalme et al, 2011, p319).

Whilst the findings of this study have strongly challenged the ideas set out by a number of previous researchers, it has also provided support to alternative points of view on the matter.

McDonald and Makin (2000) conducted an investigation into which they found there was 'no significant difference between the permanent and non-permanent staff in either the overall levels of the psychological contract, or in the subscales for transactional or relational contracts' (p88). However, one of the concerns in relation to their findings was whether the results could be generalised to include all temporary workers, due to the fact that the sample was isolated to one organisation in one particular industry, namely the holiday industry. The fact that this study included two separate organisations in two opposing industries, therefore provides the support that in terms of transactional psychological contracts it can be confirmed that there is no obvious variance between temporary or permanent workers.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated that permanent workers have more relational psychological contracts. The results of the analysis showed that the null statement: *There would be no significant difference in relational contracts for permanent workers*, would be rejected in this case. The results of the Mann Whitney U test demonstrated that there is significant evidence to suggest that permanent workers scored higher on the relational psychological contract scale than temporary employees.

The literature concerning relational contracts is varied, however the rejection of this hypothesis demonstrates support for the concept proposed by Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler

(2000), in which they explain, 'PC variations across employees are primarily found at the relational or balanced content level. More specifically, permanent workers may have a PC characterized by dominant relational and balanced content (Cited in Chambel et al, 2016, p81).

Furthermore, the investigation ran by Chambel et al (2016) in order to test this theory was successful in proving that a higher percentage of permanent workers compared to temporary, were characteristically identified as being part of the relational psychological contract dominant profile.

In addition, the nature of permanent employment typically indicating a longer service period in an organisation, may suggest the development of a relational psychological contract, as opposed to the shorter-term roles usually associated with temporary employment (De Cuyper et al., 2008a).

However, whilst there are some excellent theories to support the hypothesis of this study, the findings also present some challenges. Whereas the results of the investigation conducted by McDonald and Makin (2000) were in support of Hypothesis 1, they are in fact contradictory to Hypothesis 2. The statement that there was no significant difference for permanent or temporary workers concerning the sub scale of relational psychological contracts, is contrasting to the findings of this study. It would seem that, the results of McDonald and Makin's study could not be applied across permanent workers in general. The concerns that they expressed in relation to the image of this holiday industry and its reputation for recruiting permanent employees from seasonal staff, could be to answer for the differing results of their study. Again, the fact that this study included two separate organisations in two opposing industries, may provide solid support for a more conclusive outcome that could be more generalised across the board, i.e. that permanent workers maintain higher relational psychological contracts than temporary workers.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 indicated that temporary workers display lower levels of engagement compared to permanent workers. The results of the analysis showed that the null statement: *There would be no significant difference in engagement level of temporary workers in comparison to permanent employees*, would be accepted in this case. The results of the Mann Whitney U test did not indicate significant evidence to prove that temporary workers are less engaged than their permanent counterparts.

The results of this study are contradictory to several ideas presented in the extant literature; Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2002) indicated that 'contingent employees are likely to display less positive attitudes and behaviours than permanent staff' (p96), clearly outlining that there is a distinct difference depending on employment type. If the contingent workers are displaying more negative attitudes and behaviours in comparison to the permanent staff, this would reflect poorly on their input into the organisation. Similarly, Kalleberg and Reynolds (2003) parallel this concept with their view that non-standard workers (temporary workers) are assumed to show more negative attitudes than standard workers, in addition to having inferior in-role performance (cited in Broschak, Davis-Blake & Block, 2008).

The presumptions in the literature surrounding temporary and permanent worker engagement, can be linked to the work with Psychological Contracts. The fact that there is an expectation that temporary workers generally do not possess relational contract features, but instead reflect a dominance in the transactional contract profile, would offer the opinion that the motivation of temporary workers is driven largely by compensation and monetary rewards (Koene & van Riemsdijk, 2005). Therefore, lacking in the level of engagement that can be achieved by an employee with a relational psychological contract.

However, despite there being a strong assumption in the literature, that temporary workers will display lower engagement levels to that of permanent workers, Jiang and Wang (2018) discovered an interesting deviation from this belief, whereby their results show that temporary workers in general experience high engagement in their work. They state that this 'supports Drucker's (1998) observation that temporary employees can develop attachment to their organizations by showing high organizational commitment' (p1038).

The results of this study show that the common postulation that low engagement is related to the employment status of a temporary worker, is not supported in either the industrial organisation or the commercial and so offers a well-rounded belief that the employment type does not have a significant effect on employee engagement, in fact temporary employees are capable of achieving almost equal engagement levels to that of their permanent counterparts.

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 stated that the difference in levels of engagement between temporary and permanent workers, would be more prevalent in the industrial organisation. The results of the analysis showed that the null statement: *There is no significant difference in engagement level of temporary workers and permanent employees, in the Industrial organisation in comparison with the commercial organisation*, would be accepted in this case. The results of the Two Way Anova test did not indicate significant evidence to display an interaction with industry type, employment type and engagement levels in the sample participants.

In terms of the literature on this topic, there is not a substantial amount of research that has delved into the interaction between employment type and engagement level with industry as a factor, which is why this was identified as a research gap for this study.

The hypothesis made was based around the idea that more workers will have a transactional contract in the industrial industry, which has been linked to lower levels of engagement. Consequently, meaning that if the majority of workers in the industrial organisation relate to a transactional psychological contract and fewer with the relational psychological contract, this will then reflect a larger difference in engagement levels; 'the balanced/relational dominant profile was found to present higher engagement scores compared with the transactional PC dominant profile' (Chambel et al, 2016, p88).

Whilst it has been acknowledged that the analysis result cannot be considered significant based on the alpha value of 0.05, it is clear from the plot graph (Figure 11) that there is

some interaction present in the relationship, which shows a potential effect between the engagement levels of contingent and temporary workers, in the industrial industry in particular. The p value of 0.092 whilst not technically significant, could be considered an indicator of the relationship between the variables.

Chambel, Castanheira and Sobral (2016b), offer insight into the interactions of industrial workers, in that the sector is considered to be more traditional in nature, that the employees expect to 'develop their professional tasks in the company for a long time with an undefined term' (p671). The constraints accompanying a temporary work arrangement, means that these types of expectations are excluded, and it is possible that temporary workers in this traditional sector cannot see a path of career progression for them. This would indicate that workers would display low engagement, however Chambel, Castanheira and Sobral (2016b) develop their ideas further by explaining that if workers 'perceive that the organization acts with concern about their goals and needs their expectations rise and they show greater motivation (e.g. engagement) when compared with workers in a less traditional sector' (p671).

Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 relayed that transactional psychological contracts are more dominant than relational psychological contracts, in employees belonging to the industrial industry. The results of the analysis showed that the null statement: *There is no difference in the presence of transactional or relational psychological contracts in employees of the industrial organisation*, would be accepted in this case. The results of the Mann Whitney U test did not indicate significant evidence to believe that industrial workers have predominantly transactional psychological contracts as opposed to relational.

Alike to Hypothesis 4, literature relating to this particular aspect of the study is scarce. As discussed earlier, the concept that employees working in industrial roles have a more transactional psychological contract, stems from the idea that workers in these more manual, mechanical roles are more likely to be motivated by monetary rewards and compensation. Dan Pink (2010) conveys this theory through his motivation theory involving

'carrots and sticks', and discussing the study conducted by Dan Ariely and colleagues. The deductions taken from the study being that when the task called for "even rudimentary cognitive skill," a larger reward "led to poorer performance." But "as long as the task involved only mechanical skill, bonuses worked as they would be expected: the higher the pay, the better the performance." (cited in Pink, 2010, p62).

The attempt to link psychological contract to this particular theory, was unsuccessful in this case. The assumption made that workers undertaking these mechanically skilled roles, would in turn identify more closely with a transactional psychological contract, due to the similar characteristics of being motivated by pay, did not prove to be undeniably true. The employees in the industrial roles were not only concerned with economic exchange, but also identified with aspects of the relational psychological contracts, indicating a relationship that also involves the importance of 'long-term, less-defined, socio-emotional obligations, commitment and trust '(Lee and Faller, 2005, p 833).

4:3 Conclusion and Recommendations

With temporary employment becoming a consistently central aspect of organisational structure in businesses today, exploration of the ways in which employment type can affect the progression and success of organisations, becomes increasingly important (Connelly and Gallagher, 2004).

Understanding how to manage this evolving employer – employee relationships is one of the main challenges for current businesses, (Tyagi and Agrawal, 2010), and it is essential to ‘empower client organisations to manage their contingent workforce for maximum productivity’ (Lee and Faller, 2005, p833).

One of the benefits of using temporary staff is said to be financial flexibility, however from a practical perspective if ‘the lack of attachment experienced by nonstandard workers leads to poorer attitudes and behaviors than standard workers, then this could generate costs that negate all or some of the benefits of increased flexibility’ (Davis-Blake, Broschak, & George, 2003; McLean Parks, & Kidder, 1994; Rotchford & Roberts, 1982; cited in Broschak, 2008, p5).

The main objective of this study was to explore whether there is a relationship between employment type and work engagement, focusing on the different psychological contracts at present, additionally exploring any interaction with industry type.

In the interest of providing insight to assist employers, engagement was identified as a significant factor to explore to promote organisational success, due to the fact that ‘engaged employees are more productive and less often absent due to sickness (Effactory, 2014; Guthrie, 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2009, cited in Van Elst and Meurs, 2015, p41).

The expectations at the outset were principally placing temporary workers to have lower engagement levels and to be more likely to identify with transactional psychological contracts, which in turn indicated a work motivation driven by monetary rewards (Koene & van Riemsdijk, 2005). Additionally, that further research involving industry type would

present trends in terms of transactional contracts being more prevalent and also there being a more obvious gap in terms of temporary vs permanent employee engagement, in the industrial industry as opposed to the commercial.

However, the results produced from the study, did not prove that temporary and permanent employees differ significantly in terms of their engagement levels. In fact, temporary and permanent staff, as indicated in this data set, are engaged on an almost equal level. It can be argued that a reason for this is due to the temporary staff having fewer expectations than permanent workers, therefore there is less chance for breach of contract; plus the general shorter lengths of tenure for temporary employees offers less opportunity in terms of time to break contracts, therefore ensuring a fulfilled and engaged employee is maintained.

The results also indicated that there is a significant difference between permanent and temporary staff, concerning the levels of relational psychological contracts. Less temporary staff than permanent workers, perceive obligations that are considered to characterise a relational contract. This promotes that there is in fact a heightened importance for organisations to focus on competitive pay for non-permanent staff, which may include performance related pay and additional benefits.

In terms of permanent staff, the data clearly shows the equal value that permanent staff place on both transactional and relational psychological contracts, in order to maintain an engaged permanent workforce, employers must cover both bases.

Whilst it is evident that monetary reward and compensation is a dominant motivating factor, the line is not drawn here, temporary employees also perceive some obligations in relation to recognition, training, job security, career development, performance feedback, fairness and justice in personnel procedures, promotion opportunities and support with their personal and family problems. This can bring them more closely parallel to permanent employees.

One of the aims for this study was to try to produce a more conclusive result, that could potentially be generalised, which has been relatively successful, the sample included two completely different organisations with different roles but produced data that almost

paralleled. The reality is that in organisations today, temporary workers are not so different from permanent workers in their engagement or the way they view employer obligations. From a practical perspective, Employers must be aware of this and alter their actions to ensure all psychological contracts remain fulfilled and intact.

It should not be taken for granted that contingent workers will be content with a good salary in exchange for their commitment and engagement to their work. The changing landscape means that contingent workers are seeking a more fulfilling relationship with their employers despite the potentially brief nature of their contracts. This may involve reassessing HR practices to cater to temporary as well as permanent workers, more specifically to include more aspects of relational psychological contracts. Whilst there will inevitably be certain employment elements that apply solely to permanent workers such as job security and promotion opportunities, it would be possible to include more sophisticated performance feedback, personnel procedures, recognition, training and support with personal and family issues. As Wilkin (2013) explained, it is 'in the interest of organizations to treat contingent workers in a fair manner to affect productivity, increase citizenship behaviors, and decrease turnover' (p59). This will ensure that hiring employees on a temporary basis, will continue to benefit organisations by fostering productive and engaged employees who benefit the business in a positive way.

Personal Learning Statement

This research study has been completed as partial fulfilment for a Masters in Human Resource Management. This experience has been both challenging and rewarding for me personally. I have succeeded in further development of my skills in time management by balancing my full-time role as a Recruitment Consultant with part time studies. At times this has been difficult, but with organisation and determination I have pushed myself to the best of my abilities.

I began my role as a Recruitment Consultant for a Global Recruitment Agency in 2015, which provided me with an enlightening first experience to working in a HR related role. I quickly became extremely interested in the subject and inspired to begin developing my career in the profession. The course gave me both an educational and practical knowledge base of working in a wide range of HR roles and the biggest challenges that face HR practitioners in organisations today.

My interest in exploring employment type in particular, originates from my role within my current organisation, as a Consultant recruiting for ad hoc temporary and contract positions, I was interested in investigating further the potential differences between permanent and contingent workers. Communicating with employees working in temporary positions on a daily basis, in addition to the client organisations that employ them, I was interested in exploring whether the engagement levels varied depending on employment type – were the organisations adopting a cost-effective option that would also spur the success of the business, or were temporary staff simply stop gaps until a permanent employee could be found. The research gap identified, included the added study of industry type. As an agency we collaborate with a diverse range of clients from many different industries, however I selected two fairly opposite organisations in terms of operations and services, in order to provide a varied data set in the responses.

Additionally, during my knowledge development of HR topics, I became interested in the subject of Psychological Contracts, which I decided to incorporate into the research study. As often temporary employees do not always have full written contracts of employment, this struck me as particularly useful as a framework to analyse the elements that employees

consider to be obligations of the employer – employee relationship. It would be interesting to examine whether these obligations differ depending on the employment type.

Of the five hypotheses, one significant result transpired, this was with an analysis of the data involving the relational psychological contract, which showed more permanent employees perceive obligations of a relational nature, than temporary workers. However, both temporary and permanent perceive obligations of a transactional nature.

The anticipated differences in engagement level, and also expected differences based on industry did not transpire and is therefore illuminating in terms of expelling the concept that temporary employees are not as engaged or committed to their roles as permanent staff.

The investigation could be taken to the next level by including various other industries than the two involved here to explore whether there are any types of roles or organisations that this does not apply generically to. Additionally, it could be useful to explore further the concept of breach of contract, specifically to hone in on which aspects of the psychological contract, if breached, would affect engagement levels most drastically, depending on employment type.

The research experience on a personal level has been illuminating in my professional role and also on an educational level. The main challenge for me was choosing a topic, that I was not only interested in, but would have the opportunity to conduct primary research and additionally that would fill a research gap in the literature. However, I believe that once I overcame this hurdle, the methodology plan and execution of the research were very successful. Further challenges arose in the data analysis sector as this is an area whereby I had little experience and was a novice in the IBM SPSS software, although this again was overcome with commitment and study.

I believe that I have improved as an independent learner, as a HR professional and in my current role as a Recruiter, as a direct result of this course and this research study.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Primary Research Survey

An exploration of engagement levels in permanent and contingent workers, with a focus on psychological contract.

This research study aims to explore the levels of engagement of both permanent and contingent workers in the industrial and commercial sectors, with focus on psychological contract.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research study, your participation is extremely appreciated. Please answer each question as honestly as possible, taking care in your answers to ensure a true and accurate portrayal in the outcome.

All information provided will remain anonymous and confidential. The information gathered will be used for the purpose of this research only.

The survey should take around 10-15 minutes to complete and will contain three sections: Section 1 will gather the demographics, Section 2 will measure the type of psychological contract in the employment relationship and Section 3 will measure the level of engagement.

There are 8 questions in this survey.

A note on privacy

This survey is anonymous.

The record kept of your survey responses does not contain any identifying information about you unless a specific question in the survey has asked for this. If you have responded to a survey that used an identifying token to allow you to access the survey, you can rest assured that the identifying token is not kept with your responses. It is managed in a separate database, and will only be updated to indicate that you have (or haven't) completed this survey. There is no way of matching identification tokens with survey responses in this survey.

[Load unfinished survey](#)

[Next >>](#)

[Exit and clear survey](#)

Demographics

1. Please indicate your gender – Male/Female
2. Please indicate your age (16-25) (26-30) (31-40) (41+)
3. Which best describes the industry you work in – Industrial/Commercial
4. Which best describes your employment type – Permanent/Temporary
5. Which best describes your seniority level – Associate/Management
6. Please outline the range of your tenure (0-2 years) (3-4 years) (5-10 years) (10+ years)

Psychological Contract Scale

7. " ... to what extent do you believe your organisation is obliged to provide the following items?"

Items				
Not at all obliged	Low obligation to provide	Moderate obligation to provide	Highly obliged to provide	Very highly obliged to provide
1	2	3	4	5

- Competitive salary;
- Benefits;
- Pay linked to performance.
- Recognition of contributions to the organisation;
- Training;
- Job security;
- Career development;
- Recognition and feedback on performance;
- Fairness and justice in personnel procedures;
- Consultation and communication with employees;
- Support with personal or family problems;
- Promotion opportunities

Has your organisation overall ever failed to fulfil what you believe to be its obligations and promises to you?

- Yes
- No

Engagement Scale

Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Salanova, M. (2006). Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t05561-000>

Items

Never	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always
0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

8. The following statements are about how you feel at work.

Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job.

If you have never had this feeling, cross the "0" (zero) in the space after the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you felt it by crossing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

- At my work, I feel bursting with energy. (VI1)
- At my job, I feel strong and vigorous. (VI2)
- I am immersed in my work. (AB4)
- I am enthusiastic about my job. (DE2)
- My job inspires me. (DE3)
- When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work. (VI3)
- I feel happy when I am working intensely. (AB3)
- I am proud of the work that I do. (DE4)
- I get carried away when I am working

Thank you again for the time to answer these questions, your participation will be contributory to proving or disproving various hypotheses in relation to this topic.

If this survey has raised any personal concerns or caused distress of any kind, the researcher has listed some organisations below that may assist you.

Mental Health Ireland
Tel: 01 284 1166
Email: info@mentalhealthireland.ie

Samaritans 24 hour (Emotional Support Helpline)
Tel: 116 123
Email: jo@samaritans.org

HSE support
Visit: www.yourmentalhealth.ie

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