

**An exploration into employee engagement and
turnover intention of permanent and temporary
workers in Ireland**

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Abstract

This research examines the relationship between employee engagement, turnover intention and total rewards among permanent and temporary employees.

In the modern workplace, organisations are relying on temporary employees to support businesses in times of growth. However, existing research focuses heavily on permanent workers and temporary workers individually but is lacking in offering a comparison of both employment categories in a single study. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of factors impacting employee engagement and turnover intention of both employment categories.

A quantitative research design was used, utilising data from an online survey of over 80 participants in Ireland. The preliminary findings suggest that employee category impacts the relationship between engagement and turnover intention.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This section provides background information and highlights the reasons for undertaking this research. This section will also include the aims objectives and research questions of this study.

1.1 Research Rationale

Employers are increasing their intake of temporary employees, to enhance their organisations, with temporary contracts often serving as a screening device for employers to observe the employee's characteristics before deciding on a permanent employment contract. This is often considered a "try before you buy" opportunity (Högberg, Strandh and Baranowska-Rataj, 2019).

In 2022, Ireland experienced a surge in temporary employment, with an increase of over 13.4%. However, permanent employment declined in areas such as senior officials, managers, and directors, where temporary roles increased, signalling a change away from traditional employment in these professionals (Central Statistics Office, 2022).

Research emphasises that temporary workers serve as a buffer in the labour market, alleviating concerns of their permanent counterparts. However, being a permanent worker is not always viewed as positive, as it often results in a lower salary than that received by temporary workers, however, permanent workers are often entitled to healthcare and share options that increase costs for companies. Temporary workers often do not receive share options and healthcare, and it can be viewed as easier to hire temporary staff (Pfeifer and Mohrenweiser, 2023).

The general assumption is that employees desire permanent contracts over temporary contracts (Högberg, Strandh and Baranowska-Rataj, 2019). While it is assumed that employees favouring temporary contracts are as happy as those in permanent employment (Canzio, Bühlmann and Masdonati, 2023), state that this is dependent on the type of category of temporary worker. According to Wilkin (2013), temporary employees who are categorised as "contractors" display a higher desire to become permanent employees with their current company (Wilkin, 2013). Lack of employee engagement leads to increased job turnover, which occurs from uncertain working arrangements, perceived

lack of control, and relationships with management. For organisations to improve engagement and performance, investigating the key factors that contribute to disengagement is crucial (Getahun Asfaw and Chang, 2019). However, the effect of temporary employment on engagement and overall satisfaction remains unclear (Canzio, Bühlmann, and Masdonati, 2023).

Thus, it is necessary to further investigate and address engagement and turnover intention to improve and maintain high employee engagement, and to understand the role of a lack of engagement and increased turnover intention. As research is largely focused on permanent workers, limited research is focused on temporary workers. Furthermore, there is a lack of research investigating both permanent and temporary workers in Ireland in a single study, this research aims to bridge this research gap.

1.2 Research Question and Hypotheses

For this dissertation, the research question is as follows:

“What are the factors that influence engagement and turnover intention among permanent and temporary workers?”

Hypotheses:

H1: Permanent employees are more engaged than their colleagues on temporary contracts.

H2: Employees with temporary contracts will report lower turnover intention compared to permanent employees.

H3: A strong total rewards program will be more effective in increasing employee engagement among temporary staff compared to permanent staff.

1.3 Research Objectives

- Compare and analyse engagement levels between permanent and temporary workers.
- Evaluate the level of turnover intention between permanent and temporary workers.

- Examine the organisation strategies used to minimise turnover intention among permanent and temporary workers, such as total rewards, and if it is important to both categories of workers.

1.4 Structure of Dissertation

This chapter has given an overview of the study, beginning with an overview of the research rationale, defining the research questions and research hypothesis. The chapter also provides an overview of the structure of each chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review provides a critical analysis of all previous research conducted on the topics essential to this research, including defining permanent and temporary workers, employee engagement, turnover intention, and total rewards. The author uses a variety of sources including journal articles, books, and media to explore the areas of this research for both permanent and temporary workers.

Chapter 3: Research aims and objectives outline the research aims and objectives within this chapter. This chapter also outlines the main research question for this dissertation.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology discusses how the primary research was undertaken to gather the required information for this research. The chapter begins by outlining the research philosophy and the research methods used to obtain the primary data within this study. This chapter also provides the approaches used to analyse data and highlights the potential limitations of this research.

Chapter 5: Research findings and analysis presents the findings and data obtained from the primary research survey which was conducted through an online survey. The data is discussed and supported by tables and graphs to display results effectively. A statistical analysis will be conducted to investigate the research hypothesis of this research.

Chapter 6: The discussion analyses the findings of primary research and will be linked to secondary data outlined in chapter two. The analysis will be carried out to examine the research objectives defined in this study as mentioned in chapter three, before being concluded in chapter 7.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations concludes the research gathered throughout this dissertation. The author proposes recommendations and areas of further

study that could guide organisations employing both categories of workers and future researchers who are conducting a similar study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will investigate current literature, focusing on employee engagement, employee engagement factors and theories, and factors leading to turnover in organisations. Currently, there is limited research on employee engagement and turnover intention, with a focus on both permanent and temporary employees in Ireland. Often the research is focused on permanent and research focusing on temporary workers has been conducted in studies based across mainland Europe. This research aims to review existing literature to understand current ideas and theories and explore potential research gaps and limitations.

The research will first explore the concept of permanent and temporary employees. Secondly, it will define employee engagement and engagement theories. The chapter will provide an overview of turnover, turnover intention and the factors leading to turnover will be examined. Finally, the last section will discuss total rewards.

The section will conclude by identifying research gaps and limitations.

2.1 Definition of Temporary and Permanent Workers

To conduct this research, it is first important to attempt to define “temporary employment”, to secure an understanding of this term. Temporary employment is defined as an employment relationship, in which both employer and employee contractually agree that the contract will end on a specific date or on fulfilment of detailed conditions and includes fixed-term, task-based contracts, or seasonal and casual work (Ritter-Hayashi, Knoben, and Vermeulen, 2021). Temporary workers can also be defined as workers who are “interchangeable, disposable, recallable and transferable” (Szabó and Négyesi, 2005). However, these definitions are broad umbrella expressions, as within the area of temporary workers, there are four main sub-categories: fixed-term, casual, seasonal, and arrangement through temporary employment agencies. However, all forms of temporary employment have the same basis that they can all be defined as being “dependent employment of limited duration”(Lheureux and Parmentier, 2022). It is important to note that the temporary labour market is considered a sector of the “buffer workforce” that

offers unstable and insecure working arrangements carrying high risks of disadvantages such as decreased well-being, higher mortality rate, and decreased engagement. However, it is important to note that this is a generic assumption, and not all temporary workers or temporary jobs provide inferior status and social and economic disadvantages (Virtanen et al., 2005).

The importance of understanding different types of temporary workers is crucial, as there is a large amount of confusion about the impact and consequences of temporary employment on factors such as wage and career development. A vast number of theories exist such as dual labour market, that has led to some debate as to whether temporary employees are “trapped”. According to dual labour market theory, the labour market is segmented into a primary segment, that offers job security (permanent roles), and a secondary segment, where jobs lack security and are focused on regulating business in times of demand fluctuations, thus “trapping” people in this market and, in turn, limiting wage and mobility options (Latner and Saks, 2022).

However, findings are largely inconsistent, as some studies find temporary employees are more satisfied in their role, while other studies have found opposite patterns. The general assumption is that temporary employees are unsatisfied, however, studies have shown that contract type alone is not a leading factor in employee engagement, as employees can often choose temporary contracts to suit their current personal circumstances (completing education, family commitments). Thus, it does not always mean employees are “trapped” and settled for such roles (Goldan, Jaksztat and Gross, 2023).

For this current study, it is assumed that permanent employees are workers who work on contracts that have no pre-determined end date (OECD, 2023). It is also assumed that permanent employment contracts are the most preferred contract over short-term contracts and are fundamental to operating core business functions (Rouvroye et al., 2023).

2.2 Employee Engagement

Despite increased research, there is no universal definition for employee engagement. Employee engagement can be described as a behaviour reflecting the optimal level of trust, dedication, and commitment. Over 50 definitions of engagement exist, with all definitions related to an employee’s commitment to the organisation and willingness to

go beyond their contractual obligations for organisation success (Macleod and Clarke, 2009). However, some definitions focus on engagement as a two-way process where management and employees are equally engaged. However, other definitions focus on engagement, closely linking job satisfaction, thus emphasising aspects such as job clarity, adequate resources, and employee voice (CIPD, 2023a).

According to Caldwell (2021), the following factors have a direct impact on employee leadership style: autonomy, progression opportunities, adequate rewards, recognition, and organisational culture. In contrast, other researchers rejected the idea that engagement is impacted by multiple elements and theorised that pay, and rewards are the only key factors to ensuring engaged employees. Thus, the hypothesis exists that, the higher the level of salary is a positive predictor of work engagement, with additional financial rewards beyond the annual salaries (yearly bonuses, target bonuses, long-term service) encouraging employees to go above and beyond for organisations (Kulikowski and Sedlak, 2020).

It is worth considering how engagement itself can be a barrier to increased engagement if taken to the extreme and negatively impacts employees by increasing stress levels (Garraad and Chamorro-Premuzic, 2016). A toxic workplace environment is categorised by non-inclusive behaviour, and unethical leadership, which significantly impacts employee engagement, leading to increased stress, burnout, and increased turnover intention. In such situations, organisational support is crucial to ensure employee well-being, as a lack of support creates a negative impact of the toxic workplace on employee engagement (SHRM, 2023).

Burnout is one behaviour that is a direct consequence of negative engagement. Burnout or disengagement is a response to high stress levels caused by excessive job demands, resulting in failure, increased absenteeism, and increased turnover and overall disengagement. Burnout is likely to occur when employees have no control over their work environment (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014). Addressing what causes these issues requires further investigation and tailored approaches must be understood by organisations. Dysfunctional behaviours such as poor leadership can be the root cause of extreme engagement and its negative impact, leading to severe physical health issues, decreased productivity, and increased turnover. As such, organisations must understand the root cause and take action to ensure a supportive environment that promotes healthy levels of engagement and avoids the risk of burnout (Rasool et al., 2021).

2.2.1 Theories of Engagement

When examining employee engagement for this current study, it is important to highlight engagement factors for both permanent and temporary employees. According to Boyce, temporary arrangements are beneficial for organisations by reducing staffing costs and supporting businesses during busy periods, but at the expense of the temporary worker. Latner and Saks (2022) state conflicting views, considering temporary work as a “trap” that reduces mobility options as temporary employees reduce security and engagement, with temporary workers often viewed as buffers in the market. However, Canzio, Bühlmann and Masdonati (2023) reject this by stating that employee engagement is not solely related to contract type but to work preference.

Latner and Saks (2022) imply the need for safety is a key component for employee well-being. However, in Europe, temporary workers are a minority with insecure contractual agreements leading to the assumption that temporary workers choosing unfavourable employment often leads to higher turnover intention, lower satisfaction and engagement, and general well-being due to lack of psychological wellbeing (Hünefeld, Gerstenberg and Hüffmeier, 2020). Despite this, differences in engagement levels have been highlighted, with temporary workers exhibiting vigour, willingness to invest, and dedication, often feeling they must prove themselves compared to their permanent colleagues (Crowther and Seifi, 2023).

2.2.2 Khan’s theory of Engagement and Maslow’s theory of Motivation

Khan’s (1990) theory of engagement is derived from the identification of three critical dimensions of engagement, physical, cognitive, and emotional engagement. Khan stated that for employees to be fully engaged, they need to feel their work is impactful, they are in a safe working environment, and be able to show initiative without the fear of negative repercussions. The role of the organisation is viewed as providing the resources and capacity to allow employees to perform their roles (Huang, Huang, and Chang, 2022). According to Khan, engagement is comprised of physical engagement, which refers to employees’ effort they put into their work, and cognitive engagement, which involves understanding the organisation's vision and how individuals contribute to this success. Emotional engagement centres on the emotional connection employees have with their employer (Stanley, Matthews, and Davidson, 2017).

Parallels can be drawn from Khan's theory and Maslow's theory of motivation based on how both theories highlight the factors required to ensure employees are equipped to fulfil their creative potential and achieve self-actualisation once all other needs are met (Kenrick et al., 2010). In Maslow's theory, a series of levels are outlined from physiological needs (food/shelter) to the need for safety, the need to belong and to be loved, and esteem needs. Once all these needs are satisfied, an individual can achieve self-actualisation. Maslow's theory suggests each level needs to be fulfilled before moving on to higher levels (Block, 2011).

These theories highlight the importance of addressing both basic needs and physiological needs to foster an engaged workforce. Khan's engagement theory on conditions of engagement aligns with Maslow's hierarchy of needs emphasising the importance of love belonging, esteem, and ultimately, self-actualisation. This aligns with Khan's theory; for example, focusing on safety in the workplace corresponds with Maslow's need for security, and Khan's theory focusing on meaningful work reflects Maslow's need for esteem needs and self-actualisation, where individuals need to feel accomplished (Pincus, 2023). These theories emphasise the importance of the need for organisations to focus on creating a positive workplace that ensures employees feel safe and provides opportunities to ensure growth and development opportunities, to fulfil the engagement factors outlined by both Khan and Maslow.

2.2.3 Psychological Contract

In organisations that employ both permanent and temporary workers, the psychological contract plays a key role in influencing engagement. Understanding the different obligations of organisations in this unwritten contract can shed light on different engagement levels and turnover intentions amongst these workers. Rousseau (1995) defined the psychological contract (PC) as a set of unwritten individual beliefs about mutual obligations such as job security, development opportunities, and benefits. These mutual obligations, significantly impact employee engagement in the organisation.

For permanent employees, the PC includes job security, career progression, and benefits that contribute to increased loyalty and willingness to go above and beyond for the organisation. Other the other hand, temporary employees focus their PC on fair treatment, respect, clear communication, and opportunities for career development.

When the PC is breached, it has significant impacts on both permanent and temporary employees and the entire organisation (De Cuyper et al., 2010). When a contract is breached, the organisation experiences increased disengagement, negative change, and increased turnover. While both employee types are impacted, there is a greater impact on the temporary workers, as they can feel like the inferior employee (Chambel et al., 2016). Studies have supported the significance of the psychological contract in impacting organisational outcomes such as engagement and turnover. Research has indicated that, where the psychological contract was fulfilled, this is associated with higher engagement and lower turnover, especially in mixed employment workforces (Bal et al., 2008).

2.2.4 Gallup's Q12 Study

Gallup's Q12 study, confirms engagement is associated with several characteristics both at the level of the organisation and of the individual. The results of the research highlighted a range of benefits of having highly engaged employees. These include better performance, increased innovation, a higher likelihood of employees staying with their employer for five or more years, improved personal well-being, and a perception of a more sustainable workload. Additionally, Gallup's Q12 study identified 12 core elements that predict engagement, with the general assumption that if employees affirm these elements, high engagement is likely. In summary, the 12 factors aim to align the engagement between the individuals and organisation goals provided by a statement such as "I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right" and emotional statements such as "In the last seven days I have received recognition or praise for doing good work" (Beardwell and Thompson, 2017).

The drivers of employee engagement, identified by Gallup's Q12 study include purpose, caring managers, and focusing on strengths. These factors are essential for employees seeking purpose and meaningful work. Gallup's research highlights the need for organisations to go above and beyond to guarantee employees are satisfied, by focusing on creating a fulfilling work environment that aligns with employees' strengths and aspirations (Gallup, 2023).

In summary, the research by Khan, Gallup, and Maslow's theories, underscores the complexity of employee engagement and highlights factors such as meaningful work, fulfilment and the need for achievement, which impact employee engagement. This highlights the significance of the physiological contract and highlights the need for

organisations to investigate the importance of certain factors on different categories of employees and tailor their engagement strategies accordingly.

2.3 Leadership Style

Leadership means inspiring people to do their best to achieve a desired result. It involves, developing and communicating a vision for the future, motivating people, and securing their engagement. A skilled leader can inspire and persuade others to behave differently, communicate with a sense of purpose, get the team into action, and influence others so that a task is achieved (Armstrong and Taylor, 2023).

Engaged employees are passionate about their work and they work towards organisational goals with a sense of pride. Leaders play a crucial role in creating engaged employees by influencing and motivating employees to achieve better performance (Mahajan and Sharma, 2015). Gameda *et al* (2020), support this view, by emphasising that effective leadership is crucial for organisational success. Based on their research, they state a good leader is fundamental in guiding and inspiring employees to perform to the best of their abilities, which is crucial for organisations to achieve their goals.

However, other research highlights that, while leadership style is a key contributing factor to employee engagement, it is crucial that the leadership style adopted is most effective and suitable for the organisation. The mismatch between leadership style and employee expectation and organisational culture can result in disengagement and increased turnover for organisations and the development of work-related issues for employees i.e. burnout, and physical and mental health issues (Hancock et al., 2023).

Research conducted by Harvard Business Review (2016), highlighted the profound impact leadership style has on engagement and underlines the need for adopting a suitable leadership style that is appropriate to the organisation, employees, and the nature of the work. This research shows that leadership qualities are contagious and good leaders tend to foster a positive environment. The key findings of this research involve an assessment of high-level managers and their direct reports. The overall effectiveness of high-level managers was directly linked to the engagement levels of their mid-level reports and in turn, their subordinates. Therefore, supporting the idea that effective leaders, not only inspire better behaviours in their direct line but across multiple levels of the organisation (Zenger and Folkman, 2016).

The above research demonstrated the impact of effective leadership on employee engagement. Undoubtedly, there are possible limitations when applying to different employees and areas of work, therefore, it will be explored further in the primary research of this study.

2.4 Learning and Development

Page-Tickell (2022) , defines learning and development (L&D) as “an internal function whose purpose is to build the capability of the organisation, that sits within the wider HR function and recognises that we are all involved in a constant, ongoing process of learning and development”. The CIPD (2023b) views learning and development as an overall organisational strategy that outlines how an organisation develops its workforce skills and competencies as a key part of overall organisational strategy. The L&D strategy must align the people and purpose team's goals for talent and recruitment, to ensure the process is understood across the organisation. The CIPD also highlighted the importance of learning and development not sitting within the HR department. Research conducted supports this and highlights trends that have elevated the importance of a strategic L&D function. However, the research highlights that the learning and development process not only offers training and upskilling opportunities but consists of five key areas that create a strategic learning and development function. These areas include talent attraction and retention, employee motivation and engagement, building an employer brand, developing a value-based culture, and developing individual employee's capabilities(Brassey, Christensen and van Dam, 2019).

However, research suggests that not all L&D programmes are effective. If programs are not relevant to the organisation's strategy, fail to engage employees, or do not provide relevant skills, they are less likely to result in meaningful training, performance improvement, and overall employee motivation and satisfaction (Salas et al., 2012). Thus, organisations that fail to invest in up-skilling their employees, suffer from higher turnover and decreasing profits. This emphasises the importance of creating a culture that values continuous learning, that is integrated into everyday work life, with strategic alignment between the L&D function and development programmes linked to organisational needs and individual learning goals (Baele, 2022). Research supports this, by highlighting the importance of a clear internal learning and development plan, as a key factor in employee engagement, retention, and minimising turnover intention (Rothwell, 2010).

As discussed previously, leadership is another key component to successfully engaging and retaining employees, thus it is crucial that managers consistently receive adequate training to support their teams throughout different organisational phases. Recent studies found that managers are the most untrained employees, with over 57% of organisations admitting that senior leaders are not included in current manager training programs, with over 65% unable to secure funding for manager training (Root, 2015).

L&D requires crucial investment for the organisation, and if not strategically aligned to the organisational can result in higher turnover rates post-training, leading to reduced profits. The challenge exists for organisations to integrate L&D across the organisation to ensure that the investment yields positive returns.

2.5 Defining Employee Turnover

Price (1977) created one of the earliest definitions of turnover, as the degree of individuals leaving an organisation and not the individuals coming into it. Furthermore, the definition indicates that turnover is universal to all organisations (Bluedorn, 1978). Similarly, Abbasi and Hollman (2000) define turnover as the rotation of workers in an organisation, but their definition goes further including the rotation of turnover of workers around the labour market, between firms, jobs, occupations, and between states of employment and unemployed. More recent definitions refer to employee turnover as “the rate at which people leave an organisation” which should form the basis for a wider retention strategy. This strategy should track turnover trends and highlight the reasons employees are leaving (Armstrong and Taylor, 2023). Frequently, managers view turnover as the entire process of filling a vacancy, each time a position is vacated and during the time frame, that a new employee is being hired and trained, whether the turnover is voluntary or involuntary (Ongori, 2007).

Employee turnover has been a concern since the 19th century. Since then, considerable research has been carried out into the context of causes and consequences of turnover. Despite this, there is no single framework to understand and reduce turnover. Mobley (1982) states that turnover remains a significant issue for organisations. One of the earliest research projects defined turnover as the physical act of an employee leaving an organisation and argued that the primary reason for turnover is employee dissatisfaction, as it has a profound effect on employee behaviour (Samad and Saufi, 2017).

Determining the main reason for employees leaving their positions is difficult at best. Holston-Okae and Mushi (2018) state it can be determined that employees leave an organisation for many reasons, with the main reasons including that the work is not as the employee expected, the salary is less than expected, few opportunities for growth, and a lack of trust between managers and employee (Alan, Polat and Tiryaki Sen, 2022). Turnover rates in mixed contract organisations are high and have an impact on a company's financial performance. Moreover, employee turnover is a broad term that covers all leavers and occurs in two specific forms: voluntary and involuntary (Peters, 2024). Turnover is classified as voluntary when the employee decides to terminate the working relationship or involuntary when the employer decides to terminate (Lazzari, Alvarez and Ruggieri, 2022). This current research will focus predominantly on voluntary turnover. Turnover is not specific to any one industry and excessive turnover has a significant impact on business performance by raising costs in areas of advertising new roles, interviewing and onboarding, and induction training costs, with the cost of turnover valued at £5,800 per employee and over £20,000 per high-level executives (Armstrong, 2021).

In more recent years, the topic of turnover has included turnover intention incorporated into research. Turnover intention refers to the degree that people want to leave their jobs and while they are not acting on the intention presently, they are considering and exploring new opportunities in other organisations. Further research highlights that not all employee's intentions to leave do not result in actual turnover. Therefore, organisations have the opportunity to step in and engage employees in time to prevent turnover (Park, Feng, and Jeong, 2024). High turnover rates in mixed contract organisations can negatively impact a company's financial performance and overall morale. Long-term employees may feel resentful if they need to take on extra work due to the high numbers of slower and less experienced colleagues (Frye et al., 2020).

The following section will investigate theories regarding what impacts employees' intention to leave an organisation.

2.5.1 Turnover Theories

Turnover is a widely researched area, with many authors aiming to justify why employees intend to leave organisations. Hom (2012) introduced a theory of the "withdrawal state" that distinguishes employees by their desire to stay or leave an organisation and identified

four categories of employees that turnover (Hom et al., 2012). The four categories include:

- Enthusiastic leavers (“I want to and can leave”)
- Enthusiastic stayers (“I want to and can stay”)
- Reluctant leavers (“I want to stay but must leave”)
- Reluctant stayers (“I want to leave but I cannot”)

While the theory helps distinguish between stayers and leavers, it highlights that each reflects a mixture of intention to quit, job search behaviour, and diverse reasons for leaving and staying (socio-emotional and economic reasons) (Moon and O’Brien, 2023). Other authors have defined turnover intention as a coping strategy used by employees to escape an organisation either permanently, where an employee leaves for good, or by horizontal internal mobility, where an employee moves to another department in the organisation (Petriglieri, 2011).

Frame's (2004) research supports Hom's (2012) research and believes turnover is comprised of changing intentions. He grouped these variables into the following categories:

- Organisational variables i.e. job satisfaction, work stress, or gender discrimination
- Individual demographic variables i.e. gender, marital status, etc.
- External variables i.e. availability of alternative jobs (Brough & Frame, 2004).

As discussed previously, turnover occurs in two main forms: involuntary and voluntary. Taylor's (2002) push and pull factor theory distinguishes between pull type where employees leave for better working conditions (work-life balance, attractive benefits, and enhanced job satisfaction), or push factors, often caused by poor organisational practices, lack of training and feedback and poor work-life balance and poor leadership style (Kallio et al., 2024). This is supported by Zhara et al. (2013) who delved further into the factors influencing turnover across various industries and found that turnover intentions included job satisfaction, organisational commitment, the culture of the overall organisation, and the level of psychological contract upkeep. It is evident that a number of intentions exist, and gauging employee's intentions may be detrimental to organisational success. Job embeddedness theory supports Taylor's (2002) and Zhara et al.'s (2013) research, as the theory aims for a broader view on retention and considers a wide range of factors that

impact an employee's intent to leave their organisation, highlighting the main reasons as personal and social factors, organisation factors, and community. However, job embeddedness theory, and findings from other research, focus on turnover intentions, by investigating turnover predictors such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Ngo-Henha, 2017). This theory considers a wider range of factors that contribute to employee retention, including links to the organisation, the fit between the employee and the job, and other factors that play a role in the retention of both permanent and temporary employees (Holtom and Darabi, 2018).

Based on the literature, several turnover factors were identified including pay rewards and engagement. The above theories exhibit the main characteristics of voluntary turnover (Anvari, JianFu and Chermahini, 2014). For this current research, the focus will be on enthusiastic leavers and reluctant leavers, in line with voluntary turnover.

2.5.2 Turnover Factors

Organisations have faced challenges retaining good employees due to reasons such as market competition, talent scarcity, and the global competition to obtain top talent, which has led to high turnover rates (Kaliannan et al., 2023). With the recent layoffs experienced across different industries over the past year, it is more prevalent for leaders to focus on becoming personally involved in employee engagement, by investigating the reasons why workers would leave an organisation (Lovich, 2023).

For this research, total rewards and job insecurity will be discussed.

2.5.3 Total Rewards

A reward or remuneration is a term used for all the financial value elements employees receive from their organisations. Total Rewards emphasises all pay, and benefits employees receive, and it also appreciates the importance of providing people with the opportunity to develop their skills and careers and provide rewarding experiences for the work that they do (Armstrong and Cummins, 2011). Total rewards have been concluded as the key for organisations to ensure employees feel appreciated and valued, helping them to engage more with their organisation (Armstrong, 2008).

In recent years, the relationship between rewards and engagement has received increased attention, particularly due to the gap between temporary and permanent workers. This

issue was particularly pronounced in corporations such as Google. In 2019, Google's workforce included a larger proportion of temporary and contract workers compared to permanent employees. While the workers were compensated with higher-than-average salaries, they did not receive the same benefits and development opportunities as their permanent colleagues. This approach was successful in achieving the organisation's goals for rapid growth by hiring highly skilled individuals and proved successful in the short term. However, it ultimately resulted in detrimental impacts on engagement, manifested through increased turnover and negative team dynamics (Moreno, 2019). Research conducted in 2022 revealed that over 4,500 Irish contractors at Google Irish head office were underpaid between 2019 to 2021, due to violations of local labour laws. The revelation resulted in a pay parity review, resulting in contract workers receiving an average of €2,000 per year to address the wage disparities, leading to an increased negative brand image of Google (MacNamee, 2023). The case of ongoing unequal treatment of Irish temporary workers and the negative image presented for further contractors prompts the need for further investigations into the rewards that are more important in Ireland for organisations to retain employees by supporting the development of adequate rewards strategies.

For rewards to be successful in positively influencing engagement and turnover, a total rewards strategy must be strategic and well-researched by leaders to unlock benefits. Organisations that implement a strategic total rewards strategy, attract and train top talent by offering rewards beyond standard packages, and recruit high-performing employees who are likely to remain long-term committed to the organisation. This is achieved through going beyond the general pay and rewards and fostering a culture that focuses on career development and recognising success (Aalok, 2024). As discussed earlier in this research, the psychological contract plays a key role in influencing engagement, by understanding the different obligations for organisations. In this unwritten contract, they can include rewards both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.

The research into rewards and impact on turnover dates to the 1950's, with Herzberg's (1959), motivation theory investigating the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Herzberg's theory focuses on motivation factors (achievement, recognition growth opportunities), hygiene factors (company policies, relationship with supervisor, working conditions, and salary), and intrinsic (comes from within) or extrinsic (rewards or punishments) as factors that impact the employee's working ability, therefore,

decreasing engagement (Alshmemri, Shahwan-Akl and Maude, 2017). Herzberg's theory suggests that, for employees to be motivated and engaged and reduce turnover, organisations need to address both factors, by managing the factors that cause disassociation and by fostering the motivators that drive engagement. Herzberg implies that the key to turnover comes from employees being motivated by the work itself, with opportunities for growth, recognition, and feeling valued (Alrawahi et al., 2020).

More recent literature from Xiong et al. (2018) discusses turnover intentions created by an individual analysing different reference points (salary or goal minimum requirements) and decision anchors (e.g. pay level of their peers). If the analysing of the reference points leads to a negative outcome, a turnover intention is created as the employee feels undervalued and will consider new opportunities similar to what their peers have or feel that they deserve. However, this research does determine pay satisfaction as a leading factor in turnover (Xiong, Wang, and Li, 2018). Evidence of Herzberg's and Xiong's research has not been applied to permanent and temporary workers, to date. However, their findings can still be relevant and insightful to understanding engagement and turnover. Herzberg's research is often applied to permanent organisations only but could be replicated for temporary employees in order to highlight different motivating factors. Similarly, Xiong's research can provide direct insights into issues within organisations. Organisations can benefit from considering both theories when designing policies and practices to address the needs of all employees. Indeed, further research targeting both permanent and temporary work would provide additional insights for organisations into this important segment of this workforce.

2.5.4 Job Insecurity

Despite decades of research, there is little theoretical evidence of how job insecurity shapes performance and engagement. Job Insecurity (JI) concerns "a perceived threat to the continuity and stability of employment as it currently experienced". The main consequence of job insecurity is the eroding of the employer-employee relationship due to the increased stress of potential job loss (Shoss and Vancouver, 2024). De Witte and Naswall (2003) found that in those who experience a high degree of job insecurity, it was permanent workers rather than temporary employees who reported lower levels of job satisfaction and commitment in comparison to temporary employees, prompting research to refocus on job security, with an element of subjectivity, depending on the worker's employment type (Sverke, Hellgren and Naswall, 2006). Research suggested that job

insecurity is the mediating factor between the contract type and effects on employee and organisational commitment due to impaired well-being, and less desirable attitudes and behaviours amongst temporary employees (De Cuyper and De Witte, 2006). The lack of job security surrounding further employment at the current organisation, acts as a stressor for employees, leading to workers actively seeking alternative employment or disengaging from their current role, resulting in higher turnover (van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2013). While both permanent and temporary workers experience job insecurity, the consequence of the insecurity differs between both groups. Permanent workers may experience more emotional distress and be more reluctant to leave, despite experiencing job insecurity. In contrast, temporary workers lack the same level of attachment to organisations and are motivated by short-term financial rewards but are more inclined to actively look for alternative employment (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt, 2010).

Job insecurity affects all employees and reflects concerns about the financial stability and ability of long-term career goals within an organisation (Richter, Vander Elst and De Witte, 2020a). A general assumption exists that temporary workers are more affected by job insecurity compared to permanent workers and are more likely to disengage (Ferris et al., 2013). However, research by Landers (2016), disagrees and suggests that temporary workers have been shown to demonstrate higher levels of engagement in their roles and go above and beyond by seeking more responsibility and duties, to increase their chances of contract renewal, and minimise job stress. Studies on the relationship between job insecurity and actual turnover are scarce, with research conducted by Ritcher et al. (2020), surveyed over 650 employees and examined the relationship between job security, fear of losing a job, and actual turnover over a one year period. The research did support the theories mentioned above, highlighting that job-insecure employees are more likely to change over time because they begin to deliberate about their potential loss of employment. The study highlights that the increased deliberation about job insecurity results in a fear response and depletes employees' capabilities further, leading them to explore other opportunities. The study also highlights the need for further research such as the breach of the psychological contract to understand the key drivers in preventing turnover as a result of job insecurity (Richter, Vander Elst and De Witte, 2020b).

Based on the existing literature, the area is worthy of further investigation to address the key gaps identified and to further understand the area of employee engagement, turnover

intention, and total rewards, specifically to provide a more comprehensive view of this topic.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter defined different types of employment and provided an overview of permanent and temporary employment that forms the basis for the comparative analysis of these workers in this current research. The chapter defined employment engagement and turnover and discussed relevant theories and engagement and turnover factors. The overall findings for this literature review highlighted some gaps that need to be addressed in an Irish context. Furthermore, several correlations have been identified to factors impacting both engagement and turnover.

The next chapter will focus on the research aims, objectives and research hypotheses.

Chapter 3: Research aims and objectives

3.1 Introduction

This study aims to address the research gap in the literature regarding employee engagement and turnover intention among permanent and temporary employees. To achieve this aim, a research question and research objectives have been determined and will be discussed in this chapter. A hypothesis is an idea or explanation that you test through study and experimentation, to test whether it is true or not (Casula, Rangarajan and Shields, 2021). Multiple hypotheses are developed in this study to investigate the research gap identified in this study.

The following chapter will also outline the chosen research methods and how these methods will facilitate the result of this thesis. The researcher will justify the chosen methodology by first defining the research philosophy, the chapter will include a discussion of the research process, and the methods used to collect data and analyse the research findings. Research limitations and ethical considerations are also discussed.

3.2 Research Aim

This study aims to examine engagement and turnover intention factors among both permanent and temporary workers. Significant amounts of research have shown the link between the importance of strong employment engagement and reducing turnover intention, often being referred to as the key strategy or “secret tool” to ensuring employee retention (Radley, 2022). The majority of the literature in this area focuses on permanent employees and highlights the role that tenure, job satisfaction, and lack of a clear development model has on employee engagement and turnover intention (Rudolph et al., 2017). Further literature in this area does focus on the moderating role of position or contract level and highlights that those employees with lower levels of position on insecure contracts and who are less satisfied with their managers have a negative impact on employee engagement and turnover intention (Wen, Yan and Sun, 2022).

To test this, primary research will be conducted to investigate the relationship between the type of worker (permanent or temporary), employee engagement, turnover intention, and total rewards, using previously used scales sourced during secondary research. The research findings will provide crucial insights to organisations, particularly as workplaces

are turning to flexible employment agreements to meet fluctuating staffing needs and to be adaptable to changing market conditions (Foote, 2023).

3.3 Research Question

The research project aims to investigate the factors influencing employee engagement and turnover among both permanent and temporary workers in Ireland. By comparing these two employment categories, the study will explore engagement and turnover intention specific to each group.

The research questions address the following:

“What are the factors that influence engagement and turnover intention among permanent and temporary workers?”

3.4 Research Objectives

To address the research question, this study will explore the following objectives:

1. Compare and analyse engagement levels between permanent and temporary workers.
2. Evaluate turnover intention between permanent and temporary workers.
3. Examine how programmes such as total rewards support higher levels of engagement and reduced turnover.

3.5 Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses for this research will determine whether the results are supported by previous literature:

H1: Permanent employees are more engaged than their colleagues on temporary contracts.

H2: Employees with temporary contracts will report lower turnover intention compared to permanent employees.

H3: A strong total rewards program will be more effective in increasing employee engagement among temporary staff compared to permanent staff.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter will outline the methodology and research design that will be carried out in this study.

4.2 Research Philosophy

The researcher used the “Research Onion” framework. The research onion provides researchers with a systematic and layered approach to designing and conducting research, acting as a guide for researchers (Saunders, 2019).

The research onion consists of six layers, each representing a detailed part of the research process. The outer layers comprise the underlying research philosophy and research approach (layers one and two). Moving inwards, the next layers focus on research design includes methodological choices, research strategy, and time horizon (Melnikovas, 2018a)

The methodological choices include the researcher's decision whether the research will adopt a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods approach, while the research strategy outlines the specific research plan and defines over the timeframe the research will be carried out. The inner core focuses on the techniques and processes of conducting research. This includes the data collection strategy, and the techniques used to analyse the data. All layers of the research onion are intersected and influence the others, throughout the creating an integrated research process (Melnikovas, 2018a).

The researcher analysed the positive and negative aspects of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Saunders (2009) believes that the decision lies with the individual researcher and their study objective (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Applying the “research onion” framework allowed the researcher to examine each layer to decide on the most suitable method (Melnikovas, 2018b). The chosen research approach will influence how the study is conducted.

In the case of quantitative research methods, the research processes can be categorised into an ontological approach that focuses on the nature of reality and epistemological considerations about the nature of knowledge. This research adheres to the postpositivist research philosophy supported by Caswell's Worldviews theory and Saunders's research

onion framework (Mark Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Epistemology is described as a way of “looking at the world and making sense of the world, from a theoretical perspective” including positivism and interpretivism, that supports chosen research methods (Al-Ababneh, 2020). Positivism takes a scientific research approach concerned with producing findings that are unbiased and generalised to wider populations (Hetherington and Blundell-Birtill, 2018). Furthermore, post-positivism acknowledges the existence of multiple realities that are shaped by an individual’s perceptions and experiences (Creswell, 2014).

This current study follows a positivist approach. The approach aligns with this research study into turnover intention and employee engagement, which are subjective to individual beliefs in their workplace. Generally, researchers who opt for a positivist approach use quantitative research as their research method (Park, Konge and Artino, 2020a). To achieve the research objective, three hypotheses were developed based on previous research and reviewing existing theories and will be tested as part of the primary research of this study. Therefore, a deductive research approach was deemed the most suitable. This method draws theories from what is known, such as, firstly, reviewing the literature, then developing hypothesis and verifying through data collection and analysis (Aneta and Jerzy, 2013).

4.3 Quantitative vs Qualitative – Rationale

To achieve the research aims, this study required the collection of primary research data. As highlighted in layer three of the research onion framework, there are various research methodologies classified into qualitative and quantitative (Saunders et al., 2009b). Qualitative research is often used for any data collection tool (such as interviews) that generates non-numerical data. In contrast, quantitative is often used for any data collection technique (such as questionnaires/surveys) that requires data analysis through graphs or statistics (Saunders, 2019). Therefore, the quantitative research approach is the most appropriate research approach for this study. As this research investigates complex topics of turnover intention and employee engagement, quantitative surveys can capture employee attitudes and feelings toward their work environment (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Furthermore, the quantitative approach is often associated with positivism and deductive research approaches where data is collected and analysed to ultimately strengthen or refine a theory, confirm approaches to new learners, or help redefine theories (Park, Konge and Artino, 2020b).

It is necessary to acknowledge the disadvantages of surveys, including the potential for bias and potential dishonesty from respondents (Andrade, 2020a). Despite drawbacks, surveys remain the most suitable approach to gather data on individuals' beliefs and analyse them in large volumes to test hypotheses. Additionally, surveys can address uncertainties related to theories, as they often contain simple and short answers and can easily be processed using statistical software (Basias and Pollalis, 2018).

4.4 Data Collection Method

Data collection is the process of collecting data, to gain insights into the research topic and is considered a crucial stage in a research project. Deciding on a suitable data collection method significantly contributes to the success of the research outcomes (Taherdoost, 2021).

Surveys measure variables such as preferences and behaviours. Given the positivist approach, this method will capture data in a short time frame and create hypotheses (Muhammad and Kabir, 2016). An online survey was distributed on LinkedIn. LinkedIn was used to reach a large sample, thereby reducing errors (Brant et al., 2015). The results obtained will remain anonymous and this was explained to participants at the outset. It has been noted that anonymity and confidentiality are key for credible research and encourage participants to participate (Eungoo and Hwang, 2023).

4.5 Variables Measures

4.5.1 Demographics

For the purpose of this research, the most important factors to gather for this survey include gender, age, type, and length of employment. This section was devised in line with the JARS guidelines on essential demographics to report and altered to allow participants to answer freely about gender and age in order to ensure inclusivity (Hughes et al., 2022). For employment type, participants were given a choice of permanent, temporary, or unemployed in this category. Participants who selected unemployed were removed from the study at this stage. When addressing the length of employment with the current company, participants were in six categories ranging from less than one year to more than seven years. For this research, it was necessary to evaluate key factors including engagement, turnover, and total rewards, and the relationship between these variables and permanent and temporary workers.

4.5.2 Employee Engagement

Employee Engagement is a behaviour reflecting the optimal level of trust, commitment, and dedication of employees (Caldwell, 2021). Gallup's Q12 survey of employee engagement has been virtuously tested and considered a strategic tool to measure engagement by analysing three main drivers: communication, work-life balance, and leadership, and examining their impact on other key factors (Bedarkar and Pandita, 2014). Using this survey, participants were asked a series of questions on employee needs such as "I know what is expected of me at work" and asked to rate their agreement on a scale ranging from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree (GALLUP, 2024).

4.5.3 Turnover Intention

Turnover intention is defined as "a plan for an employee to leave the organisation; it is a deliberate effort to look for a job outside the organisation, that is driven by internal factors within a current organisation" (Nazari and Alizadeh Oghyanous, 2021). Turnover intention is measured using the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) which is proven to provide reliable results to assess turnover intentions and establish differences in the leavers and stayers (Chris F.C Bothma and Roodt, 2013). Participants are presented with seven concise statements including "I often look forward to another day at work" and asked to rate their level of agreement with each statement (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree).

4.5.4 Total Rewards

Research on total reward satisfaction is limited, however, a survey developed by Hareendrakumar VR et al., (2021), aimed to bridge this gap. This survey measures employee satisfaction by evaluating contributing factors and their impact on engagement and turnover intention (Hareendrakumar, Subramoniam and Bijulal, 2021a). Participants respond to ten statements including "I am very much satisfied with the present salary I am receiving" and state their level of agreement with each statement on a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The survey concludes with a free text box to allow participants to share additional insights. This highlights any issues that were not covered by questions in the survey or elaborate on the areas addressed in the survey (Decorte et al., 2019).

4.6 Data Analysis

The first stage of data analysis will involve cleaning data, identifying and addressing any incorrect submissions, verifying the data, and ensuring proper formatting (Hair et al., 2019). This stage will also include analysing and summarising the demographic characteristics of participants (such as age, gender, and contract type). An initial summary will be provided, including measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode) and measures of variability (range, standard deviation, and interquartile range) (Fulk, 2023).

Due to the nature of the research, hypothesis testing will be required including, correlation analysis to assess relationships between different variables such as turnover intention (Poletiek, 2013). The survey will first be completed via Microsoft Forms and firstly exported to Microsoft Excel for initial analysis and finally analysed through IBM SPSS. This research will use Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) which is beneficial for creating and identifying relationships and correlations in data (Pallant, 2020). The findings will be analysed in tables and reviewed against the hypothesis and existing literature to achieve the research objective.

Thematic analysis will be utilised for the data collected in the open-ended comment box to identify recurring themes and gain deeper insights into the experiences of permanent and temporary employees (Polities, 2013).

4.7 Sampling

Sampling is the process by which a researcher carefully selects, through probability and non-probability methods, a number of individuals from a larger population of interest for the study. The sample of a study is carefully chosen to set boundaries and limit bias (Mweshi and Sakyi, 2020). Probability and non-probability are two main types of sampling techniques used in research. Probability sampling provides an equal chance for every member of the population to be involved, with techniques of random sampling, cluster, and systematic sampling (Cornesse et al., 2020). Non-probability is when some members of the population have a greater chance to participate than other members. There are five main types of non-probability samples: convenience, purposive, quota, snowball, and self-selection (ScienceDirect, 2001). Non-probability was chosen for this study, as the sample population is non-systematic (Elfil and Negida, 2017). Therefore, convenience sampling was deemed appropriate for this research due to it being easily accessible

(Andrade, 2021). However, this technique leads to potential bias (Thomas and Manz, 2017). The researcher aims to address this by categorising respondents into permanent and temporary employment to enhance accuracy.

Due to the nature of the research on permanent and temporary employees, a link to the survey was posted on LinkedIn, outlining the research topic, the purpose of the research, and the length of the survey, and made clear that all responses were anonymous and confidential. The survey remained active for two weeks and the researcher shared the post directly with professionals, both permanent and temporary, to increase participation, briefly explaining the research and inviting them to participate.

4.8 Pilot Study

A pilot study is the first step of the entire research protocol and involves the study being conducted on a smaller scale than the full-scale study and is important for the improvement of quality and efficiency of the main study (In, 2017). A pilot of this study was conducted with a small, handpicked group to improve different areas of the research study. Pilots highlight problems that may occur and allow researchers to collect data on the length of time to gather responses and the respondent's time to fill out the form (Thabane et al., 2010).

The pilot study yielded valuable insights into participant eligibility. The initial survey allowed all participants to complete the entire survey, including unemployed participants who were ineligible to participate. Following this, the survey was redesigned to include eligibility screening questions at the beginning and to include three possible answers to employment type (Permanent, temporary, or unemployed), with respondents who selected unemployed redirected to a page acknowledging their time and interest.

4.9 Ethical Considerations

At the commencement of this research study, the researcher completed the National College of Ireland ethical review form submitted to the ethics committee. This guaranteed that all ethical considerations were met when conducting and writing research, as well as with collecting and correct storage of data, and understanding the intellectual property. As the survey relies on gathering participants' thoughts, feelings, and opinions, the topic is considered a sensitive area. Participants can sometimes be uncomfortable discussing sensitive topics for fear of being judged, however when researching sensitive types of

topics is very successful as participants feel sharing their opinions is very worthwhile (Sipes, Mullan and Roberts, 2020). “Building trust and relationships with participants to erase an ethical tension that arises is key” (Fernandez et al., 2021). Therefore, it was crucial to ensure participants were aware that the data collected was anonymous and could not be identified as belonging to any individual participant.

Before commencing the survey, a cover page explaining the survey to participants emphasised that the data collected was confidential and anonymous and used for the sole purpose of research only. The participants were also required to consent to the survey before proceeding and informed they had the right to withdraw at any stage of the survey.

To eliminate any potential bias, all surveys were issued and worded in the same manner to all participants, with no pre-determined answers.

4.10 Research Limitations

This research was conducted by utilising scales and supported by previous research. However, it has some research limitations. Potential limitations include the use of online surveys that can lead to potential bias. As the research will be uploaded to LinkedIn; therefore, the respondent group will be limited to platform users, potentially reducing diversity. Additionally, as respondents are anonymous, this may contribute to potential bias (Andrade, 2020b). The convenience sampling method is used to access suitable respondents, it is not a representation of the entire population (Ben-Zvi, Bakker and Makar, 2015).

Moreover, although quantitative was the most suitable method to research this topic, it is not possible to explore the deeper meaning to understand the “why” behind the data (Bryman, 2016). However, an open-ended comment box was included in this study, aimed to overcome this limitation. This allowed employees to elaborate on their experiences if they wished (Gillespie, Mulder and Eggleston, 2021).

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter detailed the research methodology for this research. The researcher discussed the quantitative research that was undertaken by adopting an approach using a positivist viewpoint. In addition, surveys were considered most appropriate to research the topic and issued to participants via LinkedIn, using scales covering employee

engagement, turnover intentions, and total rewards, in order to gain insights from both permanent and temporary employees. Research ethics were discussed, as were research limitations.

The following chapter will discuss the key findings and analysis.

Chapter 5: Findings and Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the key findings and analysis of data obtained from the primary research. The data was gathered by an online survey that was conducted through Microsoft Forms and shared on LinkedIn. The survey contained 10 questions that were answered by 82 respondents, the results of which are showcased through statistical analysis, descriptive text, tables, and graphs.

To achieve the research objectives and examine the research hypotheses, the survey included a series of demographic questions including the age, gender, and employment status of all participants. The key areas of this study were employee engagement, turnover intentions, and total rewards for both permanent and temporary employees. To investigate these areas, three survey scales used in previous research studies were replicated to investigate these variables.

Once the above was conducted, the final stages of this chapter will utilise SPSS to analyse the hypothesis and research question, conducting reliability and normality tests. Thematic analysis is used to analyse additional comments received by respondents. The main findings for each section are presented with a concise discussion of key findings and their relation to the research hypothesis.

5.2 Survey Overview

As discussed in the methodology chapter, an online survey was distributed through LinkedIn, where a total of 95 surveys were issued, to which 82 responses were received. The first six questions in the survey were related to the demographics of the participants, including gender, age, and employment questions including contract, length of employment, and employment sector.

5.2.1 Gender and Age

Figures 1 and 2 represent the gender and age of the respondents, where the x-axis represents the variables, while the y-axis represents the frequency of participants. The largest respondent group identified as Female, with 45 respondents (52.9%). Respondents identifying as Male had the second highest response rate, with 34 respondents (44.1%). Non-Binary respondents accounted for 2.9% of the remaining respondents.

The highest response rate was from the 21-29 age category, with 47 responses, followed by 26 responses, from the 30-39 age category. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, LinkedIn was the platform chosen to access the largest population size. Here, the age category being the most prominent could be due to the age demographics on LinkedIn, being used mainly by 25-34-year-olds, accounting for 59.1% of total users (Bondar, 2023; MacNamee, 2023). The main difference in participation was the low percentage of respondents from age 40-59, with only 9 total responses received.

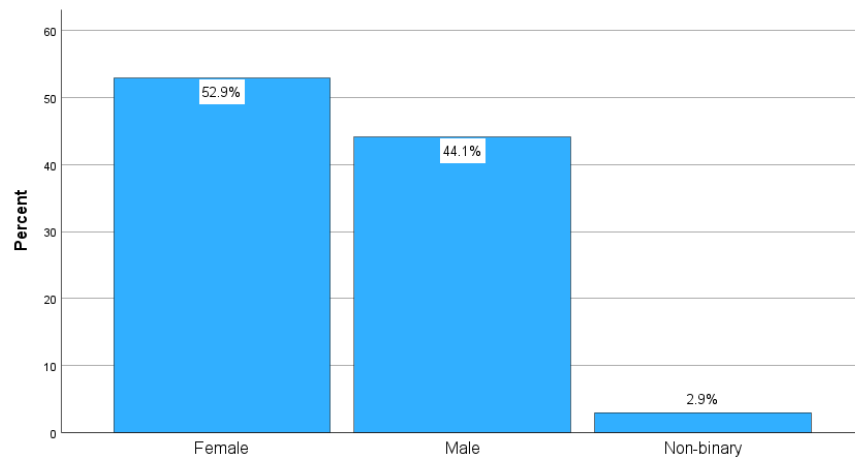


Figure 1: Gender

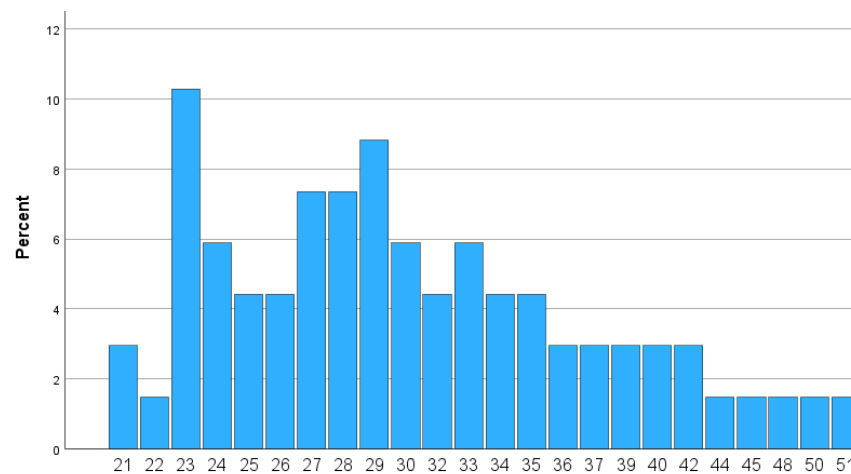


Figure 2: Age

5.2.2 Employment Type

In question four of the survey, participants were given the option to select permanent, temporary, or unemployed. Those who selected unemployed were removed from the survey at this stage. Due to the nature of the research focusing on permanent and temporary workers, the data reported will reflect these employment types. Figure 3 represents the employment type of the respondents. However, it is worth noting that the researcher was made aware that over 50% of the unemployed respondents (15 responses) were previously temporary workers who experienced contracts being prematurely terminated.

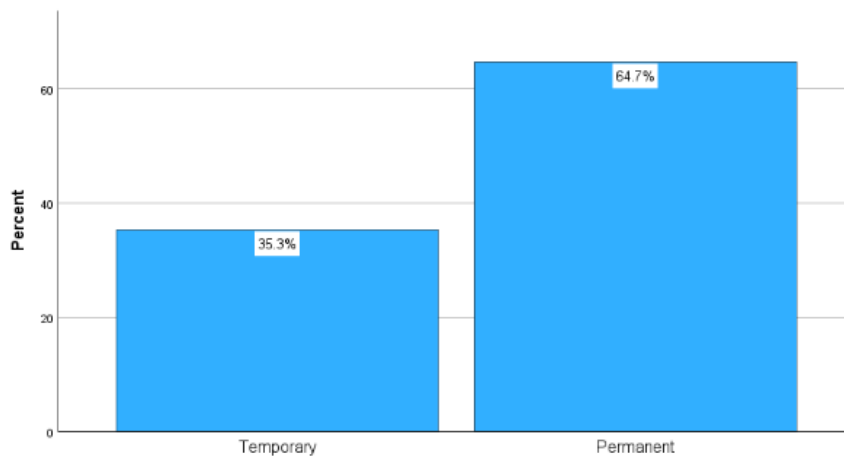


Figure 3: Employment Type

5.2.3 Length of time with current company

Table 1 represents question five of the survey relating to the length of time spent at the respondents' current company. The graph represents the percentage of respondents in a particular employment sector and the type of employment.

In the frequency of each employment range, the mean length tenure was 1.65 years, with 17 respondents (25%) being employed with their organisation for less than one year, and a total of 24 respondents (60.3%) employed with the company for 1- 2 years, representing the highest response rates. The remaining categories included responses from 2-3 years from 11 respondents, and 3-5 years from 4 respondents, with 6 respondents choosing 5-7 and over 7 years.

Table 1: Length of Time with Current Company

<i>Length of Time with Current Company</i>			
<i>Tenure</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
<i>Less than 1 year</i>	17	25.0	25.0
<i>1-2 years</i>	24	35.3	60.3
<i>2-3 years</i>	11	16.2	76.5
<i>3-5 years</i>	4	5.9	82.4
<i>5-7 years</i>	6	8.8	91.2
<i>More than 7 years</i>	6	8.8	100.0
<i>Total</i>	68	100.0	

5.2.4 Employment Sector of Participants

The final demographic question required respondents to select their employment sector. The responses are detailed below in Figure 4. The highest number of respondents were employed in the IT sector, with 20 workers, with 17 workers employed in professional and business services. The second highest employment sector for temporary workers was finance and insurance, with the second highest category in permanent responses opting to select “other”.



Figure 4: Sector

The remaining categories received one response in each category including accommodation/food services, construction, and food/beverage production for permanent workers. This contrasts with temporary workers who are employed in a larger variety of categories than permanent workers, the remaining categories include accommodation and food services, professional services, and public administration.

5.3 Reliability Test Results

To measure internal reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was used for this study. According to research, a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7 or above is considered acceptable.

As the survey included Likert scales, Cronbach's Alpha is the most appropriate scale to measure reliability (Louangrath and Sutanapong, 2018). For this research, Cronbach's Alpha is calculated for engagement, turnover intention, and total rewards, as seen below in Table 2.

Table 2: Survey Reliability Test Scores

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Cronbach Alpha</i>
<i>Engagement</i>	.854
<i>Turnover</i>	.715
<i>Total Rewards</i>	.838

For this study, engagement was measured through the use of Gallup's Q12 engagement survey. Ginting *et al.*'s (2018) application of Gallup's Q12 survey was adopted from the International Journal of Business and Applied Social Sciences (Ginting *et al.*, 2018). In Ginting *et al.*'s (2018) study, a reliability test was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha and reported a reliability value of .542. Concerning this current study, we reassessed the internal consistency of Gallup's Q12 survey of engagement and observed a Cronbach's Alpha value of .854. This outcome indicated this current research indicated a very good to excellent reliability, while the study by Ginting *et al.* (2018) falls within the questionable reliability range.

Turnover was measured using the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6). Bothma and Roodt's (2013) application of the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) was adopted from the SA Journal of Human Resource Management. In Bothma and Roodt's (2013), study, a reliability test was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha, which reported a reliability value of 0.80. Concerning the current research, we reassessed the internal consistency of the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) and observed a Cronbach's Alpha value of .715, which indicated an acceptable level of agreement.

In this current research, total rewards were measured in this study using the scale from the study of Hareendrakumar, Subramoniam and Bijulal (2021), measuring total rewards from the Journal of Management Research, which conducted a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha and reported a reliability value of 0.70. For this current research, the

internal consistency of the Total Rewards was reassessed and a Cronbach's Alpha of .838 was observed. A Cronbach Alpha of .838 indicates good to excellent reliability and demonstrates a higher internal consistency compared to 0.70 reports from Hareendrakumar, Subramoniam and Bijulal's (2021) study.

5.3.1 Summary of Employee Engagement Results

Gallup's Q12 survey was utilised to gather responses to address, hypothesis two of this research thesis "Permanent employees are more engaged than their colleagues on temporary contracts". From the overall sample, irrespective of respondents' employment category, the mean engagement scores were 30.9581, with a standard deviation of 8.2, which indicated that participants reported they are relatively engaged in their current role.

The data also reported a skewness of -.502, indicating that the data was negatively skewed, which indicates that all respondents (both permanent and temporary workers) are lying on the higher proportion of the engagement scale, as seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptives-Engagement Composite Score

<i>Descriptives- Engagement Composite Score</i>	
<i>Mean</i>	30.9851
<i>Median</i>	32.0000
<i>Std. Deviation</i>	8.20106
<i>Minimum</i>	11.00
<i>Maximum</i>	47.00
<i>Range</i>	36.00
<i>Interquartile Range</i>	10.00
<i>Skewness</i>	-.502
<i>Kurtosis</i>	-.183

To achieve the research objectives of this dissertation, it was necessary to analyse and compare engagement composite scores for both permanent and temporary employees. Table 4 below outlines the results of this analysis. The mean engagement score for temporary employees has a mean of 28.500, versus a mean score of 32.5116 for permanent employees. This suggests that there is a difference in the engagement levels between temporary and permanent employees. To test this further, it was necessary to conduct a normality-independent sample T-test.

Table 4: Descriptives- Engagement Composite Score

<i>Employment Type</i>		<i>Statistic</i>
<i>Temporary</i>	Mean	28.2500
	Median	31.5000
	Std. Deviation	7.81442
	Minimum	12.00
	Maximum	38.00
	Range	26.00
	Interquartile Range	12.75
	Skewness	-.621
	Kurtosis	-.890
<i>Permanent</i>	Mean	32.5116
	Median	34.0000
	Std. Deviation	8.09871
	Minimum	11.00
	Maximum	47.00
	Range	36.00
	Interquartile Range	10.00
	Skewness	-.576
	Kurtosis	.232

Figure 5 outlines a graphical representation of the distribution associated with engagement scores. The horizontal axis represents engagement scores, with the vertical axis representing the number of participants having specific engagement scores. As outlined below, the distribution is relatively negatively skewed. The scores range from 10.00 to 50.00, and the scores are prominently between 30.00 and 40.00.

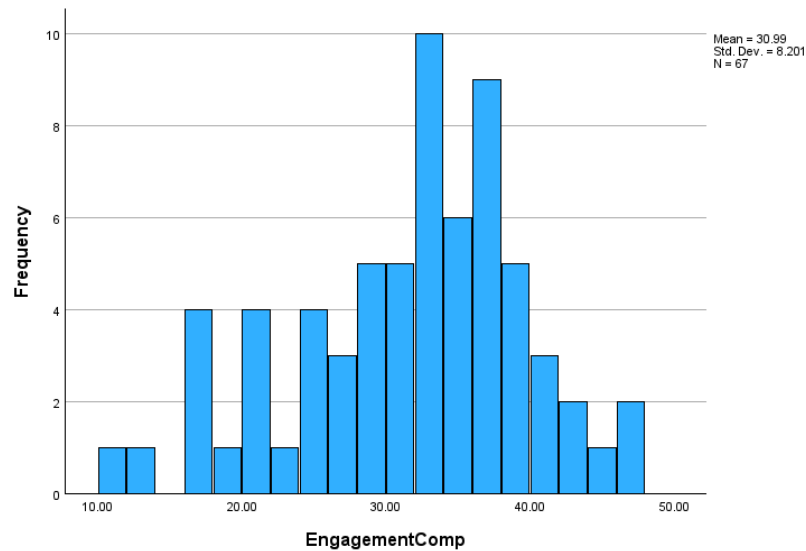


Figure 5: Engagement Composite

5.4 Tests of Normality

5.4.1 Hypothesis 1 - Permanent employees are more engaged than their colleagues on temporary contracts.

To determine if engagement levels are different between permanent and temporary employees, an independent samples hypothesis test was undertaken. We first assessed for distribution normality, with the results of the Shapiro-Wilks test of normality indicating that the disturbance of engagement levels associated with temporary employee distribution was non-normal. $W = .894$, $df = 24$, $p = .016$. There was no evidence to suggest that the distribution of engagement levels was non-normal for permanent employees, $W = .969$, $df = 43$, $p = .286$.

Table 5: Tests of Normality

<i>Tests of Normality – Engagement Composite</i>			
<i>Employment Type</i>	<i>Shapiro-Wilk</i>		
	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Temporary</i>	.894	24	.016
<i>Permanent</i>	.969	43	.286

As such, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was conducted using grouping variables of Employment Types. The results of the Mann-Whitney U test, in Table 6, indicated that there is a statistically significant difference between median engagement levels between permanent ($Md = 34.0$) and temporary employees ($Md = 31.5$). $Z = -2.049$, $P = .040$.

Table 6: Test Statistics

Test Statistics	
	Engagement Comp
Mann-Whitney U	359.500
Wilcoxon W	659.500
Z	-2.049

Turnover Intention Overview

The third section of the quantitative survey focused on turnover intention, utilising the turnover intention scale (TSI-6), to address research hypothesis two “Employees with temporary contracts will report lower turnover intention compared to permanent employees”. Figure 6 outlines a graphical representation of the distribution associated with turnover intention scores. The horizontal axis represents turnover intention scores, with the vertical axis representing the number of participants having specific turnover intention scores. As outlined below, the distribution is relatively negatively skewed. The scores range from 10.00 to 30.00, and the scores are prominently between 20.00 and 30.00.

From the overall sample, irrespective of respondents' employment category, the mean engagement scores were 17.2083 for temporary employees and 20.1136 for permanent employees. This suggests that, on average, permanent employees have a higher engagement score, compared to temporary employees. A Standard deviation of 4.91651 was reported for temporary workers, with a standard deviation of 6.00 for permanent employees, as seen in Table 7 below.

The data also reported a Skewness of -.302 for temporary employees and -.933 for permanent, indicating that the data was negatively skewed for both employment types. This indicates that a significant number of respondents have lower engagement scores, especially in permanent employees.

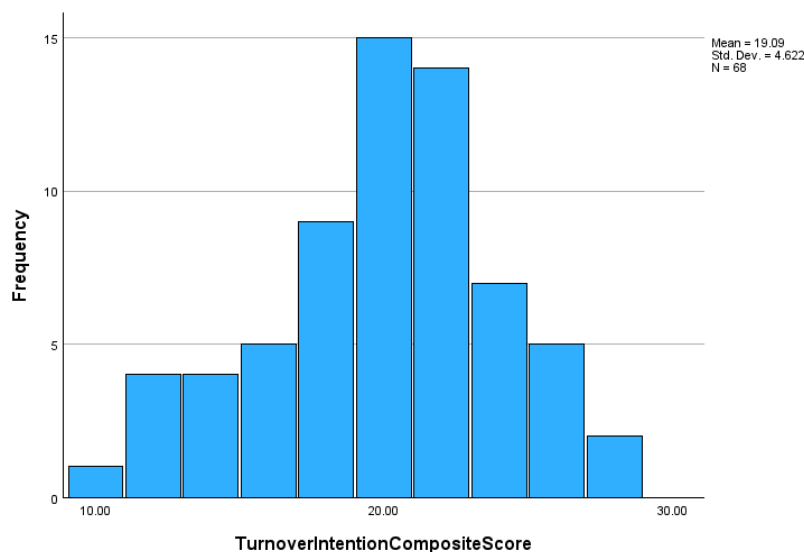


Figure 6: Turnover Intention Composite Score

Table 7: Turnover Intention Composite Score

<i>Descriptives Turnover Intention Composite Score</i>		
<i>Employment Type</i>	Statistics	
<i>Temporary</i>	Mean	17.2083
	Median	18.0000
	Std. Deviation	4.91651
	Minimum	6.00
	Maximum	28.00
	Range	22.00
	Interquartile Range	6.00
	Skewness	-.302
	Kurtosis	.399
<i>Permanent</i>	Mean	20.1136
	Median	21.0000
	Std. Deviation	4.16081
	Minimum	6.00
	Maximum	28.00
	Range	22.00
	Interquartile Range	4.75
	Skewness	-.993
	Kurtosis	2.077

5.4.2 Hypothesis 2 - Employees with temporary contracts will report lower turnover intention compared to permanent employees.

To determine if turnover intention levels are different between permanent and temporary employees, an independent samples hypothesis test was undertaken. Firstly, assessed for distribution normality, with the results of the Shapiro-Wilks test of normality outlined in Table 8, indicating that the disturbance of turnover intention levels associated with temporary employee distribution was non-normal. $W=.027$, $df=24$, $p=.697$, for temporary employees. Therefore, we failed to reject the null hypothesis and concluded that the temporary employee data is not normally distributed.

For permanent employees, $W=.022$, $df=44$, $p=.031$, we can conclude that the data is not normally distributed and thus we reject the null hypothesis.

Table 8: Shapiro-Wilks

<i>Employment Type</i>	<i>Shapiro-Wilk</i>		
	Statistics	df	Sig.
<i>Temporary</i>	.971	24	.697
<i>Permanent</i>	.943	44	.031

As such, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. The results of the Mann-Whitney U test indicated that there is a statistically significant difference between median turnover intention levels between permanent (Md=18.0) and temporary employees (Md=21), resulting in an MD=3.0000, Z= -2.633, P= .008

The result of the Mann-Whitney U test results, as seen below in Table 9, suggests that there is a statistically significant difference in turnover intention scores between permanent and temporary employees. This suggests that employment type has a significant impact on employee turnover intentions.

Table 9: Mann-Whitney U Test

<i>Mann-Whitney U Test</i>	
	Turnover Intention Composite Score
<i>Mann-Whitney U</i>	323.500
<i>Wilcoxon W</i>	623.500
<i>Z</i>	-2.633

Total Rewards Results

The third section of this report focused on total rewards to address research hypothesis three.

“A strong total rewards program will be more effective in increasing employee engagement among temporary staff compared to permanent staff.”

Table 10 outlines a graphical representation of the distribution associated with total reward scores. The horizontal axis represents the total rewards score, with the vertical axis representing the number of participants having specific total rewards scores. As outlined below, the distribution is relatively negatively skewed. The scores range from 10.00 to 35.00, and the scores are prominently between 15.00 and 30.00.

Table 10: Total Rewards Composite Score

Total Rewards Composite Score			
Employment Type	Statistic		
Temporary	Mean		16.5417
	Median		13.7132
	Std. Deviation		6.69834
	Minimum		8.00
	Maximum		28.00
	Range		20.00
	Interquartile Range		13.00
	Skewness		.368
	Kurtosis		-1.175
Permanent	Mean		20.7727
	Median		22.0000
	Std. Deviation		7.76355
	Minimum		3.00
	Maximum		35.00
	Range		32.00
	Interquartile Range		11.50
	Skewness		-.341
	Kurtosis		-.317

From the overall sample, irrespective of respondents' employment category, the mean total rewards scores are 16.5417 for temporary employees and 20.7727 for permanent

employees. This suggests that, on average, permanent employees perceive total rewards more favourably than temporary employees. A standard deviation of 6.69834 was reported for temporary workers, with a standard deviation of 7.76355 for permanent employees, indicating greater variability in the perception of total rewards amongst permanent employees compared to temporary workers.

The results also reported a skewness of -.1175 for temporary employees and -.341 for permanent, indicating that both data distributions are left skewed for both groups. However, the skewness is more pronounced for temporary employees, suggesting a heavier volume of total reward scores in temporary employees compared to permanent employees. This suggests temporary employees receive as many rewards as possible and hence do not perceive any importance of rewards compared to permanent employees.

5.4.3 Hypothesis 3 - A strong total rewards program will be more effective in increasing employee engagement among temporary staff compared to permanent staff

As the data outlined above is non-normal, a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to compare total reward scores between temporary and permanent employees. The results of the Mann-Whitney U test are Z= -2.235, P = 0.025 are outlined in Table 11.

Table 11: Mann-Whitney U Test

<i>Mann-Whitney U Test</i>	
	Total Rewards Composite Score
<i>Mann-Whitney U</i>	323.500
<i>Wilcoxon W</i>	623.500
<i>Z</i>	2.235

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis can be rejected. This indicates that there is a significant statistical difference in total reward scores between both employment types.

5.5 Thematic Analysis

The final question in the survey included an open-ended question allowing respondents to share additional comments. A total of 16 responses were collected, with over 35% of respondents answering as temporary workers for the survey, providing additional insights alongside the quantitative results.

By analysing the comments, recurring themes emerged:

1. **Theme 1:** Temporary employees do not have access to benefits or reward programmes
2. **Theme 2:** Workplace divide exists between permanent and temporary employees
3. **Theme 3:** Temporary workers lack access to development opportunities

To further illustrate these themes, a summarised version of quotes from respondents can be found below:

Theme 1: Temporary employees do not have access to benefits or reward programs

- *“The company I work for this very good at treating employees equally in the office. The only difference is temps do not have any additional benefits. As a contingent worker, the agency I am employed via is very unhelpful and is a negative factor”*
- *“As a temp, I miss out on the benefits, but I enjoy the higher salary than the perms”*
- *“As a temporary worker I have no access to a benefit or pension scheme, I actively look for a perm role to have health insurance”*

Theme 2: Workplace divide between permanent and temporary employees

- *“Temporary workers are required to attend in office two days a week. Permanent staff can request home offices once over 40km away from the office and are not required to be in the office. Different colour badges are given to each type of worker that distinguishes who can or can't attend an event”*
- *“There's a noticeable divide between temp and full-time staff”.*

Theme 3: Temporary workers lack access to development opportunities

- *“Temporary workers are unable to access other training and development programmes that permanent staff are required to take part in. Many company*

meetings took place that shared important information, management was asked to communicate this to temp workers as it was important, however, temps were not authorized to attend”

- *“Lack of job growth and being passed over due to office favourites seem to be a trend”*

5.6 Significance of Findings

The statistical tests on this data yielded valuable insights that support the research hypothesis. The findings indicate that responses to certain variables vary drastically depending on the respondent’s employment type.

The additional comments provided an understanding of the quantitative data and offered significant insights into total rewards and workplace differences for permanent and temporary workers. The findings highlighted the different treatment of temporary workers including lack of access to training and rewards programmes and exclusion of hybrid working arrangements and attending company events. While temporary workers do not receive benefits and rewards, significant information was gathered that indicated, that despite temporary workers not receiving rewards, their base salary is higher than that of their permanent co-workers.

The results and implications for workers and organisations are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss and analyse the key findings in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The objective of this study was to investigate employee engagement and turnover intention between permanent and temporary workers in Ireland. The variables measured were employee engagement, turnover intention, and total rewards. Demographic information was collected for all respondents to create the largest profile of respondents possible. The key findings for each variable will be discussed separately in the following section.

6.2 Employee Engagement

The purpose of this study was to explore employee engagement and compare and analyse engagement levels between permanent and temporary employees. The results of the primary research suggest that employment type is a crucial factor that influences employee engagement.

The results of the statistical analysis from the Mann-Whitney U test identified statistically significant differences between permanent and temporary employees. In addition, the results were supportive of Hypothesis 1, which shows that permanent employees have higher levels of engagement compared to temporary employees. The results of the Cronbach Alpha in this study are .854, which indicates a moderate level of internal consistency. The scale used was based on Gallup's Q12 engagement survey. Ginting *et al.*'s (2018) application of Gallup's Q12 survey was adopted from the International Journal of Business and Applied Social Sciences (Ginting et al., 2018).

The results of the study are supported by research discussed in the literature review chapter. Researchers stated that permanent employees are generally more satisfied in their roles, due to greater job security, benefits, and development opportunities. This is in contrast to temporary employees, who lack the same level of job security, often feel less important to the organisation, and generally display lower levels of engagement. Lower levels of engagement can be due to the feelings of lack of importance within the organisation and the divide within organisational culture between permanent and temporary workers (Huang, Huang and Chang, 2022). This is further supported by

research suggesting that in organisations that struggle with maintaining positive engagement levels, employees feel they lack knowledge and skills about their jobs and face issues with staff feeling underappreciated leading to a negative reputation for the organisation (Mishra, Boynton and Mishra, 2014). Also, research into the attitudes and behaviours of temporary versus permanent workers indicates that temporary workers tend to exhibit more negative attitudes than their permanent counterparts. This disparity is often attributed to temporary workers feeling less integrated within their organisations (Rigotti et al., 2009).

Research into engagement differences by employment type further supports the findings of this research. This emphasises that engagement varies significantly depending on employment types and found that rewards and development opportunities had the largest impact on employee engagement (Westwood, 2017; Saks, 2022). Similarly, research has noted that engagement levels can vary in different personality characteristics and fluctuate daily depending on the individual. However, all successful employees who have long tenures within their organisations are engaged in their work and hold positions where job expectations align with their talents. Research also highlights that employee engagement is comprised of two main elements that include psychological meaningfulness and safety so that employees feel valued at work and can perform their duties in a safe environment (Westwood, 2017).

The results of this study show that permanent employees have higher engagement than temporary employees. It also signifies that engagement varies depending on employment types. Based on the findings discussed and their relevance to previous research, organisations should focus on employment engagement as an evolving and continuous process. This process is highly specific to the organisation and the individual worker, requiring ongoing monitoring and exploration of engagement drivers that matter to employees, such as commitment, involvement, and psychological presence. Addressing and fulfilling these drivers will lead to positive improvements in employee performance and organisational success (Gupta and Sharma, 2016). This study has provided novel insights into the need for critically tailored engagement strategies for different employment types that can increase engagement for all employees irrespective of their employment contract.

It also highlights the need for policymakers to advocate for employment policies that ensure non-permanent employees receive benefits and development opportunities equal

to those of their permanent co-workers. This would help reduce the engagement gap between employees and bridge the divide between workers in organisations, which can lead to temporary workers feeling inferior and less valued than their permanent counterparts. Future research in this area should focus on the implications of policies and develop metric systems to measure and define engagement drivers more effectively. It is crucial to manage the engagement gap between employees and provide valuable insights into the understanding of complex factors that influence engagement.

6.3 Turnover Intention

The study investigated turnover intention using reliability and statistical tests to draw conclusions and highlight key findings. This study investigated turnover intention using the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6). In Bothma and Roodt's (2013) study, a reliability test was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha and reported a reliability value of 0.80. Concerning this research, we reassessed the internal consistency of the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) and observed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.715. While this value is slightly lower than Bothma and Roodt's (2013) results, the reliability remains at an acceptable level. While this is a slightly lower value than Bothma and Roodt's (2013) survey, this may be due to different sample sizes or research methodology differences. However, the reliability observed supports Hypothesis 2 which theorises that an employee's contract type impacts turnover intentions, with higher turnover intentions among temporary employees compared to permanent employees. This result highlights the importance for organisations to understand and address the factors that influence engagement and turnover intention amongst different categories of workers.

In the literature discussed in Chapter Two, where research directly compared turnover intention and employment type as a factor was sparse and highlighted a research gap addressed in this study. It can be determined that employees leave an organisation for reasons such as work not being as the employee expected, the salary being less than expected, few growth opportunities and there is a lack of trust between managers and employees (Alan, Polat and Tiryaki Sen, 2022). This aligns with the nature of turnover theories that suggest that employee turnover is influenced by events and individual decisions (Moon and O'Brien, 2023). These findings also align with Taylor's (2002) theory that turnover is influenced by several factors such as push factors (lack of training, poor work-life balance, or poor leadership style), while pull factors (e.g. attractive job offer) entice them to leave for new opportunities. While push and pull factors distinguish

between what influences employees to leave and stay, other research highlights that each factor reflects a mixture of an employee's intention to quit and diverse reasons for leaving and staying including socio-economic reasons (Moon and O'Brien, 2023). These findings support theories, that turnover intention is complex and many factors contribute to it, and that there is not one significant reason why an individual intends to leave an organisation (Holston-Okae and Mushi, 2018).

This research highlights the impact of employment type on turnover intention and highlights that while there are no specific reasons that cause it. Turnover intention can be attributed to factors such as lack of benefits, job insecurity, and limited development opportunities (Vallasamy, Muhadi and Vijaya Retnam, 2023). The results suggest that temporary employees are more affected by push factors such as job insecurity. This highlights the importance of addressing the specific needs of these employees to reduce turnover and emphasizes the need for a strategic organisational approach that considers both personal and circumstantial factors impacting turnover.

The findings have significant implications for various stakeholders. For organisations, the findings show the importance of understanding the factors that influence turnover intention to reduce these levels. Organisations should consider introducing strategies to enhance employee satisfaction and turnover, including offering development plans to all employees and measures to ensure better job security. However, this would be most beneficial if tailored to the specific needs and concerns of their workers to reduce turnover. Similarly, the insights from this study can assist employees in making career decisions, by understanding the factors that influence turnover intention and can support employees in seeking roles that align with their career goals.

This study opens potential pathways for future research, which can include an investigation of turnover intentions and organisational culture amongst different employment types. This would provide further insights into turnover intentions and understand how to retain employees. In addition, this study could be conducted over time to monitor the evolution of factors and changes in employees' behaviours.

This study contributes to understanding turnover intentions in different employment types. The findings align with turnover theories and offer new insights and perspectives into the factors influencing turnover intentions and provide the foundation for future studies in this area.

6.4 Total Rewards

This research study aimed to identify the factors that influence engagement and turnover intention for permanent and temporary workers. In addition, research hypothesis three aimed to investigate if a total reward program would be effective in increasing engagement in temporary staff compared to permanent staff. The research findings did not find enough evidence to support this hypothesis. However, this could be changed by obtaining a larger survey respondent group of permanent employees. The data did show that total rewards are important and are often not received by temporary employees. It also indicates that reward programs are beneficial if they form part of a broader strategy. The wider strategy should encompass other factors such as job security, and a positive employee and management relationship.

Xiong *et al.*'s (2018) research found that turnover intentions are created by employees analysing different reference points such as their salary and decision anchors (for example comparing their salary to that of their colleagues). The study highlighted that if the analysis results in a negative outcome, an employee will create an intention to leave. This is driven by perceived inequality, leading them to feel undervalued and consider new opportunities. While Xiong et al (2018), identified key reference points, primary research in this study extends these findings showing the disparity in reward perceptions between employment types. The results also align with research that total rewards are critical for employee engagement (Armstrong, 2008). However, it is noted that such programs are most successful when all workers are treated equally. Equal treatment of permanent and temporary workers is often not common practice in many workplaces. In recent years organisations such as Google have faced criticism for mistreating temporary workers, including underpaying salaries and providing a lack of benefits compared to permanent employees (Saks, 2022). The survey participants in the current study were asked a series of questions relating to total rewards, using the scale from Hareendrakumar, et al.'s (2021) study which conducted a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha and reported a reliability value of 0.70.

For the current research, the internal consistency of the total rewards was reassessed and observed a Cronbach's Alpha of .838. A Cronbach Alpha of .838 indicates good to excellent reliability and demonstrates a higher internal consistency compared to 0.70 reports from Hareendrakumar et al's (2021) study. To investigate the impact of how total reward varies between employment types, the results of the Mann-Whitney U test

indicated that significant statistical differences existed in total reward scores between each employment category. However, the mean total rewards figures for temporary employees (16.5417) is lower than that of permanent employees (20.7727), this suggests that permanent employees have a higher perception of total rewards. This disparity can stem from the fact that temporary employees do not receive the same access to total rewards programmes as their permanent colleagues. This supports secondary research reviewed in chapter two, which highlights that while temporary workers may receive higher salaries, they do not receive the same rewards and benefits as their permanent counterparts.

The results of this study's primary research highlight that rewards are crucial to permanent workers in terms of engagement and reducing turnover, rewards are less crucial for temporary workers as they do not receive access to these benefits. The thematic analysis of the open-ended questions further emphasises this factor, with a key theme that temporary employees do not have access to the rewards and benefits as their permanent colleagues. This research aligns with research objective three, which aims to address whether reward programmes can minimise turnover. The findings indicate that permanent employees value total rewards programmes, while temporary employees lack access to reward options, which directly increases turnover intentions and decreases engagement. This further creates a divide between permanent and temporary workers, which was a key theme highlighted in this survey.

A surprising research finding was the extent to which temporary employees feel disengaged from reward programmes. This highlights the divide between permanent and temporary employees and emphasises the need for further research to develop methods to integrate temporary employees into organisations.

The findings of this research have implications for policymakers, organisations, and HR departments. The research shows the importance of reward systems and recommends that organisations re-evaluate their reward systems to ensure inclusivity for all employees. For organisations and policymakers, it is evident that there is a need for fair treatment of temporary workers including, equitable fair pay, benefits, and rewards, to mitigate turnover intentions and enhance employee engagement.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

In today's dynamic business environment, organisations are increasingly employing both permanent and temporary workers. The temporary workforce has become a central aspect of many organisations and offers immediate benefits (e.g. not having to hire train or fire), and the ability to maintain flexibility in times of fluctuating demand (Wilkin, de Jong and Rubino, 2018). Despite the growing popularity of mixed workforces, many organisations have not adjusted their policies and procedures to address the needs and challenges faced by temporary workers compared to their permanent colleagues (Darvishmotevali, Kim and Ning, 2024).

This study explored employee engagement and revealed significant differences between permanent and temporary employees. By utilising statistical analysis, the research contributed to the understanding of factors of how benefits and other factors impact employee engagement. The findings of this theory support motivating theories such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory which highlights the importance of focusing on intrinsic and extrinsic motivators in fostering employee engagement (Bexheti and Bexheti, 2016). In addition, the research draws attention to the need for tailored engagement practices that are designed for different employment types.

While the data findings provided valuable insights, the research was not without limitations. A longitudinal research study would have provided a comprehensive overview of engagement and turnover intention over time. Additionally, opting for a larger sample size with a diverse sample from different industries and demographics should be included in future research.

While Gallup's Q12 survey was effective in assessing employee engagement, incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews would have enriched the data. This would have provided deeper insights into employee behaviours and workplace experiences, and uncover areas missed by quantitative research. An interesting finding of this research is the small difference in engagement levels between temporary and permanent workers. Further investigating into factors such as shortened time in employment in organisations for temporary staff is justified. The implications of these findings for HR departments and leaders are significant. By investing in additional research, organisations can develop targeted engagement and retention programs that are specific to the needs of both permanent and temporary employees.

Regularly assessing employee engagement and turnover intentions and adapting strategies to meet evolving employee needs are essential to maintaining engagement and reducing turnover.

This study advances the theory of turnover intention by examining its relationship to employment types. By utilising the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6), it was identified that temporary employees exhibit higher turnover intentions. This finding supports the research hypothesis that contract types influence turnover intention and aligns with turnover theories. This study has stressed the need for tailored recruitment and retention strategies to address the needs of different employees.

If replicating this survey, it would be worth investigating job security in more detail. Based on the assumption that temporary employees might accept insecurity as part of their employment terms, it warrants further research to develop strategies to address these issues. Including these additional factors could have led to more robust findings and a more comprehensive understanding of turnover intentions.

Additionally, the findings can assist trade unions and industry associations in addressing the issues raised by temporary workers and advocate for improved employment practices. By highlighting the importance of job security and benefits in reducing turnover intention, organisations can drive positive change for all workers.

A key focus of this research was to explore the role total rewards systems play in influencing employees. The research revealed that permanent employees highly value reward programs, but temporary employees did not share the same views. This can be due to the disparity caused by the lack of equal benefits and unequal treatment. These findings should encourage organisations to reevaluate their reward and benefit programmes to create a more inclusive approach to engagement. Future research in this area should explore strategies to integrate temporary employees into programmes. While the scale produced reliable results, a more comprehensive approach could be achieved by including focus groups to discuss this topic in greater detail. This would allow for more detailed questions regarding the specific types of rewards employees desire and their potential impact on engagement and turnover. Furthermore, the study had a higher proportion of respondents of permanent workers from IT and professional services, therefore expanding the sample size would encompass a broader range of industries to enhance the generalisability of the research findings.

The research emphasised a significant divide between permanent and temporary workers, including employment layoffs, exclusion from workplace events, and limited access to training and development opportunities. These disparities often lead temporary workers to seek a more fulfilling employment relationship. As the business environment and workplace hiring practices continue to evolve, organisations must be aware of how their policies and actions impact temporary workers. Ensuring a positive and fulfilling experience for all employees, regardless of their contract type, is essential for fostering a positive workplace.

Organisations should proactively implement policies and practices that cater to the needs of both temporary and permanent workers. Conducting open forums to identify the most important factors for each employment category is essential. While some differences such as development and promotion opportunities are expected, organisations can introduce generalised skill development and recognition programmes. Additionally, providing support to temporary workers during times of personal matters. By ensuring fair treatment for all employees, organisations can foster greater employee commitment regardless of contract type.

In conclusion, this research has explored the dynamics of engagement, turnover intention, and total rewards, among temporary and permanent employees. The study established that employment type significantly impacts these variables. The research underscores the unique challenges faced by temporary employees, such as social exclusion. The research highlights the need for more targeted strategies and policies. Ultimately, the findings offer both theoretical insights and practical recommendations for stakeholders to address engagement and ultimately leading to sustainable organisational success.

7.2 Recommendations for Further Research

This study contributes to the advancement of research on temporary and permanent workers in Ireland, by addressing a previously overlooked area. While existing research on this topic has predominantly focused on permanent workers, this research fills a critical gap by examining temporary employees. The data gathered enhances the understanding of the differences in behaviours and perspectives of both employment types, and supports organisations in implementing targeted policies and practices to improve engagement and reduce turnover intention.

An additional area for future research was identified in this study. This study did not survey unemployed workers. Future research could benefit from examining the type of contracts held previously by the unemployed respondents. This would gain insights into the understanding of which contract types are more likely to lead to unemployment and analyse any correlations between contract length and unemployment rates. Understanding the length of unemployment would provide an understanding of how long it takes individuals to re-enter the workplace and address specific barriers and challenges faced by job seekers.

Another potential area for future research involves replicating this study within the tourism and travel industry. Given the sector's seasonality, and reliance on temporary workers during peak periods (Grobelna and Skrzyszewska, 2019). This would provide a large sample size of temporary workers for examining the specific needs and challenges of workers.

Personal Learning Statement

This research has been undertaken as a partial fulfilment for a master's degree in human resource management from The National College of Ireland. This experience has been challenging but extremely rewarding. I have succeeded in proceeding in professional development while balancing my full-time role in talent acquisition with part-time studies over the past two years. While at times, this was challenging, I am proud of my drive and determination to strive for the best outcomes and utilise my abilities.

I began my career in talent acquisition in 2020 as a temporary worker, which provided me with an enlightening experience. I experienced firsthand the differences in working as a temporary and permanent employee and became increasingly interested in the factors that impact both permanent and temporary workers. This master's programme allowed me to gain educational and practical knowledge across Human Resource areas and allowed me to research an area I was personally interested in.

Due to the nature of the research, a quantitative survey was the most suitable method with statistical analysis providing the best insights and analysis for results. However, this was a big challenge and a learning curve as I was a complete novice in IBM SPSS software and statistical analysis. However, I remained committed and overcame this hurdle and I am proud of my dedication as this provided valuable research insights.

Overall, I have improved as a learner with increased knowledge across human resource practices and have developed a better understanding of employees. I have also improved as an individual as a direct result of undertaking this master's programme.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Primary research survey

Employee Engagement and Turnover Intention: A Comparison of Permanent and Temporary Staff ☺

This research study aims to explore employee engagement and turnover intentions of both permanent and temporary workers.

This survey is part of primary research for a Master's degree in Human Resource Management at the National College of Ireland. Your participation in this study is invaluable and greatly appreciated.

The information gathered will be used for this research only. All information provided will be kept confidential and anonymous. The responses do not contain any identifying information such as your name, IP address or email address. The data collected will be stored securely in a password-protected file, accessible only to the researcher. You can choose to withdraw from this study at any time.

This survey consists of five sections:

- Section One: Consent to participate in the research study
- Section Two: Demographic information
- Section Three: Employee engagement
- Section Four: Turnover Intention
- Section Five: Total Rewards

Completing this survey should take approximately 5-10 minutes.

If you have any questions about the survey or the research study, please feel free to contact me via email at x22141227@student.ncirl.ie.

Thank you for your participation and contribution to this research.

Section 1

...

Consent

1. I voluntarily agree to participating in this research study. I understand that all results of this survey will remain completely anonymous and used solely for the purpose of this research. *

☐ Yes, I agree

Demographics

2. Please indicate your gender

Enter your answer

3. Please indicate your age

Enter your answer

4. What is your current employment contract? *

- ☐ Permanent
- ☐ Temporary
- ☐ Unemployed

- ☐ 2- 3 years
- ☐ 3 - 5 years
- ☐ 5- 7 years
- ☐ More than 7 years

6. What sector are you employed in? *

- ☐ Finance and insurance
- ☐ Professional and business services
- ☐ Retail and wholesale trade
- ☐ Accommodation and food service activities
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Public administration and defence
- ☐ Food and beverage production
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- ☐ IT Sector
- ☐ Other

Employee Engagement

7. This section of the survey focuses on understanding how engaged you feel at work. Please read and carefully consider the following statements. *

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I know what is expected of me at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There is someone at work who encourages my development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At work, my opinions seem to count.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a best friend at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Turnover Intention

8. This section focuses on turnover intention to understand factors that may influence your decision to stay with or leave the company. Please read and carefully consider the following statements. *

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am satisfied in my role	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often look forward to another day at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I foresee myself working for the organisation for at least the next 12 months	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My salary and overall compensation are important to me and influence my decision to stay with the organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career growth is important to me and influence my decision to stay with the organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Management is important to me and influence my decision to stay with the organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work-life balance and flexibility are important to me influence my decision to stay with the organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Total Rewards

9. The following sector will focus on Total rewards received refers to the entire package of compensation and benefits offered by an employer. Please read and carefully consider the following statements. *

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am very much satisfied with the basic pay I receive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the benefit package offered to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always get appreciation for the good work I do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am very much satisfied with the present salary I am receiving	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a better benefits package in my company	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The benefits offered by the company is better than that of similar companies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The social security benefits are sufficient and good for a satisfied retired life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In my company employees are getting promoted faster than similar companies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am fully satisfied with the job advancement chances applicable to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The working hours are very comfortable for me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Additional Comments

10. Please feel free to leave any additional comments below relating to employee engagement, turnover intention and total rewards.

[+ Add new](#)