UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

This is a peer-reviewed, post-print (final draft post-refereeing) version of the following published document:

**Biggs, David M and Swailes, Stephen (2006).
Relations, commitment and satisfaction in agency workers and permanent workers. Employee Relations, 28 (2), 130-143.**

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR TEXT.

Final Version

Relations, commitment and satisfaction in agency workers and permanent workers

David Biggs. University of Gloucestershire, Francis Close Hall, Cheltenham, GL50 4AZ.

Stephen Swailes. The Business School, University of Hull, Cottingham Road, Hull, HU6 7RX.

Address for correspondence:

Dr David Biggs
School of Health and Social Sciences,
University of Gloucestershire,
Francis Close Hall,
Swindon Road,
Cheltenham,
GL50 4AZ.
Tel: 01242 543238

Email: dbiggs@glos.ac.uk

Word Count (Including References): 6352

Key words: worker relations, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, agency workers, permanent workers

Relations, commitment and satisfaction in agency workers and permanent workers

ABSTRACT

Purpose of this paper

To investigate the level of organizational commitment in agency workers compared with permanent workers by taking into account relations between the two groups.

Design/methodology/approach

A mixed methods design was employed comprising of a quantitative survey of 157 call centre workers followed by 29 qualitative interviews with permanent workers, agency workers and employers.

Findings

Agency workers had a significantly lower level of organizational commitment compared with permanent workers once the relation between agency and permanent workers was controlled. Significant correlations were found within the sample between organizational commitment, being valued and job satisfaction further supported by a hierarchical multiple linear regression.

Research limitations/implications

As with all cross-sectional research causality cannot be confirmed and difficulty accessing call centre workers led to a restricted sample size. The measurement of worker relations needs developing. Further research is proposed to address these limitations and extend the findings.

Practical implications

The implication for human resource management is that employers must be aware of the possible adverse influence that agency workers may have on permanent workers and as such try to incorporate agency workers within the organization to support their commitment.

What is original/value of paper

Previous studies have found inconsistent variations in the relative organizational commitment of permanent and temporary employees; a counter-intuitive finding given the precarious employment contract held by temporary workers. This study casts light on these results by controlling for the relation between agency workers and permanent workers.

Introduction

Temporary workers, of which agency workers are a major category, have decreased in recent years but represented 5.8% of UK employees in Spring 2003 (Biggs, Burchell and Millmore, In Press). Agency workers are big business, indeed, the turnover of UK employment agencies supplying agency workers was £22.8 billion in 2003/2004 (REC, 2005). Agency workers are classified as temporary workers as their tenure within a company is for a limited period of time. However, unlike other temporary workers who are employed in a two-way relationship by those they work for, agency workers are characterised by a triangular relationship involving the employment agency who hires them, the organization they work for, as well as themselves as shown in Figure 1.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Organizational commitment, relations between workers and job satisfaction are crucial to our understanding of people at work. Studies in this area tend to be concentrated on workers characterised by having permanent tenure and relatively little research has examined temporary workers (Gallagher & Parks, 2001; McClurg, 1999; Newton, 1996; Smith, 1988). This study adds to the literature by examining the organizational commitment, worker relations and job satisfaction of agency workers and compares this, in part, with permanent workers.

Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Worker Relationship

Job satisfaction can be defined as an attitudinal state reflecting all the affective feelings that a person has about their job (Spector, 1997). It is an aggregate variable reflecting satisfaction towards facets of a job including growth, pay, co-workers and supervisors that contribute towards general satisfaction in varying degrees (Smith, 1992). Nevertheless, job satisfaction is not just a combination of these facets but also a separate single concept of general job satisfaction (Hackman and Oldham, 1975; Smith, 1992) and it is important to measure job satisfaction as a general concept separated from its facets (Hackman and Oldham, 1975).

Both agency workers and permanent workers are likely to develop affective feelings about the same aspects of their job so general job satisfaction as a concept is relevant to both parties.

Organizational commitment can be described as a multidimensional work attitude that concerns the bond between the employee and their employing organization (Allen and Meyer, 1996). Classically, it is the extent of belief in and acceptance of organizational goals, a willingness to exert effort for the organization and a desire to stay with the organization (Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982). These three dimensions have been embodied in the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian, 1974) and a similar instrument designed for British manual workers, the British Organizational Commitment Scale (Cook and Wall, 1980).

Commitment theory is underpinned by reciprocity theory (Gouldner, 1960) that essentially states that when one person treats another person favourably then the norm of reciprocity stimulates a proportional return. In an organizational setting, favourable treatment from an employer in the form of respect, consideration or resources given to an employee should be reciprocated in the form of positive attitudes and work-directed effort. This concept has been examined through the development of organization support theory (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson and Sowa, 1986; Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli and Lynch, 1997). Organization support theory suggests that employees hold views about how much their organization values their contribution and how much it cares about them as individuals, e.g., whether the organization is bothered about their sense of (dis)satisfaction with some aspect of their working life. Where employees feel that organizations do care about them and do value them as individuals then this should be reciprocated via commitment to the organization's aims (organizational commitment) and via behaviour to help achieve those aims.

The concept of organizational support has been operationalised in a measure of Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger, et al. 1986). In simple terms, perceived organizational support is akin to the employee's sense of the organization's commitment to them. Research shows a strong positive correlation between perceived support and organizational commitment (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch and Rhoades, 2001; Swailes, 2001)

High levels of organizational commitment provide a clear focus for human resource managers on the grounds that commitment is in itself a good and positive thing that should lead to high levels of work performance. The empirical evidence for strong links from commitment to

performance however is lacking despite the intuitive appeal of the theory. One explanation for this is that performance, which is of course measured in myriad ways depending upon job context, is influenced by too many other variables to show a strong link to an attitudinal construct like commitment. Such other variables include individual skills and competences and the behaviour of co-workers.

In an effort to better understand the commitment-performance relationship the concept of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (Bateman and Organ, 1983; Smith, Organ and Near, 1983) was introduced to encapsulate the helpful and constructive actions and behaviour that are not set out in job descriptions and which are not captured by typical measures of work performance. Citizenship behaviours are firmly within the grasp of individual employees and, like commitment, are seen as desirable in enhancing organizational effectiveness. Research shows that they are a 'robust' correlate of job satisfaction (Organ and Konovsky, 1989), commitment (Feather and Rauter, 2004) and also influence group performance (Podsakoff, Ahearne, MacKenzie, 1997).

The organizational commitment of agency workers appears to be more complicated than normal as they work for both a third party employing organization and an employment agency (Druker and Stanworth, 2004; Gallagher & Parks, 2001; McClurg, 1999; Newton, 1996). McClurg (1999) surveyed 200 US-based agency workers in terms of their organizational commitment to the third party employer and to their employment agency and found agency workers slightly more committed towards their employment agency than to the third party employer. In contrast, Newton's (1996) work also with US agency workers found that they were slightly more committed to the third party employer than to their employment agency although the differences were small in both studies.

McClurg (1999) maintained that agency workers have a dual commitment through which they can be committed to both the employment agency and the third party employer. She further argued that this dual commitment is not contradictory, as both employment agency and third party employer work together for mutual benefit. This notion suggests that agency workers should be committed to both organizations and indeed this boundary can often be blurred (Marchington, Grimshaw, Rubery and Willmott, 2004). Consequently, a composite measure of organizational commitment can be used for agency workers to assess feelings of attachment to their third party employer and to their employment agency.

The relationship between organizational commitment and job satisfaction has received much attention and a moderate to strong correlation is usually observed (Bateman and Strasser, 1984; Curry, Wakefield, Price and Mueller, 1986; Lance, 1991; Martin and Bennett, 1996; Vandenberg and Lance, 1992). Agency workers that demonstrate a high level of organizational commitment are likely to be more accepted by the permanent employees that they work alongside as they share their organizational values (Druker and Stanworth, 2004; Feldman, Doerpinghaus, Turnley, 1994). Relations between permanent and agency workers are thus important to measure (Davis-Blake, Broschak and George, 2003; Ward, Grimshaw, Rubery and Beynon, 2001). Positive worker relations between agency workers and permanent employees may be demonstrated through support for agency workers, an absence of anti-agency worker attitudes and feeling valued by others in their current position whether they are a permanent worker or agency worker. All of these factors are likely to be associated with both organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Hodson, 1997; Lease, 1998; Wall, Kemp, Jackson and Clegg, 1986; Van-der-Vegt, Emans and Van-de-Vliert, 2001).

Nevertheless, how does the organizational commitment of agency workers compare with that of permanent workers? It can be argued that because agency workers are only at a third party employer for a limited amount of time, their organizational commitment will be lower than that of permanent workers (Ward, et al, 2001). In the Netherlands, de Gilder (2003) found that temporary workers had less organizational commitment than permanent workers. In the UK, Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler (2002) also found that temporary workers had less organizational commitment than the permanent staff in the public sector. However, Gardner and Jackson (1996) measured the difference between the organizational commitment of permanent and temporary assembly line workers using the British Organizational Commitment Scale and found that temporary workers reported significantly higher organizational commitment than permanent workers. Other studies on US agency workers (McClurg, 1999), US temporary workers (Smith, 1998) and Australian contract teachers (Feather and Rauter, 2004) were inconclusive, finding no significant differences between the levels of organizational commitment between permanent and temporary workers.

Inconsistencies in the findings of these studies are evident. The differences seem counterintuitive as, following a social exchange theory of commitment, why should agency workers show high commitment to an organization, which offers reduced returns for the commitment they show? If the permanent workers who work with agency workers are

considered in greater detail, more light can be shed on these seemingly inconsistent results. Davis-Blake, et al. (2003) demonstrated how different types of temporary workers, namely contractors and agency workers, had a different affect on the loyalty of permanent staff. Both types of temporary workers had a negative affect on the relations between employees and managers. Nonetheless, reactions to different types of temporary workers were different with agency workers having a greater impact on staff that were similar to them. Feldman, et al. (1994) and Porter (1995) argued that permanent workers may have a negative attitude towards an organization that employs agency workers rather than permanent staff and that these negative attitudes would translate into lower levels of organizational commitment.

If agency workers have lower levels of organizational commitment then the findings of Gardner and Jackson (1996), McClurg (1999) and Smith (1998) that agency workers have similar if not higher levels of organizational commitment than permanent workers can be explained by suggesting that the permanent workers measured in these studies were somehow influenced by the presence of temporary workers (Voudouris, 2004). As a result, permanent workers come to have a level of organizational commitment that is comparable to the level of organizational commitment in agency workers. Overall, these studies suggest the following null hypothesis:

H1. **There is no significant difference between the levels of organizational commitment of agency workers and permanent workers who work with agency workers**

This null hypothesis is important to test as it is consistent with findings related to job satisfaction (Allan and Sienko, 1997; Biggs, Senior and Swailes, 2002). If working with agency workers is controlled for, then agency workers may show less organizational commitment than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers. This is because permanent workers should have higher levels of organizational commitment as they do not react adversely to their organization for employing agency workers and as result should show higher levels of organizational commitment compared with agency workers who have a lower level of organizational commitment. This leads us to propose that if agency workers are compared with permanent workers who do not work with them, they would appear not as committed, leading to our final hypothesis:

H2 **Agency workers have a significantly lower level of organizational commitment than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers**

In summary, two hypotheses have been put forward to test differences between two of the three sets of workers namely, agency call centre workers, permanent workers who do not work with agency workers and permanent workers who do work with agency workers.

Research Design

Sample

Some difficulties exist in surveying temporary workers, as they tend not to exist in large numbers in single organizations. They are thus difficult to access and studies of temporary workers often have small sample sizes (Alan and Sienko, 1997; Gardner and Jackson, 1996; McDonald and Makin, 2000). Sampling agency workers, rather than the wider category of temporary workers, adds additional challenges to the sampling procedure.

Hypotheses H1 and H2 required comparable permanent and agency workers. Call centre workers were chosen for this sample as they: performed a similar role in answering calls no matter what the employment contract; were employed in high numbers; existed as agency and permanent workers; existed in different relationships that may include or exclude agency workers and were easily distinguishable through their role.

Due to the need to obtain different groups of permanent workers and the proliferation of temporary workers in modern organizations; seven organizations consisting of two Credit Card Companies, an Employment Agency, a Management Consultancy, a Telecommunications Company and a Coffee Supplier permitted workers to be surveyed.

Data collection

Demographic data was collected on employment contract, age, gender, job title, occupational level, marital status, hours worked and organization. Organizational commitment was

measured with the 9-item British Organizational Commitment Scale (Cook and Wall, 1980) and job satisfaction with the 5-item General Satisfaction scale (Hackman and Oldham, 1975). The British Organizational Commitment Scale was selected from other measures of organizational commitment given that it was designed for British manual and clerical workers and has good psychometric properties (Mathews and Shepherd, 2002). This measure was considered to encompass commitment to the employment agency and third party employing organization in relation to agency workers and encompass commitment to the employer for permanent workers. Hackman and Oldham's (1975) General Satisfaction scale was used due to its use within temporary worker research and its good psychometric properties (Alan and Sienko, 1997). Both measures used a 7 point Likert response scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Three additional items were created as a measure of the relations between permanent and agency workers, 'The organization I work in supports employment agency workers in all job related and non-job related matters' (WR1), 'Some of the permanent staff are anti-employment agency workers' (WR2, reverse-scored), and, 'I feel valued in my current position' (WR3).

To complement and to help interpret the results of the questionnaire survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted after the quantitative study with all respondents who agreed to take part in further research. These amounted to 17 agency workers and five permanent workers. Seven employers were also interviewed through at least one manager, typically within Human Resources. The transcript data collected from the qualitative survey was analysed using ATLAS-ti, a software package that aids the investigation of qualitative textual data through the process of developing thematic codes.

Results

A response rate of 45% was achieved for the questionnaire survey giving a sample of 157 call centre workers in total. Individual subgroups from this data were then created consisting of agency workers (N=31), permanent employees who worked with agency workers (N=85) and permanent employees who did not work with agency workers (N=41). No differences between the organizations used for the sample were found within the subgroups on organizational commitment, job satisfaction, WR1, WR2 and WR3 using a Kruskal Wallis test. This indicated that the subgroups were homogeneous and had no organizational bias in the variables measured.

Sixty eight per cent of the sample was female and 85% worked on a full-time basis. Just fewer than 60% of the sample were located in the Midlands with the remainder being located in the South East. Fifty one per cent of the call centre workers were unmarried or divorced. The Spring 2003 *Labour Force Survey* (Office for National Statistics, 2003) was used to compare the study's sample age distribution against a nationally representative survey. The agency worker sample had a similar age distribution although there were slightly fewer young workers proportionately in the 16-21 year old age group. However, the permanent workers were younger than the profile recorded in the *Labour Force Survey,* which suggests that as permanent workers, call centre workers tended to be younger than workers in other jobs.

Scores for some of the variables were not normally distributed and so non-parametric tests were adopted. The reliability of data for the British Organizational Commitment Scale was good (Cronbach α, 0.83) as were the correlations between individual items on the scale. Confirmatory factor analysis showed that although a three factor solution for organizational commitment was an adequate fit to the data (chi-square=70.5, df=24, p>0.01, CFI=0.93, RMSEA=0.097) the high correlations between these factors (organizational identity and organizational involvement r=.82, p<0.01; organizational identity and organizational loyalty r=.86, p<0.01; organizational involvement and organizational loyalty r=.59, p<0.01;) warranted using a single variable for organizational commitment. The reliability of the General Satisfaction scale was good (Cronbach α, 0.84) as were the correlations between individual items on the scale. Confirmatory factor analysis showed that although a two factor solution of job satisfaction was the best fit to the data (chi-square=5.0, df=4, p>.29, CFI=.94, RMSEA=.09) the high correlation between these factors (r=0.74, p>0.01) warranted using a single variable for job satisfaction. Because of the expected high correlation between

commitment and satisfaction, an exploratory factor analysis (Principal Component Analysis with Oblimin Rotation) was performed to ensure that organizational commitment and job satisfaction loaded onto distinct factors could be treated as distinct variables, as was found to be the case. Further confirmatory factor analysis found these variables to be quite distinct in nature.

Correlations for all call centre workers are presented in Table 1, as they were not appreciatively different by subgroup. Table 1 shows strong correlations between commitment and satisfaction (rho= .77 p=0.01), satisfaction and being valued in the current position (rho= .71 p=0.01) and commitment and being valued in the current position (rho= .71 p=0.01). No significant correlations were found between commitment and support for agency workers (WR1) and anti-agency worker attitudes (WR2). Support for agency workers (WR1) and anti-agency worker attitudes (WR2) were moderately correlated with each other at .25 (p=0.01) indicating that within the same organization, some staff may support agency workers and other staff may express anti-agency worker attitudes.

INSERT TABLE I ABOUT HERE

A hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis was completed with organizational commitment as the dependent variable. Job satisfaction was entered first into the model, followed by being valued in current position (WR3) and the remaining items (WR2, WR1, age and sex) being entered into the model. This further demonstrated that job satisfaction had the largest influence on organizational commitment (β=0.79. t=14.63, sig. t=0.01, ΔR^2 =0.626) and being valued in current position the second largest influence on job satisfaction (β=0.28. t=4.05, sig. t=0.01) as shown in Table II.

INSERT TABLE II ABOUT HERE

The null hypothesis H1 was supported as no differences were found between the levels of organizational commitment of agency workers and permanent workers who work with agency workers (means 4.79 and 4.65, Mann Whitney = 1104.5, p=n/s). Hypothesis H2 was also supported as agency workers had a significantly lower level of organizational commitment

than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers (means 5.47 and 4.65, Mann Whitney = 304.5, p=0.01).

Semi-structured interviews were carried out after the quantitative survey with 17 agency workers and five permanent workers, all of who worked with agency workers. Qualitative analysis of interview dialogue revealed seven main themes (see Table III). The dominant theme was worker relationships (77 extracts) followed by skill variety (35 extracts) and commitment to agency or third party employer (35 extracts). Interestingly, 44% of all comments coded in Atlas-ti concerned relations between permanent and agency workers. Representatives of seven employers in the quantitative study were also interviewed. Extracts from this qualitative data are used below to illustrate the main quantitative findings of the study.

INSERT TABLE III ABOUT HERE

Discussion

In keeping with findings from other studies of permanent workers (Bateman and Strasser, 1984; Curry, et al., 1986; Lance, 1991; Martin and Bennett, 1996; Vandenberg and Lance, 1992), organizational commitment had a strong positive correlation with job satisfaction. In addition, to the general finding that feelings of attachment to an organization and its goals associate strongly with attitudes towards satisfaction with a job, two suggestions can be made from the research relating to organizational commitment and agency workers:

• Being valued in current position (which we take to be similar to perceived organizational support) had a significant association with organizational commitment.

• The disadvantages of higher organizational commitment that may arise for permanent workers have less influence on agency workers.

The qualitative study showed that agency workers willing to go "the extra mile" for the organization showed commitment even if they often changed employers:

"in a sense its like a change of football clubs, you always play for who you're with and you support and give 100% to whoever you play for, I mean it makes no sense to me to actually go to a company and not give a monkey's about it because at the end of the day you are working for this company and if they do well, you do well"

This attitude and accompanying behaviour then tended to be rewarded in terms of job satisfaction as this was reciprocated by the employer. Indeed, one comment received from an agency worker concerned the favourable reception she received after being on a short leave of absence:

"When I came back from my holiday everyone was saying 'oh please never go away again' which makes you feel that you are needed and appreciated and that it is worth getting up in the morning and going into work"

Organizational commitment had a strong positive association with being valued, suggesting that permanent workers may place more value on those agency workers who seem to share their organizational goals and attachment. Thus, it seems that if an agency worker shows commitment to the organization they are working for, then this influences how the permanent workers value them as illustrated by the following comment:

> "*where you are involved and you feel part of who you are working for, people ask you for your opinions.*"

Being valued no matter what the employment contract or position was also associated with job satisfaction. One agency worker described this through explaining the differences between a good and not so good assignment in that:

> "*it was a brilliant place to work ... not due to the type of work but actually due to the people.*"

This demonstrates that being valued at work and having good worker relations led this agency worker to evaluate the work positively. Furthermore, it demonstrates how worker relations, which in turn can influence organizational commitment, have a large influence on the level of job satisfaction reported even if the work is not particularly stimulating.

While high commitment to an organization is the primary aim of human resource management practices, displaying high commitment carries with it certain implications for employees. These implications, among others, include high work effort and conscientiousness often extending beyond contractual hours. From our data, it seemed that agency workers, although duty-bound to complete their required hours, were not expected to complete the additional 'extras' in the job, such as staying late to complete work. Thus, when agency workers demonstrated outcomes of organizational commitment this did not disadvantage them as they would not be expected to perform the additional extras without any additional reward. This was not the case with permanent workers who had to comply with additional duties, as one employer stated,

> "*The organization promotes a high number of working hours, to get the work done, which permanent staff have to put up with. Agency workers however can just put their foot down refusing to do the long hours of work and tend to do so if working late is not in their interest.*"

Thus, the expectation of employers was that even if agency workers show high commitment this cannot be capitalised upon as they can easily leave if they do not accept the additional duties. Permanent workers however do not have this freedom and as such high levels of organizational commitment can be seen to have a downside. This reflects the work of Ward,

et al. (2001) demonstrating that employers may strategically use agency workers to get enhanced performance out of their permanent workers.

Agency call centre workers had a lower level of organizational commitment than permanent workers (H2). This evidence contradicts previous research findings (Feather and Rauter, 2004; McClurg, 1999; Smith, 1998) that found little difference in organizational commitment between workers. It also contradicts UK research, which found that temporary workers had a significantly higher level of organizational commitment than permanent workers (Gardner and Jackson, 1996) but supports research conducted in the Netherlands and UK (Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2002; de Gilder, 2003). However, none of these studies realised the importance of the possible influence of agency workers on permanent staff and the need to accommodate this in a research design. When the control group is not used, exemplified by the null hypothesis (H1), no differences between workers on different employment contracts emerge supporting previous research (Feather and Rauter, 2004; McClurg, 1999; Smith, 1998).

The results of the study suggest that in some call centre organizations, permanent employees may become disheartened with their organization for using agency staff and as such, this will have a negative affect on their organizational commitment. In the call centre environment, lower organizational commitment may translate into lower service quality (Malhotra and Mukherjee, 2004). The disheartening feelings felt by permanent workers may be moderated somewhat by employers explaining why the agency workers are being used, for instance, in preventing layoffs (Bishop, Goldsby and Neck, 2001). However, overall this study found that there was a reduced organizational commitment in permanent employees that worked with agency workers as opposed to a similar set of permanent workers who did not work with agency workers.

As with all research some limitations require comment. The particular approach to knowledge generation used cannot establish causal relationships. The measurement scale for worker relationship could have been supplemented with further items strengthening the measure used. An assumption of the research is that attitudinal differences between workers are based on differences in their employment status (permanent or agency) or are being influenced by the employment of agency workers as opposed to any confounding variables. However, no confounding variables were signalled in the qualitative study that explored work-related attitudes. Difficulty in accessing call centre workers, especially permanent

workers who did not work with agency workers, led to a restricted sample size. Further research in this area is proposed to address these limitations and extend the findings of this study to other contractual arrangements.

Conclusions

Differences between the organizational commitment of workers (agency call centre workers and permanent workers who do not work with agency workers) were found with agency workers appearing to have a lower organizational commitment. Interestingly, this was not the case in the control group of permanent workers who work with agency workers (replicated in US studies) where the impact of temporary worker use on the organizational commitment of permanent workers was not considered. Associations were found between organizational commitment, job satisfaction and being valued in current permanent or temporary position. While these relationships are well known for employees generally the distinctive contribution of this study is to suggest that the presence of agency workers negatively influences the commitment of permanent workers. Other studies had not tested this possibility.

This finding, given the precarious nature of agency employment makes intuitive sense although it has not been noted previously. Employers who seek ways of improving the organizational commitment of both agency workers and permanent workers should find that a powerful antecedent is the development of reciprocating trust between parties. Higher commitment, and the job satisfaction that co-occurs with it, will foster increased organizational citizenship behaviour to the benefit of the organization.

The implication for human resource management in call centres at least is that the management of agency workers within the working environment has to be carefully considered. This study shows that if relations between agency workers and permanent workers are poor, then the organizational commitment and job satisfaction of permanent workers and agency workers can be reduced. In essence, it is therefore crucial that if an employer needs to use agency workers then the strategy for doing so is carefully considered and that permanent workers are advised of the reasons behind this strategy to encourage good working relations between the two parties.

Figure 1: Three-way relationship between agency worker, employment agency and third party employing organization
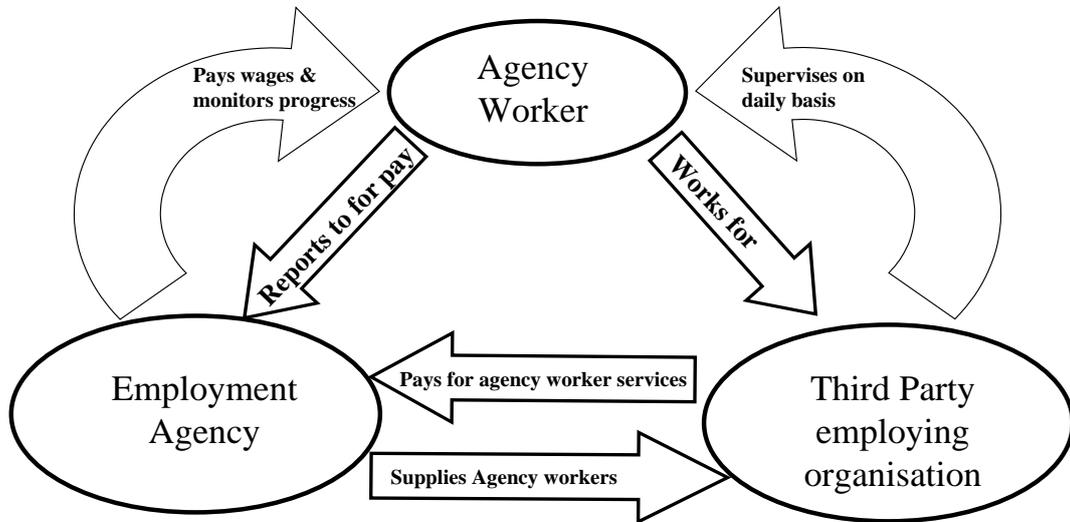
TABLE I. Non-parametric Correlations for call centre workers

	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4
1 Organizational commitment	4.94	1.13	*.83*			
2 Job Satisfaction	4.16	1.35	.77 **	*.84*		
3 Valued in current position (WR3)	4.18	1.73	.71 **	.71 **		
4 Supports agency workers (WR1)	4.62	1.66	.16	.09	.16	
5 Anti-agency workers attitudes (WR2)	4.47	1.67	.04	.09	.05	.25 **

* p<.05, ** p<0.01, N=132-156, alpha shown on the diagonal.

TABLE II. Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression Model

	Model		
	1. Job Satisfaction (JS)	2. JS and Valued in current position (WR3)	3. OC, WR3, Anti-agency worker reversed (WR2), supports agency workers (WR1), age, sex
R^2	0.62	0.66	0.67
ΔR^2	0.62	0.04	0.01
F	213.99	128.11	42.37
n= 130 (excludes missing cases)			

TABLE III: Main themes present in interviews

Subject	Agency worker responses (n=17)	Permanent worker responses (n=5)	Total
Worker relationship	59	18	**77**
Skill variety	29	6	**35**
Organizational commitment to 3rd party employing organization	18	2	**20**
Organizational commitment to employment agency	15	0	**15**
Involuntary/ voluntary status	1	0	**1**
Job satisfaction	6	1	**7**
Job security	11	8	**19**
Total	**139**	**35**	**174**

References

Allan, P. and Sienko, S. (1997) A Comparison of Contingent and Core Worker's Perceptions of their Jobs' Characteristics and Motivational Properties. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, 62, 3, 4-11.

Allen, N.J. and Meyer, J.P. (1996) Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization: an examination of construct validity. *Journal of Vocational Behavior,* 49. 252-276.

Baron, R.A. (1994) The physical environment of work settings: Effects on task performance, interpersonal relations and josat. *Research in Organizational Behaviour,* 16, 1-46.

Bateman, T.S. and Stasser, S. (1984) A longitudinal analysis of the antecedents of organisational commitment. *Academy of Management Journal,* 27, 1, 95-112.

Bateman, T. and Organ, D. (1983) Job Satisfaction and the Good Soldier: The relationship between affect and employee 'citizenship', *Academy of Management Journa*l, 26, 4, 587-595.

Biggs, D.M., Senior B. and Swailes S. (2002) Differences in job satisfaction between agency workers and permanent workers. *Proceedings of the HRM in a Changing World Conference, ISBN 1-873640-36-6, Oxford: Oxford Brookes University Business School.*

Biggs, D.M., Burchell B. and Millmore, M. (In press) The changing world of the temporary worker: The potential HR impact of legislation. *Personnel Review.*

Bishop, J.W., Goldsby, M.G. and Neck, C.P. (2001) Who goes? Who cares? Who stays Who wants to? The role of contingent workers and corporate layoff practices. *Journal of Managerial Psychology,* 17, 4, 298-315.

Cook, J. and Wall, T. (1980) New Work Attitute Measures of Trust, Organizational Commitment and Personal Need Non-Fulfilment. *Journal of Occupational Psychology,* 53, 39-52.

Curry, J.P., Wakefield, D.S., Price, J.L. and Mueller, C.W. (1986) On the causal ordering of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. *Academy of Management Journal,* 29, 4, 847-858.

Davis-Blake, A., Broschak, J.P. and George, E. (2003) Happy together? How using non-standard workers affects exit, voice, and loyalty among standard employees. *Acedemy of Management Journal,* 46, 4, 475-485.

de Gilder, D. (2003) Commitment, trust and work behaviour – the case of contingency workers. *Personnel Review*, 32, 5. 588-604

Druker, J. and Stanworth, C. (2004), Mutual expectations: a study of the three way relationsip between employment agencies, their client organisations and white-collar agency 'temps'. *Industrial Relations Journal,* 35, 1, 58-75.

Eisenberger, R. Armeli, S., Rexwinkel, Lynch, P.D. and Rhoades, L. (2001) Reciprocation of Perceived Organizational Support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86, 1, 42-51.

Eisenberger, R., Cummings, J., Armeli, S. and Lynch, P. (1997) Perceived Organizational Support, Discretionary Treatment and Job Satisfaction, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82, 5, 812-820.

Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchinson, S. and Sowa, D. (1986) Perceived Organizational Support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71, 3, 500-507.

Feather, N.T and Rauter, K.A. (2004) Organizational citzenship behaviours in relation to job status, job insecurity, organizational commitment and identification, job satisfaction and work values. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology,* 77, 1, 81-84.

Feldman, D.C., and Doerpinghaus, H.I. Turnley, W.H. (1994) Managing Temporary Workers: A Permanent HRM Challenge. *Organizational Dynamics,* 23, 2, 49-63.

Gallagher, D.G. and Parks, J. (2001) I pledge thee my troth … contingently Commitment and the contingent work relationship. *Human Resource Management Review,* 11, 181-208.

Gardner, C.R., and Jackson, P. (1996) Worker Flexibility, Worker Reactions. *Unpublished MSc Project, University of Sheffield.*

Gouldner, A. (1960) The norm of reciprocity: a preliminary statement, *American Sociological Review*, 25, 161-178.

Hackman, J.R., and Oldham, G.R. (1975) Development of the Job Diagnostic Survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 60, 2, 159-170.

Hodson, R. (1997) Group Relations at Work: solidarity, conflict and relations with management. *Work & Occupations*, 24, 4, 426-452

Lance, C.E. (1991) Evaluation of a Structural Model Relating to Job Satisfaction, Organisational Commitment and Precursors to Voluntary Turnover. *Multivariate Behavioral Research,* 26, 1, 137-162.

Lease S.H. (1998) Annual review, 1993-1997: Work attitudes and outcomes. *Journal of Vocational Behavior.* 53, 2, 154-183.

Malhotra, N., and Mukherjee, A. (2004) The relative influence of organisational commitment and job satisfaction on service quality of customer-contact employees in banking call centres. *Journal of Services Marketing,* 18, 3, 162-174.

Marchington, M., Grimshaw, D., Rubery, J. and Willmott, H. (2004) *Fragmenting Work Blurring Organizational Boundaries and Disordering Hierarchies.* Oxford: Oxford Unversity Press.

Martin, C.L. and Bennett, N. (1996) The role of justice judgments in explaining the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. *Group and Organization Management,* 21, 1, 84-104.

Mathews, B.P. and Shepherd, J.L (2002) Dimensionality of Cook and Wall's (1980) British Organizational Commitment Scale revisited. *Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology*, 75, 3, 369-375.

McClurg, L.N. (1999) Organisational Commitment in the Temporary-Help Service Industry. *Journal of Applied Management Studies,* 8, 1, 5-22.

McDonald, D.J. and Makin, P.J. (2000) The Psychological contract, organisational commitment and job satisfaction of temporary staff. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 21, 2, 84-91.

Mowday, R.T., Porter, L. W. and Steers, R.M. (1982) *Employee Organization Linkages: The Psychology of Commitment, Absenteeism and Turnover*, New York: Academic Press.

Newton L. (1996) Stiff Competition for Talented Temps. *HR Magazine,* May, 91-94

Office for National Statistics (2003), *Quarterly Labour Force Survey,* SN: 4664. UK Data Archive, Colchester, Essex.

Organ, D.W. and Konovsky, M. (1989) Cognitive Versus Affective Determinants of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 74, 1, 157-164.

Podsakoff, P.M., Ahearne, M. and MacKenzie, S.B. (1997) Organizational Citizenship Behaviour and the Quantity and Quality of Work Group Performance, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82, 2, 262-270.

Porter, G. (1995) Ethical Considerations in the Use of Contingent Employees. *Paper presented at the International Conference Promoting Business Ethics,* New York, November.

Porter, L.W., Steers, R.M., Mowday, R.T. and Boulian, P.V. (1974) Organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover among psychiatric technicians. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 59, 5, 603-609

REC (2005) *Annual Recruitment Industry Survey 2003-2004.* London: Recruitment & Employment Confederation.

Smith, C.A., Organ, D.W. and Near, J.P. (1983) Organizational Citizenship Behaviour: its nature and antecedents, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 68, 653-663.

Smith, P.C. (1992) In pursuit of happiness, why study general job satisfaction. In C.J Cranny, P.C. Smith and E.F.Stone (Eds.) *Job Satisfaction: How people feel about their jobs and how it effects their performance.* 5-19. Lexington Books. New York.

Smith, V. (1998) The Fractured World of the Temporary Worker: Power, Participation and Fragmentation in the Contemporary Workplace. *Social Problems,* 45, 4, 411-430.

Smith, W. (1988) They Serve Two Masters. *Personnel Administrator,* April, 112-116.

Spector, P. (1997) *Job Satisfaction. Application, Assessment, Causes and Consequences.* Sage Publications, USA.

Swailes, S. (2001) Goals, Creativity and Achievement: commitment in contemporary organisations, *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 9, 3, 185-194

Vandenberg, R.J. and Lance, C.E. (1992) Examining the causal order of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. *Journal of Management,* 18, 1, 153-167.

Van-der-Vegt, G.S., Emans, B.J.M. and Van-de-Vliert, E. (2001) Patterns of independence in work teams: a two level investigation of the relations with job and team satisfaction. *Personnel Psychology,* 54, 51-69.

Voudouris, I. (2004), "The use of flexible employment arrangements: some new evidence from Greek firms", *International Journal of Human Resource Management,* 15, 1, 131-146.

Wall, T.D., Kemp, N.J., Jackson, P.R. and Clegg C.W. (1986) Outcomes of autonomus work groups: A long term field experiment. *Academy of Management Journal*, 29, 2, 280-304.

Ward, K., Grimshaw, D., Rubery, J. and Beynon, H. (2001) Dilemmas in the management of temporary agency staff. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 11, 4, 3-21.