

Employment agency workers, their job satisfaction and their influence on permanent workers

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David Michael Biggs

ABSTRACT

Agency workers are a fundamental part of modern work being characterised in the workplace by a triangular employment relationship between them, the employment agency and the third party employer. The thesis was concerned about the job satisfaction of agency workers on two counts. Firstly, what contributed towards the job satisfaction of this unique type of worker? Secondly, what differences in job satisfaction and related variables arise between agency workers and permanent workers? Preliminary research along with a literature review on job satisfaction and agency workers formulated two sets of hypotheses, those variables relating to agency worker job satisfaction (relational hypotheses), and differences between permanent workers and agency workers (differential hypotheses). Both sets of hypotheses were tested by a quantitative survey, which surveyed 96 agency workers for the relational hypotheses and 157 call centre workers for the differential hypotheses. For the differential hypotheses a control group was used to address the possible influence that the employment of agency workers may have on permanent workers that hitherto has not been controlled for in studies of a similar nature. Semi-structured interviews with workers and employers were used to enlarge the quantitative findings.

Organisational commitment, permanent and agency worker relationship were found to be significantly related to job satisfaction in both a correlation and hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis. Involuntary work status had no correlation challenging previous research. Significant differences were seen between agency workers and permanent workers on a number of variables including skill variety, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and job security satisfaction. These results both supported and contradicted previous studies primarily as preceding research had not accounted for the possible influence that agency workers may have on the permanent workers under research.

Keywords: job satisfaction, agency temporary worker, organisational commitment, worker relationship

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

Employment agency workers or “temps”, as they are known in popular language, seem to be a part of modern twenty first century life performing jobs ranging from secretarial support to industrial cleaning. Indeed, the turnover of the employment agency industry in supplying agency workers is estimated to be approximately £21 billion in 2001/2002 by the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC). Agency workers are therefore a considerable part of modern day society performing a wide range of jobs and contributing to UK industry (Hotopp, 2000). Employment agencies and agency workers are not a recent business phenomenon. They have existed since the nineteenth century when agency workers were supplied as domestic servants and ancillary staff for a third party employer, usually a wealthy household (McCrum and Sturgis, 2000). However, although agency workers have existed for a long time in industry, the experience of being an agency worker as opposed to being a traditional permanent worker is not fully understood (Feldman, Doeringhaus and Turnley, 1994). This thesis therefore tries to re-address this balance and explore the world of the agency worker in closer detail.

In popular culture, both films and songs have been written about agency workers. One film in particular, *Janice Beard 45 Words Per Minute* (produced in 1999) examined the trials and tribulations of a young Scottish agency worker, Janice. The film actively portrays how Janice is given jobs requiring little skill and how colleagues treat Janice in a derogatory fashion as “the temp”. Nevertheless, Janice seems to cope with these negative influences through her day dreaming escapism and the goal of gaining a permanent position with the organisation. In this manner, the film actively shows how an agency worker can become satisfied with her job and how factors, that may seem trivial to permanent workers, can be important to agency workers. The relationship between Janice as the agency worker and the permanent workers is also explored in the film. Janice is seen as an outsider and is not included in many of the conversations of “office gossip”. Nevertheless, the film portrays much of this office gossip as

trivial, whereas Janice has a tendency to speak her mind and does not feel obliged by office rules to be falsely pleasant and servile towards superiors. Indeed, possibly because of this some of the permanent employees see Janice as a threat. This is particularly shown in one scene where Janice's supervisor breaks down and cries as she believes Janice will take over her supervisory position.

Interestingly, this thesis picks up two major issues from this film. The first issue considers agency worker job satisfaction in terms of those job related variables that can increase or decrease it. The second issue is the relationship between agency workers and permanent workers completing the same job and how the employment of one might influence the other. For instance, are agency workers considered by permanent workers and the organisation to be a help, or a hindrance? Are they perceived by their employment contract to have greater freedom regarding the organisational rules and able to leave, more easily without personal hindrance, if they do not like what they are doing?

In addressing these issues and suggesting answers to associated research questions, this work contributes to knowledge through firstly, providing insights into what contributes to the job satisfaction of this unique type of worker and secondly by identifying the effects of the employment of agency workers on the job satisfaction and related variables of the permanent workers.

The thesis has a timely relevance to these issues since at the time of writing, law governing agency workers and their employment rights is under review by the Government. The Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2002 (EAA) has been put forward for review by Alan Johnson (DTI Minister of State for Employment) for consideration by interested parties such as the Employment agency industry. This proposes to regulate four main aspects of the agency worker industry being: Temp-to-Temp and Temp-to-Third Party Transfer Fees; Marketing Service Companies; Unsuitable Workers; and Limited Company Contractors. It is hoped that the results of the research reported here will help inform this consultative process by detailing specific results of interest to the Minister.

1.2 AIMS OF THE THESIS

The aims of the thesis are to investigate:

1. the antecedents of agency worker job satisfaction.

2. the differences between agency workers and permanent workers in job satisfaction and related variables.
3. the possible impact of the employment of agency workers on permanent workers.

Agency workers are identified as a unique type of temporary worker in the research so the first aim is to examine what contributes to this particular type of worker's job satisfaction. The second aim then seeks to clarify how they are different from permanent workers. In other words, how is the job satisfaction of agency workers different, if at all, to permanent workers? Lastly, the possible influence that the employment of agency workers has on permanent workers is investigated, this expands previous research, which had not accounted for this plausible influence.

1.3 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE THESIS

The thesis, as with most applied research, has assumptions related to the subject matter as well as the data gathered. The core assumptions existing within this research are as follows:

1. Agency workers are a unique type of temporary worker being similar in their own right but different to other temporary workers. (Detailed further in Chapter 3).
2. Comparable workers that perform the same job can be identified and differences in job related attitudes between them can be attributed solely to their status as being either employed on a permanent basis or on a temporary basis through an employment agency.
3. Job satisfaction and its related constructs exist as real and measurable phenomena.
4. Self reported measures of the constructs within the thesis are accurate and reliable.
5. Ordinal data gathered through self-report measures can be treated as interval data in the statistical analysis where data conforms to the test assumptions.
6. Quantitative research, with additional qualitative data, routed within an empirical framework can be used to investigate and understand the topics of interest within the thesis.

1.4 THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The structure of this thesis is similar to many other psychology-based doctorates that use an empirical approach. The thesis is divided into ten chapters. After the introduction (Chapter 1), Chapter 2 reviews the literature on job satisfaction as it relates to the affective feeling generated by work. The main aim of this chapter is not only to investigate why job satisfaction is an important concept in the context of this thesis, but to examine its antecedents and consequences in preparation for the discussion in Chapter 3, which concentrates more closely on the job satisfaction of agency workers and how this might differ from that experienced by permanent workers.

Chapter 3 can be viewed in several parts. The first part discusses the reasons why the traditional view of job satisfaction, as put forward in Chapter 2, might not apply to agency workers. This part differentiates between agency workers and permanent workers by using, in part, an analysis of the 1998 (Winter) Labour Force Survey to provide a representation of the labour force at this time in addition to other key references. The second part of the chapter examines the job satisfaction literature as it applies to agency and other temporary workers concluding with a number of hypotheses relating specifically to the job satisfaction of agency workers. Because these hypotheses relate only to agency worker job satisfaction, for the purposes of the thesis, they are termed ‘relational’ hypotheses. Chapter 3 continues by recognising that a discussion of agency workers, in isolation from other types of workers, represents only one part of the picture in that the permanent workers that the agency workers work with are not considered. Consequently, the third part of this chapter addresses differences between workers and the hypothetical effects that the presence of agency workers has on the job satisfaction and related variables of permanent workers working with them. To distinguish this second set of hypotheses from the first, they are collectively termed the ‘differential’ hypotheses, a term that reflects their aim to test for differences amongst the three groups.

Having set up the hypotheses to be tested, Chapter 4 presents and justifies the research design for doing this through an empirical approach. Two samples are used to test the hypotheses. The first sample is agency workers only, testing the relational hypotheses. These respondents are sampled from a wide range of clerical agency worker positions a third of which are agency call centre workers. The second sample of workers used to test the differential hypotheses include agency workers, permanent workers who work with agency workers and a third control group of permanent workers who do not work with agency workers. All these workers had to be comparable for testing the differential hypotheses and as such call centre workers were chosen as

this occupation had similar jobs between agency workers and permanent workers and a number of other benefits detailed in Chapter 4 that were essential in testing the differential hypotheses. Chapter 4 then gives details of the main quantitative study, which is based on the use of a specifically designed questionnaire, and of a supporting qualitative study consisting of a series of interviews with workers and representatives of their employers.

The results from the questionnaire study, regarding the relational and differential hypotheses, are presented in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively. Statistical techniques are employed to establish firstly, the reliability of the main instruments used and secondly, to support or refute the hypotheses tested. Chapters 7 and 8 examine, with the aid of qualitative analysis, the results of the interviews quoting directly from the workers and the employer representatives to give us a personal view to the quantitative data gathered in the questionnaire. This data serves to support the quantitative analysis but extends it slightly to explore issues such as tenure not covered in the questionnaire.

Chapter 9 discusses the results of the research in terms of its aims and hypotheses. The results are further discussed in the context of the literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3 and the extent to which they agree or disagree with what is said previously. Chapter 10 concludes the thesis by summarising the main findings to show how the research has contributed to knowledge and its usefulness to organisations and those that work for them. A final comment is made on the possibilities for future research in this important area of study.

CHAPTER 2

2. JOB SATISFACTION: A REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In a psychology-based thesis, many questions initially arise regarding the field of interest and the topics to examine. For myself, the field of interest was certain from the outset about whom I should examine, agency workers. I had noted, from friends and through personal experience, some agency workers were happy in what they did, whereas others loathed it and could not wait for the ‘security’ of a permanent job. Working as a practising Chartered Occupational Psychologist within industry, I also noted the resistance of permanent workers against agency workers not allowing them entry into full time permanent employment through a variety of overt and covert means. This interest, coupled with the seemingly increased use of flexible labour in society spurred me to investigate agency workers and differences between them and traditional permanent workers.

With the question of whom should I study answered, the next question is what topic within the discipline of occupational psychology should I study? Motivation initially seemed to be a likely topic being the processes within an individual that stimulate behaviour that may benefit an organisation (Stockman-Vines, 1997). This topic is of great interest as the motivation of agency workers may be quite different from permanent workers given their precarious employment (Feldman et al, 1994). Nevertheless, this topic has been examined with temporary workers by several authors both within the discipline of occupational psychology (Allan and Sienko, 1997; Feldman, Doeringhaus and Turnley 1995; Galup and Saunders 1997) and in the business literature (Bergin 1996; Blake, 1998; Brotherton, 1995; Messmer, 1996; Newton, 1996; Stockman-Vines, 1997). The majority of these studies have been carried out in the United States of America (US) so there may be reason to replicate these studies in the United Kingdom (UK) given that employment conditions in the US are different as discussed in Chapter 3. Nevertheless, it is the considered opinion of the author not to pursue this topic as although important, it may duplicate research completed elsewhere and not add to existing knowledge. In

addition, the author is more concerned about how agency workers feel about their jobs, so research is to be directed towards job satisfaction rather than towards motivation.

Job satisfaction is arguably one of the most popular and well researched topics in industrial and work psychology (Quarstein, McAfee and Glassman, 1992). Nevertheless, when this research first started there were relatively few studies examining job satisfaction of agency workers (Feldman et al, 1995; Gardner and Jackson, 1996; Lee, 1991; Rogers, 1995). Since that date, other studies have been published about this interesting area (Allan and Sienko, 1997; Ellingson, Gruys and Sackett, 1998; Rogers and Henson, 1997). However, the majority have been conducted in the US or if UK-based, they include the broader definition of temporary workers rather than just agency workers. The reasons why this research may not apply to UK-based agency workers are given in the following chapter (Chapter 3), which utilises a government funded survey (the 1998 Winter Quarter Labour Force Survey) to provide a representation of the labour force at that time and psychological literature to point out differences between workers. However, before examining the job satisfaction of agency workers and possible differences between them and permanent workers in Chapter 3, this chapter examines job satisfaction in the wider context.

However, before proceeding, some caution must be applied in trying to summarise all this research given the many studies of job satisfaction that exist. In this regard, the thesis will utilise the substantial literature reviews to date (Cranny, Smith and Stone, 1992; Lease, 1998; Locke, 1976; Roberts and Glick, 1981; Spector, 1997). This will be used in addition to more recent research that has been reviewed which may have a particular impact on agency worker job satisfaction. The chapter initially reviews the concept of job satisfaction examining job satisfaction facets, general job satisfaction and differences between these concepts. The job characteristics model (Hackman and Oldham, 1975) that includes job satisfaction as an outcome is then reviewed and assessed according to its prevalence with research and within the modern working environment. This leads to further precursors or antecedents of job satisfaction being identified from the theoretical models of Spector (1997) and Lease (1998), which will be summarised in a unique model of job satisfaction, its antecedents and its consequences. This review is essential for the thesis and will lead in Chapter 3, to a rationalising of these antecedents as they may apply to agency workers and what can be feasibly examined in research of this nature. Lastly, the chapter aims to investigate the consequences of job satisfaction. This is done primarily to inform the reader of the importance of job satisfaction and how it may give rise to important psychological and business phenomenon.

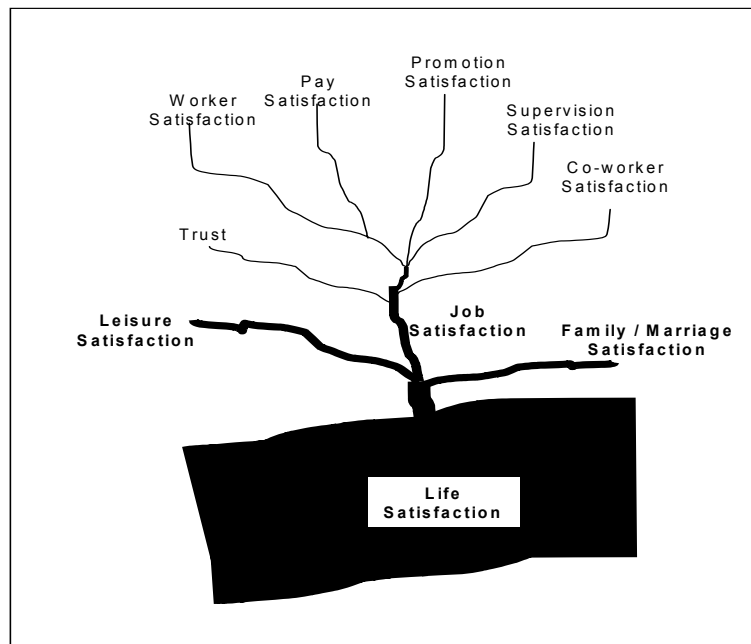
2.2 JOB SATISFACTION, FACETS AND A SINGLE CONCEPT

2.2.1 Job satisfaction facets

Before examining job satisfaction as a concept, it is useful to examine the different sides of job satisfaction. A job satisfaction facet can be defined as an affective state that an individual has regarding the extent to which they like or dislike a particular part of their job. Indeed, Hackman and Oldham's (1975) Job Diagnostics Survey (JDS) included specific measures of job satisfaction which were called job satisfaction facets. These job satisfaction facets were concerned with satisfaction with growth, pay, job security, social (co-worker) and supervisors. These are clearly aspects of job satisfaction being concerned for instance with the happiness a worker has with their personal growth or pay. All of these facets are important when studying job satisfaction. However, in research of this nature it is important to be selective over what is to be measured, which will be investigated in Chapter 3.

Facets of job satisfaction have now been identified. Nevertheless, job satisfaction tends not to be measured by simply adding a number of job satisfaction facets together, although this is the case with some instruments such as the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis, and Lofquist, 1967). Many instruments that measure job satisfaction, such as the JDS, also include a single measure of general job satisfaction. Smith (1992) remarked that job satisfaction facets can be monitored independently being analogous to streams as these can be monitored in their own right. Streams eventually lead to a river just as job satisfaction facets eventually contribute to a global measure of job satisfaction. However, to measure the speed of flow or water volume in the river, one would not simply add all the streams together and assume that this will measure the river. No, the river itself would be measured. In this regard, job satisfaction facets can be measured as specific aspects of job satisfaction, as previously stated, however the addition of all of these facets does not clearly represent a global measure of job satisfaction, which is explored in more detail below. Figure 2.1 shows an important diagram in Smith's work demonstrating how specific facets such as pay satisfaction feed into job satisfaction. It also shows how job satisfaction combined with leisure and family/marriage satisfaction feeds into satisfaction with life, which will be reviewed later in this chapter when examining the consequences of job satisfaction.

Figure 2.1: The river of satisfaction (Smith, 1992; p.8)

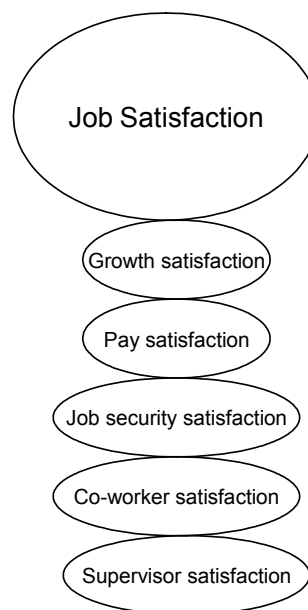


2.2.2 Job satisfaction as a single concept

The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, et al, 1967) measured 20 specific job satisfaction facets, which according to the authors can be added to form a composite job satisfaction score. Nevertheless, others argued that job satisfaction cannot simply be the summation of a number of job satisfaction facets (Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson and Paul, 1989; Smith, 1992). Patricia Cain Smith, who was one of the primary developers of the Job Description Index (JDI) a well regarded measure of job satisfaction, insisted that although job satisfaction facets may contribute towards job satisfaction, job satisfaction is different to the summation of its facets as it involves components that are not attributable to the immediate job situation (Ironson, et al, 1989; Smith, 1992). An unkind remark by a supervisor, for instance, may have an immediate impact on the satisfaction with supervisor job satisfaction facet; however it may have to become a prolonged issue to influence job satisfaction. In this regard, issues that occur with specific job satisfaction facets may take some time before they influence job satisfaction in general. Another problem with adding job satisfaction facets together is that a researcher may place equal weight on the job satisfaction facets analysed, which may not represent a truthful measure of job satisfaction for the individual being assessed. This is because an individual may only consider some of the job satisfaction facets to be important and thus the measure of job satisfaction generated by the summation of facets is biased as it may take into account several unimportant job satisfaction facets.

Hackman and Oldham's (1975) JDS provided one solution to this problem by the inclusion of both job satisfaction facets and a single measure of general job satisfaction (See Figure 2.2). In Figure 2.2, the facets of job satisfaction support the single measure of job satisfaction but are distinct and separate entities as Smith (1992) suggested. The authors described the single measure as "an overall measure of the degree to which an employee is satisfied and happy with the job" (Hackman and Oldham, 1975; p.162) which is similar to Smith's (1992) definition for job satisfaction. Indeed, one of the most cited authors in the job satisfaction literature is Locke (1976) who embarked on a massive review of over 3,000 studies on job satisfaction in the mid 1970s. Locke defined job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke, 1976; p.1300). Later definitions (Agho, Price and Mueller, 1992) support this and Hackman and Oldham's (1975) definition stating that job satisfaction is an affective state where people like or dislike their job.

Figure 2.2: Job satisfaction, seen as a single and multi-faceted work outcome by Hackman and Oldham (1975)



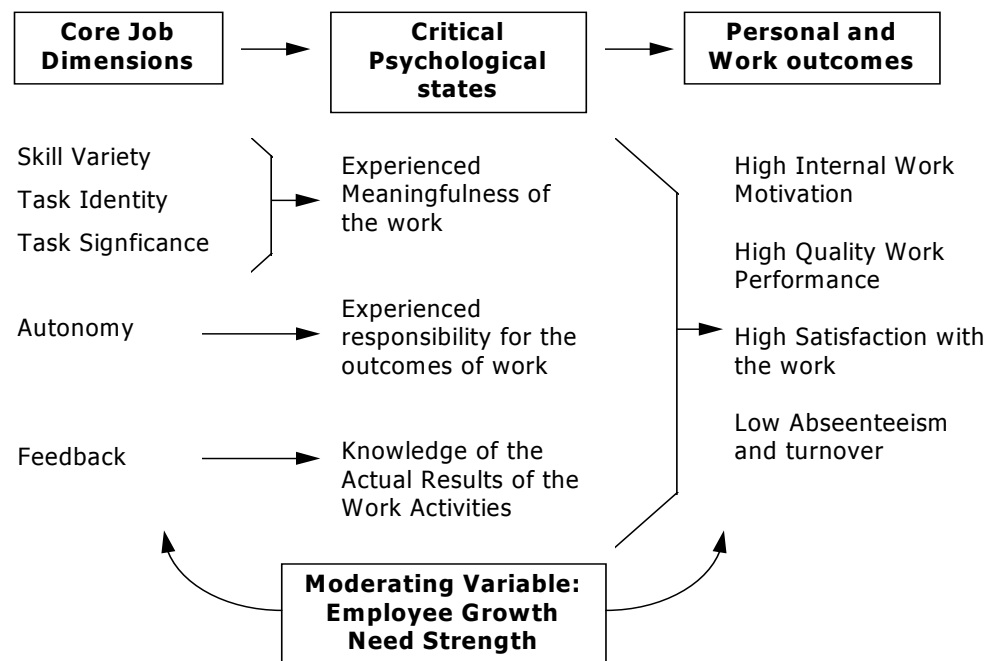
In summary, job satisfaction is a concept that contains all the affective feelings that a person has about their job. Nevertheless, this is not just a combination of job satisfaction facets but a separate single concept of job satisfaction (Hackman and Oldham, 1975; Smith, 1992). One of the most outstanding contributions to the job satisfaction literature has been the job characteristics model put forward by Hackman and Oldham (1975). The thesis will now critically examine this model and then build upon the model to provide a theoretical background for the research.

2.3 JOB CHARACTERISTICS MODEL

2.3.1 The model

As long ago as 1844, Marx stated that workers could experience satisfaction at work by creating an identifiable product that is of use and appreciated by others (Colletti, 1975). Task identity, whereby workers could identify with their own products of labour, and task significance whereby the work has a significant impact on others was therefore identified nearly 160 years ago as contributing towards worker's job satisfaction. More recently, a number of theories have been developed examining similar and additional job characteristics. One of the most popular (Roberts and Glick, 1981) is the job characteristics model developed by Hackman and Oldham (1975) as shown in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: Hackman and Oldham's (1975) job characteristics model.



Hackman and Oldham (1975) identified five core job dimensions that lead to critical psychological states, personal and work outcomes including job satisfaction. The five dimensions are skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback, which were defined as follows:

1. Skill variety is the “degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities in carrying out the work, which involve the use of a number of different skills and talents of the employee”;

2. Task identity is “the degree to which the job requires completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work”;
3. Task significance is “the degree to which the job has a substantial impact on the lives and work of other people”;
4. Autonomy is “the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence and discretion to the employee in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out”;
5. Feedback is “the degree to which carrying out the work activities required by the job results in the employee obtaining direct and clear information about the effectiveness of his or her performance”.

(Definitions from Hackman and Oldham, 1975, p.161).

The five core job dimensions lead to critical psychological states, which mediate the relationship between core job dimensions and work outcomes. Three critical psychological states are depicted in Figure 2.3 and include:

1. Experienced meaningfulness of work, where one experiences the job as meaningful and worthwhile;
2. Experienced responsibility for work outcomes, the accountability felt by the worker;
3. Knowledge of results, knowledge of performance within the job.

A further moderator was also proposed by the model, which concerned employee need strength. This moderator is dependent on the individual and influences the core job dimensions and their effect on work outcomes.

Work outcomes were then described as the manifestations of the core job dimensions on the individual where critical psychological states and employee need strength were taken into account. These work outcomes could be individually based such as job satisfaction, or they could be organisation specific for instance turnover and absenteeism. The central principle behind the theory of Hackman and Oldham (1975) was that if a core job dimension is some how insufficient then this will lead to negative personal and work outcomes such as low job satisfaction and high absenteeism. Therefore, if an insufficient core job dimension is improved, for instance through a process of job redesign then this will theoretically lead to improvements in

job satisfaction. Indeed, core job dimensions as suggested by the job characteristics model strongly correlate with job satisfaction (Fried and Ferris, 1987; Hackman and Oldham, 1976).

2.3.2 Criticisms of the model

Not all researchers have agreed with the job characteristics model due to method variance (Glick, Jenkins and Gupta, 1986; Harvey, Nilan and Billings, 1985) not taking into account social and situational settings (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978; Pollock, Whitbred and Contractor, 2000) assuming variables are linear (Champoux, 1992) and not taking into account additional variables, which may also influence job satisfaction (Roberts and Glick, 1981; Spector, 1992; Spector, Fox and Van Katwyk, 1999).

Glick et al (1986) questioned the validity of the job characteristics model stating that common method variance may inflate the relationship between core job dimensions and work outcomes. Common method variance is when a single method, such as a survey type instrument in the case of the job characteristics model, is solely employed in research. The authors examined 631 respondents from four organisations and found their evidence initially supported the job characteristics model through multiple non-hierarchical regression techniques. Nevertheless, on further examination of the data using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) techniques they found that there were elements of method variance in the data that moderated the relationship between variables. Thus, Glick et al (1986) argued that although the job characteristics model seemed fine as a theoretical model, other theories such as the social information approach (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978) that account for method variance may be more valid. In conclusion, these researchers argued that in any study of job characteristics method variance must be guarded against by using a multitude of research techniques such as a survey backed up with qualitative interviews. Harvey et al (1985) also critically examined the job characteristics model by using confirmatory factor analysis on 2,028 National Guard Employees. They found method variance did influence their data but after incorporating method factors, designed to eliminate method variance, their confirmatory factor analysis did support the job characteristics model. Both of these studies therefore found method variance in the job characteristics model casting the validity of the model into question.

If the validity of the job characteristics model is cast into question, are there any other models that are better? Indeed, an alternative theory to the job characteristics model and one that does account for situational and method variance effects is the social information processing model (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) suggested there were errors of consistency in the job characteristics model, whereby when participants were asked about their

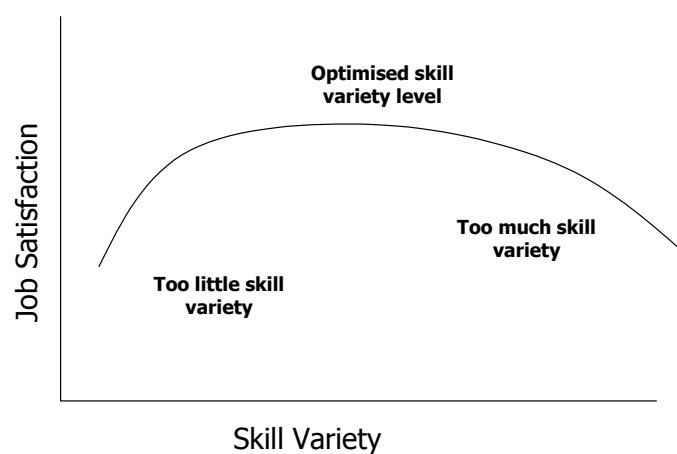
attitudes or their beliefs they will tend to organise them in such a way that will be dependent on a researcher's line of questioning. In this regard, if participants are asked about their level of skill variety they will try and assess this against outcomes such as job satisfaction. This evidence of priming (in that an interviewer orientates a person's response to a particular perspective) is likely to have an influence on research carried out based on the job characteristics model. Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) argued that respondents were likely to arrive at different answers regarding factors affecting job satisfaction if interviewers did not prime them. Indeed, priming is a problem with most quantitative methodologies as the whole process of hypothesis formation primes participants to structure their responses in a particular fashion. The authors claimed that only qualitative data can seek to avoid priming, yet this approach often grouped under the term phenomenology is also subject to criticism (See Chapter 4, Section 4.6.1).

Indeed, Stone (1992) strongly criticised Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) stating that "in many cases the validity of the arguments presented by Salancik and Pfeffer (1977, 1978) appears to be suspect." (Stone, 1992; p.22). He suggested that, as a theory, the job characteristics model has little to do with social perceptions and that measurable features such as skill variety do in reality relate strongly to job satisfaction. Yet have any other researchers looked at this problem? Indeed, in a meta-analysis of research, Fried and Ferris (1987) reviewed many studies on the job characteristics model including those conducted by critics of the theory such as Roberts and Glick (1981) and the proponents of social information processing theory. They found that some of "the fundamental criticisms levelled at the model" (Fried and Ferris; 1987, p.309) were not supported as both the job characteristics and social information processing theory both related to work outcomes such as job satisfaction. In this regard, "the evidence suggests a blending of the two perspectives" (Fried and Ferris, 1987; p.309). In other words, the job characteristics model is acceptable to use as a method of examining job related aspects of job satisfaction. Indeed, through devising the Job Diagnostics Survey (JDS), Hackman and Oldham (1975) provided an excellent instrument for measuring environmental antecedents of job satisfaction.

According to Fried and Ferris (1987) the job characteristics model was a good model to use in research on job satisfaction. Yet are there any other criticisms of the model? Another criticism of the model was its assumption of a linear relationship between core job dimensions and work outcomes such as job satisfaction. Champoux (1992) stated there is a likely curvilinear relationship between core job dimensions and job satisfaction. This relationship is likely to be U shaped or an inverted U shape possibly due to personal variables that influence the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction on the individual. Warr (1987) described two types of curvilinear relationship between psychological variables and these seem very applicable

to the relationship between core job dimensions and job satisfaction. Additional detriment (AD) variables are psychological variables that after an optimum level an increase will result in a detrimental effect. Skill variety may be one example of an AD variable, whereby, if an individual is in a role in which there is little skill use, then the individual will benefit from an increase in skill variety. Nevertheless, if a person is in a role in which there is an optimum level of skill variety, then a further increase in skill variety is likely to be detrimental towards job satisfaction as shown in Figure 2.4.

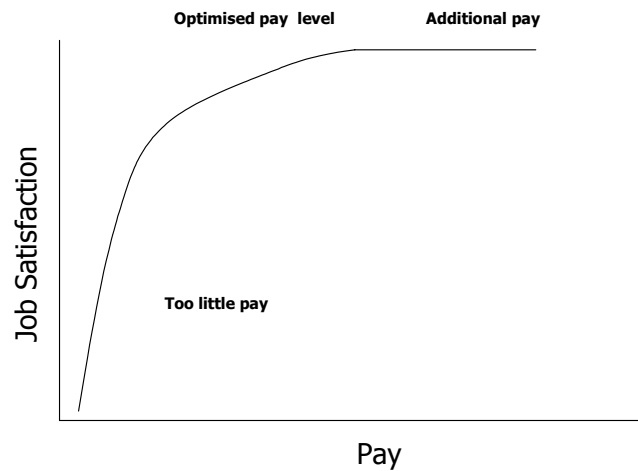
Figure 2.4: Curvilinear relationship between skill variety and job satisfaction



In Champoux's work, it may be argued that this U shaped curvilinear relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction represents individuals that are beyond their optimised level and as a result increasing the variable merely translates to a detrimental influence on job satisfaction. Other individuals who are not at their optimised level however may experience increases in job satisfaction after a certain period thus suggesting the inverted U shaped curvilinear relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction.

The other curvilinear relationship between variables described by Warr (1987) involved Constant Effect (CE) variables. In CE variables, there is again an optimum level of a variable. However when the optimum level of the variable is passed this does not have a detrimental effect but has a constant effect in that no benefits are gained from increasing the amount of variable further. Pay is a variable that may fall into this CE category whereby after an optimum level of pay, pay is neither beneficial nor not beneficial for the person, as shown in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5: Curvilinear relationship between pay and job satisfaction



The final criticism of the job characteristics model is that the theoretical model is not always supported by research as there are likely to be other variables influencing job outcomes such as job satisfaction. Roberts and Glick (1981) suggested that there may be other variables that lead to work outcomes that the model does not present. These variables range in type but may be organisational, individual or social in origin. Indeed, through reviewing a number of job satisfaction studies they list a number of variables as likely main, or interactive effects, on job satisfaction which include: achievement, attribution of performance, commitment, education level, functional speciality, individual differences, internal work motivation, involvement, organisational task responses, social cues, socialisation, task boredom, task satisfaction, technology task satisfaction and tenure. More recent research (Spector et al, 1999) found that individual characteristics, such as positive and negative affectivity, that may contribute towards job satisfaction were not contained within the job characteristics model.

The job characteristics model and criticisms against the model have now been reviewed. In this section of Chapter 2, the aim was to evaluate the job characteristics model as a theoretical model that lists antecedents, moderators and consequences of job satisfaction. Yet, by purely relying on one job satisfaction model this has limited the scope of variables examined within the thesis. Undeniably, the job characteristics model is a robust theory on which a thesis could be built. However, critics of the model suggest that there may be more antecedents and consequences of job satisfaction. In a study of this nature, it is important to evaluate job satisfaction, its antecedents and its consequences. This task is a major undertaking and space restrictions within the thesis would limit the amount of literature that could be properly evaluated. It is therefore preferable to examine the work of others and put forward their suggestions for major antecedents and consequences of job satisfaction. However, as previous authors have examined permanent

worker job satisfaction if there are important antecedents or consequences of job satisfaction that are important to agency workers it is important that these are addressed. Consequently, the last two sections of this chapter represent an accumulation of research from major literature reviews (Cranny et al, 1992; Lease, 1998; Locke, 1976; Roberts and Glick, 1981; Spector, 1997) which have been expanded with the temporary worker literature in mind (Allan and Sienko, 1997; Ellingson Gruys and Sackett, 1998; Feldman et al, 1994; Feldman et al, 1995; Rogers, 1995). This literature is supported by two overall theoretical models taken from Lease (1998) and Spector (1997) along with the job description index model of job satisfaction proposed by Patricia Cain Smith (Cranny et al, 1992).

2.4 JOB SATISFACTION ANTECEDENTS

Given the criticisms made against the job characteristics model, the thesis cannot take the model in its pure form as the theoretical basis for the research. Consequently, a review is needed of research that has looked at the antecedents and consequences of job satisfaction. After these have been reviewed, a job satisfaction model for the research will be distilled from the literature and the theoretical models that support this literature (Cranny et al, 1992; Lease, 1998; and Spector, 1997). Yet a note must be made at this point that these models and literature refer to permanent worker job satisfaction and as such some distillation has to be made to keep the focus of the thesis firmly on the job satisfaction and related variables of agency workers.

The antecedents of job satisfaction can be classified in a number of ways by reviewing specific antecedents (Cranny et al, 1992) or by summarising them into environmental and individual factors (Lease, 1998; Spector, 1997) or into task and organisational related antecedents (Roberts and Glick, 1981). Out of all these approaches separating antecedents into environmental and individual factors seemed the most appropriate for organising the review although each antecedent will be discussed in turn. However, these models being considered have a variety of variables, which cannot all be assessed in the limited scope of a thesis. So, a selection of variables must take place and as such it is important to ask two questions:

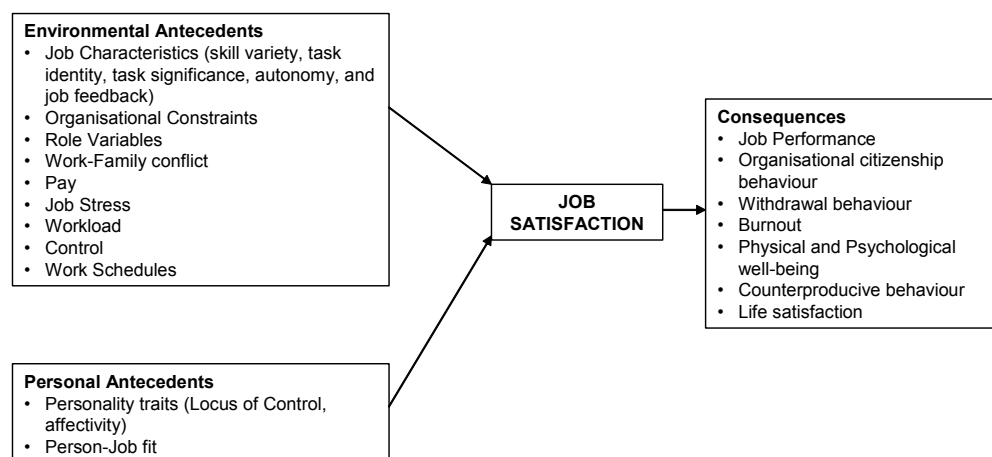
1. What are the most popular antecedents studied in psychological research? and
2. What are the antecedents of agency worker job satisfaction?

To answer the first question, a number of literature reviews with their own theoretical models were examined (Cranny et al, 1992; Lease, 1998; Roberts and Glick, 1981; Spector, 1997). However, out of these reviews two theoretical models (Lease, 1998; Spector, 1997) seem to be

the most up-to-date and most relevant to agency workers answering the second question. These models will now be discussed in brief, which will lead to a selection of antecedents that satisfy the two questions posed above.

The first model that is considered is Spector (1997). This model concentrated on both the antecedents and consequences of job satisfaction (See Figure 2.6). Antecedents were split between both environmental and individual antecedents and as such the model seemed to be particularly suitable to agency workers as it took into account both the business environment they were employed in and their individual make-up (although not all variables, such as voluntary or involuntary temporary employment, that may be important in agency workers were included in this model). A number of variables have been selected from this model which will be reviewed in greater detail below. These include job characteristics (i.e., skill variety, autonomy, feedback, task identity and task significance) which have already been explored as part of the Hackman and Oldham (1975) model, organisational constraints, role variables (role ambiguity and role conflict), work-family conflict and personality. Not all of the variables presented in this model can be considered for review primarily because of space restrictions but more importantly as they did not seem relevant to agency worker job satisfaction from a review of the agency worker job satisfaction literature in Chapter 3 and from preliminary research conducted with agency workers and employment agencies (See Appendix B).

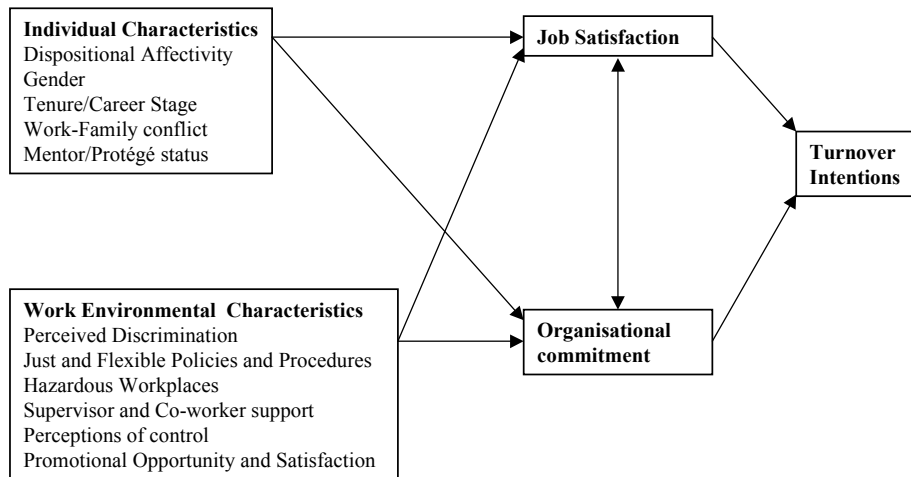
Figure 2.6: Spector's (1997) Model of job satisfaction



Another model (See Figure 2.7) that again breaks up job satisfaction antecedents into environmental and individual based antecedents is Lease (1998). Lease precludes many of the environmental antecedents listed by Spector (1997), however, she does add several environmental antecedents of interest including organisational commitment, worker relationship

(supervisor and co-worker support) and harassment (perceived discrimination). Other environmental antecedents detailed in Lease's (1998) model of job satisfaction such as hazardous workplaces and promotional opportunity and satisfaction again appear to be more relevant to permanent workers as opposed to agency workers (a full account of the differences are given in Chapter Three) and as such are not relevant to this thesis.

Figure 2.7: Lease's (1998) Model of job satisfaction



Interestingly, Lease has many of the individual antecedents that formed part of Spector's (1997) model. From these, dispositional affectivity (positive and negative affectivity) and work family conflict have already been considered and will be explored in further depth below. However, tenure/career stage and mentor/protégé status both included in this model seemed unlikely to have an impact on agency workers. Tenure for instance, which is measured as the amount of time in the job and the amount of time in the chosen profession, is likely to be very short in agency workers as they move from assignment to assignment fairly frequently. As such, tenure is an unlikely variable to impact on agency worker job satisfaction. In addition, agency workers are unlikely to be protégés so it is unlikely that both this and tenure will influence agency worker job satisfaction, and as such will not be included in the following discussion. Nevertheless, although these variables may be precluded from the main questionnaire it is trusted that through using qualitative interviews if they are important to the thesis this will be revealed. Gender is another variable that Lease (1998) suggested may be an antecedent of job satisfaction. However, Spector (1997) stated that it is unlikely to be a job satisfaction antecedent although differences in gender had been noted in several studies. Due to these differences in gender being noted, gender will be examined in the main quantitative approach with descriptive variables being used in the main research design that will note the differences in gender. Further quantitative analysis will

also be completed in the study (Chapter 5) to note any differences between gender types and agency workers' job satisfaction.

Both the models of Lease (1998) and Spector (1997) have been examined revealing a number of antecedents that seem to be important and relevant to agency worker job satisfaction. Yet, another important individual-based antecedent not considered by either Lease (1998) or Spector (1997) or any other theoretical model of job satisfaction (Hackman and Oldham, 1975; Roberts and Glick, 1981) is voluntary/involuntary worker status. This variable regards the voluntary (by choice) or involuntary (due to unemployment, redundancy, etc) take-up of agency work. This variable has been seen as important in the agency worker literature (See Chapter 3) and as such will be considered in this Chapter. Indeed, this points to a limitation of using job satisfaction models based on permanent workers as variables that may be important to agency workers may be not considered in these theoretical designs. Nonetheless, through a thorough analysis of the agency and temporary worker literature, along with preliminary research conducted with agency workers and employment agencies it is considered that no variable that is important in agency worker job satisfaction has been precluded from the following discussion. Yet, it will be the responsibility of the research design highlighting any variable that has not been considered for future research as appropriate.

In conclusion, there appears to be a number of variables that may be important to the job satisfaction of agency workers. These are: job characteristics (i.e., skill variety, autonomy, feedback, task identity and task significance), organisational commitment, organisational constraints, worker relationship, role variables (role ambiguity and role conflict), work-family conflict, personality, harassment and voluntary/involuntary worker status. These variables will now be considered as highlighted by the research models and other psychological research on permanent workers. These variables, will then be further refined in terms of how they relate to agency workers and how they may differ between workers in the following chapter (Chapter 3).

2.4.1 Skill Variety

Skill variety is a core job characteristic, which according to Hackman and Oldham (1975) was antecedent to job satisfaction and other work outcomes. To explore this relationship, Glisson and Durick (1988) examined 319 workers in 22 organisations to analyse the antecedents of job satisfaction from multiple predictors. These predictors were chosen from three categories of job characteristics, organisational characteristics, and worker characteristics. Interestingly, they found that skill variety, in addition to role ambiguity, which will be discussed later in this chapter, had the strongest predictive validity to job satisfaction using general linear modelling

analysis. Skill variety was also observed in more recent studies (Burke, 1999) as being an antecedent to job satisfaction. Burke (1999) found that all the core job characteristics, including skill variety, correlated with job satisfaction. Thus, although the job characteristics model does have its criticisms as mentioned above, skill variety has been shown to be an antecedent of job satisfaction other studies.

2.4.2 Autonomy

Autonomy is another core job characteristic proposed by Hackman and Oldham (1975) to be antecedent to job satisfaction. Recent studies on the relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction have occurred in hospital settings. Finn (2001), for instance, used questionnaire data obtained from 178 nurses to investigate the importance of autonomy and its relation to job satisfaction. The results of this study showed that autonomy was the most important component for job satisfaction in nurses with low autonomy corresponding with low job satisfaction. Other studies have showed similar results within the nursing population, Wade (1999), for instance, performed a meta-analysis on a number of studies on nurse's autonomy. She found that job satisfaction was one of the most frequently quoted responses to autonomy. However, both of these studies were limited as they surveyed nurses only, so have other studies found similar results with other worker populations? Indeed, Becherer, Morgan and Richard (1982) found that autonomy was an important predictor of job satisfaction in 211 industrial salespersons suggesting that autonomy is an important contributor to job satisfaction in a variety of occupations.

2.4.3 Feedback

Feedback is another core characteristic discussed by Hackman and Oldham (1975) as antecedent to job satisfaction. Anderson (1986) found that feedback from the job was a significant predictor of job satisfaction through a hierarchical regression analysing 97 grocery store workers. Later research, on US-based educational psychologists also found a significant relationship between feedback and job satisfaction (Williams, Williams and Ryer, 1990). Correlation studies are numerous linking feedback, and other job characteristics, with job satisfaction. However, one study examined the use of improving feedback with 16 clerical employees, as part of an organisational behaviour management intervention (Wilk and Redmon, 1998). Not surprisingly, they found that reported levels of job satisfaction improved during the intervention programme, which could be attributable to the increase in feedback the clerical employees received. Thus feedback, in a similar way to skill variety and autonomy, is likely to be an antecedent of job satisfaction.

2.4.4 Task identity and task significance

Task identity and task significance are the remaining core job characteristics proposed by Hackman and Oldham (1975) as contributing towards work outcomes such as job satisfaction. Task significance was found to be related to job satisfaction in a study by Jex and Bliese (1999) that examined self-efficacy as a moderator between job characteristics and job satisfaction. In this regard, individuals with a high amount of self-efficacy tended to respond more favourably with task significance and as a result report a higher level of job satisfaction. Other research also observed a link between both task significance and task identity with job satisfaction. Burke (1999) in her review of the job diagnostic survey found that both of these variables were related to job satisfaction. Kahn and Robertson (1992) also found that job characteristics, including both task significance and task identity were related to job satisfaction in a study of 166 computer users. Task identity and task significance are therefore likely to be antecedents of job satisfaction, being supported as with other job characteristics by both theoretical and practical research.

The core job characteristics proposed by Hackman and Oldham (1975) have now been discussed. Skill variety, autonomy, feedback, task identity and task significance all appear to be related to job satisfaction. It is therefore appropriate that these variables are discussed further in the following chapter to see if they also apply to agency workers as the studies cited above were limited to permanent workers only.

2.4.5 Organisational commitment

An early definition of organisational commitment was from Cook and Wall (1980, p.40) who defined organisational commitment as:

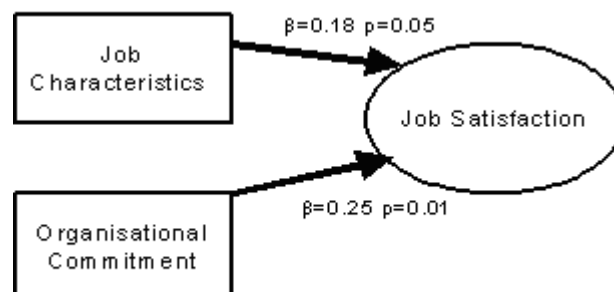
“A person’s affective reactions to the characteristics of his employing organisation. It is concerned with feelings of attachment to the goals and values of the organisation, one’s role in relation to this, and attachment to the organisation for its own sake rather than for its strictly instrumental value.”

Later research also used similar definitions stating that organisational commitment is a multidimensional work attitude that concerned the bond between the employee and their employing organisation (Allen and Meyer, 1996). Many researchers have examined the relationship between organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Bateman and Strasser, 1984; Curry, Wakefield, Price and Mueller, 1986; Lance, 1991; Martin and Bennett, 1996; Vandenberg and Lance, 1992). As a result, some discussion remains about whether organisational commitment is an antecedent of, similar in nature to, or a consequence of job

satisfaction. This is important to discuss in the thesis, as although it does not seek to prove causality it is important that the nature of the relationship between organisational commitment and job satisfaction is explored.

Bateman and Strasser (1984) used a longitudinal survey examining the relationship between job characteristics (from the job characteristics model), organisational commitment and job satisfaction using time lagged regression parameters. They found that job characteristics were antecedent to job satisfaction but not to organisational commitment, as shown in the time-lagged regression statistics shown in Figure 2.8. They also found organisational commitment was antecedent to job satisfaction using time-lagged regression parameters to determine causality. Both job characteristics and organisational commitment are therefore seen as job satisfaction antecedents as shown in Figure 2.8. However, whether causality can be determined by using time-lagged regression is a matter of debate. Regression can be used to determine the association between variables but to prove that organisational commitment causes job satisfaction is very difficult to determine.

Figure 2.8: Job characteristics, organisational commitment and job satisfaction relationships showing time-lagged regression parameters.



Further criticism of Bateman and Strasser (1984) was presented by Curry et al (1986). They criticised this work for not taking account of measurement error, temporal sources of error and not employing a range of statistical controls. In order to correct for this, they tried to replicate and extend Bateman and Strasser's (1984) work using another longitudinal design. However, no causal relationships between organisational commitment and job satisfaction were found. Nonetheless, whether this technique can prove causality is a matter of debate as previously implied. In addition, Curry et al's (1986) study was not a particularly good replication having both different measures and a different sample structure to Bateman and Strasser (1984) so it is likely that their criticisms of this work are unfounded.

Vandenberg and Lance (1992) also criticised the methodologies of both Curry et al (1986) and Bateman and Strasser (1984) on the basis that determining causality through correlation taken at different times has methodological limitations. In this regard, they put together a study designed to counteract previous methodological uncertainties by using structural equation modelling (SEM). In addition to adopting SEM techniques, they also used longitudinal data and a multifaceted measure of job satisfaction, hoping to reduce the methodological uncertainties found in previous projects. They tested for four different relationships between organisational commitment and job satisfaction:

1. Job satisfaction is antecedent to organisational commitment.
2. Organisational commitment is antecedent to job satisfaction.
3. Organisational commitment and job satisfaction are reciprocally related.
4. Organisational commitment and job satisfaction are independent.

The results of these tests showed organisational commitment to be an antecedent of job satisfaction. This study was perhaps more robust than the studies that have been conducted before it. However, the SEM technique has its statistical origins based on multiple regression techniques which although these can be used to ascertain associative relationships between variables, it cannot prove causality. If these statistical techniques presented by these authors can be trusted in determining causality then organisational commitment could have a varied relationship with job satisfaction, either being mutually independent (Curry et al, 1986; Martin and Bennett, 1996) or causally linked (Bateman and Strasser, 1984; Vandenberg and Lance, 1992). Organisational commitment may therefore be an antecedent of job satisfaction. However, in the thesis, no attempt to determine causality is made so an assumption will be made that organisational commitment is related to job satisfaction although the exact nature of this relationship is difficult to determine. In conclusion then although organisational commitment will be treated as a possible antecedent to job satisfaction no causality, that organisational commitment causes job satisfaction, is claimed.

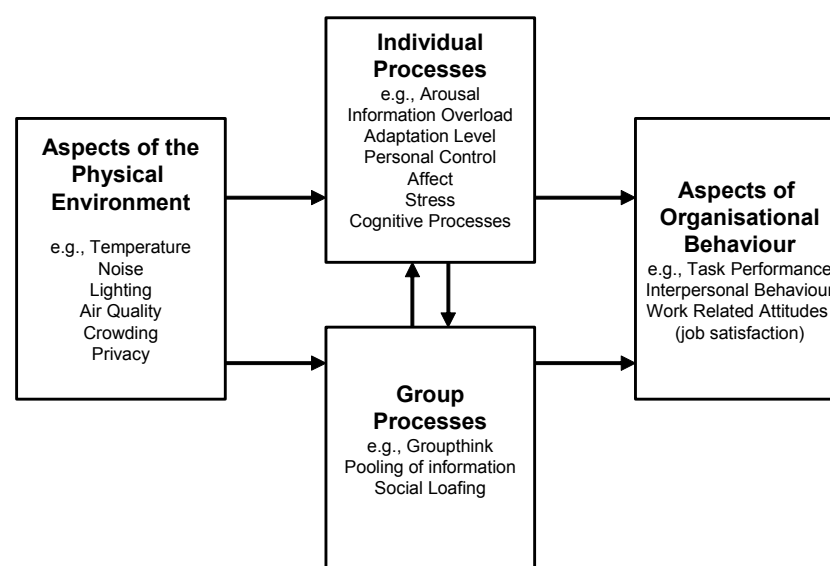
2.4.6 Organisational constraints

Organisational constraints are conditions of the job environment that interfere with variables such as job performance and job satisfaction. Peters and O'Connor (1980) found eight organisational constraints that can be briefly described as:

1. Job-related information, information regarding and needed for the job.
2. Tools and equipment, apparatus required for the job.
3. Materials and supplies, products necessary for the job to be completed.
4. Budgetary support, financial contribution to pay for resources to complete the job.
5. Required services and help from others, interpersonal support from colleagues.
6. Task preparation, skills needed to prepare for tasks to be completed on the job.
7. Time availability, amount of time available to complete the job.
8. Work environment, the physical working conditions of the job environment.

It is not possible to discuss all of these organisational constraints in any depth. Yet, one constraint that may be particularly apt for this thesis is the physical work environment. Baron (1994) integrated much of the research in this area into a comprehensible model as shown in Figure 2.9. In this model, physical working aspects such as temperature, noise, lighting, air quality, crowding and privacy were all listed as influencing aspects of organisational behaviour such as job satisfaction. Indeed, these physical constraints work on both the group and individual level. For instance, temperatures that were unpleasantly warm would have an individual effect of reducing performance but a group effect of increasing hostility and anger (Baron, 1994).

Figure 2.9: Physical working environment and job satisfaction.



(Adapted from Baron, 1994; p.35)

Organisational constraints tend to limit individuals in terms of their jobs and as a result were likely to lead to dissatisfaction if they were particularly high. Some evidence, from Bogg and Cooper (1995), partially supports this hypothesis as public sector workers were found to be more dissatisfied than private sector workers possibly due to higher levels of bureaucracy and organisational constraints within the public sector. Organisational constraints are likely to have an influence on job satisfaction as found above and so are important to bear in mind. Indeed, one organisational constraint, being the support received from others, is likely to be important in this research and is examined next under the term of worker relationship.

2.4.7 Worker Relationship

Worker relationship can be defined as the interpersonal affiliation or connection between workers. In the literature, worker relationship has often been cited as a moderator between antecedents and job satisfaction (Baron, 1994) or as a facet of job satisfaction, i.e., supervisor and co-worker satisfaction (Hackman and Oldham, 1975). Yet for workers that do not exist within the normal employee/employer relationship, the affiliation with other workers may be a very important antecedent to their job satisfaction. Indeed, though this matter is examined further in the next chapter, some authors have stated that worker relationship may be an antecedent to permanent worker job satisfaction (Lease, 1998; Wall, Kemp, Jackson and Clegg, 1986; Van-der-Vegt, Emans and Van-de-Vliert, 2001).

Wall et al (1986) examined autonomous work groups and their influence on job satisfaction. They found that job satisfaction was influenced by groups that had the following characteristics:

1. Collective control over pace, distribution of tasks and work breaks.
2. Collective participation in recruiting and training new members.
3. Little or no direct supervision as the group is self-managed.

Groups with these characteristics showed a significantly higher job satisfaction than groups without these characteristics. This suggests a correlation between worker relationship coupled with the autonomy of work groups and job satisfaction. Causal effect could not be ascertained from the data of the study as it was correlational in nature. However, the correlation between worker relationship and the autonomy of the work groups stood the test of time being similar on three different times of measurement. This study was important showing that worker relationship does influence job satisfaction, yet it has limitations in that the sample is constrained to blue-collar workers only and carried out at a time where self-regulating groups within the

manufacturing industry were quite rare. Thus, the influence of autonomy on job satisfaction may be greater than the influence of the worker relationship in this study.

Consequently, recent studies (Van-der-Vegt et al, 2001; Zalewska, 1999) re-examined the link between worker relationship and job satisfaction. Zalewska (1999) investigated 169 white-collar workers in the banking industry and found when employees value worker relationship; worker relationship is an antecedent of job satisfaction. Van-der-Vegt et al (2001) also examined worker relationship in terms of the group cohesiveness of workers in working towards a unified goal. They found that groups that work well together in terms of performing interdependent tasks that took the team towards a unified goal, experienced a high degree of job satisfaction.

Other studies (Frone, 2000; Hodson, 1997) have taken a more negative approach to worker relationship observing the link between interpersonal conflict, when the worker relationship breaks down, and job satisfaction. Frone (2000) observed 319 young workers between the ages of 16-19 and found negative correlation between conflict with superiors and conflict with co-workers with job satisfaction. Hodson (1997) also found similar results using survey and observational data in a sample of 371 employed adults. She revealed that interpersonal conflict corresponded with low levels of job satisfaction and conversely good worker relationships, measured through worker solidarity, corresponded with high levels of job satisfaction.

Social relations or worker relationship is thus an important antecedent determining job satisfaction. All studies cited above found that when groups operate well together, affiliating group members and aiding them as necessary, job satisfaction tended to be increased. The reverse was also true that interpersonal conflict reduced job satisfaction. Worker relationship is therefore likely to be an important antecedent to job satisfaction.

2.4.8 Role variables

Role variables, such as role ambiguity and role conflict, include factors relating to the role of an individual in the work place. Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970) defined role ambiguity as the degree of clarity of behavioural requirements that guide behaviour and outcomes of behaviour in the work environment. They also defined role conflict as the compatibility versus the incompatibility of role requirements within a job that impinge job performance. Rizzo et al (1970) revealed that both role ambiguity and role conflict negatively correlated with job satisfaction and recent studies (Brown and Peterson, 1993; Glisson and Durick, 1988; Yousef, 2000) found similar results. For instance, Glisson and Durick (1988) found that role ambiguity was a strong predictor of job satisfaction using multiple regression on 319 human service

workers in 22 organisations. All these studies agreed that role variables may be precursors to job satisfaction although due to the nature of correlation studies causality cannot be determined.

Nevertheless, one apparent method of predicting causality between psychological variables is Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) techniques mentioned previously. In this regard, Sawyer (1992) applied SEM techniques and determined that job satisfaction was one causal consequence of role ambiguity. Although the claim for causality in this study is debatable, it does seem clear from this research that role variables such as role ambiguity and role conflict are antecedents to job satisfaction because jobs that are ambiguous and conflicting tend to be dissatisfying in nature.

2.4.9 Work-family conflict

Work-family conflict happens when the demands put on an individual by work and their family deviate with one another (Spector, 1997). Lewis and Cooper (1987) found that high degrees of work-family conflict in couples, where both partners are working, correlated with low levels of job satisfaction in both partners. This suggests that when there was work-family conflict job satisfaction was influenced in a negative manner. However, their study is nearly 20 years old, when families may be arguably different from today. Consequently, a more recent study (Rice, Frone and McFarlin, 1992) has also revealed that high levels of work-family conflict correlate with low levels of job satisfaction.

Frone, Yardley and Markel (1997) point out that both of these studies were limited as they do not investigate familial conflict with work. They suggested that work-to-family and family-to-work conflict should be segregated. This point was also endorsed in the work of Carlson, Kacmar and Williams (2000) who suggested that family-work conflict could exist from family interference at work as well as the more traditionally held view that work interferes with the family. They contend that there were three forms of work-family conflict consisting of conflict interests in terms of time, strain and behaviour. This evidence puts forward the argument that just as work could interfere with home, so the reverse can be true with home interfering with work. Both of these may influence job satisfaction. Work-family conflict and family-work conflict were therefore likely to have a negative effect on job satisfaction.

2.4.10 Harassment

Lease (1998) found in her literature review on job satisfaction that harassment or discrimination, whether on the grounds of sex or ethnicity, contributed negatively to job satisfaction. One of the earliest pieces of research in this area was completed by O'Farrell and Harlan (1982) who

compared 238 females in traditional male craft jobs with 101 females in traditional female clerical jobs. They found that the females in the traditional male craft jobs were generally satisfied with their jobs although sexual harassment, experienced by some of the workers, was a major influence reducing levels of job satisfaction in this population. Sexual harassment is therefore likely to have a negative influence on how people feel about their job leading to low levels of job satisfaction.

Kissman (1990) performed a similar study to O'Farrell and Harlan (1982) examining 46 women working in blue-collar occupations. She disclosed that sexual harassment did impede job satisfaction although this was offset somewhat by the relationship between workers who helped a person cope with an unpleasant situation. White-collar office workers also portray similar findings to blue-collar workers. Piotrkowski (1998), for instance, reports that 70% of her sample of 385 female workers experienced some sort of sexual harassment, the frequency of which negatively correlated with job satisfaction.

Male workers also experience harassment. Einarsen and Raknes (1997) examined male harassment and victimisation in the Norwegian marine engineering industry. They used a sample of 464 male workers and found that 22% of these workers experienced harassment or victimisation at least once a month, the experience of which negatively correlated with job satisfaction. Yet, whether male harassment in the Norwegian marine industry is representative of other industries is difficult to ascertain. In addition, whether male workers experience more harassment than female workers is also hard to ascertain from this study. In this regard, Sczesny and Stahlberg (2000) examined the sexual harassment experienced by 93 male and female call centre workers. They established that female call centre workers dealt with 94% of harassment showing that females probably suffer from more harassment than males. However, their measure of the harassment was harassing phone calls rather than behaviour of colleagues within the organisation so it is difficult to be certain of this exact implication.

Harassment is experienced by both sexes and by all occupational groups. Harassment was shown to have a negative effect on individuals reducing their job satisfaction although no attempts to determine causality have been made. Harassment is therefore very likely to have a negative association with job satisfaction.

2.4.11 Personality

Spector (1997) stated that until the 1980s job-based antecedents of job satisfaction dominated the conceptual domain. Since this period, individual antecedents of job satisfaction have become

more popular. Personality traits, particularly locus of control (Reed, Kratchman and Strawser, 1994) and negative affectivity (Agho, Price and Mueller, 1992; Spector, Fox and Katwyk, 1999) have been proposed as individual antecedents to job satisfaction.

Locus of control represents an individual's belief about their ability to control their life. It is a bipolar measure that ranges between externals who believe that external influences control their life and internals who believe that they and they alone are responsible for shaping their destiny (Reed, Kratchman and Strawser, 1994). Reed et al (1994) examined the impact of locus of control on the job satisfaction of US accountants and found that locus of control had an effect on job satisfaction and turnover intentions especially when combined with gender factors. In this regard, external females were the group most likely to have low job satisfaction (Reed et al, 1994). Nevertheless, externals, who believe that external forces control their life, were likely to have lower levels of job satisfaction compared with individuals with an internal locus of control. The correlation between high internal locus of control and high job satisfaction was also discovered in other studies (Judge and Bono, 2001) and therefore it may have an antecedent influence on job satisfaction. Nevertheless, Spector (1997) pointed out that those individuals with a high internal locus of control tend to do better in their jobs than individuals with an external locus of control. In this way, a criticism of this study is that externals may be in inferior jobs compared to internals and as a result have a lower level of job satisfaction.

Negative affectivity is another personality based variable that seems to influence job satisfaction (Agho et al, 1992; Spector et al, 1999). Negative affectivity is an individual's predisposition to experience negative emotions, such as depression or sadness, across a wide range of work and non-work related situations. Agho et al (1992) found that negative affectivity correlated with low job satisfaction. Possible reasons for this may be that individuals with high negative affectivity view their job in a negative light and were thus dissatisfied at work. Indeed, Organ and Davis (1995) point out that the internal sense of happiness that an individual possibly has, relates to their job satisfaction. Unhappy people, with high levels of negative affectivity, generally display low levels of job satisfaction as compared with upbeat and happy individuals (Organ and Davis, 1995). Agho et al (1992) also showed this with positive affectivity, being a person's disposition to be happy, which was positively correlated with job satisfaction. Judge and Bono (2001) also examined the relationship between job satisfaction and individual traits using meta-analytic techniques revealing that job satisfaction was correlated with four individual traits being: self-esteem, self-efficacy, internal locus of control, and emotional stability. Consequently, it is likely that other individual dispositions influence job satisfaction.

2.4.12 Voluntary and Involuntary worker status

Voluntary and involuntary work status was not mentioned in any of the literature reviews on job satisfaction and is not a particularly well researched area outside of agency worker studies. However, it is a variable likely to be important to agency workers so it is included in this discussion. Voluntary worker status describes a situation where an individual completes their job freely and of their own accord. Involuntary worker status is the situation where an individual completes their job forcibly as they cannot get any other job. This is explored in the temporary worker arena (Ellingson et al 1998; Feldman et al, 1995; Krausz, Brandwein and Fox, 1995) which will be considered in the next chapter.

Nevertheless, studies that are more general examined the differences between volunteers and non-volunteers' job satisfaction. This may be investigated to ascertain whether a person employed on a voluntary basis is happier at work than other employees performing work on a less voluntary basis. Hershey (1996) compared 100 career fire fighters and 100 volunteer fire fighters on a number of measures including the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) described earlier. Volunteer fire fighters had less satisfaction in terms of career progress but significantly more job satisfaction than career fire fighters. This suggested that voluntary work status was antecedent to job satisfaction as a difference was recorded between these two groups. Differences in job satisfaction between 17 volunteers and 25 non-volunteers in hospices were also recorded by Paradis and Usui (1989) whereby volunteers seemed to be more satisfied in their job than non-volunteers.

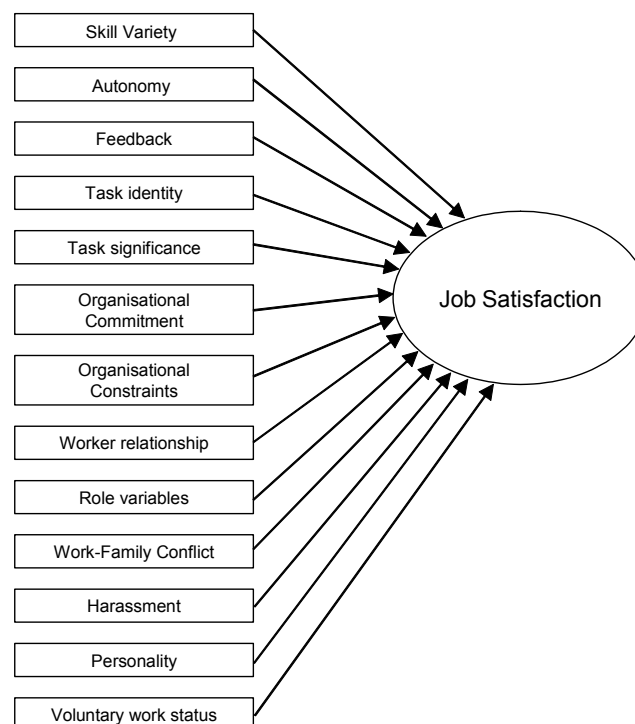
Both of these studies suggested a difference between those who voluntarily take up employment and those that do not. Nonetheless, both of these studies were limited as volunteers may have a different working arrangement to non-volunteers and therefore show different levels of job satisfaction for a variety of reasons other than their voluntary employment. In addition, non-volunteers in both studies may not necessarily be involuntarily employed. Thus to control for both criticisms, only work completed on agency workers, can point to whether voluntary work status is an antecedent to agency worker job satisfaction. This will be completed in the following chapter, nevertheless, for the time being the thesis will propose that both voluntary and involuntary worker status are antecedents to job satisfaction.

2.4.13 Conclusions on the antecedents of job satisfaction

Earlier in this chapter, the job characteristics model of Hackman and Oldham (1975) was discussed in detail. Several of the model's criticisms were detailed which made the model

unsuitable for a theoretical basis for this research. Variables directly antecedent to job satisfaction were considered (See Figure 2.10) which were both environmental and individual in nature. This list of antecedents is reviewed in the following chapter (Chapter 3) based on their applicability to agency workers. Nevertheless, before moving on to this work, the possible consequences of job satisfaction are examined because of the need to explore what the consequences of job satisfaction may be for agency workers.

Figure 2.10: Job satisfaction antecedents



2.5 CONSEQUENCES OF JOB SATISFACTION

It is important to note that the relationship between job satisfaction and its related variables is not inevitably linear and unidirectional so it should not be ruled out that some antecedents could also be consequences. Many behaviours and worker outcomes such as job performance are hypothesised consequences of job satisfaction. A complete review of this area is not feasible in a project of this size and would not specifically add value to the overall thesis. Subsequently, only consequences put forward by the two theoretical models of job satisfaction reviewed earlier (Lease, 1998; Spector, 1997) will be examined. Lease (1998) listed turnover intentions in her model as a consequence of job satisfaction (See Figure 2.7) but this included both the intent (turnover intention) and the subsequent leaving of an organisation either on a temporary

(absenteeism) or permanent basis (turnover). Spector (1997) also included turnover intentions, absenteeism and turnover under the broad term of withdrawal behaviour. He then listed the consequences of job satisfaction, as:

1. Withdrawal behaviour,
2. Job performance,
3. Organisational citizenship,
4. Counterproductive behaviour,
5. Psychological well-being, physical health and burnout,
6. Life satisfaction.

These consequences listed also correspond with the work of other authors in this area, such as Smith (1992). Consequently, all of these consequences are to be discussed to see how they correlate with job satisfaction.

2.5.1 Withdrawal behaviour

The primary consequence of job satisfaction according to Lease's (1998) model was withdrawal behaviour. Withdrawal behaviour was linked to job satisfaction as if people were dissatisfied with their jobs they will avoid them either permanently by leaving the organisation or temporarily by being absent. Tett and Meyer (1993) examined the antecedents to turnover and turnover intention performing a meta-analysis of 155 studies. They used SEM techniques to predict the effects of job satisfaction on turnover and turnover intentions, and revealed that it correlated to both. Chen and Spector (1992) also found significant negative correlation between job satisfaction, the intention to quit and absenteeism.

More recent studies have also replicated these findings. In Thailand for instance, intention to stay positively correlated with overall job satisfaction (Kunaviktikul, Nuntasupawat, Srisuphan and Booth, 2000). Thus, the opposite of withdrawal behaviour positively correlates with job satisfaction. Lance (1991) also modelled the causal relationship between job satisfaction and withdrawal behaviours and found job satisfaction negatively correlated with the intention to search for a new job and the desirability of quitting. Job satisfaction was therefore associated

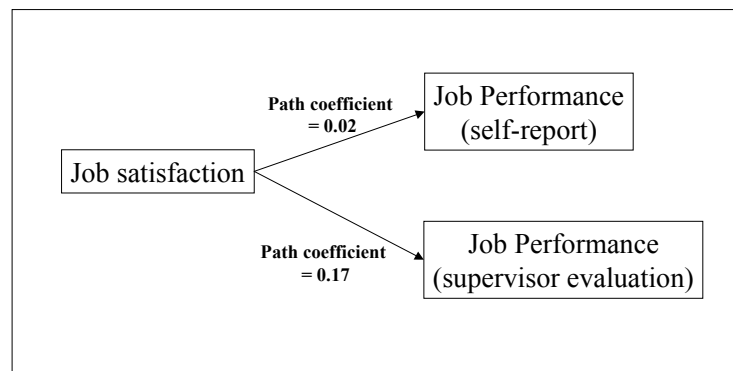
with a person's decision to withdraw from their employing organisation as found in these studies (Chen and Spector, 1992; Kunaviktikul, et al, 2000; Lance, 1991; Tett and Meyer, 1993).

2.5.2 Job performance

Job performance is viewed as one of the major consequences of job satisfaction with conventional wisdom suggesting that satisfied employees are productive employees (Moorman, 1993). Nevertheless, some research in this area has not lead to this conclusion. Katzell, Thompson and Guzzo (1992) for instance, used a SEM approach to test for this relationship showing that job satisfaction had only a slight effect on job performance and only on job performance as rated by superiors, not job performance rated by self-completion measures. Although this result may be due in part to inaccurate assessment of job performance measured by the self-completion questionnaire. The authors concluded that job satisfaction had little causal effect on job performance and that the amount of effort an individual makes in a job is much more likely to be related to job performance than job satisfaction. In support of this view, the work by Brown and Peterson (1993; 1994) on sales people found no correlation between job satisfaction and job performance.

Other researchers (Moorman, 1993) suggested that the modest correlation between the two variables may be due to problems with the assessment of performance and if job performance measures were more accurate then the correlation between job satisfaction and job performance may be higher. Indeed, in examining the path analysis model of Katzell et al (1992) as shown in Figure 2.11 different measures of job performance do vary in their correlation with job satisfaction as previously discussed. However, even so the low level of correlation between the two suggested that job performance had little association with job satisfaction and as such will not be included as a consequence in the research's model of job satisfaction.

Figure 2.11: Path analysis of job satisfaction and performance.



(adapted from Katzell et al, 1992, p.205)

2.5.3 Organisational citizenship behaviour

Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) may be described as discretionary behaviour (e.g., aiding others, being punctual, staying late to complete allocated tasks) that goes beyond the formal requirements of a job and promotes the effective functioning of an organisation (Moorman, 1993). In this regard, OCB is similar to performance as it promotes the efficiency of an organisation. However, OCB is generally not rewarded in an organisation's reward structure (Moorman, 1993).

Spector (1997) argued that a satisfied worker was more likely to exhibit organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) to a greater degree than unsatisfied workers. Moorman (1993) investigated the contribution that job satisfaction may have on OCB and found a correlation between the two. However, the strength of this relationship depended on the measure of job satisfaction. More cognitive measures of job satisfaction had a greater correlation with OCB than affect-based measures of job satisfaction. This suggests that other factors such as perceptions of fairness may have a greater relationship with OCB than job satisfaction. Indeed, Moorman, Niehoff and Organ (1993) found that perceived fairness was more strongly related to OCB than job satisfaction concluding that OCB may be caused by employees who:

“Feel the necessity to reciprocate the fair treatment they have received from the organisation” (Moorman et al, 1993; p.223)

In this regard, the relationship between job satisfaction and OCB may be coincidental. Indeed, Schappe (1998) tested for the antecedents of OCB examining job satisfaction, organisational commitment and perceptions of procedural justice. Schappe (1998) established no correlation between job satisfaction and OCB with only organisational commitment being strongly related to

OCB. In summary, although some authors suggested that the association between job satisfaction and OCB was coincidental (Schappe, 1998). Others (Moorman et al, 1993; Spector, 1997) suggested that there was a relationship between the two variables and as such OCB will be included in the research's model of job satisfaction.

2.5.4 Counterproductive behaviour

Possibly the opposite to organisational citizenship behaviour is counterproductive behaviour which includes:

“Acts committed by an employee that either intentionally or unintentionally hurt the organisation. This includes aggression against co-workers, aggression against the employer, sabotage and theft.” (Spector, 1997, pp.67-68).

Shamir (1983) examined the antecedents to work and non-work conflict and established that job satisfaction was significantly correlated to the amount of inter-role conflict. Indeed, high levels of job satisfaction were also noted in this study in workers that experienced little work or non-work conflict. This finding has been replicated in a number of other studies. Weider-Hatfield and Hatfield (1995) also revealed that job satisfaction was negatively correlated with work conflict. Chen and Spector (1992) also found a negative correlation between job satisfaction and counterproductive behaviour such as aggression, hostility, sabotage and theft.

Frone (2000) specifically investigated interpersonal conflict at work examining the possible antecedents to supervisory based interpersonal conflict and co-worker based interpersonal conflict. Interestingly, job satisfaction related more to supervisory-based interpersonal conflict than co-worker based interpersonal conflict. Nevertheless, job satisfaction significantly related to both forms of interpersonal conflict suggesting that individuals with low job satisfaction showed more counterproductive behaviour in the form of interpersonal conflict than individuals with a much higher level of job satisfaction.

All of these studies (Chen and Spector, 1992; Frone, 2000; Shamir, 1983) suggested a strong correlation between job satisfaction and counter productive behaviour. Counterproductive behaviour will therefore be included in the job satisfaction model used in this study as a likely consequence of low job satisfaction.

2.5.5 Psychological well-being, physical health and burnout

Psychological well-being may be described as an improved quality of life with the absence of mental and physical illness (Wheeler, 1991). Many studies positively correlate job satisfaction with psychological well-being (Decker and Borgen, 1993; Healy and McKay, 2000; Snelgrove,

1998). Decker and Borgen (1993) examined 249 full time employees in various organisations finding job satisfaction negatively correlated with stress, a result repeated in other studies (Healy and McKay, 2000). Snelgrove (1998) examined general well-being and occupational health, as opposed to stress, as measured by the general health questionnaire, a short measure of general psychological health. In this regard, the job satisfaction of health visitors, district and community nurses negatively correlated with the general health questionnaire score, indicating that dissatisfied workers have lower levels of general well-being.

Unfortunately, many of the studies that examined job satisfaction and psychological well-being were correlational in nature and as a result have difficulties in implying causality. Indeed, some studies (Snelgrove, 1998; Tovey and Adams, 1999) regarded low psychological well-being caused by strain on a job as the cause of the low job satisfaction. Nevertheless, although causality cannot be currently determined it seems clear from the research literature, dissatisfied workers tend to have low levels of psychological well being. Even so, it is difficult to determine whether low job satisfaction caused low psychological well-being or whether low psychological well-being caused low job satisfaction.

Physical health as well as psychological health may also be affected by the extent of job satisfaction. For instance, Bogg and Cooper (1995) examined over two thousand participants in their investigation of how job satisfaction influences both mental and physical health. They found that participants who reported low levels of job satisfaction had greater mental and physical ill health compared with other participants. Job satisfaction was likely therefore to have an influence not only on psychological well-being but also on physical health.

Burnout described as emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and a sense of low personal accomplishment correlated negatively with job satisfaction (Iverson, Olekalns and Erwin, 1998; Jamal and Baba, 1997). Lee and Ashforth (1993) maintained that low job satisfaction caused negative feelings about a person's job led to an exhaustive emotional state (i.e., burnout). However, Iverson et al (1998) based on research with 487 hospital staff in Australia argued that burnout as measured by emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment caused job dissatisfaction. With conflicting evidence such as this, the causal relationship between job satisfaction and burnout may not be fully understood. Even so, the evidence taken overall suggests that dissatisfied workers will exhibit signs of burnout and as such there is an association between these variables.

In summary, job satisfaction seems to correlate with psychological well-being (Decker and Borgen, 1993; Healy and McKay, 2000; Snelgrove, 1998) physical health (Bogg and Cooper, 1995) and burnout (Iverson et al, 1998; Jamal and Baba, 1997; Lee and Ashforth, 1993). Consequently, these will be included in the research's model of job satisfaction.

2.5.6 Life satisfaction

Smith (1992) argued that satisfaction was analogous to a river. In this regard, facets of job satisfaction lead to global job satisfaction which in turn, with other non job-related satisfactions, lead to an overall satisfaction with life (See Figure 2.1). Building on this theory, Landry's (2000) research with librarians indicated that life satisfaction and job satisfaction were significantly correlated. However, the direction of causality between these two types of satisfaction is not entirely clear. In relation to this, Spector (1997) suggested that there were three possible relationships between the two variables. These were:

1. Feelings of job satisfaction spill over into feelings of life satisfaction.
2. Individuals dissatisfied in one area of their life, such as their job, will compensate that dissatisfaction by promoting satisfaction in other areas of life
3. No relation exists between life satisfaction and job satisfaction.

In his review of the life and job satisfaction literature, Spector (1997) suggested that the spill-over hypothesis seemed to be the most plausible explanation of the relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. In support, Judge and Watanabe (1993) used a longitudinal study and SEM techniques to examine the causal links between job satisfaction and life satisfaction and found that the two variables contribute to each other in a reciprocal manner. This finding provided evidence supporting the spill-over hypothesis that feelings of job satisfaction spill over into feelings of life satisfaction. It seems likely, therefore, that job satisfaction is a significant component of life satisfaction, modified (according to Smith, 1992) by leisure and family satisfaction.

2.5.7 Conclusions on the consequences of job satisfaction

Six possible consequences of job satisfaction have been discussed: withdrawal behaviour, job performance, organisational citizenship behaviour, counterproductive behaviour, psychological well-being and life satisfaction. Yet the research considered above found that only five of these had a significant association with job satisfaction (See Figure 2.12).

Figure 2.12: Consequences of job satisfaction.



Job satisfaction was related to both temporary (e.g., absenteeism) and permanent withdrawal behaviours (e.g., turnover) although the evidence for the former was not as strong as for the latter. The correlation between job performance and job satisfaction turned out to be rather mediocre or non-existent. In this regard, another form of job performance organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) which represented worker's behaviours that promote the well being and profitability of an organisation was examined and found to be related to job satisfaction. The opposite of OCB, counterproductive behaviour was also found to be negatively correlated with job satisfaction. Consequently, although job performance may not be correlated with job satisfaction, job behaviours such as OCB and counterproductive behaviour did correlate with job satisfaction.

A number of studies showed that psychological well-being and physical health were correlated with job satisfaction. Mental ill health, physical ill health, stress, burnout and emotional exhaustion negatively correlated with job satisfaction. Job satisfaction therefore appeared to be related to both psychological and physical well-being with unsatisfied individuals exhibiting high levels of stress, mental health problems, physical health problems and burnout. Life satisfaction was the last consequence to be evaluated. Research showed that life satisfaction could be a consequence of job satisfaction. On the other hand, happiness with life may also spill-over into happiness with the job. In this regard, the main conclusion is that there is a likely reciprocal relationship between the two with job satisfaction spilling over into life satisfaction and vice-a-versa.

In examining the consequences of job satisfaction, the reason why this phenomenon should be studied becomes apparent. Job satisfaction related to organisational behaviour (OCB, counterproductive and withdrawal behaviour) psychological and physical well being, and life satisfaction (See Figure 2.12). Job satisfaction consequently influences both the organisation and the individual and is thus an important issue to be studied in the field of work and organisational psychology.

2.6 CONCLUSIONS

Job satisfaction was defined in this chapter and its antecedents and consequences were discussed. Job satisfaction was initially examined in terms of job satisfaction facets. These facets were related to, but not the same as, job satisfaction that was described as an affective state governing a person's feelings about their job. Several antecedents of job satisfaction were investigated but for many their causal nature could not be determined. Possible antecedents of job satisfaction fell into two categories these being environmental antecedents and individual antecedents. Environmental antecedents included job characteristics defined in the job characteristics model, organisational constraints, role variables, work-family conflict and harassment. Individual antecedents also included organisational commitment, personality and voluntary/involuntary worker status. Both types of antecedents were considered possible causes of job satisfaction and as a result, both should be examined in any study investigating job satisfaction. Of interest will be the differences of emphasis placed upon different aspects of job satisfaction according to the degree of permanence of work and/or jobs being done. Consequences of job satisfaction were also discussed with some surprising findings appearing in the literature. Job satisfaction was not particularly related to positive organisational behaviours such as job performance. Conversely, job dissatisfaction was strongly related to negative organisational behaviours such as withdrawal, theft and sabotage. Job satisfaction was significantly associated with life satisfaction, psychological and physical well-being. However, whether job satisfaction actually causes these phenomena could not be ascertained although some evidence was available for a job and life satisfaction spill-over hypothesis whereby job satisfaction tended to be reciprocated in life satisfaction. Job satisfaction (both as a single concept and with satisfaction facets from the job characteristics model), its antecedents and consequences are summarised in Figure 2.13. This diagram represents the model of job satisfaction that is to be used in this research.

Figure 2.13: Job satisfaction model.



It must be recognised that a model such as is presented in Figure 2.13 is to some extent an over simplification since the relationship between job satisfaction and related variables is not necessarily unidimensional that is if there is a casual relationship it can flow both ways. Additionally, the antecedents and consequences are not independent of each other and may have a complex pattern of interdependency.

The job satisfaction literature shows why the construct is such an important psychological phenomenon. It should be studied for two reasons. Firstly, a civilised society has a responsibility to ensure that its members are satisfied with their jobs contributing to their satisfaction with life. Secondly, the correlation between job satisfaction and organisational behaviour concerns employers as if workers are dissatisfied in their job they may take counterproductive measures. Job satisfaction is consequently an important concept to be studied both from a humanitarian and utilitarian perspective. If job satisfaction can be understood and promoted within jobs then not only will individuals feel more satisfied with their life, society will benefit from more efficiently run and less dysfunctional organisations.

The meanings of job satisfaction, together with its antecedents and consequences have now been examined as the first part of this study. However, the majority of studies reviewed were completed on full-time permanent members of staff. Consequently, caution must be advised in assuming that what contributed to permanent worker job satisfaction also contributes to agency worker satisfaction. The next chapter, therefore, discusses these conclusions in the context of agency worker job satisfaction, what leads to this and how this may be different to permanent workers. In addition, the discussion will encompass what little is known about the possible effects that the presence of agency workers might have on the job satisfaction and other variables of the permanent employees working with them.

CHAPTER 3

3. AGENCY AND PERMANENT WORKERS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the concept of job satisfaction together with antecedents and consequences. This chapter concentrates on the job satisfaction of agency workers, what contributes to it, and the extent to which it differs from that of permanent workers. Hypotheses are also reached on the possible effects that the presence of agency workers might have on the job satisfaction and related variables of permanent workers. Finally, a number of hypotheses regarding these issues are proposed for testing through the research.

3.2 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DIFFERENT TYPES OF WORKERS

3.2.1 Classifications of workers

Felstead and Jewson (1999) claimed that the literature on temporary workers is unclear in the terms and definitions used, leading to confusion on behalf of the reader. This sentiment is shared by other researchers (McGregor and Sproull, 1992) especially given the different types of temporary workers exist in the UK today (Casey, 1988; Tremlett and Collins, 1999). It is therefore important to consider these sentiments and define worker classifications. Nevertheless, given the focus of the thesis, some further discussion of the definitions of a permanent worker, a temporary worker and an agency worker is required. The definition of a permanent worker detailed further in Appendix A is:

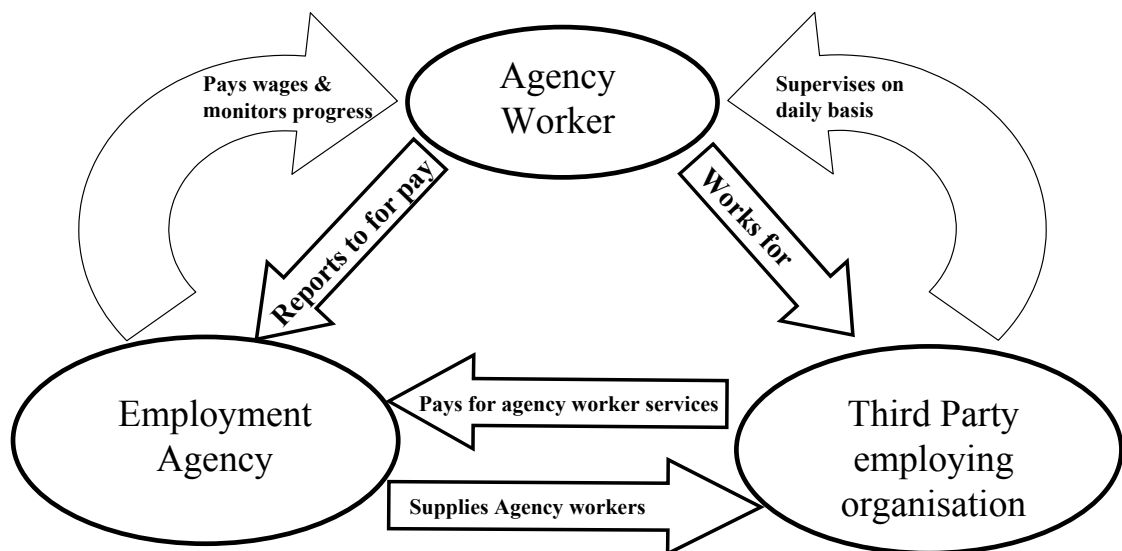
An individual who earns a monetary reward from work carried out for a third party employing organisation whereby that paid work lasts for an indefinite unlimited period of time.

Whereas a temporary worker is:

An individual who earns monetary reward from work carried out for a third party employing organisation whereby that work only lasts for a limited period of time.

A temporary worker has essentially the same definition as a permanent worker but with the major exception that the paid work lasts for a limited period of time. An agency worker's paid work or assignment also lasts for a limited period and thus it can be said that an agency worker is a temporary worker. Yet, central to the employment of any agency worker is both a third party employing organisation and an employment agency that places agency workers for the use of other businesses (Bronstein, 1991; Casey, Dragendorf, Heering and John, 1989). Consequently, a triangular relationship exists between the employment agency, the third party employing organisation and the agency worker (See Figure 3.1.)

Figure 3.1: The triangular relationship between agency worker, the employment agency and the third party employing organisation



This relationship is important for understanding the definition of an agency worker. An agency worker works for a third party employing organisation that supervises, and possibly trains them. The employment agency also monitors, on an ad-hoc basis, the progress of the agency worker within the third party employing organisation. After the agency worker has completed the work within the third party employing organisation, they receive payment for the work done from the employment agency. The employment agency then invoices the third party employing organisation for the agency worker's time. With the employment relationship of the agency worker explained, an agency worker can be defined as:

An individual who is employed on a temporary basis, through an employment agency, (for supply, on a fixed or limited period) to a third party employing organisation.

Another difference, which is important to note given all the research completed on US-based agency workers, is the distinction between the UK and US in employment legislation. In the

UK, legislation on the employment status of agency workers as employees of the employment agency is not clear. Thus in more recent legislation (i.e., The Employment Relations Act, 1999) the definition of workers, as opposed to the traditional definition of employees, is used to apply the legislative act to agency workers. Nevertheless, it is generally regarded that UK-based agency workers are not the employees of employment agencies even though no piece of legislation, inclusive of precedents, states this. In the US, however, agency workers are regarded as employees of the employment agency (often called temporary help service agencies). This is why the employment agency Manpower can state it is the biggest employer in the US because of all the agency workers it employs. Thus, although US-based agency workers have the same relationship as UK-based workers depicted in Figure 3.1. The fundamental difference between the two is that US-based agency workers are employees of the employment agency, whereas UK-based agency workers are not.

3.2.2 Employer's use of temporary workers

The employer's use of temporary labour is important to the thesis as it highlights the extent to which temporary workers are used and the context of their employment. Casey (1988) was one of the first authors to examine the extent of temporary workers in modern businesses using the workplace industrial relations survey (WIRS) carried out between 1980 and 1984. He found that approximately one in five organisations used temporary workers. This represents quite an extensive use of temporary workers by employers. However this data is almost two decades out of date, so have any other studies examined the extent of temporary workers in the UK? Fortunately, the answer to this is yes with more recent research (Atkinson, Rick, Morris and Williams, 1996; Cully, Woodland, O'Reilly and Dix, 1999; McGregor and Sproull, 1992) showing an increase in the employment of temporary workers.

McGregor and Sproull (1992) assessed the 1987 Employers Labour Use Survey (ELUS) that examined 877 employers employing 25 or more employees. Out of these employers, 305 organisations used non-agency temporary workers and 141 used agency workers meaning that just short of 50% of employers used temporary workers, which was a significant increase from 25% found a decade before by Casey (1988). Cully et al (1999) presented the results of the workplace employee relations survey (WERS), which had two elements to the survey. Firstly, a longitudinal study of 882 managers between 1990 and 1998, then a cross sectional study in 1998 of 2,191 managers, 947 worker representatives and 28,237 employees. Cully et al (1999) did not specify how many employers used temporary workers, however from other data supplied it can be ascertained that out of a total of 3,073 organisations, 1,868 organisations used fixed term

contractors and 1,891 organisations used agency workers. Therefore out of all the organisations surveyed 61% used agency workers and possibly more on top of this figure used temporary workers in general. This again indicates a rise of this type of employment, which were reflected in official statistics (Cully et al, 1999).

However, why have employers increased their use of temporary workers? In an economic environment of downsizing and de-layering, staff are being reduced in numbers but the workload still remains. This may be why issues such as stress and job insecurity are more prevalent now than they have ever been. Indeed, this removal of staff has undoubtedly left a staff shortage that agency workers serve to fill. Perhaps, even in the organisational need to outsource business functions to save money and increase profit. The ultimate outsourcing that organisations can do is to outsource their staff. This gives organisations the benefits of using staff at will to cope with fluctuating demands in workload. Indeed, is this desire to outsource staff and use employment agencies the reason for the increase in agency workers recorded in the official statistics. In answering this question, the thesis must examine why employers use temporary workers.

Atkinson et al (1996) surveyed 979 workplaces and conducted executive interviews with 23 employers and employment agencies. From this data they assessed the main reasons for employers using temporary workers were:

- Matching staffing levels to peaks in demands (63.3% of employers)
- Short-term cover whilst staff are away on holiday or sick leave (59.4% of employers)

Other reasons given were to perform one-off tasks (39.0% of employers), to perform specialist skills (20.5% of employers) and as a trial for permanent work (20.2% of employers). Other reasons, such as to reduce staff costs were not as important (5.5% of employers). Larger employers of temporary workers gave more reasons for the hiring of such staff but generally their reasons for hiring temporary workers were similar to smaller employers. Unfortunately, Atkinson et al (1996) assumed that all temporary workers can be considered as one group. This is unlikely to be the case with fixed term contractors being employed for very different reasons as say agency workers. In this regard, have any other researchers split the temporary worker sample up into specific subgroups of workers and if so have they examined the reasons behind their employment? Fortunately, the answer to this question is yes, with two studies of note researching this issue (Cully et al, 1999; McGregor and Sproull, 1992). McGregor and Sproull (1992) commented on the similarities between the reasons why employers hire agency workers and non-agency temporary workers, however, the data they present also showed clear differences between employer's reasons for hiring the two subgroups of temporary workers (See Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Employer's use of agency workers and fixed term contractors (adapted from McGregor and Sproull, 1992)

Reason for use	Agency Workers (Percentage of employers citing as reason)	Non-agency temporary workers (Percentage of employers citing as reason)
Short term cover	71%	55%
To Match staffing levels to peaks in demand	35%	35%
To deal with one-off tasks	35%	29%
To obtain specialist skills	16%	22%
Makes it easier to adjust staffing levels	18%	26%

Similarities between McGregor and Sproull (1992) and Atkinson et al (1996) can be seen for the employers' reasons for employing temporary workers. Issues such as matching staffing levels to accommodate peaks in workload demand were similar reasons given in both studies. However one of the major differences, especially noted in agency workers, was that the temporary workers in the McGregor and Sproull (1992) study were more likely to be used as short-term cover as opposed to matching staffing levels to peaks in demand. Interestingly, Cully et al (1999) also asked managers about the employer's use of temporary workers subdivided into agency workers and fixed term contractors. These reasons varied between the two groups as shown in Table 3.2. Interestingly, the reasons for why fixed term contractors are employed deviated from why agency workers are employed adding weight to the argument that agency workers are different from other temporary workers such as fixed term contractors.

Table 3.2: Employer's use of agency workers and fixed term contractors (adapted from Cully et al, 1999)

Reason for use	Agency Workers (Percentage of employers)	Fixed term contractors (Percentage of employers)
Short term cover	59%	Not common reason cited
Adjusting the size of the labour force in line with demand	40%	39%
To obtain specialist skills	Not common reason cited	21%
Freeze on permanent worker recruitment	Not common reason cited	18%
Trial for a permanent job	Not common reason cited	17%
Cover for maternity leave	22%	11%

Atkinson et al (1996), Cully et al (1999) and McGregor and Sproull (1992) all give a good quantitative analysis of the types of reasons that agency workers may be employed. However, the problem with all of these studies is that they do not elicit the exact conditions of why employers use agency or other types of temporary workers. In other words, if agency workers are used for short-term cover is this to cover permanent workers and if so at what level of the company are these workers employed? The research may give broad reasons for why employers use agency or other temporary workers but this research does not explain the why and in what precise circumstances these workers are used. In this regard, it is proposed that after the main

quantitative questionnaire has been used in this study, further qualitative information is elicited from the third party employers of agency workers. This will serve to add additional information on the main topics of the thesis as well as giving further information about the reasons why employers use agency workers.

3.2.3 Differences between agency workers and other temporary workers

From the above, it seems that agency workers are temporary workers, however they are employed for different reasons as compared with other temporary workers. Many studies use the global term of temporary workers and yet only use agency workers in their research, especially in the US (Feldman, Doeringhaus, and Turnley, 1995; Rogers, 1995). Indeed, McGregor and Sproull (1992) commented that some studies have not even reported in their methodology whether they surveyed agency workers or other temporary workers such as contractors. However, does this matter? McGregor and Sproull (1992) examined both agency workers and non-agency temporary workers and found that agency workers were employed for similar reasons as non-agency temporary workers as seen above. They therefore suggested that for "analytical purposes, agency temps (agency workers) are sufficiently similar to other temporary workers to be treated as a single group" (McGregor and Sproull, 1992, pp.227-228). However, other authors argued that agency workers were different to other groups of temporary workers (Braff, 1997; Casey, 1988; Cohany, 1998; Rasell and Appelbaum, 1997; Tremlett and Collins, 1999). For instance, Rasell and Appelbaum (1997) examined non-standard work arrangements in the US and found distinct differences between agency workers and non-agency workers on a number of variables including wages and job quality. Also in the US, Cohany (1998) concluded that classifications of temporary workers such as agency workers and contractors were different from each other. Indeed, agency workers had a greater amount of job insecurity and a lower level of job satisfaction than many of the other non-agency temporary workers especially independent contractors (Cohany, 1998).

By contrast, UK findings disputed that agency workers were any worse off than other temporary workers. Casey (1988) analysed worker demographic differences and conjectured that variables such as job security may be different between permanent workers, agency workers and non-agency workers. Indeed, in direct contrast to the findings of Cohany (1998), Casey (1988) suggested that:

“Agency workers are likely to enjoy a higher degree of employment security than many members of the ‘standard’ workforce.” (Casey, 1988; p.92)

In other words, agency workers were likely to be more secure in their successive assignments than both other temporary workers and indeed permanent workers as although individual assignments may come to an end, the employment agency will supply the worker with a continual stream of work. Thus, the agency worker could be constantly employed though they move from job to job. However, Casey's (1988) research was based on the 1984 Labour Force Survey, which is over 18 years ago and completed in a fluctuating economic period (Golden and Appelbaum, 1992). It is useful therefore, to examine whether differences between agency workers, non-agency workers and permanent workers still exist. In this regard, the Labour Force Survey conducted in the winter of 1998 was analysed, to provide a snapshot of data detailing the demographic, economic and social variables of workers in an economic period before the main questionnaire survey was launched.

3.2.4 Independent analysis of the winter 1998 Labour Force Survey

The winter 1998 Labour Force Survey (LFS) surveyed 56,322 workers personally or by proxy split into the following categories:

- 92.57% of workers were permanent workers (N= 52,138)
- 7.43% of workers were temporary workers (N= 4,184) comprising of:
 - 0.94% of workers were agency workers (N=529)
 - 6.49% of workers were non-agency temporary workers (N=3,655)

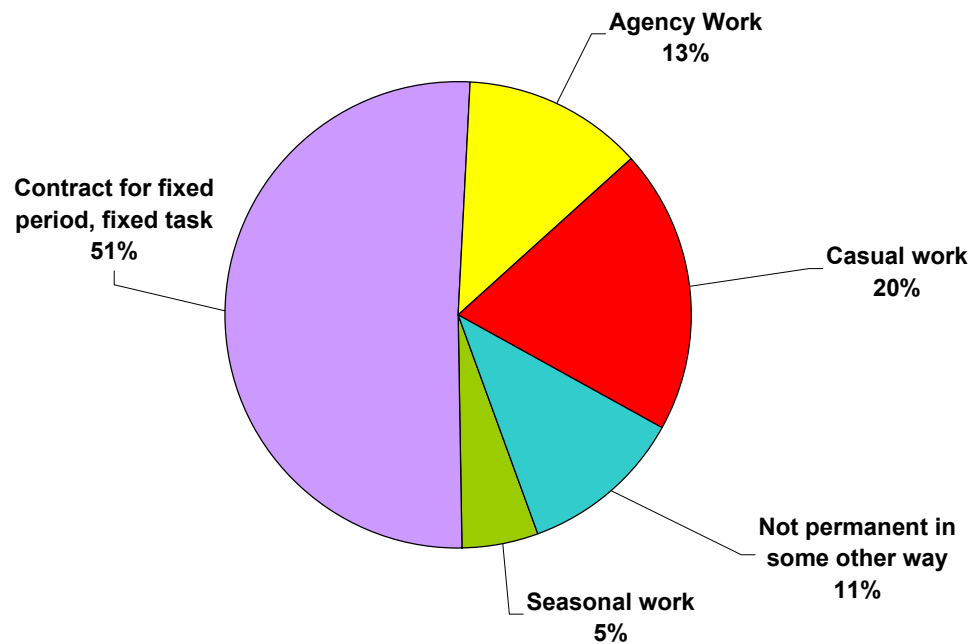
The research then analysed demographic, economic and social variables in order to investigate any variance between the different types of worker. Variables analysed included age, sex, ethnic origin, reasons for working in a temporary job, social stratification, geographical distribution, educational attainment and hourly pay.

3.2.4.1 The extent of agency workers in the UK

In examining the employers use of agency workers an estimate of the extent of their use and the use of other temporary workers was given. Nevertheless, the extent to which the working population were employed as agency workers or other types of temporary workers could not be ascertained from this data. Consequently the extent of temporary workers was calculated as above to be 7.43% of workers. This suggests, as this survey is representative of the UK working population, that a little under 8% of the UK working population were employed under a temporary contract. The LFS further breaks down temporary workers into five categories agency workers, fixed term contractors, casual workers, seasonal workers and other types of

temporary worker as shown in Figure 3.2. Out of these temporary workers, agency workers represents the third largest group meaning that just under 1% of the working UK population were employed as agency workers.

Figure 3.2: LFS classifications of temporary workers

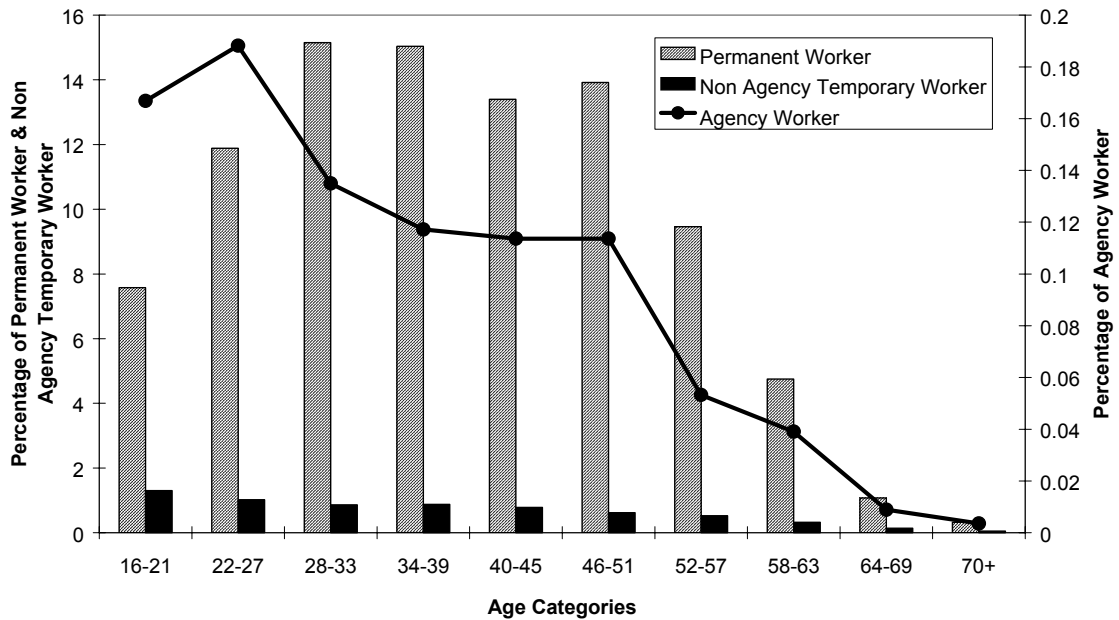


Data taken from the winter 1998 LFS (Crown Copyright, 1998. Used by permission of the Office of National Statistics).

3.2.4.2 Age differences between workers

Age was an interesting variable to study in the LFS due to a number of researchers (Feldman, Doerpinghaus, and Turnley, 1994; Hipple and Stewart, 1996; Polivka, 1996a) stating that both agency workers and non-agency temporary workers were younger than permanent workers. Age of the worker was analysed by splitting them into ten categories, spanning five years, ranging from 16 years old to seventy years old and above as shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Distribution of permanent workers, agency workers and non-agency temporary workers by age



Data taken from the winter 1998 LFS (Crown Copyright, 1998. Used by permission of the Office of National Statistics).

The LFS data showed that there were marked differences between the ages of permanent workers, agency workers and non-agency temporary workers (See Figure 3.3). Permanent workers were evenly spread in age categories peaking in the 28 to 33 age category with the distribution of age for both agency workers and non-agency temporary workers being skewed towards the younger age categories.

Of the whole workers sample ($n=56,322$) 0.94% were agency workers of which 0.36% were in the two youngest age categories below 28 (i.e., 38% of agency workers are below 28). Similar findings were found with non-agency temporary workers whereby 6.49% of all workers were non-agency temporary workers of which 2.32% were under the age of 28 (i.e., 36% of non-agency temporary workers are below 28). After these age categories, the amount of both non-agency temporary workers and agency workers declined rapidly as shown in Figure 3.3. A Chi-square test found age differences to be statistically significant between the category of workers ($p<0.01$) suggesting temporary workers, which include agency workers, tended to be younger than permanent workers, a finding that has been replicated in other UK (Casey, 1988) and international research (Polivka, 1996a). Agency workers tended to be slightly older in age compared with non-agency temporary workers peaking in the 22 to 27 years of age bracket

(0.19% of 0.94%) compared with non-agency temporary workers who peaked in the earlier age bracket of 16 to 21 years of age (1.3% of 6.49%). A difference between workers therefore existed with age suggesting that permanent workers, agency workers and non-agency temporary workers have different age profiles.

3.2.4.3 Sex differences between workers

Table 3.3 shows the sex differences between the different categories of workers. Differences between workers being statistically significant using a chi-square test ($p < 0.01$).

Table 3.3: Sex differences between workers

	Category of worker			
Sex	Permanent Worker	Agency Worker	Non Agency Temporary Worker	Totals
Male	47.56%	0.43%	2.74%	50.73%
Female	45.01%	0.51%	3.75%	49.27%
Totals	92.57%	0.94%	6.49%	100.00%

Data taken from the winter 1998 LFS (Crown Copyright, 1998. Used by permission of the Office of National Statistics).

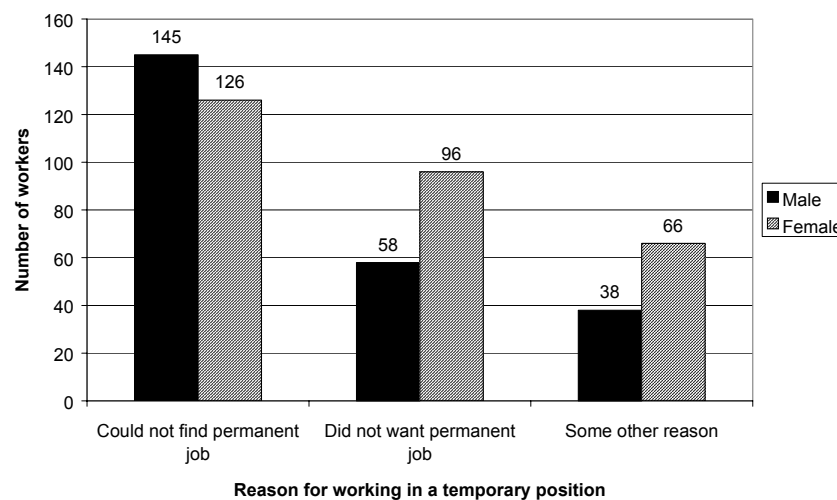
One of the results in the LFS data was there were more male permanent workers (47.56%) than female permanent workers (45.01%). Nevertheless, this was not the case with both agency workers and non-agency workers where there were a higher percentage of females compared to males. Other researchers have also noted this discrepancy between the employment of the sexes (Casey, 1988; Foxley, 1997). Casey stated that “temporary workers are disproportionately women” (Casey, 1988 p.24). Foxley (1997) also noted that in Holland, when temporary employment was increased, there was a subsequent increase in the employment of women. Some researchers (Albert and Bradley, 1998; Rogers, 1995; Rogers and Henson, 1997) argued that the reason why women take up temporary employment was because of their weaker position in employment compared to men. Casey (1988) also argued that because of the industrial and occupational nature of temporary jobs, women were more likely to be employed in low-paid, casual and seasonal jobs as compared with men.

3.2.4.4 Sex differences in voluntary/involuntary work status

A number of authors (Bole, 1999; Ellingson, Gruys and Sackett, 1998; Polivka, 1996b) suggested that the reason for working as a temporary worker can class workers as being in voluntary temporary employment and involuntary temporary employment. In this regard, voluntary temporary employment is a situation when a worker does not want a permanent job and involuntary temporary employment is when a temporary worker cannot find a permanent

job. Ellingson et al (1998) noted this was a rather crude definition of voluntary and involuntary temporary working. Nevertheless, as this variable already existed in the LFS it could classify voluntary and involuntary temporary workers out of the male and female worker samples. Feldman et al (1995) found that in the US more women than men were likely to be voluntary agency workers and less likely to be looking for permanent work. The data from the LFS, as shown in Figure 3.4, confirmed this research finding in the UK whereby 96 women as opposed to 58 men did not want a permanent job and as such were working on a voluntary basis (shown to be significant in a Chi-square test).

Figure 3.4: The differences between agency worker sex in terms of voluntary and involuntary temporary worker status



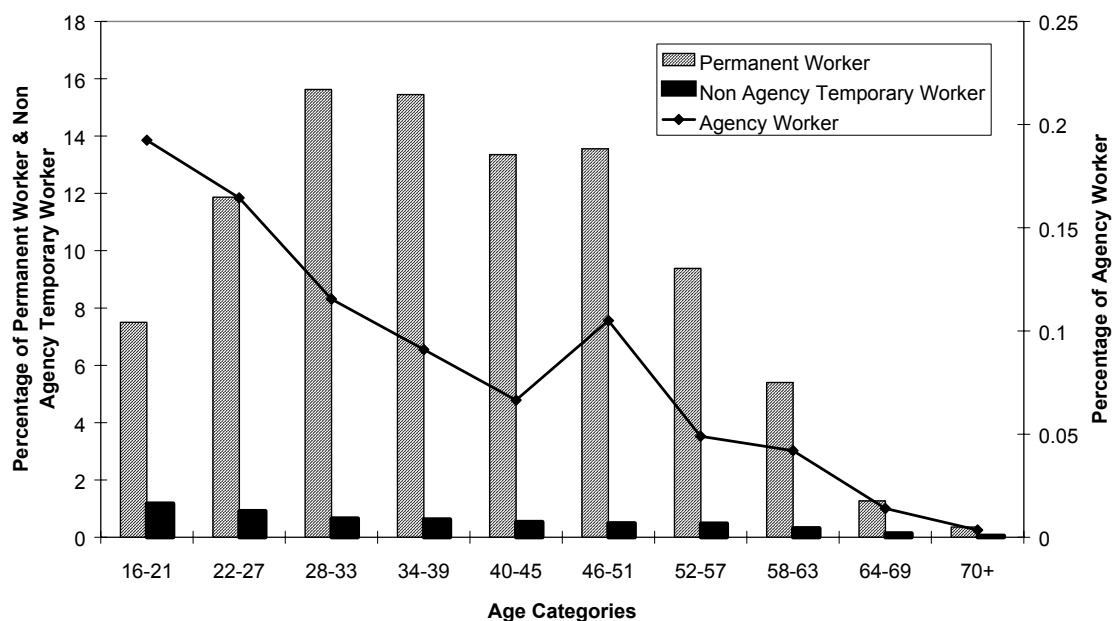
Data taken from the winter 1998 LFS (Crown Copyright, 1998. Used by permission of the Office of National Statistics).

Nevertheless, although the findings of Feldman et al (1995) were confirmed in the Labour Force Survey data there may be other reasons for the greater number of voluntary female agency workers. One reason may be that women cannot get a suitable permanent job that caters for their personal employment needs. In this respect, the women may have stopped searching for a permanent position mainly because no suitable permanent work is ever likely to be available. Therefore, although there were a greater proportion of voluntary female agency workers, one cannot say whether this was because women enjoy agency work to a greater degree than men enjoy agency work. Nevertheless, what was clear from the LFS data was that a greater number of women were employed as agency workers and non-agency temporary workers as compared with men who were more likely employed on a permanent basis.

3.2.4.5 Age differences between male and female workers

The thesis has now examined both age and sex of workers, however, it is interesting to see these combined as reportedly more women are attracted to this type of work later in their careers (Albert and Bradley, 1998). Figure 3.5 shows the percentage of male agency workers, male non-agency temporary workers and male permanent worker at the age categories previously specified. The percentage of workers in the different worker categories was similar to the patterns found in comparing age and type of worker. Again, the permanent workers age category was normally distributed but both the agency workers and non-agency temporary workers were skewed towards having a large number of young people.

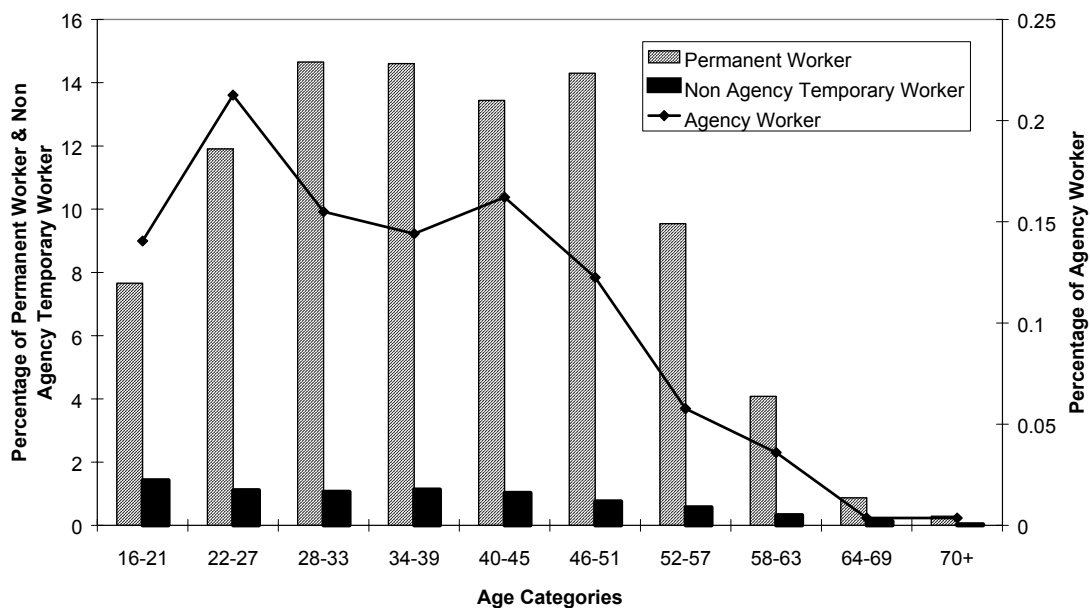
Figure 3.5: Age categories of male workers



Data taken from the winter 1998 LFS (Crown Copyright, 1998. Used by permission of the Office of National Statistics)

The percentage of different workers in the age category for males was similar to the percentage of different workers in the age category for both sexes. In analysing the female workers in the different age categories a significant difference ($p < 0.01$) was found between the male and female age groups within the agency workers. Figure 3.6 shows a graphical representation of the different worker categories against the age categories for female workers. Both the permanent worker and non-agency temporary worker follow the same patterns as found with both sexes and age category. Nevertheless, the percentage of female agency workers in the age category was different to the patterns previously found in that the percentages were more normally distributed and less skewed towards the young 16-21 year old age category.

Figure 3.6: Age categories of female workers



Data taken from the winter 1998 LFS (Crown Copyright, 1998. Used by permission of the Office of National Statistics)

This research finding suggests that women tended to be employed as agency workers throughout their career as opposed to men who were more likely to be employed as agency workers earlier in their career and then move to permanent jobs. Possible reasons for this difference in employment between the sexes may consist of a working mother's need for flexibility (Feldman et al, 1994) the disadvantaged status women have in the labour market (Rogers 1995; Albert and Bradley, 1998) the greater the control over working women may have being an agency worker (Albert and Bradley, 1998) or the inherent nature of female employment (Casey, 1988).

3.2.4.6 Reasons for undertaking temporary work (Voluntary/Involuntary work status)

As seen above, the LFS asks all temporary workers about the voluntary and involuntary nature of their work. Workers that did not want a permanent job were working on a voluntary basis, whereby workers that could not find a permanent job were working on an involuntary basis. Over a third of temporary workers were working in a temporary job on an involuntary basis. This was especially noted within agency workers a greater proportion of whom were employed on an involuntary basis compared with non-agency temporary workers (See Table 3.4). This was also noticeable in the below 22 age category where agency workers were more likely to be employed on an involuntary basis as opposed to non-agency. This data would suggest again that agency workers and non-agency temporary workers were different in that the reasons for taking up temporary work were dissimilar and that earlier on in a person's career, agency work was

more likely to be performed on an involuntary basis as opposed to other forms of temporary work.

Table 3.4: Reasons for temporary worker status

Reason for working in a temporary position	Permanent Worker	Agency Worker	Non Agency Temporary Worker	Total
Contract including training	0.00%	0.01%	0.42%	0.43%
Could not find permanent job	0.00%	0.48%	2.30%	2.78%
Did not want permanent job	0.00%	0.27%	1.91%	2.18%
Some other reason	0.00%	0.18%	1.86%	2.04%
Missing Cases	92.57%	0.00%	0.00%	92.57%
Totals	92.57%	0.94%	6.49%	100.00%

Data taken from the winter 1998 LFS (Crown Copyright, 1998. Used by permission of the Office of National Statistics)

3.2.4.7 Educational differences between workers

Table 3.5 shows the differences between workers on education attendance rates. Non-agency temporary workers were twice as likely to attend an education course compared with both agency workers and permanent workers. The higher number of non-agency temporary workers enrolled on an education course may account for the higher numbers of workers that did not want a permanent job. A clear finding from the data was that the level of attending education courses was very similar between the agency workers and permanent workers but not similar to non-agency temporary workers. These findings may suggest that temporary workers attending an educational course were much more likely to be employed as non-agency temporary workers than they were as agency workers.

Table 3.5: All workers enrolled on a full time or part time course

Category of Worker	No of workers enrolled on an education course.		
	Yes	No	Total
Permanent Worker	9.84%	82.66%	92.50%
Agency Worker	0.14%	0.80%	0.94%
Non Agency Temporary Worker	1.64%	4.84%	6.48%
Missing Cases			0.08%
Total	11.62%	88.30%	100.00%

Data taken from the winter 1998 LFS (Crown Copyright, 1998. Used by permission of the Office of National Statistics).

Nollen (1996) found temporary workers in the United States (US) had a lower educational attainment than permanent workers. Table 3.6 shows the educational attainment of UK workers assessed by the highest level of qualification received.

Table 3.6: Educational attainment of workers

Highest Qualification awarded to worker	Permanent Worker	Agency Worker	Non Agency Temporary Worker	Total
Higher degree	3.23%	0.03%	0.56%	3.82%
First degree	8.39%	0.09%	0.92%	9.40%
A level or equivalent	5.70%	0.07%	0.50%	6.27%
O level, GCSE grade A-C or equivalent	18.28%	0.20%	1.25%	19.73%
CSE below grade1, GCSE below grade C	3.94%	0.04%	0.21%	4.19%
Other highest qualification	39.62%	0.41%	2.35%	42.38%
No qualifications	12.58%	0.09%	0.66%	13.33%
Don't know	0.76%	0.01%	0.03%	0.80%
Missing	0.07%	0.00%	0.01%	0.08%
Total	92.57%	0.94%	6.49%	100.00%

Data taken from the winter 1998 LFS (Crown Copyright, 1998. Used by permission of the Office of National Statistics).

Significant differences ($p < 0.01$) using a chi-square test were found between workers and educational attainment categories. Non-agency temporary workers were the most highly qualified group of workers with agency workers and permanent workers being very similar in qualifications (aside from permanent workers having a higher proportional percentage of individuals with no qualifications compared with agency workers). This finding contradicted Nollen (1996) suggesting non-agency temporary workers had the highest educational attainment out of all the different types of workers. This finding may be due to the increasing number of well-qualified contractors and interim managers in the non-agency temporary worker category (Boudette, 1989; Dinte 1995). It may also be due to an increasing number of students taking non-agency temporary work to fund their courses or due to graduates not finding appropriate permanent work in the UK (Mason, 1996).

3.2.4.8 Ethnic differences between workers

The LFS categorised ethnic background into several types including White, Black (Caribbean), Black (African), Black (Other Black Groups), Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese and Other Ethnic Backgrounds. A number of workers ($n=56,313$) responded to this question with only 9 missing cases in total (0.02%), out of all the workers 95.64% class themselves as white leaving 4.34% in other ethnic groups. Table 3.7 shows the percentage breakdown of ethnic origin amongst all types of workers processed into two categories of ethnic origin consisting of “white” and “other ethnic groups”.

Table 3.7: Worker ethnic origin

Ethnic origin	Permanent Worker	Agency Worker	Non Agency Temporary Worker	Totals
White	88.78%	0.83%	6.03%	95.64%
Other ethnic groups	3.77%	0.11%	0.46%	4.34%
Missing Cases	0.02%	0.00%	0.00%	0.02%
Totals	92.57%	0.94%	6.49%	100.00%

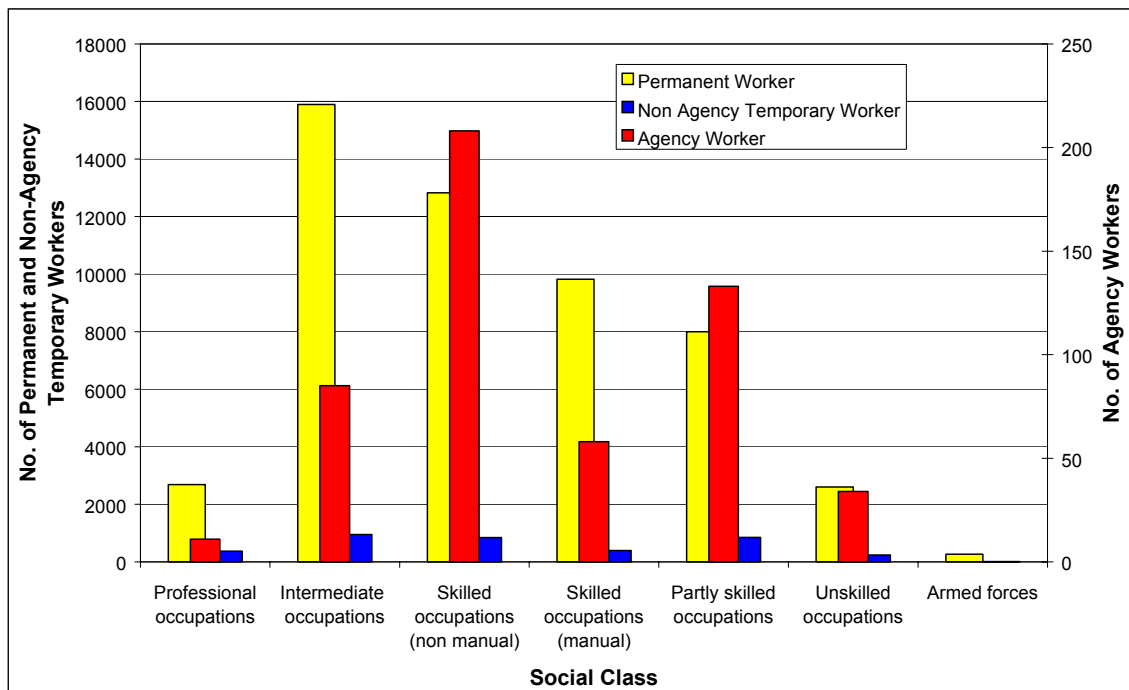
Data taken from the winter 1998 LFS (Crown Copyright, 1998. Used by permission of the Office of National Statistics)

Clear differences between workers emerged from the LFS data, with both agency workers and non-agency temporary workers having a higher percentage of workers proportionately in the other ethnic groups category compared with permanent workers. In addition, agency workers also had a higher proportion of individuals in the other ethnic groups category than non-agency temporary workers. This finding has been replicated abroad in the US, where Nollen (1996) found a greater number of temporary workers in the ethnic minorities compared with permanent workers. Polivka (1996a) also discovered the same results whereby contingent workers (which include part-time workers in addition to temporary workers) were more likely to be from an ethnic minority compared with permanent workers. Nollen (1996) stated that temporary work allows employees from an ethnic minority background to enter the world of work gaining invaluable work experience. This work experience can then be used in gaining permanent employment. Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley (1990) studied the relationship between race, organisational experience, job performance and career outcomes and found that people from an Afro-Caribbean background felt less acceptance in their careers than Caucasians. It may therefore be argued that dissatisfied with permanent work individuals from an ethnic minority background seek out temporary work where they may be more satisfied. The reverse of this may also be the case whereby individuals in the other ethnic origin category are used by organisations as cheap sources of labour.

3.2.4.9 Occupational categories of workers

The LFS stratified respondents in the following occupational categories: professional, intermediate, skilled (non-manual and manual), partly skilled, unskilled and armed forces. Figure 3.7 displays clear differences between occupational categories.

Figure 3.7: Occupational categories of workers



Data taken from the winter 1998 LFS (Crown Copyright, 1998. Used by permission of the Office of National Statistics)

Agency workers dominated the non-manual skilled occupations with over a third of all agency workers (0.37% of all workers) being employed in an office, clerical or secretarial role. Other surveys (Atkinson, et al, 1996; Casey, 1988; IRS Employment Trends, 1990) replicated this finding. Agency workers were also slightly more common than non-agency temporary workers in the partly skilled social stratification but were similarly employed in the manual skilled occupations (See Table 3.8). The jobs in these social stratifications include factory supervisors, assembly line workers, and warehouse workers. Specialist employment agencies such as Blue Arrow specialise in this type of manual skilled and partly skilled work. Nevertheless, agency workers did not dominate this social stratification as compared with the non-manual skilled occupations.

Table 3.8: Occupation category by worker

Occupational Category	Permanent Worker	Agency Worker	Non Agency Temporary Worker	Total
Professional occupations	4.77%	0.02%	0.65%	5.44%
Intermediate occupations	28.23%	0.15%	1.69%	30.07%
Skilled occupations (non manual)	22.77%	0.37%	1.49%	24.63%
Skilled occupations (manual)	17.43%	0.10%	0.70%	18.24%
Partly skilled occupations	14.20%	0.24%	1.51%	15.94%
Unskilled occupations	4.61%	0.06%	0.42%	5.10%
Armed forces	0.47%	0.00%	0.01%	0.48%
Missing cases	0.09%	0.00%	0.01%	0.10%
Totals of Columns	92.57%	0.94%	6.49%	100.00%

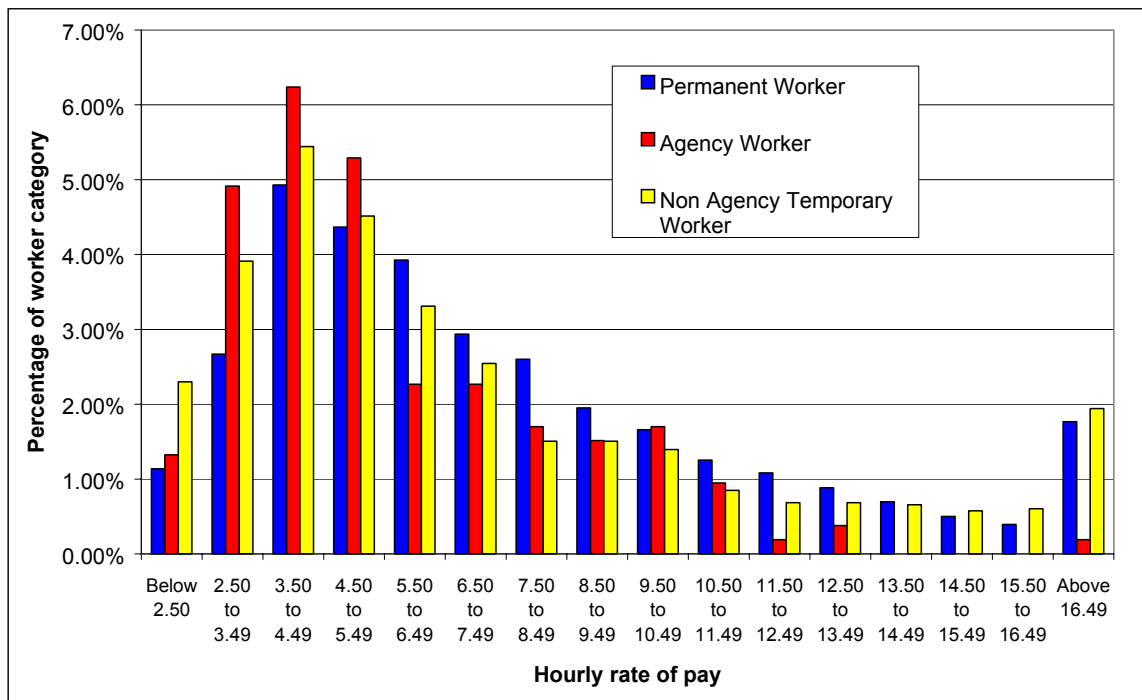
Data taken from the winter 1998 LFS (Crown Copyright, 1998. Used by permission of the Office of National Statistics)

A surprising finding in the LFS data was the percentage of non-agency temporary workers in the professional social stratification. Table 3.8 clearly shows that 0.65% of workers (10% of non-agency temporary workers) were employed in the professional social classification category. This interesting finding supports research suggesting professionals, such as interim managers and accountants, were employed on a non-agency temporary contract (Brown, 1990; Dinte, 1995; Overman, 1993). Permanent workers dominated the intermediate occupational category being employed in jobs such as computer specialists, teachers and nurses. Nevertheless, 25% of non-agency temporary workers (1.69% of all workers) were also employed in this category possibly because they bring a company specialist skills that would be hard to find in permanent workers without additional training costs. Indeed, traditional intermediate occupations such as nursing are increasingly using temporary workers especially in the US (Porter, 1996).

3.2.4.10 Pay differences between workers

Pay differences were noted between permanent workers, agency workers and non-agency workers being significantly different using a chi-square test ($p < 0.01$). All pay questions for workers were badly answered by respondents with only a third ($n=18,411$) of workers answering this question. This may mean that this data was not as representative as other data presented in this chapter. Figure 3.8 represents the hourly wage rates in the worker categories of the LFS. Percentages were calculated, in order to analyse differences in pay between the different worker categories.

Figure 3.8: Pay differences between workers



Data taken from the winter 1998 LFS (Crown Copyright, 1998. Used by permission of the Office of National Statistics)

Differences between the hourly rates of pay for permanent workers and non-agency temporary workers were fairly minimal. Indeed the median wage for both of these groups was exactly £5.00 an hour. Agency workers were different to both permanent workers and non-agency temporary workers in that they appeared more frequently in the lesser paid categories (See Figure 3.8). The median hourly wage for agency workers also reflects this finding as it was lower than the other worker categories at £4.00 an hour. Agency workers were therefore the lowest paid category compared to all other workers.

3.2.4.11 Geographical spread of workers

Geographical location of agency workers was investigated to see if there were more agency workers in a particular geographical area. The geographical areas examined by the LFS were combined to provide an overall view of the following geographical regions:

- Northern England, which included areas: Tyne & Wear, Yorkshire, Humberside, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and the rest of the North West and northern region of England.
- South East England, including Inner London, Outer London and the rest of the South East

- South West England,
- Wales,
- Midlands, which includes West Midlands (metropolitan county) and the rest of the Midlands area.
- East Anglia,
- Scotland,
- and Northern Ireland.

Considerable differences in the geographical distribution of workers were found in the LFS data (See Table 3.9). The most notable difference concerned agency workers where over a third of them (0.35% of all workers) were located in South East England. Casey (1988) commented that the higher concentration of agency workers in South East England may be caused by a shortage of clerical and secretarial workers in this region. Another important difference between the categories of workers was found in the North of England where agency workers were not as well represented compared with other workers.

Table 3.9: Percentage of worker population in specific geographical locations

Geographical Location	Permanent Worker	Agency Worker	Non Agency Temporary Worker	Totals
Northern England	22.05%	0.18%	1.51%	23.74%
South East England	22.38%	0.35%	1.63%	24.36%
South West England	7.62%	0.08%	0.56%	8.26%
Midlands	15.71%	0.14%	0.94%	16.79%
Wales	4.01%	0.02%	0.36%	4.39%
Eastern	9.01%	0.10%	0.56%	9.67%
Scotland	8.56%	0.06%	0.70%	9.32%
Northern Ireland	3.23%	0.01%	0.23%	3.47%
Totals	92.57%	0.94%	6.49%	100.00%

Data taken from the winter 1998 LFS (Crown Copyright, 1998. Used by permission of the Office of National Statistics)

3.2.4.12 Labour Force Survey conclusions

Differences between workers in the 1998 Labour Force Survey suggested that permanent workers, agency workers and non-agency temporary workers were all very distinct in nature with differences observed in:

1. Age, with temporary workers especially non-agency temporary workers being younger than permanent workers).
2. Gender with a greater number of women employed as temporary workers (both agency and non-agency temporary workers).
3. Age and gender together, females were more likely employed as agency workers throughout their careers as opposed to males who would take all forms of temporary employment (including agency work) earlier in their careers.
4. Ethnic origin, with agency workers having the highest percentage of workers from the ethnic minorities.
5. Voluntary basis of working, with more agency workers more predisposed to working on an involuntary basis than non-agency temporary workers.
6. Occupational classification, with agency workers predominantly employed in non-manual skilled occupations such as office and clerical work. Permanent workers spread throughout all occupational classifications and non-agency temporary workers prominent in the professional social stratification.
7. Pay, agency workers being the least well paid earning less than both non-agency temporary workers and permanent workers.
8. Geography, with a third of all agency workers employed in South East England whereas the geographical spread of non-agency temporary workers and permanent workers was more even.
9. Educational attainment, with non-agency temporary workers having the highest educational attainment and agency workers and permanent workers having similar levels of educational attainment.

These results add further evidence to the view that agency workers are very different to non-agency temporary workers and permanent workers.

3.2.5 Conclusions on differences between workers

Definitions of permanent and temporary workers suggest they are different in terms of terminology and the notion of permanence. Agency workers were defined as a distinct type of temporary worker, who have a unique relationship with an employment agency and a third party employing organisation. Evidence taken from the Labour Force Survey suggested that agency

workers were inherently different to non-agency temporary workers and permanent workers. This finding disputes the claim by McGregor and Sproull (1992) that agency workers were a representative sample of all temporary workers. Indeed, this Chapter has so far shown that agency workers are a unique group of temporary workers, worthy of study in their own right and that conclusions that are drawn from an agency worker sample may not necessarily apply to other temporary worker populations and that conclusions drawn from other temporary worker populations may not necessarily apply to agency workers.

3.3 AGENCY WORKER JOB SATISFACTION

Now that a review of differences between workers has been completed, job satisfaction as it relates to agency workers or is different between workers can now be examined. In the last chapter, a job satisfaction model was introduced that had antecedents (skill variety, autonomy, feedback, task identity, task significance, organisational commitment, organisational constraints, worker relationship, role variables, work-family conflict, harassment, personality, voluntary and involuntary work status), job satisfaction (recorded as a single measure of happiness with a job and a multi-faceted item) and consequences (withdrawal behaviour, counterproductive behaviour, psychological and physical well-being and life satisfaction). Yet, it would be hard to include all of these variables in the research design. Thus, a selection process is needed to select the best variables to be included in the research. This section will outline this process of selection.

3.3.1 Agency worker job satisfaction, facet or single concept?

Job satisfaction was discussed in the last chapter both as a facet-based and as a single concept. It was decided that a general measure of job satisfaction was superior to a combination of job satisfaction facets due to the time differential between influencing a job satisfaction facet and the effect on job satisfaction in general. In addition, it was proposed that an individual may not put particular importance on some of the job satisfaction facets. Thus, to use a measure that combined a number of job satisfaction facets may over represent unimportant facets and under represent important job satisfaction facets. Consequently, a general measure of job satisfaction will be used both in observing variables related to it in the agency worker sample (relational hypotheses) and for investigating differences between workers (differential hypotheses).

Yet, before moving on to discuss the variables relating to this general measure of job satisfaction, were there any job satisfaction facets shown in the agency worker literature to be of particular importance? Indeed, satisfaction with growth, satisfaction with pay and satisfaction

with job security seemed to be important in both agency worker job satisfaction and in the differences between agency workers and permanent workers (Allan and Sienko, 1997; Feldman et al, 1995; Hipple and Stewart, 1996; Reed, 1992). Agency workers in the US have been known to receive little personal growth as a result of their employment suggesting that satisfaction with growth may be an important variable to include in this thesis (Feldman et al, 1995). Satisfaction with pay may also be important to agency workers (Reed, 1992) as disparities between the pay of workers were noted in the 1998 Labour Force Survey showing agency workers to be the worst paid of all workers (although it is noted that agency workers performed roles in a limited number of occupations). Job security satisfaction is also likely to be fairly poor in agency workers given their precarious employment and indeed this variable is likely to be very different between permanent workers and agency workers and as such will be discussed when examining the differences between these workers below in the differential hypotheses section. These job satisfactions facets are important in their own right and as such should be included in the questionnaire if space permits. However, no specific hypotheses will be made about these variables with the exception of job security satisfaction, which will be discussed below.

3.3.2 Antecedents or consequences of job satisfaction?

Figure 2.13 listed a number of antecedents and consequences all of which would be interesting to study. Yet, the limitations of the research design would not allow a thorough analysis of all these variables. Consequently, a decision had to be made whether to investigate variables thought to be predominantly antecedents or consequences of job satisfaction. Antecedents were chosen over consequences as one of the reasons for this thesis was to investigate those factors that lead to feelings of contentment within agency workers about their job. This clearly declares that job satisfaction antecedents should be investigated. Thus, job satisfaction antecedents specific to agency workers will now be discussed forming the relational hypotheses in the thesis. Consequences of job satisfaction will no longer be investigated although they will be discussed in light of the research findings in the discussion and conclusion chapters (Chapter 9 and 10).

3.4 AGENCY WORKER JOB SATISFACTION ANTECEDENTS

Logic suggests that many of the antecedents stated in the last chapter are likely to have an influence on agency worker job satisfaction. These variables will now be discussed, set against a

background of studies that have examined agency workers or similar types of workers if literature on the former does not exist.

3.4.1 Skill variety

Skill variety, see previous chapter, involved the use of different skills in a job and at an optimal amount may contribute towards job satisfaction. Many researchers (Brotherton, 1995; Burt and March, 1995; Digh, 1998; Feldman et al, 1994; Filipczak, 1996; Frazee, 1997; Lenz, 1996) have argued that temporary work gives temporary workers and agency workers opportunities to gain a variety of work based skills. Lenz (1996), for example, found some temporary assignments gave agency workers the chance to practice IT related skills, skills originally taught in the employment agency (Karon, 1986; Pepper, 1986; Straube, 1985). A number of researchers (Casey, 1988; Atkinson, Rick, Morris and Williams, 1996) also argued that temporary work gives workers an opportunity to gain permanent work by providing the skills needed to secure permanent employment. Agency workers may therefore be given the opportunity to gain and practice work based skills suggesting a high degree of skill variety in agency worker assignments.

Studies examining agency worker or temporary worker skills illustrated that temporary assignments can have low or high levels of skill variety (Alfred Marks Bureau Ltd, 1982; Nollen, 1996; Smith, 1998). Nollen (1996) found temporary work assignments require little skill use and have little skill variety. Smith (1998) also found similar assignments but stated that these vary according to the job. Indeed, in some assignments, she found temporary workers with high levels of skill variety, performing such tasks as the assembly of large equipment from start to finish. Skill variety may consequently vary, dependent on the agency worker's assignment, however does it effect job satisfaction in agency workers? Rogers (1995) conducted qualitative research with 13 US-based agency workers and found that low levels of skill variety, which she argued is inherent in all agency work, was associated with negative feelings and low job satisfaction. Other researchers (Henson, 1996; Smith, 1998) maintained that mundane jobs with little skill variety were likely to lead towards low job satisfaction in agency workers. Skill variety is consequently a likely antecedent of agency worker job satisfaction.

Skill variety as detailed in Chapter 2 was likely to have a curvilinear relationship with job satisfaction, whereby there is an optimum level of skill variety associated with job satisfaction after which job satisfaction declines as skill variety increases. Yet, agency workers, as research suggested, were probably at the bottom of the skill variety curve with a low level of skill variety. Thus, any increase in skill variety is likely to have a positive outcome on job satisfaction and so

have more of an impact upon agency worker job satisfaction as opposed to other workers with higher levels of skill variety. This reasoning, coupled with the relationship between the two variables, leads to the first hypothesis in the thesis that:

H1. Skill variety has a positive relationship with agency worker job satisfaction

Skill variety is thus hypothesised to have a positive relationship with agency worker job satisfaction. Further evidence presented later in this chapter will also examine the possible differences between skill variety of agency and permanent workers.

3.4.2 Autonomy

Autonomy is the freedom to pace and control tasks at work. Autonomy was seen, as explored in the previous chapter, to contribute towards job satisfaction. Nevertheless, few studies have explored autonomy in agency workers. Caudron (1995) interviewed an undisclosed number of temporary workers, representatives of the National Association of Temporary and Staffing Services (US professional body for employment agencies) and employers, examining motivation within temporary workers. She found that several issues, inclusive of equal autonomy between agency workers and permanent workers were likely to influence both the motivation and job satisfaction of temporary workers. Nevertheless, this study does not specifically address job satisfaction so the exact link between autonomy and job satisfaction is difficult to calculate. The study was also based on temporary workers rather than the narrower definition of agency workers so again there were limitations in applying this research to the thesis.

However, in the US, Allan and Sienko (1997) analysed differences in job characteristics between 48 contingent workers (inclusive of agency workers, non-agency workers and part-time workers) and 149 permanent workers. They suggested that although autonomy may lead to job satisfaction in workers, no significant differences were noted between workers in autonomy or job satisfaction. This suggests that autonomy has little to do with the job satisfaction of contingent workers. However, this study was limited as their contingent workers sample included workers other than agency workers. Hence, the influence that autonomy has on job satisfaction in agency workers was not fully explored in this study.

Autonomy may therefore not be an important variable contributing towards an agency worker's job satisfaction as shown by Allan and Sienko (1997). Yet, as autonomy forms part of Hackman and Oldham's (1975) model, a model rejected in Chapter 2 based on more recent research, it is proposed that autonomy is a variable that is tested in the research design to ensure that the

rejection of Hackman and Oldham's (1975) model is justifiable in favour of a research model presented in this thesis.

3.4.3 Feedback

Feedback relates to information given to a worker on their performance of a particular task or job. This variable again forms part of Hackman and Oldham's (1975) job characteristics model. Two pieces of research specifically on US agency workers (Henson, 1996; Newton, 1996) stated that feedback from the job may influence the job satisfaction of agency workers to a greater extent than other permanent employees.

Kevin Henson (1996) published an outstanding piece of research on US-based agency workers. He used participant-observation techniques, while working as an agency worker, supported by qualitative interviews with 35 agency workers. He found that agency workers did not receive feedback from the job as third party employing organisations tended to withhold knowledge on job performance in order to control the agency workers. Managers from organisations employing agency workers specifically thought that if agency workers knew they were performing well they may slow down their performance or slack in their productivity (Henson, 1996). Newton (1996) also conducted a survey of agency workers in the US and found that almost 20% of agency workers were not told about their job performance. Feedback may therefore not be freely given to agency workers even if they expressly request it. Gresham-Pophal (1996) argued that if clear job expectations and performance levels were not given to agency workers then these difficulties may lead to low agency worker job satisfaction.

The lack of feedback given to agency workers, suggested by Henson (1996) and Newton (1996), may have a detrimental effect on job satisfaction. Interestingly, Sias, Kramer and Jenkins (1997) found that US agency workers were less likely to seek appraisal information compared with permanent workers. Agency workers may therefore not request feedback either because they have not received it before or possibly because they are not concerned about their work in the third party organisation. Feedback may influence job satisfaction as suggested by some researchers. Nevertheless, in the preliminary research conducted on former agency workers. Feedback was not mentioned as an important variable leading to job satisfaction. Thus, no hypotheses will be made regarding feedback at this stage, although in a similar fashion to autonomy, feedback will be examined in the research design as a means of testing the Hackman and Oldham's (1975) model in favour of an agency worker specific model of job satisfaction developed in the thesis.

3.4.4 Task identity and task significance

Task identity is the degree to which a job requires completion of an identifiable piece of work and task significance is the meaningfulness of the work being completed. Hackman and Oldham (1975) suggested that jobs with a high degree of task identity and task significance should have positive work outcomes such as high levels of job satisfaction. Yet, Rogers (1995) found that many of the US agency workers she studied had little task identity and task significance as they did not know the purpose of their job, they could not identify finished products of their labour, or could not understand why they were completing particular tasks. Nevertheless, in examining a wider range of contingent workers, Allan and Sienko (1997) disagreed with this suggesting that temporary workers may be given tasks that “enable them to complete whole and identifiable pieces of work” (Allan and Sienko, 1997; p.9). Indeed, they found task identity to be higher in contingency workers than in permanent workers.

Task identity and task significance may vary in agency work as seen by both researchers so will be included as variables in the main research questionnaire. Nevertheless, the support for these variables being powerful contributors of agency worker job satisfaction is not particularly strong and as such, no hypotheses will be made relating these variables together. Yet, as task significance and task identity forms part of Hackman and Oldham’s (1975) model, it is proposed that these are tested to justify the research model developed in this thesis.

3.4.5 Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment, as seen in the last chapter, may be defined as an individual’s feeling of attachment and belonging to an organisation (Cook and Wall, 1980). The organisational commitment of permanent workers may be described as feelings of attachment to their employer and a sharing of that organisation’s goals. The organisational commitment of an agency worker may be rather more complicated as they work for both a third party employing organisation and an employment agency (McClurg, 1999; Newton, 1996; Smith, 1988). However, agency worker organisational commitment may be described as feelings of attachment to both third party employing organisation and to the employment agency.

McClurg (1999) surveyed 200 US-based agency workers in terms of their organisational commitment to the third party employing organisation and to their employment agency. She found that agency workers were slightly more committed to their employment agency than to the third party employing organisation but this was not to a substantial degree. In contrast, Newton (1996) found the reverse of this finding, whereby US agency workers were slightly more

committed to the third party employing organisation than to their employment agency. Furthermore, she maintained that agency workers have a dual commitment where the agency worker could be committed to both the employment agency and the third party employing organisation. McClurg (1999) further argued that this dual commitment was not contradictory, in that being committed to one organisation does not mean not being committed to the other, as both employment agency and third party employing organisation work together for both organisation's needs. The weight of this evidence suggested that agency workers may be committed both to the third party employing organisation and to the employment agency (McClurg, 1999; Newton, 1996). In this regard, a composite measure of organisational commitment will be used in the study that does not divide commitment to the third party employing organisation and commitment to the employment agency.

Given these findings and the conclusions in Chapter 2, it is likely that organisational commitment contributes towards agency workers' job satisfaction as it does towards permanent workers' job satisfaction. Indeed, a high level of organisational commitment may have fewer disadvantages for agency workers than for permanent workers because the expectation of agency workers by the third party employer is not likely to be as high. Consequently, even though an agency worker may show commitment towards an employer, he/she might not be expected to demonstrate organisational citizenship behaviour, staying late to complete tasks, to the same extent as that expected of the permanent workers. It may therefore be that organisational commitment is more of a contributor to agency workers job satisfaction as no negative effects are experienced by agency workers who are committed to the organisation. This leads us to the next hypothesis, which is:

H2. Organisational commitment has a positive relationship with agency worker job satisfaction

However, in the last chapter whether organisational commitment was antecedent to job satisfaction was questioned. It is therefore recommended that in this study, organisational commitment is treated as both reciprocally related and antecedent to job satisfaction. It is therefore proposed that an exploratory factor analysis is undertaken in the study, which should be able to ascertain whether job satisfaction and organisational commitment are distinct variables or whether both of them combine as work outcomes as Lease (1998) suggested.

3.4.6 Organisational constraints

Organisational constraints listed in Chapter 2 included: job-related information, tools and equipment, materials and supplies, task preparation, time availability, work environment, budgetary support and help from others. Job-related information discussed in the previous section on feedback from the job could often be limited to agency workers as Henson (1996) observed. Other organisational constraints influencing job satisfaction were not mentioned in the agency worker literature. Messmer (1994) linked organisational constraints, such as an ill-prepared working environment and lack of task preparation, to the motivation of agency workers. He stated that in organisations that have many organisational constraints, the agency worker was unlikely to be productive or motivated. Organisational constraints may also influence job satisfaction, although no studies have tested a correlation between the two. However, although organisational constraints may influence workers in general as found in Chapter 2, they were probably unlikely to influence agency workers who can leave, as suggested by the preliminary research, if the constraints are high. Organisational constraints will therefore not be examined within the research, as their influence on agency worker job satisfaction is probably minimal. Nevertheless, if this is an important variable it is trusted that by using qualitative interviews to back-up the main quantitative study this relationship will be discovered.

3.4.7 Worker relationship

Worker relationship may be defined as the relationship between agency workers and permanent workers in or out of the office. Worker relationship is likely to play an important role in contributing towards agency worker job satisfaction as a number of researchers have shown (Feldman et al, 1994; Galup and Saunders, 1997; Henson, 1996; Porter, 1995; Smith, 1998). Feldman et al (1994) discovered that one of the primary concerns of USA agency workers was the dehumanizing way they were treated by permanent workers. Rogers (1995) further described this dehumanizing effect as alienation from others, whereby agency workers did not mix socially with permanent workers or indeed other agency workers.

Rogers and Henson (1997) suggested that the relationship between agency workers and permanent workers could become so bad that permanent workers may harass agency workers physically, mentally and even sexually. Agency workers were also excluded from social events that permanent workers were allowed to attend (Rogers, 1995; Smith, 1998) and often agency workers had to stay behind and work, monitoring the phones for instance, while permanent workers were out socialising (Rogers, 1995). Smith (1998) also found that agency workers were commonly excluded from meetings regarding work even if they had a valid contribution to make

at the meeting. Socialising with agency workers by permanent workers was therefore discouraged by both informal arrangements (Rogers, 1995) and formal arrangements (Smith, 1998). Henson (1996) revealed that agency worker assignments with little socialising and a poor worker relationship were the most dissatisfying of all assignments reported, linking together negative worker relationship with negative job satisfaction.

These findings implied that worker relationship was related to agency worker job satisfaction. If a poor worker relationship existed between agency workers and permanent workers then there was likely to be a negative influence on the agency worker's level of job satisfaction (Feldman et al, 1994; Henson, 1996; Rogers, 1995). The reverse of this may also be true that a positive worker relationship may contribute towards a positive level of job satisfaction. Worker relationship was also likely to have more of an influence on agency workers than with permanent workers as agency workers were more likely to be new within an organisation and due to their different employment status may have few friends within the permanent worker population. Both of these conclusions lead us to the next hypothesis being:

H3. Worker relationship has a positive relationship with agency worker job satisfaction

3.4.8 Role variables

Role variables, such as role conflict and role ambiguity, were shown to link with job satisfaction in permanent workers as detailed in Chapter 2. Nonetheless, has any agency worker studies revealed this connection? Sias et al (1997) used a questionnaire based approach to survey 42 temporary workers and 20 newly recruited permanent workers. Interestingly, they found role ambiguity to be negatively correlated to job satisfaction for both groups. However, no differences in role ambiguity were found between the two groups suggesting that role ambiguity was at the same level between temporary workers and permanent workers (who have just started their employment). There were limitations to this study due to the small sample of workers surveyed and to the broad range of temporary workers studied (as this included both agency workers and non-agency temporary workers).

Given the limitations of Sias et al (1997) the question is whether role ambiguity has an influence on the job satisfaction of agency workers? The nature of agency work was found in the skill variety section above to be very simple due to the limited nature of the tasks given to agency workers. In this regard, if role variables are considered then it is unlikely that there is much scope for role conflict or role ambiguity as the tasks they perform are relatively simple. Thus, it

is unlikely that role variables form a major contributor to the job satisfaction of agency workers. Therefore, measures of role variables will not be included in the quantitative research design, however, as with other variables rejected in this review, it is trusted that if these variables are being overlooked the qualitative interviews will assess their consequence on job satisfaction.

3.4.9 Work-family conflict

One of the most cited advantages of agency work was work schedule flexibility (Feldman et al, 1994; Geber, 1993). This flexibility should, in theory, reduce any work-family conflict as an individual can fit their working schedule around their home life. Indeed, Feldman et al (1994) proposed that certain members of society, such as working mothers, can benefit from agency work as a means of employment as they can fit their assignments around home-related obligations. This matter was discussed with former agency workers in the preliminary research where hours were seen as flexible initially when the contract with the third party employing organisation was negotiated and then secondly during the contract in exceptional circumstances, such as attending an interview for a permanent jobs. In addition, two of the five former agency workers, stated they have additional flexibility in their hours within preset tolerances. This meant that they could be quite flexible and arrive late and leave early if they so wished.

This evidence suggests that flexibility is an important advantage in agency work leading to a reduction of work-family conflict and a subsequent increase in job satisfaction. Yet, Rasell and Appelbaum (1997) argued that often the flexibility is on the employer's side. In this regard, if the employer had little work, workers (inclusive of part-time, agency and non-agency temporary workers) can leave early being encouraged to do so by the employer. However, if the employer had a lot of work they were likely to be inflexible and not let workers go home early. This suggests that the flexibility associated with agency work is on the employer's side only. Indeed, although a cited advantage of agency work, flexibility had not been linked with job satisfaction in the agency worker literature. It was sometimes quoted as a reason for undertaking agency work but it was not associated with work outcomes such as job satisfaction. In this regard, the relationship was flexible for the employer not the worker. This notion was supported by the preliminary research as fewer than half of the sample could be flexible, without exceptional reason, in their hours once they had negotiated these. As a result, it is unlikely that agency work is truly flexible for the worker, meaning that agency work has little influence on reducing work-family conflict and as such the effect of this on job satisfaction is likely to be similar to other workers. Thus, as this is not a unique variable associated with agency worker job satisfaction.

This variable will not be explored in the quantitative study although if it is important to agency worker job satisfaction it is likely to arise in the qualitative interviews.

3.4.10 Harassment

Harassment has been associated with job satisfaction in non-agency worker populations as seen in Chapter 2. Rogers and Henson (1997) suggested that with agency workers, sexual harassment was a common occurrence due to their low status and depersonalisation in the workplace. They suggested that sexual harassment was an outgrowth of the organisation of work separating temporary and permanent work rather than one-off cases of individual behaviours. Sexual harassment they argued led agency workers to feel dehumanised so they received little satisfaction from their work. This evidence suggested that the presence of sexual harassment will be associated with decreased job satisfaction.

Nevertheless, differences may exist between US-based agency workers and UK-based agency workers, especially given that UK-based agency workers are protected from sexual harassment by statutory employment law. The preliminary research of this thesis found that one former agency worker, out of the five sampled, had been sexually harassed by a colleague persistently asking her out to dinner. This suggests that Rogers and Henson (1997) may be correct in their assertion that agency workers are likely to be harassed in their everyday work. However, the respondent who had been harassed stated that this was not a strong influence on how she felt about her job. Indeed, the respondent stated the worker relationship between agency workers and permanent workers was more important than harassment on its own. Harassment, may therefore be considered as the ultimate breakdown in worker relationship, whereby, permanent workers feel that they have sexual rights over agency workers. This is an important topic to examine in the thesis and as such specific questions will be designed to ascertain levels of harassment within the agency worker and permanent worker samples. Nevertheless, if low levels of harassment are found no hypothesis will be made linking harassment with agency worker job satisfaction as it is likely that variables such worker relationship may be more relevant in exploring general agency worker job satisfaction antecedents.

3.4.11 Personality

Out of all the antecedents put forward in the previous chapter. Personality is one key variable that has not been examined in the agency worker literature. One study did examine the psychological contract between temporary workers and their employers (Van-Dyne and Ang, 1998) in a sample of 155 professional service workers in Singapore. However, no links were

made in this study between personality variables, such as locus of control and negative affectivity, and agency worker job satisfaction. The measurement of such variables is likely to be fairly problematical in an agency worker population, this is because something like negative affectivity is unlikely to surface in agency workers as they have to adopt the role of the helping hand willing to take on any task (as stated by representatives of the employment agencies surveyed in the preliminary research). Personality will therefore not be included in the quantitative study as a variable of interest although this situation may be reviewed for future studies if it is seen as a factor contributing to agency worker job satisfaction in the qualitative research.

3.4.12 Voluntary/involuntary work status

The most commonly cited individual antecedent relating to agency worker job satisfaction was voluntary/involuntary work status. Any agency worker who could not find a permanent job was deemed to be performing temporary work involuntarily. Agency workers not looking for permanent work were deemed to be performing work on a voluntary basis. Ellingson et al (1998) stated that the voluntary and involuntary nature of an agency worker's employment was likely to be a key antecedent to their job satisfaction. Feldman et al (1995) used the following three questions as a measure of voluntary/involuntary work status:

1. Are you working voluntarily or involuntarily as temporary workers.
2. Are you working as a temporary employee because of the positive attractions of temporary work or because you are forced to work as temporary due to no other employment alternatives.
3. Are you a regular temporary worker or looking for permanent employment.

They found that agency workers holding their job voluntarily displayed significantly greater job satisfaction than agency workers employed on an involuntary basis. Yet, Ellingson et al (1998) suggested even further refinements in assessing the voluntary or involuntary completion of agency work through measuring them as separate variables. They created four items relating to voluntary temporary worker status and four items relating to involuntary worker status as a more accurate measurement of voluntary and involuntary work status. Ellingson et al (1998) then used this measure with 174 temporary workers, finding that voluntary and involuntary temporary worker status was associated with job satisfaction. Voluntary worker status contributed positively to job satisfaction and involuntary worker status correlated negatively to job satisfaction. These findings suggested that agency workers, who were performing assignments

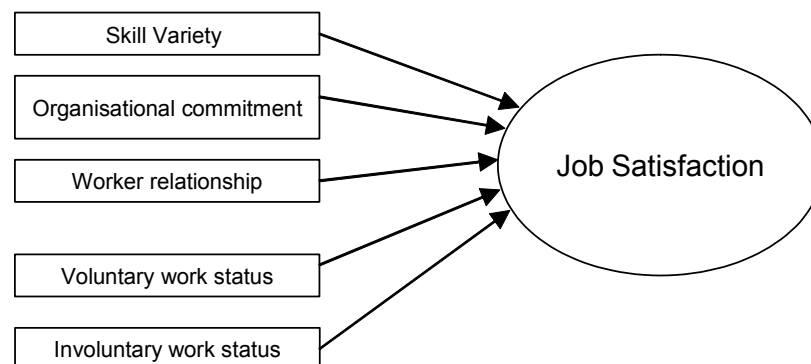
on an involuntary basis due to former job loss or lack of employment opportunity, were likely to be less satisfied with their job than agency workers who were voluntarily employed. This leads to the last of the relational hypotheses, which are:

- H4. Voluntary work status has a positive relationship with agency worker job satisfaction**
- H5. Involuntary work status has a negative relationship with agency worker job satisfaction**

3.4.13 Conclusions on the antecedents of agency worker job satisfaction

Skill variety, worker relationship, organisational commitment, voluntary and involuntary work status were all highlighted as influencing agency worker job satisfaction. Hypotheses were made linking positive outcomes on skill variety (H1), organisational commitment (H2), worker relationship (H3) voluntary work status (H4) to positive outcomes on job satisfaction. Involuntary work status (H5) was also hypothesised to have a negative relationship with job satisfaction. Due to the relational nature of these hypotheses, they will be grouped together in this thesis and called the relational hypotheses. It may be argued that all of these antecedents may also relate to permanent workers and as such agency workers are no different to other types of workers. However, these antecedents chosen were likely to have a greater effect on agency worker job satisfaction than on the equivalent permanent worker's level of job satisfaction. Thus, the model of job satisfaction in Chapter 2 (See Figure 2.13) can be refined showing agency worker specific antecedents associated with to job satisfaction as a single concept (See Figure 3.9). Inter-variable correlation between skill variety, organisational commitment, worker relationship, voluntary and involuntary work status on Figure 3.9 are not shown to simplify this diagram.

Figure 3.9: Agency worker specific job satisfaction antecedents



The agency worker story has now been told in terms of which variables were likely to contribute towards agency worker job satisfaction. Nevertheless, it is now interesting to ascertain possible differences between agency workers and permanent workers as well as the possible influence agency workers may have on permanent workers.

3.5 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WORKERS

A question of interest to this thesis concerns whether agency workers and permanent workers are different in job satisfaction antecedents, job satisfaction as a single concept or job satisfaction facets? In addition, does the employment of agency workers influence the permanent workers they work alongside by reducing any of these variables? In the following section, these questions are examined investigating the possible differences between agency workers and permanent workers.

3.5.1 Differences in skill variety

Skill variety, as shown above, involved the use of different skills in a job or task. Cerulo (1996) suggested that skill variety would be lower in agency workers than in permanent workers as these jobs were easily taught to agency workers. In addition, Smith (1998) found that permanent workers may try to avoid low skilled jobs and as a result give these jobs to agency workers. Permanent workers who work with agency workers were therefore likely to have a greater variety of skill in the work that they complete as compared with agency workers. This then leads to the first of the differential hypotheses that:

H6a. Agency workers have a significantly lower level of skill variety than permanent workers who work with agency workers

However, permanent workers who work with agency workers may not necessarily be representative of all permanent workers in the UK. Many permanent workers may not work with agency workers, and in this instance, permanent workers who do not work with agency workers may not have the opportunity to give low skilled jobs to agency workers. Nonetheless, it is unlikely that these workers are completing low skilled jobs all the time. They are therefore likely to have a higher level of skill variety than agency workers and the same level of skill variety as permanent workers who work with agency workers, leading to the following hypotheses which are:

H6b. Agency workers have a significantly lower level of skill variety than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers

H6c. There is no significant difference in level of skill variety between permanent workers (i.e., between those permanent workers who work with agency workers and those permanent workers who do not work with agency workers)

3.5.2 Differences in organisational commitment.

Organisational commitment was described earlier as feelings of attachment to an organisation. However, is organisational commitment different between agency workers and permanent workers? It can be argued that because agency workers are only at a third party employing organisation for a limited amount of time, their organisational commitment will be lower than that of permanent workers (Gardner and Jackson, 1996). In Singapore, Van Dyne and Ang (1998) surveyed 155 service workers based in the banking and hospital industries and found that temporary workers showed lower levels of organisational commitment than permanent workers as measured by the Meyer and Allen's (1984) affective organisational commitment scale. Conversely, studies conducted in Western societies in the US (McClurg, 1999; Smith, 1998) and UK (Gardner and Jackson, 1996) disputed these findings.

In the UK, Gardner and Jackson (1996) measured the difference between the organisational commitment of 36 permanent and 74 temporary assembly line workers using Cook and Wall's (1980) British Organisational Commitment scale. They found that temporary workers have a significantly higher organisational commitment than permanent workers, which contradicts their original suggestion and the findings of Van Dyne and Ang (1998). Gardner and Jackson (1996) explained their results by suggesting the organisation surveyed was going through a period of uncertainty and as a result organisational commitment was low in the permanent workers. Other studies on US agency workers (McClurg, 1999) and US temporary workers (Smith, 1998) were inconclusive, finding that the levels of organisational commitment between permanent workers and temporary workers were not significantly different.

Intuitively, this hypothesis seems incorrect as why should agency workers be committed to an organisation which offers them no commitment in turn. Nevertheless, if the permanent workers who work with agency workers are considered in greater detail, more light can be shed on this seemingly counterintuitive result. Feldman et al (1994) and Porter (1995) both argued that permanent workers may have a negative attitude towards an organisation that employs agency

workers rather than permanent members of staff. It is likely that if these permanent workers have a negative attitude towards an organisation then they are likely to have low levels of organisational commitment. If agency workers also have low levels of organisational commitment then the result by Gardner and Jackson (1996), McClurg (1999) and Smith (1998) that agency workers have similar if not higher levels of organisational commitment than permanent workers can be explained by suggesting that the permanent workers measured in these studies were somehow influenced by the temporary workers. As a result, these permanent workers have a low level of organisational commitment that is equal to the low level of organisational commitment in agency workers. Overall, these studies suggest the following hypothesis:

H7a There is no significant difference between the levels of organisational commitment of agency workers and permanent workers who work with agency workers

This hypothesis is a null (no difference) hypothesis but it is important to research as it relates to differences in job satisfaction between workers shown in previous studies. If working with agency workers is controlled for then agency workers may show less organisational commitment than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers. This is because these permanent workers should have average levels of organisational commitment as they do not have a grievance with their organisation for employing agency workers and as result should show higher levels of organisational commitment compared with agency workers who have a low level of organisational commitment. This leads us to believe that if agency workers who have a low level of organisational commitment are compared with permanent workers who do not work with agency workers they would not appear as committed, leading us to the next hypothesis that:

H7b Agency workers have a significantly lower level of organisational commitment than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers

This also suggests that permanent workers may be different. Indeed, Porter (1995) found that permanent workers who work with contingent workers (temporary and part time workers) had lower levels of organisational commitment compared with permanent workers who do not work with contingent workers. This then leads to the final organisational commitment hypothesis:

H7c Permanent workers who work with agency workers have a significantly lower level of organisational commitment than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers

3.5.3 Differences in job satisfaction as a single concept

Two main studies (Allan and Sienko, 1997; Gardner and Jackson, 1996) examined the differences between temporary worker and permanent worker job satisfaction. Unfortunately none of these studies had specifically examined agency workers but both included agency workers in their broader definition of temporary worker so may have surveyed agency workers along with non-agency temporary workers. Allan and Sienko (1997) found no difference in job satisfaction, measured as a single concept by the JDS. Nevertheless, they found differences between the workers in one of the five job satisfaction facets measured in the JDS (See Chapter 2) being satisfaction with job security, which is examined below. Gardner and Jackson (1996) also examined differences in job satisfaction between UK-based permanent workers and temporary workers on an assembly line. They measured job satisfaction as being either extrinsic, which included aspects of the job that were associated with satisfactions outside the actual work itself, or intrinsic, which is satisfaction gained from the actual completion of the work itself. No significant difference between workers was revealed on intrinsic satisfaction although temporary workers had a slightly (but statistically significant) higher level of extrinsic job satisfaction.

Research on the differences between agency worker or temporary worker job satisfaction and permanent worker job satisfaction was inconclusive. Allan and Sienko (1997) found no difference between temporary worker and permanent worker job satisfaction (with the exception of the job satisfaction facet concerning job security). Gardner and Jackson (1996) also found no difference between the intrinsic satisfaction of temporary workers and permanent workers (although temporary workers had higher levels of extrinsic satisfaction than permanent workers). If the conclusions of these studies can be applied to agency workers, and this may not necessarily be the case, it may be concluded that agency worker and permanent worker job satisfaction are at similar levels, leading to the first hypothesis on job satisfaction:

H8a. There is no significant difference between levels of job satisfaction in agency workers and permanent workers who work with agency workers

Intuitively, agency workers are unlikely to be as happy in their job as permanent workers because they are quite literally at the mercy of their third party employing organisation and employment agency. However if this is the case why were the studies above, summarised in Hypothesis H8a, showing that permanent workers and agency workers have equal levels of job satisfaction. Gardner and Jackson (1996) suggested that their unexpected results were possibly due to the organisation under study, which was going through a period of change and uncertainty. Consequently, the permanent workers were possibly feeling threatened and vulnerable due to this reason. Another explanation may be that permanent workers who work alongside agency workers may feel less secure in their jobs as compared with traditional permanent workers who do not work with agency workers (Ettorre, 1994; Feldman et al, 1994; Geber, 1993). Indeed, a methodological limitation in these studies was that the permanent workers studied were working with temporary workers and no account of the effect of working along side temporary workers was considered. One unpublished study in the US (Porter, 1995) examined the impact of temporary and part time workers on permanent workers in a hospital setting. She found that permanent workers who worked with contingent workers had more negative attitudes about workload, pressure to perform, pay and the organisation compared with permanent workers who did not work with contingent workers. This study was limited as a range of temporary workers and part-time workers were included in the researcher's methodology. Nonetheless, it does show that the employment of contingent workers had an influence on permanent workers and as such if the employment of agency workers also has this affect, then if it is removed by way of a control group then it may be that permanent workers will show a higher level of job satisfaction than agency workers. This leads us to the second job satisfaction hypothesis, which is:

H8b. Agency workers have a significantly lower level of job satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers

It is therefore essential that this possible influence on permanent workers be taken into account. This hypothesis can be taken further and applied to permanent workers as it is likely that permanent workers who work with agency workers will be less satisfied at work (due to the influence of the employment of agency workers) than other permanent workers who do not work with agency workers. This leads to the final job satisfaction hypothesis that is:

H8c. Permanent workers who work with agency workers have a significantly lower level of job satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers

In conclusion, it may be hypothesised that agency workers and permanent workers who work with agency workers have similar levels of job satisfaction but both have less job satisfaction compared with permanent workers who do not work with agency workers.

3.5.4 Job security satisfaction

In the previous chapter, job satisfaction was examined as a single and facet-based concept. The single concept of job satisfaction encompassed all elements of a job that gave an individual the feeling of the extent to which they liked or disliked their job. Job satisfaction facets were defined as elements of job satisfaction but as separate concepts in their own right. Although many different job satisfaction facets can be measured in a study of this nature, job security satisfaction is possibly the most interesting (Allan and Sienko, 1997).

Tremlett and Collins (1999) found that temporary workers cited job insecurity as one of the main disadvantages about working in a temporary position in the UK. In examining US agency workers, Feldman et al (1994) found one of the primary concerns of agency workers was that they feel “insecure about their employment and are pessimistic about the future” (Feldman et al, 1994, p.54). Indeed, Allan and Sienko (1997) found that agency workers had a significantly lower level of satisfaction with job security than permanent workers. Job insecurity was thus quoted as a major disadvantage of agency working in the US (Allan and Sienko, 1997; Feldman et al, 1994; Rasell and Appelbaum, 1997; Wiley, 1995) and in temporary working in the UK (Tremlett and Collins, 1999). No studies examined UK-based agency workers but UK agency workers may have similarly low levels of job security satisfaction to other UK-based temporary workers and US-based agency workers. This suggests that agency workers have lower levels of job security satisfaction than any permanent worker, which leads to two hypotheses, which are:

H9a. Agency workers have a significantly lower level of job security satisfaction than permanent workers who work with agency workers

H9b. Agency workers have a significantly lower level of job security satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers

Feldman et al (1994) commented that the use of agency workers within an organisation may cause permanent workers to feel insecure in their jobs, especially if they were completing the

same job role as the agency worker. Indeed, in some organisations the agency workers themselves have replaced previously existing permanent workers leading to a possible increased job insecurity in the permanent workers who were left (Ettorre, 1994; Feldman et al, 1994; Geber, 1993). Porter (1995) as seen above found that permanent workers who worked alongside contingency staff were more likely to have negative attitudes to workload, pressure to perform and pay than other permanent workers. In the UK, Cully et al (1999) presented results from the workplace employee relations survey that indicated that permanent workers who worked with temporary workers had a lower level of job security (56% felt secure) than permanent workers who did not work with agency workers (66% felt secure). Although no test of significance was made on this result, it seems likely that the employment of agency workers may affect how permanent workers feel about the security of their jobs. This suggests that permanent workers who work with agency workers are likely to have a lower level of job security satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers, leading to the hypothesis:

H9c. Permanent workers who work with agency workers have a significantly lower level of job security satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers

3.5.5 Conclusions on worker differences

The research has put forward hypotheses involving differences between agency workers and permanent workers who work with and without agency workers in job satisfaction antecedents (skill variety, organisational commitment), job satisfaction as a single concept and a job satisfaction facet (job security satisfaction). These hypotheses together are collectively termed, the differential hypotheses. Limitations in previous research findings investigating temporary worker and permanent worker differences were found as the effect that temporary workers may have on permanent workers was not taken into account. The hypotheses considered this limitation by using three distinct groups being agency workers, permanent workers who work with agency workers and the control group of permanent workers who do not work with agency workers.

3.6 CONCLUSIONS

The possible antecedents of agency worker job satisfaction and the effects of the presence of agency workers on permanent workers have been discussed. Several hypotheses were made during the chapter and these can be identified as either being relational or differential in origin. Relational hypotheses suggest a relationship between agency worker job satisfaction, skill

variety (H1), organisational commitment (H2), worker relationship (H3) voluntary worker status (H4) and involuntary work status (H5). Differential hypotheses detailing differences between workers on skill variety (H6), organisational commitment (H7), job satisfaction (H8) and job security satisfaction (H9), which were split into three sub-hypotheses examining the dynamic relationship between the variable under study and the three worker classifications (agency workers, permanent workers who work with agency workers and permanent workers who do not work with agency workers). Worker relationship (between agency workers and permanent workers) and voluntary/involuntary work status were not considered in the differential hypotheses because they apply more to agency workers than permanent workers and as such observing the differences between the levels of these variables between the agency worker and permanent worker groups would add little knowledge to the thesis. Both the relational and differential hypotheses are summarised in Table 3.10.

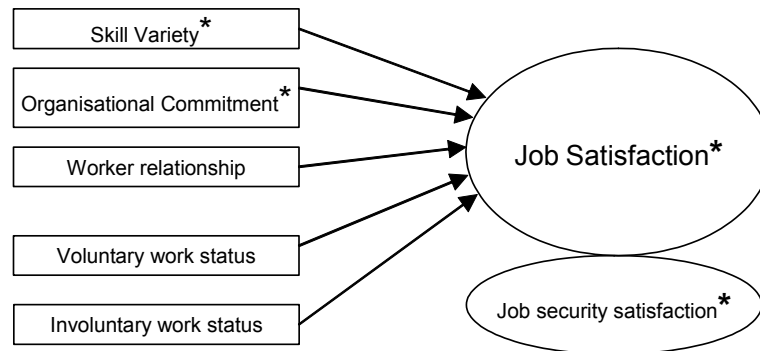
Table 3.10: Research hypotheses

Hypothesis group	Hypothesis no.	Hypothesis
Relational Hypotheses	H1	Skill variety has a positive relationship with agency worker job satisfaction
	H2	Organisational commitment has a positive relationship with agency worker job satisfaction
	H3	Worker relationship has a positive relationship with agency worker job satisfaction
	H4	Voluntary worker status has a positive relationship with agency worker job satisfaction
	H5	Involuntary worker status has a negative relationship with agency worker job satisfaction
Differential hypotheses	H6a	Agency workers have a significantly lower level of skill variety than permanent workers who work with agency workers
	H6b	Agency workers have a significantly lower level of skill variety than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers
	H6c	There is no significant difference in level of skill variety between permanent workers (both those who work with agency workers and those who do not work with agency workers)
	H7a	There is no significant difference between the levels of organisational commitment of agency workers and permanent workers who work with agency workers
	H7b	Agency workers have a significantly lower level of organisational commitment than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers
	H7c	Permanent workers who work with agency workers have significantly lower levels of organisational commitment than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers
	H8a	There is no significant difference between levels of job satisfaction in agency workers and permanent workers who work with agency workers
	H8b	Agency workers have a significantly lower level of job satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers
	H8c	Permanent workers who work with agency workers have a significantly lower level of job satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers
	H9a	Agency workers have a significantly lower level of job security satisfaction than permanent workers who work with agency workers
	H9b	Agency workers have a significantly lower level of job security satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers
	H9c	Permanent workers who work with agency workers have a significantly lower level of job security satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers

These hypotheses address the research model shown in the previous chapter in Figure 2.13. Figure 3.10, shows agency worker specific antecedents suggested in the relational hypotheses between skill variety, organisational commitment, worker relationship and involuntary/voluntary work status with job satisfaction as a single concept (inter-variable correlation are not shown on this diagram for simplicity but are obviously assumed to exist and will be tested). Differential hypotheses are also shown in Figure 3.10, as variables marked (with a *) are analysed between different worker groups. These variables include: skill variety, organisational commitment, job

satisfaction as a single concept and job security satisfaction as a facet of job satisfaction important for agency workers. Again these differential hypotheses marked on Figure 3.10, relate back to Figure 2.13 which shows the theoretical model underpinning the research.

Figure 3.10: Research hypotheses



Key

Relational hypotheses = All variables shown relating to job satisfaction

Differential hypotheses = variables marked with a *

Several hypotheses were considered in this chapter that identified five antecedents of agency worker job satisfaction and a number of differences between agency workers and permanent workers. In addition, differences between permanent workers were also hypothesised suggesting that working with agency workers may have some effect on the job satisfaction, job security satisfaction and organisational commitment of the permanent workers. The next chapter justifies and describes the research design used to examine these hypotheses.

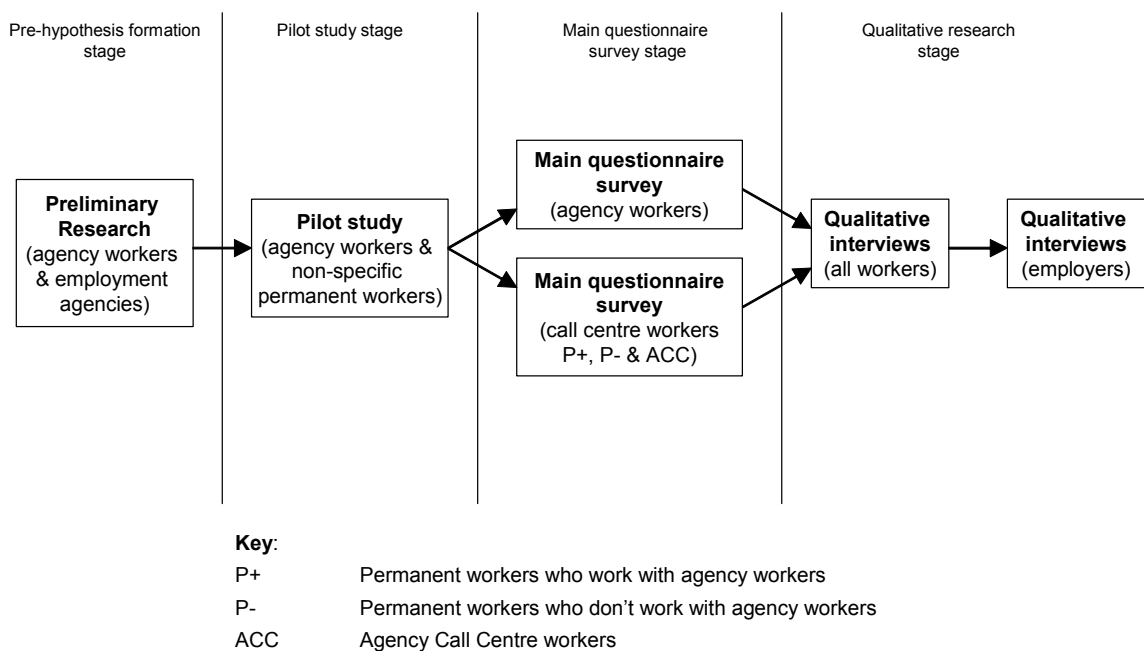
CHAPTER 4

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter justifies and presents the research design (See Figure 4.1) testing the hypotheses put forward in the previous chapter. The research design in essence consists of preliminary research; pilot study; main questionnaire survey (which simultaneously tests agency workers for the relational hypotheses and call centre workers for the differential hypotheses); and the qualitative research with permanent workers, agency workers and employers.

Figure 4.1: Model of the research design



The first section explains the two samples used for testing the relational and differential hypotheses. The second and third sections then respectively describe the data collection techniques and approaches taken to the data analysis. Results of the pilot study are given in this chapter as these results directly influence the measures and format of the final research

questionnaire. Finally, there is a discussion of the limitations and methodological restrictions inherent in the design.

4.2 SAMPLE

Two populations of workers were investigated in this research:

- UK-based agency workers.
- Equivalent (i.e., completing the same job) workers consisting of agency workers, permanent workers who work with agency workers and permanent workers who do not work with agency workers.

In research of this nature, it would be difficult to survey every worker that fits into these categories on the basis of cost, feasibility and quality. Consequently sampling needs to be adopted as a method of selecting participants for the study. Details of this are given below relevant to the preliminary research and pilot study, the main questionnaire study and the two qualitative interview studies completed with workers and employers.

4.2.1 Participants in preliminary research and pilot study

Before the main studies took place, preliminary research and a pilot study were conducted. Two target populations were sought for the preliminary research being UK agency workers and representatives of UK employment agencies. The survey population for agency workers was more specific owing to the difficulty in obtaining lists of agency workers from employment agencies. Thus the survey population was limited to former and existing agency workers in one organisation (Paradise Computing Ltd) based in Northampton. A sampling frame was drawn up from this survey population consisting of eight employees from whom five were randomly selected and interviewed (See Appendix B). A survey population of employment agencies in the Northampton town area was also created from which a sampling frame of these organisations was drawn up from the *Yellow Pages*. From this sampling frame, representatives of three employment agencies (Johnson Underwood, ACE Recruitment, and Reed Employment) were randomly selected and interviewed.

After the preliminary research, once the hypotheses in the thesis had been created, a small pilot study took place to test the main instrument (the questionnaire) used in the quantitative research. The target population for this study was UK-based agency workers and UK-based permanent workers. However, unlike the main questionnaire study it was considered that permanent

workers did not have to complete the same job as the agency workers as this is not considered necessary in testing the main research instrument in the pilot study. Thus, a sample of 25 workers was gained from two organisations in the Surrey region. Overall, the response rate from the pilot study was excellent at 72%, with 18 participants out of 25 selected replying to the survey. Some differential existed between the response rates of the worker types as 61% (8 of the 13) of agency workers replied compared to 83% (10 of the 12) of permanent workers.

4.2.2 Participants in the questionnaire survey

For this study there were two samples; one for relational hypotheses and one for differential hypotheses. A number of important aspects of sampling dominated the choice of participants for the quantitative survey. These were:

- The overall sample of agency workers should be reasonably representative of UK agency workers generally.
- In order that a valid comparison could be made, both agency workers and comparative permanent workers (those that work with agency workers and those that do not) should be engaged in similar jobs.
- Data collection should avoid seasonal fluctuations in demand associated with certain periods of the year (e.g., Christmas).
- The samples should be restricted to two main particular geographical areas – Croydon (South East) and Northampton (Midlands), to ascertain and control for variability found across different locations in the UK.
- The survey should be completed in a finite period of time as the law governing agency workers was, at the time of the study, under review in Parliament. Any changes to the law may have impacted the terms and conditions on agency workers, thus, it was essential that the research was carried out quickly.

4.2.2.1 Agency worker sample

To test the relational hypotheses multi-national employment agencies were approached as it was considered that these could provide a varied mix of agency workers from a number of different geographical locations. In addition, it was easier to persuade multi-national employment agencies to participate in the study given the potential benefits to their own internal research and development programmes. The target population for the agency worker sample were UK agency

workers. However given the difficulties of creating a representative sample, a survey population of agency workers was created, using one employment agency (and third party employers contacted additionally), selected from a number initially approached. The sample frame was then limited to agency workers who were working (or who had worked recently) for the employment agency in two locations being Northampton and Croydon (Surrey). Two hundred and fifty working (or who had worked recently) agency workers were randomly selected by the employment agency, from their books. The distribution of the questionnaires was then posted to these selected individuals financed by the employment agency.

To supplement the sample from the employment agency, additional samples were sought from two sources. One source, of agency workers was provided by two organisations used for the call centre worker sample (See below). These two organisations (Telecommunications Company and Credit Card Company 2) both in Northampton could provide agency call centre workers for the agency worker sample, although some analysis on their suitability will be completed in Chapter 5.

A further source of agency workers was taken from the researcher's employer, an engineering consultancy, who had previously helped with the pilot study four months before the main research. This organisation was chosen as it had a ready supply of agency workers that could be surveyed quickly within a month of the original distribution of the questionnaire. The organisation was also located near the Croydon region and seemed to provide agency workers with similar characteristics to those provided via the employment agency in this region.

In total therefore, three sources of agency workers were obtained from four organisations (See Table 4.1) being the original organisation selected to provide agency workers (Employment Agency), the Engineering Consultancy and two organisations (Telecommunications Company and Credit Card Company 2) which could add agency workers from the call centre worker sample. Differences between these additional sources of agency workers and the original sample seemed minimal and are analysed in the following chapter.

Table 4.1: Organisations providing the agency worker sample.

Type of organisation	Industry	Location	Number of respondents contacted
Employment agency	Various	Midlands and South East	250
Credit card company 2	Finance	Midlands	80*
Telecommunications company	Telecommunications	Midlands	80*
Engineering consultancy	Various	South East	11
*Includes other call centre workers.			

4.2.2.2 Call centre worker sample

To test the differential hypotheses, it was necessary to obtain samples of agency workers, permanent workers who work with agency workers and permanent workers who did not work with agency workers. All of which, should be completing a similar job. In addition, it was preferable that these workers were employed within a few organisations for ease of questionnaire distribution.

For these reasons, call centre workers were chosen because:

- They were likely to exist as both agency and permanent workers within the same organisation;
- There were organisations that employed permanent workers only and others that employed both permanent workers and agency workers;
- They performed a similar role in answering calls and responding to queries no matter what organisation or employment contract;
- They were employed in high numbers in organisations throughout a variety of industries;
- They were easily distinguishable through their role, and as a result, supervisors or others completing a different role are easily identified and can be taken out of the sample as necessary;
- The researcher had key contacts with managers of call centres, which could be relied upon to gain good response rates for the survey.

The target population for the survey was therefore selected as UK-based call centre workers. Nevertheless, due to limitations in cost, feasibility and quality, a survey population was generated of call centre workers from the Northampton and Croydon regions. From this survey population, a list of organisations that used call centre workers was generated. This formed the sample frame from which a random number of organisations were contacted. Initially, two organisations, Credit Card Company 1 and 2 (See Table 4.2), with whom contacts had been established were approached and agreed to participate in the study. These organisations were similar in nature being both in the financial industry and both having similar businesses providing credit cards to individuals and companies. One of these organisations was selected as it could provide permanent call centre workers who did not work with agency workers (P-). The other because it could provide both permanent workers who worked with agency workers (P+) and agency call centre workers (ACC).

Yet, as with the agency worker sample, after many attempts at communication, fewer than expected questionnaires were received from Credit Card Company 1 and 2. Credit card Company 1, providing the P- sample, stated that they had distributed the questionnaires. However, an undisclosed amount were not handed to workers and subsequently destroyed. In addition, originally 300 questionnaires were sent to Credit Card Company 2, however only a third of these questionnaires were distributed with the remainder being returned intact to the researcher.

Consequently, the return rate was lower than hoped for and expected in these organisations. Thus, additional samples were sought. These samples comprised of five additional organisations, which could provide workers similar to those chosen in the sample frame. Two of these organisations, the Employment Agency and Engineering Consultancy, provided agency call centre workers (ACC) from call centre workers found in the agency worker sample. The distribution of questionnaires to agency workers was carried out at the same time as the distribution of questionnaires to the call centre workers so no time disparity existed with the inclusion of these agency call centre workers. Nevertheless, within two months of the distributing the first questionnaires in Credit Card Company 1 and 2, two other organisations (Telecommunications Company and Government Helpline Department) were found and surveyed. These organisations provided both permanent workers who worked with agency workers (P+) and agency call centre workers (ACC) although the latter group was not provided in one of these organisations (Government Helpline Department) as the manager of this department did not want to reveal the employment agency that provided their agency call centre workers, a request which was granted by not surveying these workers. The final organisation

used was an International trade catering firm that supplied coffee and similar products to hotels around the country (Coffee Supplier). This organisation, located in the Croydon region, provided a further sample of permanent workers who did not work with agency workers (P-) group. Again, these workers were employed in a call centre and performed similar roles to the other permanent workers (P+ and P-) and agency call centre worker (ACC) groups.

Consequently, although participants from the additional sample were taken from organisations outside of the finance industry, all of these workers were employed in a call centre performing similar roles and tasks. Yet, rather than simply combining these different organisations together analysis will be done to ascertain any organisational differences between the three groups of workers previously identified (i.e., the ACC, P+ and P- groups). Table 4.2 gives the final details of the organisations providing the call centre worker sample.

Table 4.2: Organisations providing the call centre worker sample.

Type of organisation	Industry	Location	Number of respondents contacted	Type of respondents contacted
Credit card company 1	Finance	Midlands	80	(P-)
Credit card company 2	Finance	Midlands	80	(P+ and ACC)
Employment agency	Various	Midlands and South East	250*	(ACC)
Engineering consultancy	Various	South East	11*	(ACC)
Government Helpline Department	Public	South East	50	(P+)
Telecommunications company	Telecommunications	Midlands	80	(P+ and ACC)
Coffee Supplier	Catering	South East	35	(P-)
Key * Taken from the agency worker sample. P- (Permanent workers who work do not with agency workers) P+ (Permanent workers who work with agency workers) ACC (Agency Call Centre workers)				

4.2.3 Participants in interview survey of agency and permanent workers

Respondents to the questionnaire were asked if they would be willing to take part in further research. 32 agency workers and 16 permanent workers agreed to do this. However, many of these respondents gave invalid details such as unobtainable telephone numbers or incorrect contact details and consequently, all workers that gave valid details were interviewed.

4.2.4 Participants in the interview survey of employers

All participants in the questionnaire survey were questioned about their current employer and this information was used to identify a sample frame of employers for the research. From this sampling frame, seven employers were randomly selected, with their representatives being approached by telephone and asked to take part in face to face interviews to discuss their organisations' policies relating to the use (or non-use) of agency workers. Subsequently, all seven organisations took part in the survey supported by either one or two representatives as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Employer representatives interviewed.

Employer	No of representatives interviewed
Insurance company	1
Cosmetic based manufacturer	1
Telecommunications company	2
Credit card company 1	2
Public house retail company	2
Charitable organisation	1
Mobile telecommunications company	1

4.3 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

4.3.1 Questionnaire versus other methods of data gathering

A number of methods for testing the hypotheses in the study were considered, however, a questionnaire approach was adopted as this had several key advantages:

1. A dispersed sample could be obtained of agency workers who by their very nature are a constantly relocating and scattered population.
2. Both agency workers and call centre workers could be surveyed using the same instrument.
3. It is a quick method of data gathering, which is important in agency worker research as they may be governed by seasonal changes in employment (Casey, 1988).
4. Responses are private and confidential, again important in agency worker research as agency workers may feel that their employment may be in jeopardy if they criticised their employer or the permanent workers they work with to an interviewer but on a questionnaire they may be more honest.
5. It is low cost in comparison with other methods of data gathering.

However, the questionnaire approach also has several disadvantages detailed later in the limitations and assumptions section (See Section 4.6.6). Consequently, it was decided that in addition to a questionnaire survey, qualitative interviews with workers and employers would supplement this research. These interviews were carried out with a small number of workers to ensure that the results from the questionnaire had fairly represented their views. The employers were also interviewed to obtain their perspectives on employing agency workers. By combining these two research techniques, using the questionnaire as the primary source of information but informing these results with worker and employer interviews, limitations to using a questionnaire-based approach were hopefully reduced.

The measures used in the research accord with the adoption of an empirical approach to the research as discussed later in this chapter. They can be broken down into four categories consisting of preliminary research and pilot measure, quantitative survey, qualitative survey of workers, and qualitative survey of employers, which represent the research stages.

4.3.2 Preliminary research and pilot measure

The preliminary research consisted of semi-structured interviews that examined the following themes that had emerged from the literature review; details on agency assignments, advantages and disadvantages about working as an agency worker, job satisfaction, antecedents and consequences of job satisfaction, reasons for taking up agency work and satisfaction with pay.

The results from these interviews together with the literature review informed the construction of the pilot questionnaire. The pilot questionnaire was designed to test both the agency workers and permanent workers at the same time and was considered to be a full rehearsal of the main survey. Considerations for the measures to be used in the questionnaire were that they had to be:

- valid, that is they were measuring the variables of interest;
- reliable, in that individuals gave consistent responses over a period of time;
- relevant to both permanent and agency workers (so did not assume permanence of tenure);
- applicable, in that they had to be at the correct level of understanding for the participants;
- easily administered, in that they could be incorporated into a single questionnaire with simple instructions for completion.

A review of appropriate measures in the literature was undertaken and measures were selected on the basis of how well they satisfied these considerations. At the end of this process the measures, shown in Table 4.4, were selected for inclusion in the questionnaire. These measures included the hypothesised variables and additional variables of interest outlined in Chapter 3. Demographic variables (job title, temporary/permanent nature of job, sex, age, employing organisation and ethnic origin) and questions from the employment agency financing the distribution of the questionnaire (obligations felt by the agency worker and financial/insurance needs) were added to the questionnaire.

Table 4.4: Quantitative measures used in the pilot study

Study Variable	Measure	Source	items	Scale	Validity	Reliability
Voluntary worker status	Voluntary work status scale	Ellingson et al (1998)	4	4 point Likert	Adequate. (Ellingson et al, 1998).	Good 0.75 (Ellingson et al, 1998)
Involuntary worker status	Involuntary work status scale	Ellingson et al (1998)	4	4 point Likert	Adequate. (Ellingson et al, 1998).	Good 0.71 (Ellingson et al, 1998)
Skill Variety	Skill Variety Scale	Hackman and Oldham (1975)	3	7 point Likert	Adequate. Support for measure (Fried and Ferris, 1987; Hackman and Oldham, 1975)	Good 0.71 (Hackman and Oldham, 1975)
Worker relationship	Satisfaction with co-workers scale	Cross (1973)	8	7 point Likert	Adequate. Created with British based workers measuring satisfaction with co-workers (Cross, 1973)	Good 0.70 (Cross, 1973)
Worker relationship	Dealing with others scale	Hackman and Oldham (1975)	3	7 point Likert	Uncertain. Some variation between ratings of employees, supervisors and observers (Hackman and Oldham, 1975)	Poor 0.59 (Hackman and Oldham, 1975)
Organisational Commitment	British Organisation al Commitment Scale	Cook and Wall (1980)	9	7 point Likert	Adequate /uncertain. Scale correlates with items such as trust and faith in management but also seems to correlate with items such as job satisfaction (Cook and Wall, 1980)	Good. Cook and Wall (1980) report an internal consistency reliability of 0.8 for the measure.
Job Satisfaction	General Satisfaction scale	Hackman and Oldham (1975)	5	7 point Likert	Adequate. Support for measure and model (Fried and Ferris, 1987; Hackman and Oldham, 1975)	Good 0.75 (Hackman and Oldham, 1975)
Job security satisfaction	Job security satisfaction scale	Hackman and Oldham (1975)	2	7 point Likert	Adequate. Transparent, but direct for the measure given (Hackman and Oldham, 1975)	Not reported (Hackman and Oldham, 1975)
Autonomy	Autonomy scale	Hackman and Oldham (1975)	3	7 point Likert	Adequate. Support for measure (Fried and Ferris, 1987; Hackman and Oldham, 1975)	Adequate 0.66 (Hackman and Oldham, 1975)
Task significance	Task significance scale	Hackman and Oldham (1975)	3	7 point Likert	Adequate. Support for measure (Fried and Ferris, 1987; Hackman and Oldham, 1975)	Adequate 0.66 (Hackman and Oldham, 1975)
Task identity	Task identity scale	Hackman and Oldham (1975)	3	7 point Likert	Adequate. Support for measure (Fried and Ferris, 1987; Hackman and Oldham, 1975)	Poor 0.59 (Hackman and Oldham, 1975)
Feedback from the job	Feedback from the job scale	Hackman and Oldham (1975)	3	7 point Likert	Adequate. Support for measure (Fried and Ferris, 1987; Hackman and Oldham, 1975)	Good 0.71 (Hackman and Oldham, 1975)
Satisfaction with growth	Satisfaction with growth scale	Hackman and Oldham (1975)	4	7 point Likert	Adequate. Support for measure (Fried and Ferris, 1987; Hackman and Oldham, 1975)	Good 0.81 (Hackman and Oldham, 1975)
Satisfaction with pay	Satisfaction with pay scale	Porter (1973)	3	7 point Likert	Adequate (Porter, 1972)	Good 0.7 to 0.8 (Porter, 1973)

4.3.3 Quantitative measures

The quantitative measures used in the pilot study, detailed above (See Table 4.4), were generally adopted for the main research questionnaire. Nevertheless, some layout improvements and the exclusion of one measure were recommended from the results of the pilot study. These results will be discussed now as they directly modified the final research questionnaire in the study. The reliability of the measures in the pilot questionnaire was ascertained by calculating Cronbach alpha on the questionnaire variables. Three of these measures; dealing with others scale, task significance scale and task identity scale showed a poor level of reliability ($\alpha < 0.6$). Yet, as the pilot questionnaire was distributed to a limited amount of participants and these measures formed part of the Hackman and Oldham (1975) job characteristics model, important to the thesis, they were left in the questionnaire. The layout of the questionnaire was also tested in the pilot study. Participants generally liked the format of the questionnaire but complained about four main issues:

- Participants felt they were answering similar items repeatedly.
- Items on the satisfaction with co-workers scale seemed too direct and did not seem applicable to office based work.
- Some of the item scale explanations on Hackman and Oldham's (1975) Job Diagnostics Survey were considered wordy and unnecessary.
- The questionnaire seemed bulky (four pages of A4 paper).

These issues were resolved by improving the questionnaire as follows.

1. Scale items that were listed together in the pilot study were separated and mixed wherever possible when the items did not have specific instructions.
2. The satisfaction with co-workers scale was considered inappropriate for the subject population and as a result was dropped from the questionnaire. Worker relationship was measured by the following customised items that specifically examined the relationship between permanent and agency workers.
 - A. "The organisation I work in supports employment agency workers in all job related and non-job related matters" (Question 22).
 - B. "Some of the permanent staff are anti-employment agency workers" (Question 23).

C. “I feel valued in my current position” (Question 37).

3. Explanations for items that were very wordy were reduced to aid clarity.
4. The questionnaire was printed on one sheet of A3 making it seem less bulky. Some items, such as ethnic origin, were also dropped as they had no theoretical connection to the study.

Other variables in the questionnaire remained as in the pilot questionnaire (See Table 4.4) resulting in the final questionnaire used in the study presented in Appendix C.

4.3.4 Qualitative interviews with workers

The worker qualitative measures of job satisfaction (as a single and multifaceted concept), job satisfaction antecedents and consequences were addressed as the following topics: anti-agency worker feeling, dealing with others in the job, job satisfaction, job security, opportunity for interpersonal contact, skill variety, organisational commitment, social position, voluntary / involuntary nature of work. These topics were designed to aid the semi-structured interviews concentrating workers on areas of interest to the thesis. The data from these interviews were then analysed using thematic codes to create measures from the data making it more reliable (Boyatzis, 1998) the development of which was done in ATLAS-ti detailed in Chapter 7.

4.3.5 Qualitative interviews with employers

The interviews with employers were much more structured than the interviews with workers. The main reasons for this more structured approach were:

1. Employers generally wanted to be briefed on the content of the interviews before they would agree to be interviewed.
2. Employers tended to be pressed for time so preferred concise questions.
3. Employers wanted to ensure that other managers within the organisation were consulted during or after the interviews so the research could get a number of different perspectives of the employer’s view.

Appendix D shows the specific questions asked of employers. These questions examined the following broad subjects:

1. Employer's use (or non-use) of agency workers.
2. Specific worker job aspects and differences between workers.
3. Organisation culture/climate.
4. Personnel policy.

4.4 PROCEDURE

The collection of data was conducted in four stages (See Figure 4.1) consisting of preliminary research and pilot study, quantitative survey, qualitative survey of workers and qualitative survey of employers. How the data were collected at each stage and the software used in data capture or analysis follows.

4.4.1 Preliminary research and pilot study

The preliminary research was conducted in two parts, interviewing both employment agencies and agency workers. Face to face interviews were carried out with two of the three employment agencies surveyed. The remaining employment agency was interviewed by telephone, as this was more convenient for the respondent. The interviews were unstructured so respondents could talk at length on the employment and labour market conditions of agency workers. Face to face interviews were also conducted with former agency workers, which were recorded and summarised in tabular format (See Appendix B).

In the pilot study, two companies that employed both agency workers and permanent workers were selected based in Surrey. The permanent workers were contacted face to face and given the pilot questionnaire by the researcher. The agency workers were contacted by memo replicating the methodology used in the main quantitative survey. The pilot questionnaires were then returned, coded in MS Excel, with SPSS used to perform data analysis. Direct feedback was given on the questionnaire from the workers, which was considered in the redesign of the workers quantitative measure, given above.

4.4.2 Quantitative survey

The questionnaires were sent out in March 2000 and returned within a two month period. Organisations that took part in the survey were described in detail under the sample section; however, some note has to be made of the procedure adopted in gaining these organisations due to some of their opportune basis of selection. Initially, three organisations were contacted to

distribute the questionnaire to both the agency worker sample and the call centre worker sample. These organisations consisted of one large employment agency (Employment Agency), selected for access to agency workers, and two employers of call centre workers (Credit Card Company 1 and 2), selected to give a comparative sample of permanent and agency workers. These organisations contacted gave their support. Yet, the response rate was less than expected, even after much communication and time delay. Thus, four further organisations (Engineering consultancy, Government Helpline Department, Telecommunications company and Coffee Supplier) were contacted after the initial distribution of questionnaires to contribute to both the call centre worker sample and the agency worker sample (with the exception of Government Helpline and Coffee Supplier who did not employ or want us to survey their agency workers).

The number of respondents that could be surveyed varied in the different organisations primarily due to their size or the numbers of agency workers or call centre workers they employed. All organisations were sent a number of questionnaires that included an explanatory memo and a stamped addressed envelope. Managers were then briefed on what to say to participants and the type of participants that were needed by the research. In addition, a telephone number was provided for the use of participants if they wanted further information about the study or other advice. A few weeks after the questionnaires were given to the participants, managers were contacted and asked to pursue questionnaires that had not been completed. A further month after the questionnaires had been distributed, a memo chasing up any questionnaires that had not been completed was circulated in organisations that had a particularly low response rate. Data gathered was inputted through MS Access and subjected to a 100% verification process, whereby each individual questionnaire was re-checked after it had been inputted. Data were then processed into SPSS for further analysis and additional packages (AMOS, Analysis of Moment Structures) for specialist confirmatory factor analysis.

4.4.3 Qualitative research with workers

After the quantitative survey had taken place, participants for the qualitative survey were contacted by telephone in July and August 2000, to interview them further on the study. Telephone interviews rather than face-to-face interviews were used for two reasons being:

- Convenience to the participants, in that they did not have to travel or be disrupted by an interviewer booking an appointment to see them at their home or place of work
- Comfort for the participants, as they were in a comfortable surrounding where they could discuss issues freely

The nature of the qualitative survey of workers was semi-structured in design allowing the participant to talk at length and freely about their experience as a worker. Table 4.5 shows some of the questions that were used as a guide in the worker interviews. Yet, most participants covered the areas of research with little prompting.

Table 4.5: Sample interview guide questions

Question area	Typical question
Job Satisfaction	Are you satisfied in your job?
Job Security satisfaction	Do you feel secure in your job? Do agency workers sometimes make you feel insecure about your job?
Skill variety	Is there an opportunity to use a variety of skills in your job?
Worker relationship	Is there any opportunity for social contact with staff out of work (going to the pub etc)?
Organisational commitment	Do you feel committed to your organisation either the employment agency or the third party employer?
Worker relationship	Have you any opinions about working with permanent/agency workers at all?
Worker conflict	Is there any conflict between the agency workers and the permanent workers?
Worker differences	Are agency workers generally treated like the permanent staff in that there is no difference in the work?

Responses from the telephone interviews were recorded on tape with each participant's consent. Transcripts of telephone interviews were then typed into a word processor by the researcher and re-checked by the researcher reading the typed transcripts and listening to the tape recordings to ensure collaboration. In addition, if a response was difficult to understand then a second person's opinion (another PhD researcher) was used to clarify the response. Transcripts were then analysed using ATLAS-ti, which coded and sorted the qualitative data as detailed in Chapter 7.

4.4.4 Qualitative research with employers

Employing organisations identified in the quantitative survey were contacted by phone and then by letter and invited to take part in the qualitative survey. The survey was carried out in August 2000 and consisted of structured interviews with managers who could represent the third party employer. The questions asked at the employers' interview are given in Appendix D. Most employer interviews consisted of at least one manager being interviewed although typically the interviews would involve other managerial staff (See Table 4.3). Interviews, arranged in

advance with the managers selected for interview, were situated in both the Croydon and Northampton regions of England at the employer's site (apart from the Telecommunications Company interviewed at a conference). Interviews were structured in nature, although respondents could deviate from particular questions if they made an interesting point. Interviews were correlated together and written as brief text within the results section. In addition, responses from the interviewees were written up and analysed using ATLAS-ti.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The primary reason for analysing the data collected in any study is to ensure that it stands up to rigorous academic enquiry. In this regard, the data analysis used in the study is detailed below as it relates to the four stages of research (See Figure 4.1).

4.5.1 Preliminary research and pilot study

The preliminary research was analysed by taking note of the employment agency's perspectives, describing the triangular employment basis of agency workers, which ultimately resulted as information for Figure 3.1. Transcripts of interviews carried out with agency workers were summarised in tabular format (See Appendix B) and used to provide guidance on the hypotheses generated in the research detailed in Chapter 3. Pilot study results were inputted into MS Excel and analysed through SPSS, which examined the process of conversion and the integrity of the data. This procedure was subsequently changed for the main questionnaire study, for which MS Access was used to input the data. This decision was made because MS Access was easier to input into and had greater control over this input (i.e., incorrect figures could be inputted into MS Excel which was not tolerated by MS Access).

4.5.2 Quantitative survey

Checks were carried out on the data in SPSS in terms of reliability and correlation between individual items. This also included a confirmatory factor analysis of the variable items in the survey conducted by AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures), a specialist statistical package that can use SPSS based files. In addition, analysis of the normality of the data was carried out as if the data deviated considerably from the normal distribution then non-parametric statistics were to be used in the study. The data analysis of the worker quantitative survey was separated out into two distinct analyses based on the relational and differential hypotheses. Participants that were not applicable to the analysis, usually being a permanent worker who was not a call centre worker, were filtered from the data.

The relational hypotheses concerned the relationships between skill variety, worker relationship, organisational commitment, voluntary and involuntary worker status with job satisfaction. These were tested using correlation techniques to examine relationships between variables. A hierarchical multiple linear regression (HMLR) was used to ascertain the main contributors to job satisfaction. This analysis was extended to all variables in the study as appropriate to provide further evidence for the hypotheses in the study.

The differential hypotheses concerned the differences between the three call centre worker groups, which were investigated by using two types of analyses. Firstly an analysis of variance ascertained any differences between the three groups of call centre workers. Secondly, differences were detailed more closely using a t-test or a non-parametric equivalent (Mann-Whitney U test) between scores on variables of interest, and the three call centre worker groups, being:

- Agency call centre workers (ACC) and permanent workers who worked with agency workers (P+)
- Agency call centre workers (ACC) and permanent workers who did not work with agency workers (P-)
- Permanent workers who worked with agency workers (P+) and permanent workers who did not work with agency workers (P-)

4.5.3 Qualitative research with workers

The data collected from the qualitative survey of workers was analysed using ATLAS-ti. This enabled thematic codes to be produced that examined the qualitative data. The development of these codes was important and was based on both the theory behind the thesis and the results themselves. Development of these codes and analysis of the qualitative data are given in Chapter 7.

4.5.4 Qualitative survey of employers

The qualitative survey of employers was analysed in two ways. First, the material was written up into a brief synopsis per organisation. Secondly the exact responses given by the interviewees representing the employers was written up using MS Word and then analysed in ATLAS-ti, coding answers into the following categories:

- Job satisfaction

- Job security satisfaction
- Worker relationship
- Skill variety
- Organisational commitment
- Voluntary/Involuntary status

These codes did not go through an iterative development as the data from the employers was already structured from the nature of the interviews. ATLAS-ti was therefore used as a tool to aid the summary of data rather than analysing the data through the development of thematic codes as was done in the qualitative survey of workers.

4.6 ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Any study completed in the field of occupational psychology has its limitations and assumptions, especially in such an applied study as this. The main assumptions and limitations in the study are now highlighted with, where applicable, an appropriate rationale for limiting any confounding effects on the data.

4.6.1 Epistemological approach

Epistemology is a branch of philosophy concerning itself with understanding knowledge and how it originates. By adopting a particular epistemological approach, the research is influenced by the method taken, in how it comes to know and understand the concepts in the study. The epistemological approach for this study as stated earlier was empirical in nature. Yet, by using this approach the research may be restricting itself due to this method of enquiry. Consequently, the epistemological approach in the study will now be discussed and critically evaluated against competing methodologies.

In the nineteenth century, Emile Durkheim wrote “The Rules of Sociological Method”, which presented the earliest empirical philosophical tradition in social research still popular today. This methodology borrowed heavily from research designs used in the natural sciences. The fundamental basis of this was that psychological information existed and could be considered as measurable things in a social world that followed law-like propositions, which could be revealed through appropriate scientific enquiry (Haralambos and Heald, 1985). The principles of this approach were:

- Phenomenon such as job satisfaction can be measured quantitatively as a concept.
- Causal relationships between phenomena can be used to explain attitudes and behaviour.
- Large samples are needed to obtain statistical generalisation.
- Knowledge can be generated by hypothesis testing on representative samples, testing pre-existing theory.
- The researcher does not influence the people or objects being researched.

The empirical approach therefore assumes that psychological phenomena existed and could be measured quantifiably. Knowledge is extracted through a process of hypothesis testing on existing or proposed theory. This information can then be generalised from a sample to a wider population as long as the sample is in some way representative. Research in this tradition, generally seeks to quantify variables of interest with the quality of research assessed in terms of methodological rigour and statistical measures of reliability and validity.

Yet, this empirical approach has not been without criticism (Cotgrove, 1967; Haralambos and Heald, 1985). Alternative research approaches have consequently been developed that reject the assumption that psychological or social information are measurable things that can be extracted and examined in isolation. Consequently, although a self-report questionnaire (commonly used in empirical research) can assess attitudes, this approach takes great effort to find the reasons why individuals or groups have come to hold those attitudes or how those attitudes could change with circumstances. Empirical research also places a high value upon the objective, detached researcher, which is questionable given classic studies such as those conducted by Rosenthal (1964) on experimenter bias. In response to these concerns, alternative philosophical approaches have been developed, which can be collectively termed 'phenomenological' to cover a number of viewpoints (Haralambos and Heald, 1985).

The motive behind the phenomenological approach is that psychological phenomena are rich in depth holding a construction of meanings specific to the investigation that is taking place and as such it cannot be explored just by pure quantitative analysis. Consequently, according to this perspective, knowledge gained from empirical research is flawed as it is detached from the rich explanations that individuals could give the data. Attitudes and behaviour are determined by their social setting and are 'socially constructed' and as such a researcher should seek to understand and explain these phenomena in a localised manner rather than seeking universal

laws that attempt to explain these phenomena. A researcher should therefore not try and calculate a 'real suicide rate' as a statistic and then correlate this with other factors, as completed by Durkheim in his classic work. A researcher should ask "how do deaths get categorised as suicides" by those interpreting this unnatural form of death and as such investigate the meaning and context given in these classifications.

The principles of phenomenology can thus be directly contrasted with those of an empirical tradition. Indeed, some social scientists (Cotgrove, 1967) argued that there is a dichotomy between the two epistemological approaches, although this is used for descriptive purposes only, in that empiricism is not the true opposite of phenomenology. Yet, the phenomenological approach can be directly contrasted to the principles of empiricism, in that:

- Causal relationships among variables may exist but will be put into the context they were measured against and not necessarily be generalised to other settings.
- Measurement of variables are only valid in the context of a particular research design.
- Relatively small samples are sufficient to provide a rich and deep insight into the phenomena of interest
- Knowledge gained is localised and emerges from the use of research questions rather than hypothesis testing.
- Researchers cannot avoid influencing the findings of research and this is an accepted feature of the research process.

It may therefore be argued that phenomenological research is better suited to developing theory than testing it. Theory emerges from qualitative analysis rather than testing a priori theory. The 'quality' of research is assessed using the criteria of authenticity, when the researcher is immersed in situations described in the research and through this immersion shows a solid understanding of the research criteria, and plausibility, when the researcher supports their methods used even in post-hoc analysis of situations. The phenomenological approach has advantages as it can delve deep into the world of agency workers and detail specific individual experiences relating to what factors contribute towards agency worker job satisfaction and what differences exist between agency workers and permanent workers. In addition, the experience of contentment at work, which the research has called job satisfaction, may not exist or may exist in

a different format to what empirical based scientists call “job satisfaction”. The phenomenological approach provides a methodology in which to handle these research issues.

Yet, this approach is rejected in favour of an empirical methodology for three main reasons. Firstly, the research wanted to generalise the findings to wider populations of workers. Consequently, examining agency workers that work for a specific company in a specific location from a phenomenological approach would have provided us with an insight into those specific workers, however these results could not be applied to the wider population of agency workers within the UK. Secondly, a job satisfaction model could be constructed before the research took place. One of the advantages of the phenomenological approach is that it could shed light in an area in which not much research had taken place. Indeed, studies on agency worker job satisfaction have been relatively small in number. However, general studies on job satisfaction, its antecedents and consequences completed on non-worker specific samples are numerous. This gave the thesis the chance to construct a model of job satisfaction a priori (See Chapter 2). Yet, this model was made even more specific to agency workers with a review of agency worker (or temporary worker) specific literature (in Chapter 3) which put forward several relational and differential hypotheses to be tested. A final, but not inconsequential, reason for adopting an empirical epistemological approach was that the researcher is a Chartered Occupational Psychologist conversant with this approach having used it before in other studies. Thus, this approach was adopted even though limitations, as discussed, exist with this methodology.

4.6.2 Sample

Two assumptions exist with the sample detailed earlier in the chapter. First, there is an assumption in the research methodology, as with all psychological research that uses a quantitative research design, that the sample obtained is a truly accurate representation of the target population. Steps in the research methodology have maintained the representative nature of the sample. The second assumption concerns the permanent workers. The permanent workers in the study that work with agency workers work in the type of environment where many agency workers exist. One of the organisations contacted estimated that 25% of their call centre staff were agency workers. Thus, the effect of the agency workers on the permanent workers may be limited to situations where the ratio between agency workers to permanent workers is one to five or higher.

4.6.3 Assumed differences between workers

Another assumption of the research is that differences between workers are based on differences in their employment status (permanent or agency) or being influenced by the employment of agency workers as opposed to any confounding variables. For example, a hypothetical difference between scores recorded from permanent workers who work with (P+) and without (P-) agency workers is due to the influence of the employment of agency workers and not any other variable. Indeed, the researcher has taken great lengths to ensure the suitability of the two worker samples and the equivalence of organisational and job related factors. However, in applied research of this nature, this assumption cannot be truly rectified and is thus a limitation on the research design.

4.6.4 Assumed antecedents to job satisfaction

The antecedent nature of skill variety, worker relationship, organisational commitment, voluntary and involuntary status was discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. The results of this study are not dependent on the causal nature of these variables, nevertheless it must be stated that in the discussion the study presumes that these variables are antecedents of job satisfaction. Causality, of course, cannot be tested in cross sectional research.

4.6.5 Time restrictions of the sample

It was noted that the survey of both agency workers and call centre workers would have to be completed at a particular point in time (i.e., March-April 2000). It is assumed that influences in the labour market (such as the provision of jobs and, level of unemployment) affecting the workers at that time either still hold true today or are inconsequential to the matter under investigation. Yet, this is an assumption that cannot be tested, without gaining further samples of workers and repeating the survey, thus it is difficult to know:

- The labour market influences present at the time of the survey, and
- Whether these influences would influence a repeat of the survey at a later period.

Consequently, the results of the survey may be limited to a particular moment in time, and although it is assumed that this is not the case, the research cannot be wholly sure of this.

4.6.6 Limitations with a questionnaire approach

Using a questionnaire as opposed to another technique such as an experiment or interviews has its own limitations. These include:

1. Questions may not be understood in the manner intended by the researcher.
2. Answers to a questionnaire are final and cannot be probed for further clarity.
3. The research cannot be certain that questions are not discussed by the agency workers with co-colleagues meaning that the answer reflects other views as well as the agency workers themselves.
4. Answers given cannot be separated in context as all statements in the questionnaire can be seen at any one time, in other words agency workers may look at previous answers given to inform their response to a new statement.
5. The researcher cannot be 100% sure that the 'right' person answered.
6. There is no opportunity to supplement the questionnaire with observational data, in that workers cannot be seen in their work place.
7. The response rate for a questionnaire can fall below the levels needed for generalisability.

Nevertheless, all of these limitations were addressed within the research design. The first limitation has been addressed below in section 4.6.7 consisted of giving additional material that gave additional explanations on the questionnaire to the respondents. The second limitation was addressed as some participants were allowed to clarify their questionnaire responses via the telephone interviews that took place with the researcher. The third limitation was also addressed as the instructions in the questionnaire (shown in Appendix C) explicitly stated that answers are to be given dependent on the respondents own views as the following example displays:

The following statements concern how satisfied you are with aspects of your job. Read each statement then circle the most appropriate answer depending on your level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Limitation four was addressed by mixing up items on the questionnaire so that respondents could not return to their previous answer without difficulty. Limitation five was also safeguarded against due to the very specific questions that ascertained the employment status of the respondents as well as their job title, employer and employment agency worked for if appropriate. This information was used in conjunction with information received by the

employers to ensure that the right people were assigned to the right sample groups. Limitation six was also defended as the researcher had a good working relationship with many of the employers in the survey. In addition, the employer interviews were conducted at the employer's place of work and as a result the working environment of many of the agency workers and call centre workers was observed primarily by touring the site after the interviews. Limitation seven was accepted but direct contact between the researcher and the organisations providing the sample of workers was kept up to stimulate a good response rate from the questionnaire. Although all of these limitations were guarded against, it is important to recognise that they may have some impact on the survey.

4.6.7 The use of self reported measures

Self-reported measures used in the quantitative survey pose limitations that may not exist using other research methods such as observation or content analysis (Clark-Carter, 1997). Limitations exist by being unable to give further explanations to items. Self-completion questions rely on people's understanding of items, which may not match the researcher's understanding. To limit the effect of the self-reported techniques in the worker quantitative study three main strategies were employed:

1. A memo accompanying the questionnaire stated its purpose in order to promote an understanding of the areas under investigation.
2. Additional explanations were given when considered necessary on certain items as shown in Appendix C.
3. Many of the questions asked in the quantitative survey were again asked in the qualitative survey of workers. This served as a cross-check on the understanding of questions and concepts under consideration.

However, whether these did have the effect of reducing the limitations of self-reported measures was difficult to ascertain. Thus these limitations, although hopefully controlled, are important to recognise and were accepted by this research.

4.7 RESEARCH DESIGN SUMMARY

The research design can be summarised by detailing the stages taken to undertake this research. These stages were:

1. Pre-hypotheses research stage, consisting of preliminary research carried out with agency workers and employment agencies.
2. Pilot study stage, where the main research instrument was thoroughly tested on agency workers and non-specific permanent workers.
3. Main research questionnaire survey stage, assessing two samples at the same time being the agency workers and call centre workers.
4. Qualitative research stage, in which workers and employers were interviewed.

The epistemological approach taken corresponded to an empirical tradition. Thus, a model of job satisfaction was created a priori through existing research (Chapter 2), which was rationalised as it applied to agency workers (Chapter 3). Pre-hypotheses research was undertaken, but this was limited and only served to confirm the literature review in the previous chapters. Hypotheses were then generated from rationalising the job satisfaction literature as it applied to agency workers (Chapter 3). The research design for assessing these hypotheses was then created. This involved, as can be seen from the stages above, pre-hypotheses interviews, a main research questionnaire (checked by a pilot study) and qualitative interviews to elaborate on the quantitative findings. The sample was obtained both through random sampling of workers in the sample frame and additional samples sought to boost the numbers of participants. Measures used in the questionnaire were assessed in terms of standard features such as reliability and validity but also non-standard features applicable to agency workers (such as no assumption of permanent tenure or direct employment by employer). Many of the newer measures, apart from one developed specifically for agency workers, that could have been used in the study were rejected because of these grounds. Consequently, many of the measures in the Job Diagnostics Survey (detailed in Chapter 2) were deemed suitable and used, along with customised, demographical and employment agency specific questions.

Methods of statistical analysis for both the quantitative and qualitative data were presented. Analysis of the quantitative data initially checked its reliability and consistency using both an exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis to substantiate, where possible, the constructs used. Relational hypotheses were tested using correlation and Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression (HMLR) analysis. Differential hypotheses were tested generally between groups by using an ANOVA (or its non-parametric equivalent) and then checked between specific groups using t-tests (or its non-parametric equivalent). Qualitative data from the worker interviews were

rigorously analysed using ATLAS-ti used to develop thematic codes from this data. Employer qualitative data was assessed through ATLAS-ti to ensure its relevance to the study.

Limitations to the thesis were also presented. The epistemological approach was initially criticised by considering other approaches that the thesis could have adopted. Yet, the empirical tradition was chosen over others not only because of the preference of the researcher but in order to apply the findings to a wider population from that surveyed. The applied nature of the research also restricted its ability to reduce confounding variables, although the research design attempts to reduce these. The antecedent nature of variables, with the possible exception of organisational commitment, was presumed in the relational hypotheses in the study although the causal nature cannot be determined by a cross-sectional design. Limitations also exist with using self-reported measures although again these have been restricted by not relying solely on a questionnaire for gathering data.

Despite these limitations, common in research of this nature, the results from the thesis should be able to cast light on the research questions. The results of the quantitative data will now be presented in the following two chapters that detail the overall integrity of the data (Chapter 5), the relational hypotheses (Chapter 5) and the differential hypotheses (Chapter 6).

CHAPTER 5

5. RELIABILITY AND RELATIONAL RESULTS

This chapter initially details the reliability results for the measures used in the study. Measures were evaluated and accepted or rejected on the grounds of their reliability, inter-item correlation or combination of items in factor analysis. A confirmatory factor analysis was also performed on applicable variables to ensure that there underlying structure conformed to key concepts in the study. Normality of data, response rates, descriptive statistics, frequency distributions and then a testing of the Hackman and Oldham (1975) model was carried out to ensure the variables and the research model put forward in the thesis were valid. The relational hypotheses were then tested using both Spearman's non-parametric correlation and a Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression.

5.1 RELIABILITY

5.1.1 Reliability of measures

The reliabilities of measures in the study were calculated using Cronbach alpha (See Table 5.1). All participants in the study (n=222, excluding non-call centre permanent workers filtered from this data) were used to calculate the reliabilities of the measures with the exception of worker relationship, Ellingson's voluntary factor and Ellingson's involuntary factor which were applicable to agency workers only. Cases missing data were ignored in the reliability analysis, thus with the three worker relationship items there were 6 agency workers with missing data meaning that a reduced sample of agency workers (n=90) was used to calculate the reliability statistic.

Table 5.1: Cronbach's alpha.

Measure	Items	Cronbach Alpha	Reliability
Job Satisfaction *	5	0.83	Good
Skill Variety *	3	0.70	Adequate
Organisational Commitment *	9	0.84	Good
Worker relationship items 1,2,3 combined **	3	0.52	Poor
Dealing with Others *	3	0.52	Poor
Ellingson's Voluntary factor **	4	0.64	Poor
Ellingson's Involuntary factor **	4	0.71	Adequate
Job Security Satisfaction *	2	0.78	Good
* n= 199 to 222 (measure applicable to all participants)			
** n= 84 to 96 (measure applicable to agency workers only)			

Most of the measures used in subsequent analysis have good or adequate levels of reliability with the exception of the two measures comprising of worker relationship (worker relationship items 1, 2, 3 combined, dealing with others) and the Ellingson's Voluntary factor. Yet, Pallant (2001) stated that with variables with short scales, low Cronbach alphas are often found. This suggested that it was more appropriate to check the inter-item correlation in addition to the Cronbach alpha.

5.1.2 Inter-item Correlation

Due to the low reliability figures on some of the study variables, inter-item correlation were calculated as shown in Appendix F. Most items that related to a variable in the study (job satisfaction, skill variety, job security satisfaction, and organisational commitment) were correlated with each other to a significant degree (See Appendix F). The exceptions to this were:

- Working relationship customised items 1 and 2 ($\rho=0.01$).
- Dealing with others items 1 and 3 ($\rho=0.18$).
- Ellingson's involuntary factor items 1 and 4 ($\rho=0.17$).
- Ellingson's voluntary factor items 3 and 4 ($\rho=0.18$).

All four of these variables also have a poor or barely acceptable level of reliability. An exploratory Principle Components Analysis (PCA) was therefore conducted on the variables in the study (See Appendix G). This showed a strong convergence between separate items making up the Ellingson's voluntary and involuntary factor. Some convergence, but not to the extent found in the two Ellingson's factors, was seen in the Dealing with Others scale and no convergence was seen on the Worker relationship items. Given this PCA, it was decided to:

- Split up the three items that made up customised working relationship variable. These three items were to be compared separately with job satisfaction in the correlation analysis but were combined in the Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression due to the nature of this test.
- Not use the Dealing with Others Scale due to its poor reliability (Cronbach alpha=0.52) and poor inter item correlation score between items 1 and 3 ($\rho=0.18$).
- Accept the low item correlation for the one item on the Ellingson's Involuntary factor. Primarily, as this measure has a Cronbach alpha score of 0.71 suggesting a reasonable level of reliability and the items that make up this variable are seen to converge in the principle components analysis (See Appendix G).
- Accept the low item correlation for the one item on the Ellingson's Voluntary factor. Again, as the Cronbach alpha score was over above 0.6 suggesting a slightly better reliability than the dealing with others measure which was rejected. The items that make up this variable also converged in the principle components analysis suggesting that it was a unified measure.

5.1.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To ensure that the variables measured in the study were of a sound statistical basis for further analysis, in that the items of the variables of interest were seen as combining together to form the variable under observation, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was carried out on the variables in associating them with the items from the questionnaire. CFA allows the researcher to test how well the data fit a hypothesised structure among items by assessing fit against through considering a series of fit indices and parameters (Byrne, 2001). Unfortunately, CFA only tests factors with more than three items thus worker relationship, job security satisfaction and skill variety could not be tested using this technique as all of these variables consisted of three items or less. Notwithstanding, organisational commitment, job satisfaction and Ellingson's voluntary and involuntary factors were assessed using CFA. Cases with missing data were removed from this analysis as only a clean sample could be used to test organisational commitment and job satisfaction ($n=209$) and the agency worker only related variable of Ellingson's voluntary and involuntary factors ($n=81$).

General job satisfaction was best fitted to a two factor model ($\chi^2=8.2$, $df=4$, $p<.083$, CFI=.95, RMSEA=.072) with items 1 to 3 loaded onto one factor and items 4 and 5 loaded on to

a separate factor. Nevertheless, the correlation calculated by AMOS between these two factors was extremely high (estimated $r = 0.74$, $p < 0.001$) so although the CFA pointed to a two factor variable of job satisfaction, it was worth combining these factors forming one composite variable of general job satisfaction, as originally proposed in the research design.

Organisational commitment was originally a three factor variable inclusive of organisational identity, organisational involvement and organisational loyalty (Cook and Wall, 1980). The CFA, supported this three factor model to an acceptable level (chi-square=70.5, $df=24$, $p=.00$, CFI=.93, RMSEA=.097). Nevertheless, all of these three factors were highly correlated within the CFA model, calculated by AMOS (See Table 5.2). Thus, taking into consideration the high correlation between the factors, it is decided to elect one variable for organisational commitment as previously envisaged in the research design.

Table 5.2: Correlation between organisational commitment factors

Factor name	1	2	3
1. Organisational identity	1.00		
2. Organisational involvement	0.82**	1.00	
3. Organisational loyalty	0.86**	0.59**	1.00
** $p < 0.01$			
n=209 (represents clean dataset for all participants)			

Ellingson's voluntary and involuntary factors were also tested in the CFA although these items only relate to the agency workers. Thus a smaller sample ($n=81$) is used to check these factors. Both the Ellingson voluntary factor (chi-square=2.5, $df=2$, $p=.29$, CFI=.99, RMSEA=.06) and Ellingson involuntary factor (chi-square=5.6, $df=2$, $p=.06$, CFI=.95, RMSEA=.15) were found to be separate variables in their own right supporting Ellingson et al (1998). These variables were thus be considered separately for the correlation analysis although they were combined in the Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression as this model is theory driven and as such both variables relate to work status, and as such need to be tested together in this more stringent regression model.

5.2 NORMALITY, RESPONSE RATE, DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS, FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS AND RESEARCH MODEL TESTING

5.2.1 Tests of normality with the agency worker sample

A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality was conducted on hypothesised variables measured for the relational hypotheses with the agency worker sample ($n=96$). Table 5.3 shows these results with non-significant results showing normal distribution (Pallant, 2001). Data for several

variables (worker relationship items 1, 2 and 3, Ellingson's voluntary factor and involuntary factor) departed from normality. Transformation of the data was considered to convert to normality although, transformations would have to be applied to all variables some of which were already normally distributed. Hence, transformation of the data was not undertaken and non-parametric tests were used for testing the agency worker sample.

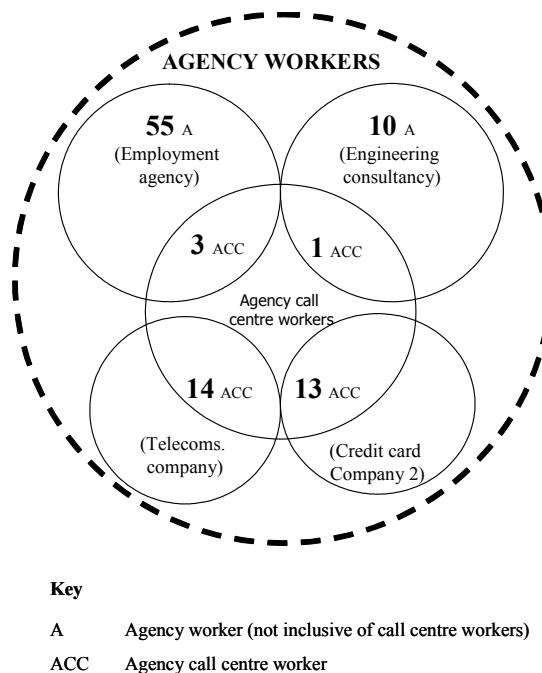
Table 5.3: Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality for the agency workers sample

Study variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic	Sig.
Job Satisfaction *	.08	.19
Skill Variety *	.09	.09
Organisational commitment *	.07	.20
Worker relationship item1 Supports agency workers **	.18	.00
Worker relationship item2 Anti-agency workers **	.18	.00
Worker relationship item3 Valued in current position **	.14	.00
Dealing with Others *	.09	.09
Ellingson's Voluntary factor **	.10	.03
Ellingson's Involuntary factor **	.14	.00
* n= 199 to 222 (measure applicable to all participants)		
** n= 84 to 96 (measure applicable to agency workers only)		

5.2.2 Response rates

Ninety-six agency workers in total were surveyed for the relational hypotheses, gathered from four organisations as shown in the following Venn diagram (See Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Venn diagram of the agency worker sample



Agency workers were thus sampled from four different organisations originating from:

- Employment agency (n=58);
- Engineering consultancy (n=11);
- Credit card company 2 (n=13);
- Telecommunications company (n=14).

The response rates varied per organisation, ranging from 100% in the Engineering Consultancy to 23% in the Employment agency as depicted in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4: Response rate for the agency worker sample

Type of organisation	Applicable Questionnaires sent	Questionnaires returned	Response rate (%)
Engineering consultancy	11	11	100%
Telecommunications company	50	14*	80%
Credit card company 2	80	13*	48%
Employment agency	250	58	23%
*Excludes permanent call centre workers although these are accounted for in the response rate calculated.			

To ensure consistency in the agency worker sample, a Kruskal-Wallis test was performed between three groups of agency workers being, those originating from the employment agency (n=58), those gathered from the two organisations from the call centre worker sample (n=27) and those from the engineering company (n=11). This found no significant differences between the three sets of agency workers (See Table 5.5) suggesting these groups can be combined to form one composite agency worker sample.

Table 5.5: Kruskal-Wallis test of differences between agency workers

Variable	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Job Satisfaction	2.92	2	0.40
Skill Variety	3.75	2	0.31
Organisational commitment	3.55	2	0.20
Worker relationship item1 Supports agency workers	0.91	2	0.23
Worker relationship item2 Anti-agency workers	1.86	2	0.34
Worker relationship item3 Valued in current position	5.62	2	0.07
Dealing with Others	0.33	2	0.90
Ellingson's Voluntary factor	6.07	2	0.06
Ellingson's Involuntary factor	0.75	2	0.69
n= 84 to 96 (all agency workers)			

5.2.3 Descriptive statistics and frequency distributions

Descriptive statistics and frequency distributions were calculated for the agency worker sample with the variables in the study. Table 5.6 shows the sample, mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum figures for the study variables.

Table 5.6: Descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Age	32.50	12.57	16.00	61.00
Hours	33.80	6.42	14.00	42.00
Marital status	2.11	1.23	1.00	5.00
Skill variety	3.59	1.58	1.00	6.67
Organisational commitment	4.73	1.07	1.33	7.00
Anti-agency workers (reversed)	4.86	1.93	1.00	7.00
Supports agency workers	4.90	1.74	1.00	7.00
Valued in current position	4.24	1.84	1.00	7.00
Job satisfaction	4.32	1.35	1.00	7.00
Ellingson voluntary factor	7.55	2.17	4.00	12.00
Ellingson involuntary factor	6.71	2.43	4.00	12.00
Job security satisfaction	3.53	1.44	1.00	6.00
Dissatisfaction with pay	1.66	1.16	0.00	6.00
Dealing with others	5.22	1.19	2.00	7.00
Autonomy	3.96	1.71	1.00	7.00
Task identity	4.83	1.51	1.00	7.00
Feedback from the job itself	4.31	1.41	1.00	7.00
Task significance	5.02	1.35	1.67	7.00
Satisfaction with growth	3.88	1.56	1.00	6.75
n= 84 to 96 (all agency workers)				

Frequency distributions showed that 74% of the agency worker sample was female and 93% of the sample worked on a full-time basis. 68% of the sample were based in the Midlands with the remainder being located in the South East. Differences in marital status was also found with 41% agency workers being single as shown in Figure 5.2. The frequency distribution of age was also calculated (See Figure 5.3) and it was found that this was similar to the frequency distribution of age in the Labour Force Survey as presented in Chapter 3 (See Figure 3.3) although the study's sample had slightly less younger workers proportionately in the 16-21 year old age bracket.

Figure 5.2: Marital Status in the agency worker sample

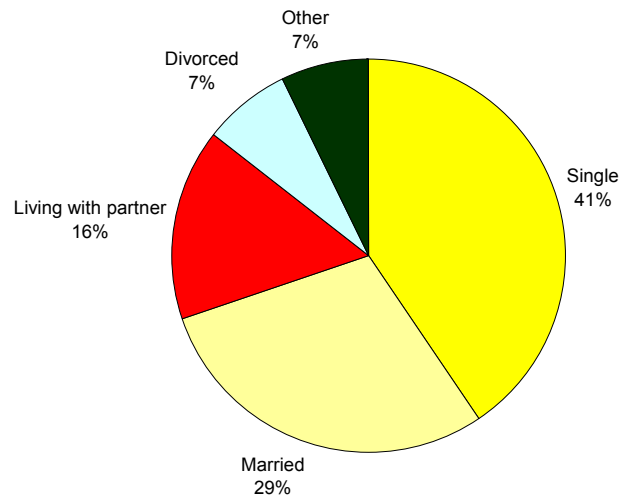
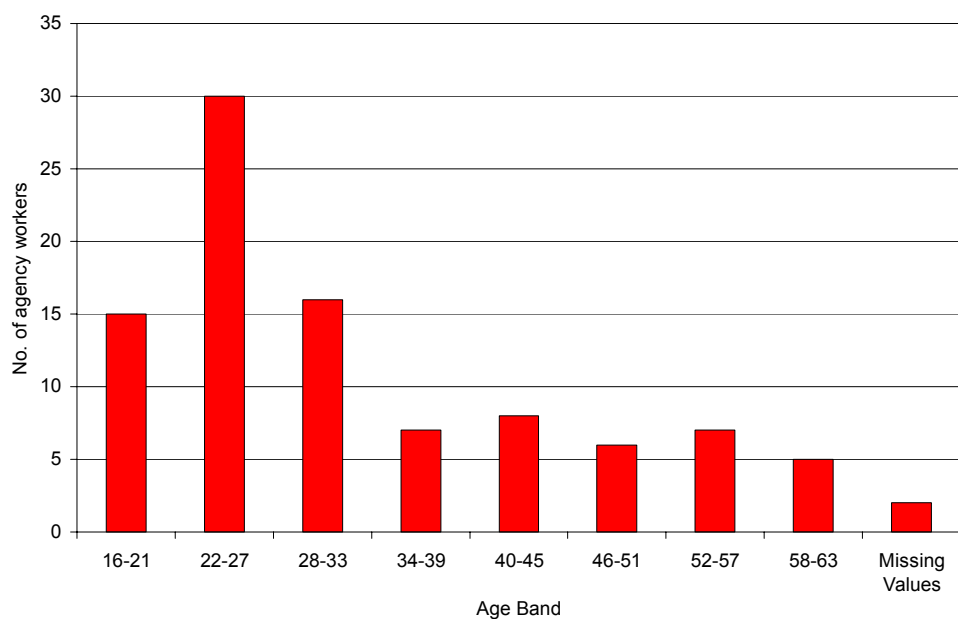


Figure 5.3: Age distribution in the agency worker sample



A Kruskal Wallis test was used to assess whether any of the demographic variables (sex, age, geographic region, full/part time position and marital status) had any influence over variables measured in the study. Interestingly, in the agency worker sample differences were found in geographic region in organisational commitment (Chi square = 4.80, $p < 0.05$) and Ellingson's voluntary factor (Chi square = 7.14, $p < 0.01$). The mean score differences between the two regions (See Table 5.7) clearly shows that these two regions were different in these two variables

whereby the agency workers from the south east had a higher commitment and voluntary take-up of work than agency workers from the Midlands indicating some regional difference.

Table 5.7: Regional differences

Geographical region	Organisational commitment (mean)	Ellingson's voluntary factor (mean)
South East	51.95	57.36
Midlands	38.63	41.50
n=96 (all agency workers)		

A marginal but nonetheless statistically significant difference was found in age (Chi square = 16.76, $p > 0.05$) and task significance. This suggested that agency workers at different ages may have different levels of task significance (See Table 5.8).

Table 5.8: Mean age differences

Age Band	Task significance	n
16-21	50.17	15
22-27	42.96	30
28-33	32.97	16
34-39	62.29	7
40-45	61.56	8
46-51	43.92	6
52-57	66.79	7
58-63	27.10	5
Missing details	N/A	2
Total Sample		96

Five agency workers had experienced some sort of sexual harassment (See Table 5.9) two of which were recent events that happened less than five years ago. Nevertheless, all of these incidents occurred when the workers were employed on a permanent basis. Thus, sexual harassment will not be examined in terms of how it is associated with job satisfaction as no incidents of sexual harassment were recorded in any of the agency assignments.

Table 5.9: Sexual harassment reported by agency workers

No. of agency workers	Felt uncomfortable with experience of:			Years ago
	Sexual innuendoes, jokes or light (non-sexual) touches	Unwanted/unwelcome sexual attention	Sexual coercion	
3	Yes	Yes	Not applicable	1 4 30
1	No	Not applicable	Yes	10
1	Not applicable	Yes	Not applicable	20

5.2.4 Research model testing

The research model in this thesis put forward five variables (skill variety, organisational commitment, worker relationship, voluntary work-status and involuntary work-status) in the relational hypotheses as being more applicable to the job satisfaction of agency workers than other models such as Hackman and Oldham (1975). Nevertheless, in any exploratory study it is advisable to check that this assumption is correct before carrying out data analysis on the relational hypotheses.

In the questionnaire that was administered to all participants some space was left over after all the measures for the relational and differential variables were included. This space was then used for variables of interest identified in Chapters 2 and 3. Table 5.10 shows the non-parametric correlations (Spearman's rho) for all of these variables.

Table 5.10: Agency Worker Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1 Job Satisfaction	1.00															
2 Ellingson Voluntary factor	0.32**	1.00														
3 Ellingson Involuntary factor	-0.06	-0.13	1.00													
4 Skill Variety	0.39**	0.21*	-0.13	1.00												
5 Supports agency workers	0.28**	0.17	-0.10	0.16	1.00											
6 Anti-agency workers (reversed)	0.30**	0.25*	-0.04	0.20	0.22*	1.00										
7 Valued in current position	0.69**	0.30**	-0.27**	0.46**	0.33**	0.30**	1.00									
8 Organisational commitment	0.79**	0.22*	-0.05	0.46**	0.40**	0.22*	0.65**	1.00								
9 Job Security Satisfaction	0.27**	0.13	-0.23*	0.35**	0.19	0.07	0.39**	0.28**	1.00							
10 Dealing with Others	0.24*	0.04	-0.25*	0.46**	0.09	0.24*	0.32**	0.36**	0.02	1.00						
11 Autonomy	0.49**	0.18	-0.11	0.70**	0.18	0.29**	0.51**	0.55**	0.16	0.34**	1.00					
12 Feedback from the job itself	0.22*	0.16	-0.26*	0.42**	0.08	0.11	0.24*	0.21	0.01	0.29**	0.51**	1.00				
13 Task Significance	0.30**	0.22*	-0.13	0.56**	0.14	0.29**	0.33**	0.40**	0.27*	0.42**	0.50**	0.30**	1.00			
14 Task Identity	0.34**	0.06	-0.23*	0.24*	0.12	0.27*	0.27*	0.31**	0.10	0.33**	0.40**	0.38**	0.33**	1.00		
15 Satisfaction with growth	0.67**	0.28**	-0.11	0.71**	0.34**	0.31**	0.69**	0.69**	0.41**	0.39**	0.73**	0.38**	0.52**	0.34**	1.00	
16 Dissatisfaction with pay	-0.17	-0.11	0.07	-0.02	-0.03	-0.19	-0.15	-0.05	-0.18	0.04	0.04	0.04	-0.05	0.02	-0.09	1.00
Key * p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01 n=84-96																

The variables with the highest correlation to job satisfaction in this matrix are two of the variables in the relational hypotheses being organisational commitment ($\rho=0.79$, $p<0.01$) and one of the worker relationship items being valued in current position ($\rho=0.69$, $p<0.01$). Satisfaction with growth was also measured as a job satisfaction facet, which is also highly related to job satisfaction ($\rho=0.67$, $p<0.01$) which is not surprising as it is a similar concept. However, the next highest correlation was autonomy ($\rho=0.49$, $p<0.01$) seconded by skill variety ($\rho=0.39$, $p<0.01$). Other variables in the Hackman and Oldham (1975) model also showed significant correlations with job satisfaction although many of these were only just significant ($p<0.05$).

Due to this result, it was thought that a more stringent method of ascertaining the relationship between variables should be conducted. In this regard, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was completed on all the variables in the data with the agency worker sample. This test showed that organisational commitment and two worker relationship items (valued in current position and anti-agency workers reversed) were strongly associated with job satisfaction. Both of these variables form part of the theoretical model underpinning the thesis and as such this model was tested in preference to other models of job satisfaction as the variables in these other models (i.e., Hackman and Oldham, 1975) were not shown as significant in the stepwise multiple regression.

Table 5.11: Stepwise Multiple Regression results

Model	R^2	ΔR^2	ΔF	$\Delta \text{Sig. F}$
1. organisational commitment	0.64	0.64	139.66	0.00
2. organisational commitment, valued in current position	0.68	0.05	11.78	0.00
3. organisational commitment, valued in current position, anti-agency workers reversed	0.72	0.02	4.88	0.00
Key: Δ = change, $\Delta \text{Sig. F}$ = significance of change in the F statistic				
n= 84 to 96 (all agency workers)				

5.3 RESULTS FOR THE RELATIONAL HYPOTHESES

Relational hypotheses consisted of Hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5, which were:

H1 Skill variety has a positive relationship with agency worker job satisfaction.

- H2 Organisational commitment has a positive relationship with agency worker job satisfaction.
- H3 Worker relationship has a positive relationship with agency worker job satisfaction.
- H4 Voluntary work status has a positive relationship with agency worker job satisfaction.
- H5 Involuntary work status has a negative relationship with agency worker job satisfaction.

Two sets of analyses were conducted to investigate these hypotheses. Non-parametric correlation using Spearman's rho were first calculated between job satisfaction, skill variety, organisational commitment, worker relationship (split into the three items: supports agency workers, anti-agency workers reversed and valued in current role), and Ellingson's voluntary/involuntary factors. Hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis was then carried out using job satisfaction as the dependent variable and organisational commitment, worker relationship, skill variety, Ellingson's voluntary and involuntary factors and the remaining variables measured as the independent variables in five blocks for the regression analysis. The selection of variable order for this model was based on the theoretical model of the thesis (in that hypothesised variables went first) and the likely variance, estimated from the correlation analysis, that variables had on job satisfaction. The advantages of using HMLR over other types of regression are that the independent variables (organisational commitment, worker relationship, skill variety and Ellingson's involuntary and voluntary factors) can be placed into a prearranged order determined by the model built in the thesis. Stepwise regression tends to examine how a set of independent variables effects the dependent variable, which in this instance is job satisfaction. HMLR, on the other hand, has the advantage of controlling how the independent variables are placed in the model and as such represents the best way in which to test the research's data.

5.3.1 Correlation

The correlations in the agency worker sample are shown in Table 5.10. Four of the hypotheses (H1, H2, H3 and H4) were accepted with significant positive correlation being found between job satisfaction, skill variety ($\rho = 0.39$, $p < 0.01$), organisational commitment ($\rho = 0.79$, $p < 0.01$), worker relationship items including supports agency workers ($\rho = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$), anti-

agency workers (reversed scoring) ($\rho=0.30$, $p<0.01$), valued in current position ($\rho=0.69$, $p<0.01$) and Ellingson's voluntary factor ($\rho=0.32$, $p<0.01$). Hypothesis H5 was refuted as no significant correlation was found between job satisfaction and Ellingson involuntary factor reversed ($\rho = 0.06$).

5.3.2 Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression

All the assumptions required (residual tolerances, residual independence, multicollinearity, sample size, homoscedasticity, linearity and normality) for performing the Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression (HMLR) were met by the data as shown in Appendix I. The variables were entered into the HMLR model according to their likely effect on the variance of job satisfaction. Thus the hypothesised variables were entered first being organisational commitment, worker relationship (all three worker relationship items entered in one block) skill variety, and Ellingson's voluntary and involuntary factors (both entered in as one block). The remaining variables recorded in the study were then entered after the hypothesised variables. The HMLR substantiated some of the correlational relationships between the hypothesised variables and job satisfaction (See Table 5.12). Organisational commitment explained over half of the variance relating to job satisfaction ($\Delta R^2 = 0.64$, $p<0.01$) and worker relationship ($\Delta R^2 = 0.08$, $p<0.01$) explained the rest of the variance in the regression model. Skill variety, Ellingson's voluntary and involuntary factors were not found to be significant in the model. These results supported Hypotheses H2 and H3. They do however refute Hypotheses H1, H4 and H5.

Table 5.12: HMLR results

Model	R^2	ΔR^2	ΔF	$\Delta \text{Sig. F}$
1. organisational commitment	0.636	0.636	139.66	0.00
2. organisational commitment, anti-agency workers (reversed), supports agency workers, valued in current position	0.716	0.080	7.26	0.00
3. organisational commitment, anti-agency workers (reversed), supports agency workers, valued in current position, skill variety	0.717	0.001	0.17	0.68
4. organisational commitment, anti-agency workers (reversed), supports agency workers, valued in current position, skill variety, Ellingson involuntary factor, Ellingson voluntary factor	0.729	0.013	1.72	0.19
5. organisational commitment, anti-agency workers (reversed), supports agency workers, valued in current position, skill variety, Ellingson involuntary factor, Ellingson voluntary factor, dissatisfaction with pay, job security satisfaction, task identity, feedback from the job itself, task significance, autonomy, satisfaction with growth.	0.768	0.038	1.36	0.23
Key: Δ = change, $\Delta \text{Sig. F}$ = significance of change in the F statistic n= 84 to 96 (all agency workers)				

5.4 QUANTITATIVE SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

Table 5.13 shows the summary results from the quantitative data for the relational hypotheses. Hypotheses H2, and H3 were not refuted and received support from both the correlation analysis and the HMLR. Hypotheses H1 and H4 were not refuted by the correlation analysis but were refuted in the HMLR. Hypothesis H5 was refuted by both tests receiving no support in the analysis. The research has now detailed the relational hypotheses in terms of the quantitative data. Further research on these hypotheses was completed in terms of the worker interviews (Chapter 7) and employer interviews (Chapter 8). Yet before this evidence is considered, attention is turned towards the quantitative results for the differential hypotheses. This testing involves a further sample of call centre workers, which is detailed in the following chapter (Chapter 6).

Table 5.13: Summary quantitative results for the relational hypotheses.

Sample	Hypotheses	Data analysis	
		Correlation	Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression
Agency workers	H1 Skill Variety	✓	X
	H2 Organisational commitment	✓	✓
	H3 Worker relationship	✓	✓
	- Supports agency workers	✓	✓
	- Anti agency workers	✓	✓
	- Valued in current position	✓	✓
	H4 Ellingson's voluntary factor	✓	X
	H5 Ellingson's involuntary factor	X	X
Key: ✓ (not refuted) X (refuted)			

CHAPTER 6

6. DIFFERENTIAL HYPOTHESES RESULTS

6.1 NORMALITY, RESPONSE RATE, FORMATION OF THE CALL CENTRE WORKER SAMPLE, DESCRIPTIVES AND FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS

6.1.1 Cleaning of data

One hundred and sixty seven call centre workers initially responded to the questionnaire. However, on assessing the suitability of data it was noted that 10 permanent workers did not match the criteria for being a call centre worker even though they worked in the call centre environment. The majority of these cases were either call centre worker supervisors or call centre analysts (that analyse calls coming in, average holding time for the customer, etc) and these cases were removed for the final sample. Consequently, the final call centre worker sample consisted of 157 call centre workers (as detailed below).

6.1.2 Tests of normality with the call centre worker sample

A Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality (See Table 6.1) analysed hypothesised variables for the differential hypotheses with the call centre worker sample (n=157). Unfortunately, three variables (job satisfaction, skill variety, job security satisfaction) departed from normality in the call centre worker sample, which is interesting as all of these measures were normally distributed with the agency worker sample detailed in Chapter 5 (although other variables with the agency worker sample were not normally distributed). Non-parametric tests were therefore used testing the differential hypotheses.

Table 6.1: Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality

Study variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic	Sig.
Job Satisfaction	.08	.03
Skill Variety	.09	.01
Organisational commitment	.05	.20
Job security satisfaction	.12	.00
n= 154 to 157 (all call centre workers)		

6.1.3 Response rates

The breakdown of the call centre worker sample (n=157) used to test the differential hypotheses was:

1. Agency call centre workers (n=31) taken from
 - a. Credit card company 2 (n=13)
 - b. Telecommunications company (n=14).
 - c. Employment agency (n=3).
 - d. Engineering consultancy (n=1).
2. Permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers (n=41) taken from
 - a. Credit card company 1 (n=18).
 - b. Coffee supplier (n=23).
3. Permanent workers who do work with agency call centre workers (n=85) who were split between
 - a. Credit card company 2 (n=25).
 - b. Telecommunications company (n=26).
 - c. Government help-line department (n=34).

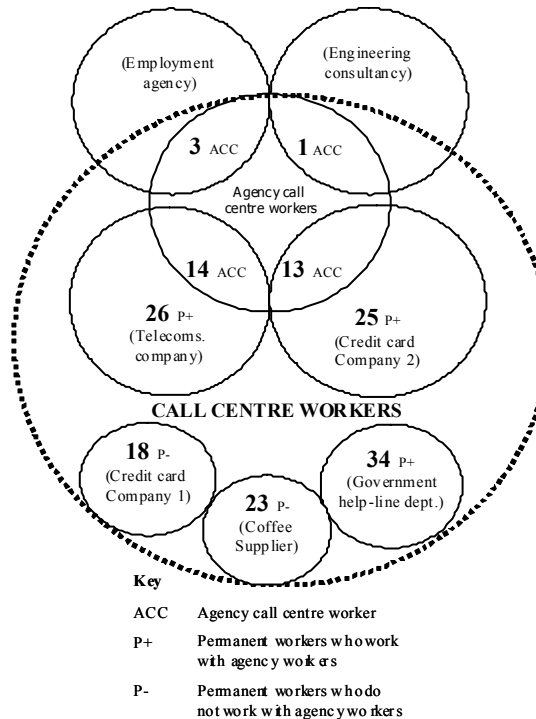
At least half of the call centre workers overall (47%) responded to the questionnaire, which is excellent for a postal based survey (See Table 6.2). This sample is presented in diagrammatic format (See Figure 6.1) that shows where the call centre worker sample originated (See Appendix E for more details on both agency worker and call centre worker samples combined).

Table 6.2: Response rates

Type of organisation	Type of respondents contacted	Number of respondents contacted	Response rate	Response rate (%)
Credit card company 1	P-	80	18	23%
Coffee Supplier	P-	35	23	66%
Credit card company 2	P+ and ACC	80	38	48%
Government Help-line Department	P+	34	34	100%
Telecommunications company	P+ and ACC	50	40	80%
Employment agency	ACC	n/a	3	N/A
Engineering consultancy	ACC	n/a	1	N/A

Key:
P+ Permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers
P- Permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers
ACC Agency call centre workers

Figure 6.1: Venn diagram of call centre worker sample



6.1.4 Formation of the call centre worker groups

The research defined three groups of call centre workers in the study consisting of agency call centre workers (ACC), permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers (P+) and permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers (P-). Yet, before these groups were merged, differences that may have existed internally in the worker groups were assessed. This found:

- No significant differences (using Kruskal Wallis test) in the ACC group sampled from four organisations.
- No significant differences (using a Mann-Whitney test) between the P- group sampled from two organisations.
- A significant difference in job security satisfaction (using a Kruskal Wallis test) between the P+ sampled from three organisations (See Table 6.3).

Table 6.3: Differences between the P+ groups

Variable	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Job Satisfaction	4.08	2	0.13
Skill Variety	1.73	2	0.42
Job Security Satisfaction	9.13**	2	0.01
Organisational commitment	4.05	2	0.13
Key: ** p<0.01 n=81 to 84 (Permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers)			

This result suggested that rather than combining the P+ group into one group, the permanent workers from the three organisations that made up this sample should be treated separately in testing the differential hypotheses. In this regard, Table 6.4 shows the final sample groups used in the analysis. These abbreviated terms, and the collective term P+ for all permanent workers that work with agency call centre workers, will now be used for the remainder of the chapter for ease of reading.

Table 6.4: Call centre worker groups

Group	Call centre worker group	N
ACC	Agency call centre workers	31
P1+	Permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers group 1.	25
P2+	Permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers group 2.	34
P3+	Permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers group 3.	26
P-	Permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers.	41
Total	Call centre workers	157

6.1.5 Descriptive statistics and frequency distributions

Descriptive statistics and frequency distributions were calculated for the agency worker sample with the variables in the study. Table 6.5 shows the sample, mean and standard deviation for the whole call centre worker sample and the three groups that make up this sample (P-, P+ and ACC) for the study variables.

Table 6.5: Descriptive statistics for the call centre worker sample

	All Call Centre Workers n=152 to 157		P- group n=40 to 41		P+ group n=80 to 84		ACC group n=29 to 31	
Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	31.76	9.93	30.05	8.35	33.07	10.11	30.45	11.10
Hours	33.14	9.68	32.20	12.48	33.71	9.24	32.87	6.17
Marital status	1.83	0.91	1.66	0.85	1.92	0.93	1.81	0.91
Skill Variety	4.03	1.57	4.36	1.34	4.19	1.57	3.16	1.59
Organisational commitment	4.94	1.14	5.47	1.08	4.79	1.08	4.65	1.19
Job Satisfaction	4.16	1.35	4.87	1.31	3.85	1.32	4.07	1.19
Job Security Satisfaction	4.67	1.50	5.05	1.51	4.90	1.28	3.53	1.54
Task Significance	5.19	1.35	5.26	1.25	5.31	1.30	4.80	1.56
Satisfaction with growth	4.24	1.44	4.93	1.34	4.20	1.28	3.47	1.58
Disatisfaction with pay	1.77	1.41	1.10	1.14	2.01	1.53	2.00	1.10
Dealing with Others	5.67	1.18	5.92	1.11	5.69	1.18	5.28	1.23
Autonomy	4.42	2.19	4.85	1.24	4.48	2.65	3.70	1.55
Task Identity	4.32	1.43	4.84	1.32	4.03	1.44	4.39	1.39
Feedback from the job itself	4.78	1.34	5.30	1.42	4.78	1.20	4.11	1.34
Supports Agency workers	4.62	1.66	4.60	1.65	4.6	1.72	5.10	1.45
Valued in current position	4.18	1.73	4.98	1.51	3.94	1.71	3.81	1.78

Frequency distributions were also calculated with sex, region, marital status, full/part time and age as shown in Figures 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6 respectively. These Figures show that 68% of the call worker sample were female, 59% were from the Midlands region, 44% were single, 85% worked full time and most workers (29%) were in the 22-27 age category. The age profile of the agency call centre workers was similar to that seen in the agency worker sample (See Chapter 5). However, the permanent workers both seemed younger than the profile recorded in the Labour Force Survey (See Figure 3.3) which suggests that as permanent workers, call centre workers tended to be younger than workers in other jobs.

Figure 6.2: Call centre worker sex distribution

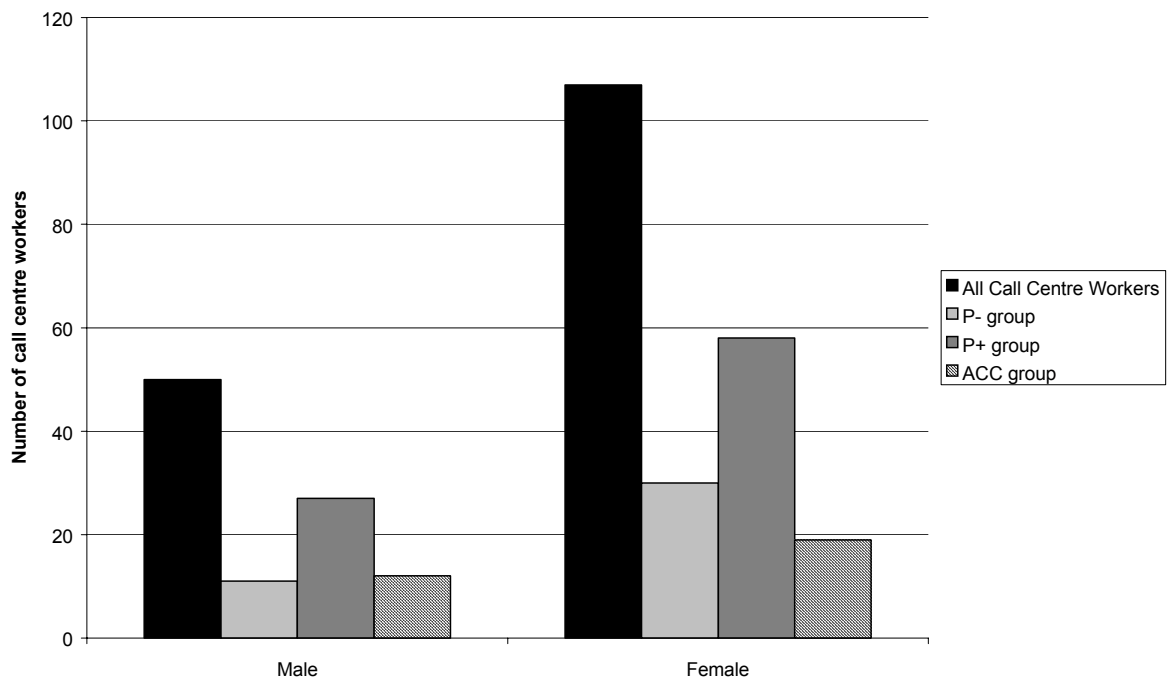


Figure 6.3: Call centre worker regional distribution

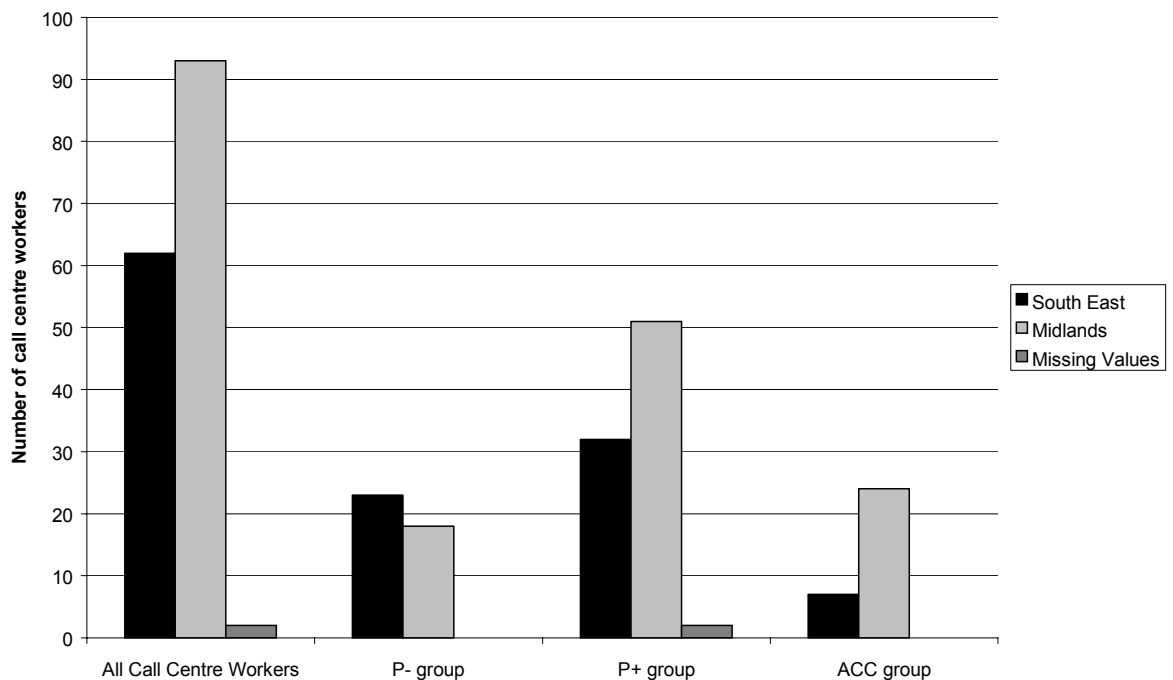


Figure 6.4: Call centre worker marital status distribution

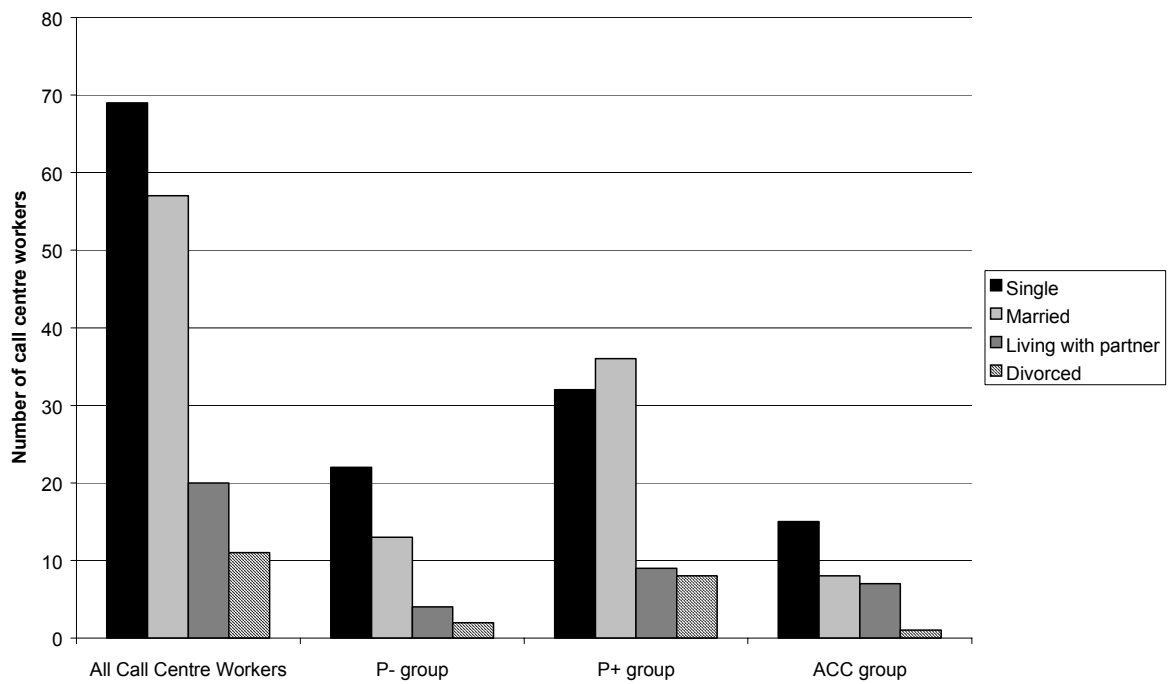


Figure 6.5: Call centre worker full/part time status distribution

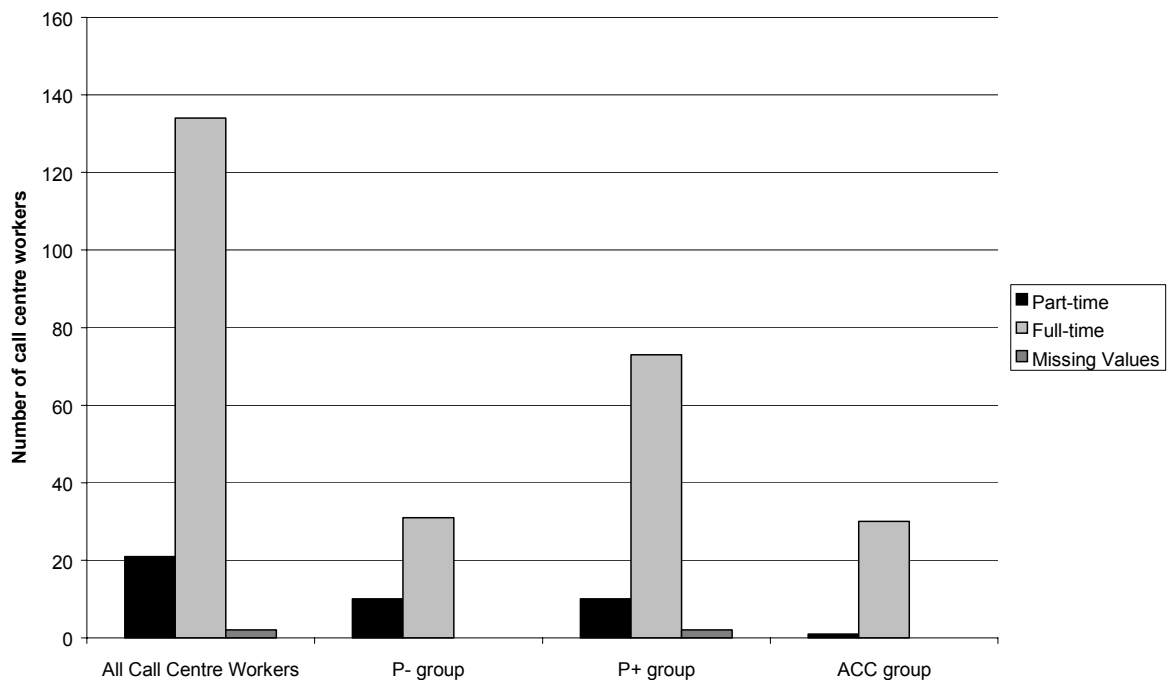
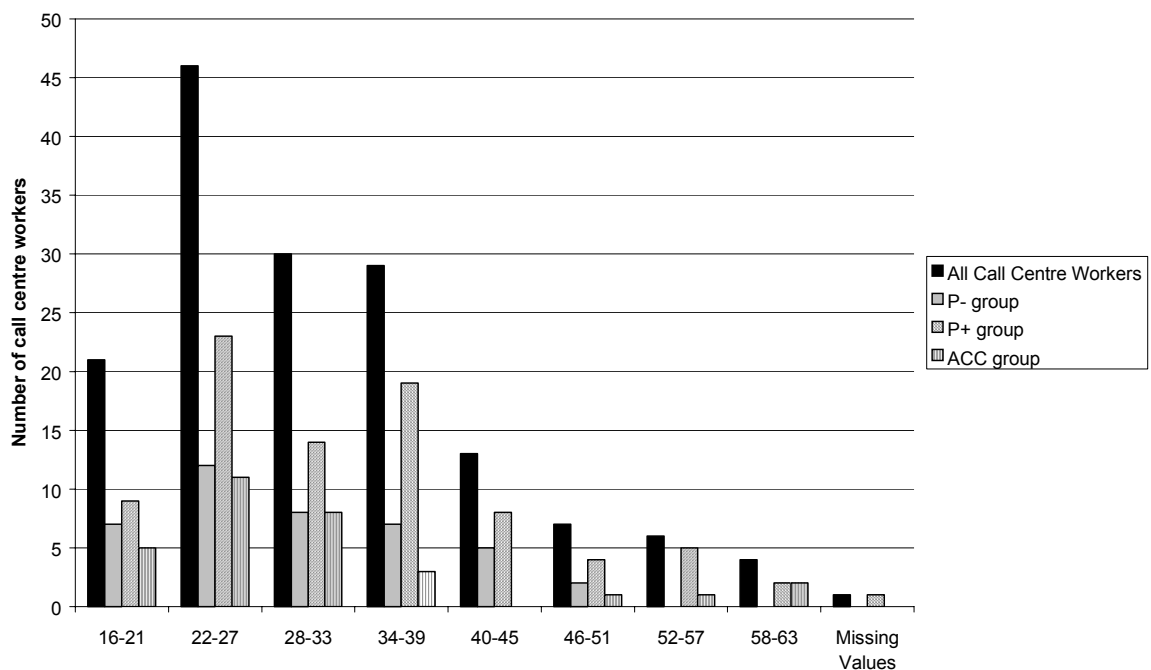


Figure 6.6: Call centre worker age distribution



A Kruskal Wallis test was used to assess whether any of the demographic variables (sex, age, geographic region, full/part time position and marital status) had any influence over variables measured in the study in the three groups previously described in the research design (ACC, P+ and P-). No significant differences were found between these descriptive variables and the main study variables in the P- and ACC group. In the P+ group a significant difference was found in geographical region and the supports agency workers worker relationship item (Chi square=15.72, $p<0.01$), job security satisfaction (Chi square=6.03, $p<0.05$), autonomy (Chi square=9.54, $p<0.01$), feedback from the job (Chi square=5.43, $p<0.05$), and dissatisfaction with pay (Chi square=14.80, $p<0.01$). This indicated some regional difference (See Table 6.5) although these differences may be more fundamental in the P+ group further suggesting that the group was divided as indicated above.

Table 6.6: Regional differences in the P+ Group

Geographical region	Supports agency workers (mean)	Job security satisfaction (mean)	Autonomy (mean)	Feedback from the job (mean)	Dissatisfaction with pay (mean)
South East	28.48	50.13	51.21	48.50	53.47
Midlands	49.41	36.90	34.67	36.10	33.27
n=81 to 84 (Permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers)					

6.2 RESULTS FOR THE DIFFERENTIAL HYPOTHESES

6.2.1 All call centre workers

The differential hypotheses (which have been modified from the original due to agency call centre workers being surveyed rather than purely agency workers) were:

- H6a Agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of skill variety than permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers
- H6b Agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of skill variety than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers
- H6c There is no significant difference in level of skill variety between permanent workers (both those who work with agency call centre workers and those who do not work with agency call centre workers)
- H7a There is no significant difference between the levels of organisational commitment of agency call centre workers and permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers
- H7b Agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of organisational commitment than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers
- H7c Permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers have significantly lower levels of organisational commitment than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers
- H8a There is no significant difference between levels of job satisfaction in agency call centre workers and permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers
- H8b Agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of job satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers
- H8c Permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of job satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers
- H9a Agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of job security satisfaction than permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers

- H9b Agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of job security satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers
- H9c Permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of job security satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers

The first analysis to be undertaken was a thorough examination of all five groups in the study by using a Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance (See Table 6.7 which also includes the means of the five groups).

Table 6.7: Kruskal-Wallis results on study variables

Variable	Chi-Square	Sample Group Mean				
		ACC (n=29 to 31)	P1+ (n=24 to 25)	P2+ (n=33 to 34)	P3+ (n=25 to 26)	P- (n=41)
Skill Variety	13.00*	3.16	4.17	3.96	4.52	4.36
Organisational commitment	16.87**	4.64	4.58	4.69	5.11	5.47
Job Satisfaction	21.19**	4.07	3.54	3.87	4.11	5.05
Job Security Satisfaction	24.67**	3.53	4.38	5.19	5.02	5.05
Key: * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$						

Significant differences were found between all call centre workers groups and the hypothesised differential variables (skill variety, organisational commitment, job satisfaction and job security satisfaction). However to provide evidence for the differential hypotheses, analysis involving specific differences between groups was carried out using non-parametric Mann-Whitney tests.

6.2.2 Differences between agency call centre workers and the permanent workers who work with agency workers groups

Three Mann-Whitney tests were conducted between the four variables in the differential Hypotheses H6a, H7a, H8a and H9a with ACC against P1+, P2+ and P3+ (See Table 6.8).

Table 6.8: Differences between ACC and the P+ groups

Study Variable	Sample group (z score)		
	ACC (n=29 to 31) & P1+ (n=24 to 25)	ACC (n=29 to 31) & P2+ (n=33 to 34)	ACC (n=29 to 31) & P3+ (n=25 to 26)
Skill Variety	-2.28*	-2.00*	-3.06**
Organisational commitment	-0.30	-0.44	-1.68
Job Satisfaction	-2.02*	-0.33	-0.56
Job Security Satisfaction	-2.07*	-4.03**	-3.47**
Key: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01			

Hypothesis H6a that ACC have a lower degree of skill variety than P+ is not contradicted with all three P+ groups (P1+, P2+, P3+) showing a significantly greater level of skill variety. Hypothesis H7a that ACC and P+ have similar levels of organisational commitment is not contradicted with no differences seen between these groups (ACC, P1+, P2+, and P3+). Hypothesis H8a that ACC and P+ have similar levels of job satisfaction gained credibility by two cases (P2+, P3+), but was refuted by one group (P1+) who had a significantly lower level of job satisfaction than ACC (See Table 6.7 and Table 6.8). This evidence refuted Hypothesis H8a. The final Hypothesis H9a that ACC have a lower level of job security satisfaction than P+ was not refuted by the data with all P+ groups (P1+, P2+, P3+) showing significantly higher job security satisfaction scores (See Table 6.7 and Table 6.8).

6.2.3 Differences between agency call centre workers and the permanent workers who did not work with agency workers

Differences between agency call centre workers (ACC) and permanent workers who did not work with agency call centre workers (P-) were investigated to examine Hypotheses H6b, H7b, H8b and H9b. Significant differences were found with job satisfaction, skill variety, job security satisfaction and organisational commitment. These results did not refute Hypotheses H6b, H7b, H8b and H9b as ACC have significantly lower levels of skill variety, organisational commitment, job satisfaction and job security satisfaction than the P- group (See Table 6.9).

Table 6.9: Differences between ACC and P-

Study Variable	Mann-Whitney (z) ACC (n=29 to 31) & P- (n=41)
Skill Variety	-3.08**
Organisational commitment	-3.03**
Job Satisfaction	-2.87**
Job Security Satisfaction	-3.60**
Key: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01	

6.2.4 Differences between permanent worker (P-, P1+, P2+, P3+) groups

Hypotheses H6c, H7c, H8c and H9c were examined by investigating differences between permanent workers in terms of those who work with (P1+, P2+, and P3+) and do not work with (P-) agency call centre workers. Three Mann-Whitney tests were conducted between the P- and P1+, P2+, P3+ (See Table 6.10).

Table 6.10: Study variable differences between permanent workers

Study Variable	Sample group (z score)		
	P- (n=41) & P1+ (n=24 to 25)	P- (n=41) & P2+ (n=33 to 34)	P- (n=41) & P3+ (n=25 to 26)
Skill Variety	-0.51	-1.02	-0.46
Organisational commitment	-3.10**	-2.95**	-1.53
Job Satisfaction	-3.83**	-3.21**	-2.48*
Job Security Satisfaction	-1.66	-0.61	-0.01
Key: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01			

Inconsistent differences were found between the permanent worker groups (See Table 6.10). Hypothesis H6c was not refuted as no significant differences were found in permanent workers' skill variety. Hypothesis H7c was refuted as in one group (P3+) there were no differences between organisational commitment scores although this hypothesis is not refuted in the other two groups (P1+ and P2+). Hypothesis H8c, stating that P+ would have less job satisfaction

than P- was not refuted in the study, suggesting that there were significant differences in job satisfaction between permanent call centre workers who work with (P+) and without (P-) agency call centre workers. The final Hypothesis H9c, that P+ has a lower level of job security satisfaction than P- is refuted in the study as no significant differences between permanent call centre worker groups were found.

6.3 QUANTITATIVE SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

All of the variables in the differential hypotheses were shown to be sufficiently reliable (in Chapter 5) and different between call centre workers. Mann-Whitney tests specify differences between call centre workers providing evidence refuting or not refuting the differential hypotheses (See Table 6.11).

Table 6.11: Summary quantitative results for the differential hypotheses

Hypothesis	Variable	Relationship	Support ✓ (not refuted) X (refuted)	Relationship found if Hypothesis refuted
6a	Skill Variety	A < P+	✓	
6b	Skill Variety	A < P-	✓	
6c	Skill Variety	P+ = P-	✓	
7a	Organisational commitment	A = P+	✓	
7b	Organisational commitment	A < P-	✓	
7c	Organisational commitment	P+ < P-	X	P+ = P-
8a	Job satisfaction	A = P+	X	A > P+
8b	Job satisfaction	A < P-	✓	
8c	Job satisfaction	P+ < P-	✓	
9a	Job security	A < P+	✓	
9b	Job security	A < P-	✓	
9c	Job security	P+ < P-	X	P+ = P-

The majority of hypotheses were not refuted in the study. However, three hypotheses were refuted (H7c, H8a and H9c). The possible reasons for this will be explored in the discussion chapter (Chapter 9). Nevertheless, before these results are discussed the qualitative evidence gathered from workers (Chapter 7) and employers (Chapter 8) will be examined in relation to both relational and differential hypotheses.

CHAPTER 7

7. QUALITATIVE RESULTS AMONGST WORKERS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Qualitative analysis is usually undertaken to expand understanding of phenomena. As a supplement to the quantitative research the results of interviews can be used to expand understanding of effects and relationships identified significantly. The 22 interviews with 17 agency workers and five permanent call centre workers have been used in this regard as a possible means of deepening our knowledge of worker perceptions that led to the results outlined below. For ease of explanation, quotes are described in terms of whether they tend to support or refute hypotheses. This is not proposed as a valid method for testing hypotheses, however, it is trusted that through this procedure the interview data will deepen our awareness of the subject matter. The main purpose of this chapter is therefore to support the quantitative evidence with qualitative data from either the agency or permanent workers. Through this process, additional evidence is illustrated to simply confirm or refute what was found in the quantitative study. It is therefore seen as an additional aspect of the research design, based on empirical reasoning, rather than being a separate piece of qualitative work performed in a phenomenological manner.

7.1.1 Response rates

A total 32% of agency workers (N=31) and 10% of permanent workers (N=12) expressed an interest in their questionnaire to take part in further research. Nevertheless, many of these contact details were inaccurate, or telephone numbers invalid or inoperable. Consequently, all permanent and agency workers who could be contacted were interviewed. This included 17 agency workers (three of which were agency call centre workers) and five permanent workers (all of which were permanent call centre workers who worked with agency workers) interviewed as part of the follow-up study to the questionnaire response.

7.1.2 Thematic code development

ATLAS-ti helped develop thematic codes constructing themes in the qualitative data through an iterative process (See Appendix I). These codes were then rationalised and brought in line with the rest of the thesis and included the following codes: job satisfaction, skill variety, organisational commitment to agency, organisational commitment to third party employer, worker relationship, voluntary / involuntary factors and job security satisfaction.

These codes were then systematically applied to the qualitative data gathered from the workers' interviews. An example of a typical transcript, with codes applied is given in Appendix J. In addition, to minimise bias in the coding process another PhD researcher who had knowledge on transcribing data coded one of the transcripts. The coding of the two researchers was very similar supporting the integrity of the data coding. Coded items were then summarised in documents relating to the variable under question and the worker group. Further refinement, was also completed at this stage to remove irrelevant responses extraneous to the study (See Table 7.1).

Table 7.1: Refinements on ATLAS-ti data (agency worker responses only)

Variable Names	Skill variety	Organisational commitment to 3rd Party organisation	Organisational commitment to employment agency	Worker relationship
Total Responses recorded from ATLAS-ti	30	20	18	69
Responses removed	1	2	3	10
New response total	29	18	15	59

The following results are excerpts from the large amount of material gathered and analysed through ATLAS-ti. Nevertheless, by reviewing this material, further evidence can be ascertained that may support the quantitative results.

7.2 RELATIONAL HYPOTHESES

7.2.1 Agency workers' views on skill variety contributing to their job satisfaction

A total of 29 coded responses (21% of all responses) were made about skill variety. Skill variety was reported at varying degrees within agency worker assignments by the agency workers

primarily dependent on the agency assignment that was undertaken, as shown in the following quote:

“It depends what job you have really, in one job I was just typing in numbers all day so no [skill variety is not high], but in other jobs I was running the site.”

Low skill variety was reported in a third (10) of all responses, for instance:

“You don't need any skills, there are no complicated skills that you need to do the job.”

Often it was reported that the agency worker was at the third party employing organisation to complete one job, for instance secretarial work, but often they would complete a very different job involving few skills and little skill variety:

“There is a load of photocopying, loads of filing, and I have been in jobs where I was [employed as] a qualified secretary and had not even touched a computer.”

In other cases, respondents judged their agency assignments on the basis of previous agency assignment or permanent jobs:

“I had been in a management role and now I find I am at the office daily, making the tea.”

Nevertheless, some agency workers stated that agency assignments could introduce them to new skills, improving their skill levels (seven out of 29 responses). One quotation directly contrasted the previous one:

“I have gone from being the girl who makes the tea, right at the beginning, [to] ... jobs where I have been PA to the managing director, because I have had the variety, I have been able to build up a skill base.”

Skill variety therefore seemed to vary according to the agency assignment. Nevertheless, does skill variety contribute towards job satisfaction as Hypothesis H1 suggests? Indeed, nine responses out of 29 linked the two together as with the following quotes:

“Yes I am actually [satisfied in the job] because ... I learn my English and new skills through agency worker assignments”

“I think that [skill variety] is important or else you is bored to tears if you are on a production line or something but yes [this leads to being satisfied]”

“If you go in and just punch numbers in a keyboard all the time then that is not very good [satisfying], and you feel like a temporary worker, like a cog in the machinery”

Many of the respondents reported that low job satisfaction originates from tasks with little skill variety. This finding was possibly most typified by the following interview between the researcher and the respondent:

Researcher *“How about your job satisfaction? Are you happy in the work and what you do?”*

Respondent *“Erm, er, not really, it’s quite basic so, yeah, it can get quite boring most of the time, and not very complicated”*

Researcher *“Is that the main reason why then you are dissatisfied with agency work, lack of skill variety?”*

Respondent *“Yeah”*

Qualitative data therefore replicated the findings in the correlation analysis finding that skill variety is linked to job satisfaction supporting Hypothesis H1.

7.2.2 Permanent workers’ views on agency worker skill variety

All of the permanent workers’ responses on agency workers’ skill variety (six responses in total) were based around differences between the groups of workers, which have been presented below under the differential hypotheses section. No permanent workers therefore discussed the contribution that skill variety may have on agency worker job satisfaction so no conclusions on Hypothesis H1 can be made.

7.2.3 Agency workers’ views of organisational commitment contributing to their job satisfaction

A quarter (33 of 138 total responses) of coded agency workers’ responses related to organisational commitment. Organisational commitment was seen from two perspectives, firstly the agency worker’s commitment to the third party employing organisation (18 coded responses) and secondly the agency worker’s commitment to the employment agency (15 coded responses).

Low organisational commitment towards the third party employing organisation was reported in seven out of 18 responses as the following excerpts show:

“I have got no loyalty whatsoever”

“They have asked me to go permanent at that place. But I don’t think I want to as it commits me too much to what they want to do. I’d rather be able to, if I really think I’ve had enough, to be able to leave and make a start again somewhere else.”

Low organisational commitment was also displayed towards the employment agency in six out of 15 responses as follows:

"You say [to yourself] 'why am I doing it, why do I do it' so given the chance I wouldn't work for an agency ... I want to work for a proper company, no disrespect to the agency itself but its not, its not, agency working is not ideal."

"I am with several agencies so I have a choice of where I go, so I can say no I don't want to do that I want to do this"

"No [I don't feel organisational commitment towards the employment agency], I mean I don't deal with them very much. I just think, no, if something better came along with another agency, I wouldn't feel any need to stay"

Low organisational commitment to the employment agency seemed to be due to a personal distaste against agency working or the pure economics of a situation, which would improve the chances of getting work if hired by a number of different employment agencies. The employment agency's profit margin on individual workers was another criticism of employment agencies leading to low organisational commitment as shown in the following quote (though the maths is a little inaccurate):

Respondent *"if agency are paying me five pound per hour, the company pays the agency about nine pound, so it's about three pounds, over fifty percent [on top of my wage] the agency earns every hour I am working there. It's too high [i.e., what the employment agency earns per agency hour worked."*

Researcher *"How does that make you feel about the agency then?"*

Respondent *"Awful"*

Researcher *"...So you feel as though you're doing all the work."*

Respondent *"I feel they are using me because they earn more than I earn, I mean you know comparing what they do, ok they are finding me jobs and things like that but it is too much"*

In this case, the agency worker felt little organisational commitment towards the employment agency viewing them with distaste because they were perceived to be making excessive money per hour on top of the agency worker's hourly wage.

High levels of organisational commitment were found with the third party employing organisation (nine out of 18 responses) and the employment agency (six out of 15 responses). Examples of high levels of organisational commitment to the third party employing organisation were as follows:

“Yeah I think so [that I am committed to the third party employing organisation], I wouldn't leave just because someone said I want you to do this, It's not, it's not like that, I like the company I am with they are quite nice.”

“Well I think I do [show commitment to the third party employing organisation] because as I said I am not totally happy where I am now [at the third party employing organisation] but I have been there for six months.”

“Well you do [feel quite committed to the third party employing organisation], in a sense its like a change of football clubs, you always play for who you're with and you support and you basically give 100% of whoever you play for, I mean it makes no sense to me to actually go to a company and not give a monkeys about it because at the end of the day you are working for this company and if they do well you do well ... it makes sense to give 100, 110%.”

Often agency workers who felt comfortable at the third party employing organisation referred to commitment shown by them being reciprocated by the organisation. Many respondents also stated they had a high level of organisational commitment towards their employment agency as in the following statements:

“Yes I do [have commitment towards the employment agency], I mean if they provide me with work I will stay committed to them, because erm I don't think you can expect them to do their best for you if they found you work and you then say my other agency has found me something else, I feel that I am employed by them and therefore I have a loyalty to them.”

“Yeah I do [feel fairly committed to the employment agency], everyone has found work for me so you don't really want to look elsewhere.”

“If the agency is nice and they want to be mates with you on a friendly basis, then you are more obliged to help them out.”

Organisational commitment therefore varied within the agency workers both towards the third party employing organisation and to the employment agency. Organisational commitment was also mentioned with job satisfaction but only in three quotes (out of 33 total quotes on organisational commitment):

“It's little things that build up your commitment ... which makes you think it is worth getting up in the morning and going in to work”

In this regard, the organisational commitment to the third party employing organisation was built up slowly resulting in a person feeling satisfied at work. Another conversation also linked organisational commitment with job satisfaction:

Researcher *“If the company cares back [and is committed to you] does that promote your job satisfaction?”*

Respondent *“Of course it does”*

Many respondents would count their organisational commitment as being towards both third party employer and employment agency as the following interview stated:

Researcher *“In terms of job satisfaction are you fairly satisfied where you are at the moment”*

Respondent *“Yeah, yes I am, I have been there [third party employing organisation] for three years and the agency that I work for are very professional. Any complaints, any gripes you can go to them. So I suppose I am satisfied at the end of the day.”*

In this case, the agency worker feels that being committed to both the third party employing organisation and to the employment agency contributed towards her job satisfaction. Organisational commitment is therefore seen to contribute towards job satisfaction, which supports the quantitative data and Hypothesis H2. Yet, only three coded responses stated a connection between the job satisfaction and organisational commitment, which was quite a stark comparison, compared with skill variety (nine out of 29 responses) and worker relationship (nine out of 59 responses).

7.2.4 Permanent workers’ views on the organisational commitment of agency workers

Two permanent workers commented on the organisational commitment of agency workers. Nevertheless, these quotes mainly referred to possible differences between workers and were thus used below in the differential hypotheses section. None of these quotes referred to organisational commitment leading to job satisfaction in agency workers so therefore no evidence is gathered on Hypothesis H2.

7.2.5 Agency workers’ views on worker relationship contributing to their job satisfaction

Worker relationship was the most popular variable in the qualitative survey with 43% of all coded agency worker responses detailing worker relationship. Reported worker relationships ranged from either being negative, whereby permanent workers behaved negatively towards the agency worker, to positive, whereby relations between the two worker groups were actively encouraged.

Difficult worker relationships were discussed 22 times with the following excerpts representing views from some of these interviews:

"Sometimes they [permanent workers] don't speak to you and you feel a bit stupid then because you feel like a gatecrasher at a party."

"When you encounter people with a bad attitude about temps you are excluded a lot, and it kind of makes you feel resentful of them, you know, that they're looking down at you kind of thing."

"I know some places treat temps [agency workers] like absolute cack, they really do, and then you really do believe you are a second-class citizen, which is not good."

Nevertheless, most agency workers stated that negative relationships were not due to feelings of malice on the part of the permanent workers; they tended to be due to permanent workers not wanting to invest their time in the agency workers who leaved after a short period:

"Some people don't want to contact people who just work in there four months or ten months ... they don't want to get involved with those kinds of people"

"You're just a temp [agency worker] so we [permanent workers] do as we please because ... you'll be gone by Friday"

Some of the relationships between agency workers and permanent workers were on more of an equal footing, with four out of 59 quotes stating this as typified by the following excerpts:

"I think a few [permanent workers] are [anti-agency workers] but for most of them, no they're not [anti-agency workers], there is quite a good atmosphere between the two [agency workers and permanent workers]."

"You are more included now than what you used to be, in most organisations where I've worked you might get the odd one that's still a bit, not so up to date, but for the majority you are included straight away."

24 out of 59 quotes stated that there was a good relationship between agency workers and permanent workers. Many of these relationships were formed while agency workers had been on a long-term assignment (ranging from a couple of months to five years):

"You are not treated any different I mean I have been there longer than some of the [permanent] people and so I'm, just like one of them, so you do go out, you do socialise, it doesn't matter who you are."

"I like to get reasonably good jobs...ones where you are involved and you feel part of who you are working for."

In this respect, permanent workers seemed to engage in conversation and sociable relations with agency workers who have been at the organisation for over a couple of months or more. Other relationships were actively encouraged by the organisation the workers were employed by, as the following excerpts show:

“The company that I work for is almost like a family.”

“They do actually organise a lot of social events but like I say in the main where I am they have got quite a nice attitude about temps so we're, we're, as a general rule we're always included.”

“They'll make a point of making sure we are invited ... they make quite a big thing about having a connection between the work life and the social life. It's nice because people get on better ... it gives them something else other to talk about than doing the filing.”

Again, the following conversation typifies many of the agency worker statements about organisations promoting good relationships between agency workers and permanent workers:

Researcher *“Do you feel like an important member of the team?”*

Respondent *“Yes, yes, yes”*.

Researcher *“Does the company promote that?”*.

Respondent *“Yes I think so, yes, yes, my experience is yes they do, yes you are not just pushed to one side”*.

Nevertheless, does worker relationship influence job satisfaction? Five participants directly quoted worker relationship as an essential item for job satisfaction in nine responses out of 59 as follows:

“I think that's what makes the difference, how the people treat you.”

“I prefer it when I am accepted as part of a team and they sort of listen to me, treat me with some intelligence.”

“I like where I work now [I am satisfied in my job], I mean the people I work with are really friendly the office is just, its really good fun.”

Qualitative evidence therefore suggested that worker relationship was an influence on job satisfaction. This evidence collaborates with the quantitative survey results and as such fails to refute Hypothesis H3.

7.2.6 Permanent workers' perspective on worker relationship

Worker relationship was also the most popular subject with the permanent workers (18 of 35 total coded responses) although this was not particularly surprising as the interviews detailed the permanent workers' views of agency workers. These views were split equally between good and not so good relationships with agency workers.

Nine out of 18 coded responses reported a strained relationship with agency workers as in the following quotes:

“Certain temps [agency workers] are not included here.”

“I feel ... they've [the company have] got a certain section of people in our office that don't take things the same as we do ... [they – the agency workers] haven't got the incentive to do the work.”

“Because of the nature of temp work, I would say quite a lot of, percentage of, them aren't particularly valuable.”

“Some of them don't behave in the same way as permanent people, in the fact that they [the agency workers] don't really take things that seriously.”

One person argued that one of the reasons for a strained relationship with agency workers was because:

“Permanent people maybe saying "there is no point getting to know them because they are going to be gone fairly soon".”

This replicated the agency worker qualitative data that suggested permanent workers were not willing to invest the time in getting to know agency workers who maybe leaving in a short period.

Nine out of 18 coded responses report reasonably positive relationships with agency workers as in the following:

“They're [agency workers are] still a member of staff it doesn't matter whether they are agency, permanent, as far as I am aware they are still a member of staff.”

“I am sure there are certain parts [of the organisation] where agency [workers] do work and do feel like that they are outside, they are separate, but I don't see why they should be made to feel like that.”

“Most people [permanent workers] generally accept them and treat them the same way as everybody else.”

Nonetheless, even in these generally positive statements the permanent workers admitted that some permanent workers were hostile to agency workers. The evidence from the permanent workers generally supported the qualitative results from the agency workers stating that worker relationship could vary given the specific job and the attitudes of the permanent workers. Nevertheless, no permanent workers commented on the contribution that worker relationship may have on agency worker job satisfaction and as such, no evidence is provided for Hypothesis H3.

7.2.7 Agency workers' views on voluntary/involuntary work status

Voluntary and involuntary work status was only mentioned once in all of the interviews as when this question was asked all apart from the following agency worker thought that it had no bearing on their job satisfaction. When it was mentioned, the researcher questioned further to see if this variable was related to job satisfaction:

***Researcher** "Just a couple of things now, more on the voluntary basis, did you take your position as a temporary worker through any sort of job loss or anything or was it because you wanted to?"*

***Respondent** "Erm, sort of, I did loose a job last year, yes"*

***Researcher** "And was that why you were temping or"*

***Respondent** "Yes"*

***Researcher** "Right, Ok, Do you think that had an effect?"*

***Respondent** "In what way?"*

***Researcher** "In terms of how you felt about working as a temporary worker or anything?"*

***Respondent** "No because I have done temping work on and off all my life so no, I am quite happy doing that"*

In this regard, the respondent did not see the link between her voluntary or involuntary status and her job satisfaction, supplying no supportive evidence for both Hypotheses H4 and H5.

7.3 DIFFERENTIAL HYPOTHESES

7.3.1 Agency workers' views on differences in skill variety

Agency workers gave three comments in total (out of 29) that specifically detailed differences in skill variety levels. All of these comments were rather negative, as the following quotations show:

"The inherent nature of the jobs ... are fairly monotonous or routine ... they [the permanent workers] think "Oh I'll give the temp that to do"."

"The permanent people they don't want to do more jobs then they talk to the manager and they say they need another person to come and do something...that's the really horrible [jobs]."

All of the agency worker responses tended to be similar to these in nature. This data therefore corresponded with the quantitative evidence providing evidence that was not able to refute

Hypotheses H6a and H6b as agency workers had a lower level of skill variety than permanent workers.

7.3.2 Permanent workers' views on differences in skill variety

All six permanent worker responses commented on differences in skill variety between agency workers and permanent workers, as follows:

"They use temps for part of the job that they know ... permanent people are [not] going to appreciate ... so they resource that [with temps]."

"The temps [agency workers] here only do billing calls but us that are permanent staff do billing and sales calls, so they [the agency workers] do less than us [the permanent workers], ... so therefore we can see a clear divide between us and them."

Clear differences between the skill variety of agency workers and permanent workers were noted. Indeed, three of these six coded responses go on to say the jobs requiring low skill variety tended to be given to the agency workers as it was easier to train them in these jobs:

"Yes, it could be [a pain to train agency workers] because it puts you even under more strain, you know you cannot just get someone in and say there you go get on with it."

The difficulty in training and supervising agency workers in jobs with high levels of skill variety possibly meant that they are given jobs with little skill variety. This evidence does not refute the Hypotheses H6a and H6b as agency workers had a lower skill variety than permanent workers. Similarity between the skill variety of permanent workers did not arise in conversation with the workers so no evidence is available on Hypothesis H6c.

7.3.3 Agency workers' views on differences in organisational commitment

The agency workers did not particularly address differences between the organisational commitment of permanent workers and themselves. However, one individual stated that being an agency worker would not effect their organisational commitment as the following conversation demonstrates:

Researcher *"When you are working as an agency worker did you feel commitment to the organisations you are working for?"*

Respondent *"Yep, I do yeah, I go in there, I go in there as though it is like my [permanent] job."*

This small amount of qualitative evidence seemingly supports Hypothesis H7a that agency workers have similar levels of organisational commitment to permanent workers as the respondent would be equally committed in a permanent job and agency assignment. Yet, this

evidence seemingly contradicts H7b as agency workers would also be equal to permanent workers who do not work with agency workers. However, it is unlikely that this respondent differentiated between permanent workers who work with agency workers and permanent workers who do not work with agency workers. In other words, these comments were made in relation to permanent workers who work with agency workers as the respondent would only work with this type of permanent worker. In conclusion, this statement therefore does not constitute evidence refuting Hypothesis H7b as the agency worker did not consider permanent workers who do not work with agency workers. In addition, this evidence was also fairly weak in supporting Hypothesis H7a as it was based on one single respondent.

7.3.4 Permanent workers' views on agency worker organisational commitment

Overall, permanent workers felt they could not comment on the organisational commitment of agency workers as they did not know what it was like to work in this type of working arrangement. However, two comments were noted from permanent workers on this subject. One of which is negative as follows:

"It's an awful thing to say, but the more you see people coming through the door that have got no intention of working for the company long term, [the more] you see the problems ... when the company takes agency workers on, they have a commitment from the agency workers that in the future they would want [to work in the company permanently] ... and I think a lot of the [agency workers are not] ... working staff ... they're on student leave or whatever so therefore they have not got a care in the world and it shows in their attitude."

In this instance, the respondent felt the majority of agency workers were individuals who did not intend to work on a permanent basis within the organisation. The result of this was a nonchalant attitude that was disagreeable for the permanent worker. Another quote, which was slightly more balanced stated that organisational commitment could be present within agency workers, however if it was not, then this was reflected in their job performance:

"There are a lot of people that are serious about it and committed but there are a lot of people that are just doing it when they know they've got something else to go to and ... their lack of commitment is reflected in the way they do the job."

Interestingly, in both cases if an agency worker lacked organisational commitment then this influenced the perception of the permanent worker. This is an important finding given the influence that worker relationship had on the job satisfaction of agency workers. Reading between the lines of one of these quotes, it is likely that most permanent workers felt that their commitment was higher than agency workers:

"[Agency workers that] have got no intention of working for the company long term ... they have not got a care in the world and it shows in their attitude"

Nonetheless, none of the comments specifically stated this so it cannot be claimed as evidence refuting Hypotheses H7a or H7b. No permanent worker stated whether agency workers would influence their own organisational commitment. In this regard, no evidence is collected for Hypothesis H7c, that permanent workers who worked with agency workers had a lower organisational commitment than permanent workers who did not work with agency workers.

7.3.5 Agency workers' views on differences in job satisfaction

Only 4% of the coded agency worker responses (6 responses in total) directly featured job satisfaction on its own or in conjunction with permanent worker job satisfaction. (Most responses therefore detailed antecedents or the effects of antecedents on the worker's job satisfaction). Interestingly estimates of job satisfaction varied enormously with the following conversations showing low levels of job satisfaction:

Conversation 1

Researcher *"how would you rate your own job satisfaction at the moment?"*

Respondent *"Crap"*

Researcher *"Right,"*

Respondent Laughs *"Putting it bluntly, rubbish."*

Conversation 2

Researcher *"OK, are you fairly happy with that assignment?"*

Respondent *"...I look at it as a job... I want to work, but you know, I would like a job where I am sort of a permanent person, laughs, If there is such a thing these days as a permanent job but, I do like, you know, to get something better than what I've got."*

Researcher *"OK is that one of the things that makes you feel dissatisfied in your job"*

Respondent *"Yeah, yeah"*

Researcher *"The fact its not permanent work"*

Respondent *"Yeah"*

Other conversations expressed higher levels of job satisfaction as in the following:

Conversation 3

Respondent *"I can actually do a good job in a warehouse environment which is what I do do, so obviously it gives me job satisfaction and so of course having gone out and done a reasonable, a good days work I can then come back and then you know I am in a good frame of mind to do things in the evening"*

Researcher *"Right I am with you so you almost feel as though you've done your days work"*

Respondent *"And you've earned your money and so on and you're pleased to do it and you come back and then you've got the chance to enjoy yourself at night for whatever you want to be doing"*

Conversation 4

Researcher *"Are there any things working as an agency worker that makes you feel unhappy at all."*

Respondent *"Erm, No not really, no I mean I always get some reasonably good jobs so, I have just actually finished today a six month temping assignment from November right through so yes its normally a very good environment"*

Researcher *"Ok, so generally what you would say you are very happy at what you do"*

Respondent *"Yes, yes"*

Levels of job satisfaction therefore varied relating to what the individual felt about their particular assignment. Only one response detailed the differences between workers:

"I've been supported [happy in my job] and the rest of it and that's the same as the rest of the people in the company"

However, this quote only detailed the treatment of workers rather than their job satisfaction. It does imply that agency workers were as satisfied in their job as permanent workers. However, only one quote stated this and in not a particularly clear way, thus no evidence was gained for Hypotheses H8a and H8b from the agency workers.

7.3.6 Permanent workers' views on differences between worker job satisfaction

Surprisingly, no comments were received from the permanent workers on their own job satisfaction even though they were asked about this and subjects such as skill variety. Indeed, most of the permanent worker interviews were dominated by their opinions either on the relationship between workers or on agency workers themselves. Nevertheless, one permanent worker did comment on differences between agency workers and permanent workers as follows:

"Everyone works for [employer's name withheld], some are permanent members some are agency members but they're still working for [employer's name withheld] they should all be treated the same"

Nevertheless, although people may be treated the same this does not necessarily assume that they felt the same, which the respondent implied. No evidence was therefore gathered for Hypotheses H8a, H8b or H8c from the permanent workers.

7.3.7 Agency workers' views on differences in job security satisfaction

Hypotheses H9a and H9b suggested that job security satisfaction was particularly low in agency workers. Eleven coded responses discussed job security satisfaction. Only one coded response, reported a medium level of job security:

Respondent *"Well, where I am working at the moment they have basically a policy where even though they're employing temps, if someone wants to come back, they can, I mean they don't, it's, considering it is a temporary job, it is actually quite secure and basically you can stay they until you want to leave."*

Researcher *"Is that because they need so many people or?"*

Respondent *"No, No, I mean its all temp staff where I work and they don't mind the temp, and that's fine, they employ as many people as they need, there is quite high turnover so they don't have to worry about letting people go if they've staff because obviously it's quite a routine job people don't often stay. Obviously, I don't mind, job security is not really a problem for me because it's only temporary till September anyway."*

In this case, it is apparent that there were problems within the working environment leading to a high turnover of staff. In addition, this agency worker used a coping strategy "it's only temporary" to deal with the issue of job security. The remaining 10 responses from agency workers commented on the lack of job security as follows:

"Well the big disadvantage is [with agency work] ... the work can dry up the next day"

"You could be out of work next week, which doesn't help but that's the whole point of temp work really"

Job security satisfaction was therefore considered low in agency workers forming evidence supporting Hypotheses H9a and H9b, whereby agency workers had lower levels of job security satisfaction than permanent workers.

7.3.8 Permanent workers' views on differences of workers' job security

Job security was discussed in the agency worker sample with some of the agency workers stating that their presence may lead to feelings of low job security in the permanent workers. Eight coded responses (out of 35 total coded responses) were gathered from the permanent workers on job security but none compared agency workers with permanent workers so no evidence is

gathered for Hypotheses H9a and H9b. Nevertheless, in regards to Hypothesis H9c regarding permanent worker job security there were a number of opinions. Three coded responses stated agency workers did affect the permanent worker's job security:

"I have no objection for anybody taking any form of employment it's up to them really, as long as they don't ask me for my place or bugger the rights of the people that work here full time"

"[Permanent workers] might start saying 'oh the temps are stealing my job'"

Both quotes sympathise with permanent workers who felt insecure in their jobs because of agency workers. All five other responses regarding job security stated that agency workers did not affect it as shown in this following interview:

Researcher *"So there is no sort of insecurity about jobs or anything like that all?"*

Respondent *"What that the other staff being threatened by them [agency workers]"*

Researcher *"that's right"*

Respondent *"No"*

Researcher *"No?"*

Respondent *"No, I don't think so, no, not at all."*

Five coded permanent worker responses stated that agency workers did not affect their job security refuting Hypothesis H7c. Nevertheless, it was interesting that some permanent workers expressed the opposite opinion which will be discussed further in Chapter 9.

7.4 OTHER ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED BY THE QUALITATIVE DATA

The purpose of the qualitative interviews was to expand the quantitative research and as such most of the data gained from the qualitative interviews concerned the variables in the study. Nonetheless, other issues did emerge from the agency worker data notably concerned with tenure, job conditions, coping strategies, temp to third party employer problems and changes in employer attitudes. None of these issues were examined in the quantitative study primarily due to space restrictions in the questionnaire, however these issues may have a bearing on this thesis so they are important to detail here.

Three quotes examined tenure with no notable similarities between them being made. The first quote details how varied tenure can be in agency work:

"I've worked 9 months which is some kind of record, as agency work is week by week and I've worked 9 months solid so they're very please with what I do and so is the agency so it has worked out quite well."

In this instance, rather than being employed on a week by week basis the person was employed for a longer period, which they were very happy with. This may suggest that tenure is correlated with job satisfaction, although this was not said so this assertion cannot be made. The second quote, detailed the link between tenure and job security:

"I know agency work is temporary, you have to accept that, but to treat you like that i.e., to drag you in the office and terminate your employment, after five years it's totally wrong ... I was like a dead person."

In this instance, because the agency worker had been at the third party employers for almost five years, she expected more notice of termination of employment than the week she received. Indeed, it transpires that the employers did seem to want to redeploy this worker, but in the end due to her "inability to multi-skill" terminated her employment giving her just one weeks notice, which the employer requested that she did not work. Unfortunately, though this practice seems harsh after five years continual employment it is perfectly legal to do this presently in the UK. However, in this one particular quote there does appear to be a link between tenure and job security, whereby the respondent felt she was secure in her job having been at the employer's for five years, although as it transpires this was not the case.

The last quote also examined tenure in agency workers compared with tenure in permanent workers and then the effect this has on worker relationship, viz:

"If people get the impression that you are only going to stick around for a few months in a permanent job they're not really going to take you seriously whereas if you are a temp, it kind of goes with the routine and if you stay longer than three months they are pleasantly surprised."

This shows that unlike permanent workers, agency workers tenure is much less, however if the tenure of an agency worker lasts for a while, permanent workers were generally more happier with the agency worker, which may suggest a link between tenure and worker relationship. Due to the short tenure typically afforded agency workers this variable was not considered as important in this study. However the last two quotes show it may have some influence on the variables in the study. Thus, tenure does appear to be a worthy variable for research and should be included in future research in the agency worker arena.

Five quotes directly commented on job conditions, three of which came from the same respondent. The first theme that emerges is the issues of holidays, which were mentioned in three of the five quotes as follows:

"I don't like when you have a day off [such as a bank holiday] you don't get paid ... you have to be there 13 weeks then you get paid holiday."

"I prefer, working temporary, because if I need to go somewhere and take holiday or something like that without giving any notice."

Obviously, these two quotes were in direct contrast with each other with one respondent wanting to work all the time, finding bank holidays a strain on financial resources, and the other respondent wanting to take extended periods of time off. Other job conditions respondents discussed regarded pay:

"I am a long term temp and I don't believe really that we are rewarded as much as permanent staff. We don't get paid as much as if I was a permanent secretary, I mean I could earn about probably four thousand pounds a year more."

Again, pay was not really discussed in great depth, but the disparity of wages did seem to appear as suggested by the Winter 1998 Labour Force Survey Data presented in Chapter 3. Other issues that emerged from the same respondent concerned pension schemes and sick leave:

"I have to think about my retirement time. So the negative side [of agency working] is you are not getting a good pension if you work like that."

"the negative side is if you get ill you haven't got sick pay. Normal permanent people get that"

None of these job conditions were associated with job satisfaction by the respondents. However, to suggest that there is no correlation between job afforded benefits and job satisfaction is difficult to prove as the thesis did not examine this evidence. What is suggested is that in future research, benefits are explored to see if they have an impact on job satisfaction.

Another issue that came to light in the qualitative study was the use of coping strategies by the agency workers. Seven quotations directly list the use of coping strategies to deal with the daily grind of work.

"You just think, oh well tomorrow is just another day"

"I mean if you're only doing it [the assignment] for a week it's fine, it's not bad."

“In my situation it is a bit different because I am on a year out between leaving school and starting University so that's the major reason why I have got a temp job because it's temporary basically”

“if you don't get on with your boss you can always ring them up and say I'd like to go somewhere else without losing benefits or holiday pay or whatever”

Coping strategies consisted of two main types. The first type was to look at the wider perspective and state that the job is only temporary or tomorrow is a different day and therefore the agency assignment did not matter. The second strategy was to leave, or threaten to leave, the agency assignment if the job became unbearable. These coping strategies brought to light in the qualitative study may moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and its antecedents. However, this influence was difficult to quantify as respondents in the qualitative study could not assess their effect and they were not considered in the main questionnaire. Further research examining these coping strategies, which may or may not be important, is therefore warranted.

One quote mentioned the temp to third party employing organisation problem that is currently being reviewed in Government via consideration of the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2002 was as follows:

“It's very difficult to get permanent position if you are temporary worker because ... they have to pay [the employment agency] to buy the staff, I don't know how much is it but I think it is over a thousand pound or something like that ... some percentage of your salary and this why it is very difficult to get a permanent position, ... you have to wait six months and not work in there in the meantime, after that if you find a permanent position in there you can go and the company does not have to pay the agency to buy you. But six months is quite a long time and they can find an extra person to fill that place [in that time].”

Agency workers then can be held back from gaining permanent employment in the third party organisation as a charge can be levied against them by the employment agency. This factor is seemingly important for agency workers, although only one person mentioned it as an issue, as surely if they cannot get permanent work easily then they are forced to remain in temporary employment. Fortunately, though it appears that this six month rule, where an agency worker cannot work for a third party employer for six months, will be quashed and/or limited to a maximum of 10-12 weeks via the new Government legislation.

Another interesting quote regarded changes in perception regarding agency workers. Five years ago it seems that employers were more negative towards this type of employment as the following quote shows:

“I have been temping for about four years so I have been to a lot of different places some of them are lovely, some of them are horrible ... when I started four years ago it was a lot more usual that employers have a bit of a nasty attitude about the fact you are a temporary worker and they tend to think that means they can take you for a ride and treat you like a dogs body to be honest, it’s quite rare now, but I have got a lot more used to it.”

Nevertheless, whether this is a real change in employer’s attitudes is difficult to determine. In this particular case, the agency worker may have simply become more hardened against adverse comments than in the past. Thus her comments represent a change in her perception rather than an actual change in the employer’s discernment.

7.5 CONCLUSIONS

The responses per ATLAS-ti category are given in Table 7.2. This table breaks down the agency worker responses as they relate both to relational and differential hypotheses. However, only the totals for the permanent workers are given as these workers generally felt they could not discuss what contributes towards agency worker job satisfaction.

Table 7.2: Responses per ATLAS-ti code

	Skill variety	Organisational commitment to 3 rd party employing organisation	Organisational commitment to employment agency	Worker relations	Involuntary/ voluntary status	Job satisfaction	Job security
High	7	9	6	24	0	2	0
Equal / medium	0	0	0	4	1	1	1
Low	10	7	7	22	0	2	10
Links variable to job satisfaction	9	1	2	9	0	0	0
Assesses Difference between groups	3	1	0	0	0	1	0
Total Responses from agency workers	29	18	15	59	1	6	11
Total responses from permanent workers	6	2	0	18	0	1	8
Total worker responses on variable	35	20	15	77	1	7	19

These responses gave some supporting evidence for the quantitative results on both relational and differential hypotheses (See Table 7.3). Table 7.3 shows both sets of workers and counts the number of quotes made that refer to a hypothesis. A tick represents support for a hypothesis, a cross indicates a lack of support for a hypothesis and “no evidence” refers to when there were no

direct quotes about the hypothesis. If there is a difference in opinion on a matter, then the most popular choice followed by the least popular choice is given (as with H9c where the hypothesis was not supported by five responses but supported by three responses). The results from the permanent workers seemed quite poor with no evidence gathered on a number of areas. This was due in part of the reluctance of permanent workers to take part in a survey on agency workers and due to the unstructured format of the interviews, which tried not to lead the workers to any specific hypotheses.

Table 7.3: Summary of qualitative results from the workers

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Summary	Agency workers	Permanent workers
H1	Skill Variety contributes to agency worker job satisfaction	✓ (9)	NEG
H2	Organisational commitment contributes to agency worker job satisfaction	✓ (3)	NEG
H3	Worker relationship contributes to agency worker job satisfaction	✓ (9)	NEG
H4	Voluntary worker status contributes to agency worker job satisfaction	X (1)	NEG
H5	Involuntary worker status contributes negatively to agency worker job satisfaction	X (1)	NEG
H6a	Skill Variety: ACC>P+	✓ (3)	✓ (6)
H6b	Skill Variety: ACC>P-	✓ (3)	✓ (6)
H6c	Skill Variety: P+=P-	NEG	NEG
H7a	Organisational commitment: ACC=P+	✓ (1)	NEG
H7b	Organisational commitment: ACC<P-	X (1)	NEG
H7c	Organisational commitment: P+<P-	NEG	NEG
H8a	Job satisfaction: ACC=P+	NEG	NEG
H8b	Job satisfaction: ACC<P-	NEG	NEG
H8c	Job satisfaction: P+<P-	NEG	NEG
H9a	Job security: ACC<P+	✓ (10) X (1)	NEG
H9b	Job security: ACC<P-	✓ (10) X (1)	NEG
H9c	Job security: P+<P-	NEG	X (5) ✓ (3)
Key: X refuted, ✓ not refuted, NEG no evidence gathered.			

Relational Hypotheses H1, H2 and H3 were supported by the qualitative evidence obtained from the agency workers. Nevertheless, permanent workers did not discuss what factors might lead to agency worker job satisfaction. Evidence contradicting Hypotheses H4 and H5 was found refuting the assertion that voluntary or involuntary work status relates to job satisfaction. Differential hypotheses also received a mixture of support, mainly as both sets of workers did not like comparing each other. Hypotheses H6a and H6b received some support from three coded agency worker responses and six coded permanent worker responses. No evidence was collated on Hypothesis H6c regarding the skill variety between permanent workers. Organisational commitment was also not compared between workers by anyone apart from one response given by an agency worker, who said her commitment would be equal no matter what

her employment position. This statement provided weak evidence for not refuting Hypothesis H7a but is unlikely to go against Hypothesis H7b as no differentiation between permanent workers was made. Job satisfaction between workers received little mention with only one agency worker stating that their job satisfaction was on a par with permanent workers supporting Hypothesis H8a. Hypotheses H9a and H9b stating that agency workers had lower levels of job security satisfaction than permanent workers was supported by agency workers, although permanent workers did not comment on this. Differences in the job security satisfaction of permanent workers was not supported with five coded responses indicating agency workers had little effect on permanent workers refuting Hypothesis H9c.

Overall, the unstructured nature of the interviews gave some support to the hypotheses made in the thesis. Yet, this evidence did coincide with the results gathered from the quantitative survey and gave flesh to the bones of the quantitative evidence gathered. This was the main purpose of the data although it has also served to test the hypotheses in the thesis. Consequently, these results will be discussed in a supportive fashion with the data from the quantitative questionnaire. Yet, before the thesis moves on to this discussion, the qualitative interviews carried out with the employers of agency workers or call centre workers are examined next.

CHAPTER 8

8. QUALITATIVE SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

8.1.1 Relevance of researching employers' views

The employer's use of agency workers was examined in Chapter 3, interestingly, in both of the agency worker and permanent worker qualitative surveys the attitude of the third party employer was an influence. Agency workers reported that some organisations positively encouraged good working relationships between agency workers and permanent workers. One permanent worker also commented that her employer would probably prefer all staff to be agency workers, due to the ease of which to hire and fire agency workers at will. The importance of third party employer attitudes is therefore of interest for this research and is examined in this chapter. For ease of reading the interview data, as was done in the previous chapter, has been expressed in how it addresses the hypotheses in the thesis. This is not to say that the interview data is a valid means of testing the hypotheses in the thesis, however, expressed in this way it serves to deepen our knowledge of the subject matter.

8.1.2 Response rates

In the quantitative survey, participants gave the names of 23 different third party employers. Seven of these were chosen at random, which included employers from the Croydon and Northampton regions, representatives of which agreed to be interviewed on the research topics. Six of these organisations hired agency workers. However, the seventh organisation had an active policy of not using agency workers and was one of the two organisations (Credit Card Company 1) used in the quantitative survey for the sample of permanent workers who did not work with agency workers. The interviews questioned employers, as represented by their managing staff, about their use of agency workers, factors that contributed towards agency worker job satisfaction and any differences between agency workers and permanent workers. Table 8.1 shows the list of employers that were interviewed and the primary interviewee (the first person interviewed) and the secondary interviewee where applicable. Codes have also been

given to these employer representatives in this table for ease of identification, although collectively these representatives will now be called the ‘employers’.

Table 8.1: Employer representatives

Employer	Geographical Area	Primary interviewee's position & code	Secondary interviewee's position & code
Credit card company 1	Northampton	HR Manager (A)	Call centre manager (B)
Telecommunications company	Northampton	Departmental Manager (C)	Operations Manager (D)
Large Insurance company	Croydon	Regional Operations Manager (E)	
Mobile Telecommunications company	Croydon	HR Manager (F)	
Medium sized charitable organisation	Northampton	Operations Administrator (G)	
Large public house retail company	Northampton	Personnel Manager (H)	IT Manager (I)
Large cosmetic based manufacture and retail company	Northampton	HR Advisor (J)	

8.1.3 Analysis of the data

The interview data from the employers was much easier to analyse than the interviews carried out with the workers as it was much more structured due to the research design. Initially answers given by the employers were transcribed into MS Word. The original responses per employer were next summarised to form an insight into the different types of employers that used or did not use agency workers. ATLAS-ti was then used to categorise this data for both the relational and differential hypotheses.

8.2 RELATIONAL HYPOTHESES

8.2.1 Skill variety

Employers were questioned on how skill variety was likely to influence the job satisfaction of agency workers. Five of the employers (employer representatives C, D, E, F, G, H) answered this question diplomatically stating that jobs with low skill variety would result in low job satisfaction as in the following excerpts:

“Job satisfaction does vary between the different agency workers, primarily because of the nature of the work being performed. Some of these jobs are on “a par” with the permanent worker jobs and so job satisfaction is at a similar level to the permanent workers. Nevertheless, some of the jobs are “below par” being monotonous, using very few skills and as a result creating little job satisfaction for the agency worker.”

“Agency workers are probably more satisfied in their jobs if they have a varied routine utilising many skills.”

Consequently, five employers (employer representatives C, D, E, F, G, H), that used agency workers, linked skill variety with agency worker job satisfaction supporting Hypothesis H1. The remaining employer of agency workers (employer representative J) did not comment on this subject.

8.2.2 Organisational commitment

None of the employer representatives stated whether organisational commitment was related to job satisfaction. Most considered that if an agency worker was not committed to the organisation then they would soon be removed from the organisation as the following quote from employer representative F stated:

“The organisation has little tolerance with agency workers who do not fit in and who show little commitment to the organisation. These workers are quickly terminated.”

Organisational commitment was promoted within organisations with individuals with little commitment finding themselves quickly removed. In addition, many of the employer representatives stated that if an agency worker demonstrated a low commitment to the organisation, then the permanent workers would not tend to socialise with those agency workers. This suggested that organisational commitment had an indirect influence on job satisfaction through worker relationships. No direct link between organisational commitment and job satisfaction was proposed so no evidence was gathered Hypothesis H3.

8.2.3 Worker relationship

Not surprisingly, all employer representatives claimed to actively promote a good relationship between workers as this was seen as beneficial. All but one of the organisations that employed agency workers recognised that the relationship between workers was rather less than good in some departments. This was often expressed by exclusion in social events such as lunchtime drinks as shown in the following quotes by employer representatives H and E:

“There is a rather alarming anti-agency worker feeling with some departments within the company not including the agency workers in social or team building activities.”

“Some offices will invite agency workers to social events but others, especially in the southeast region where work is high and pressured, have not got a very sociable culture and won’t include agency workers in social events.”

The strained relationship between permanent workers and agency workers would tend to manifest itself in conflict as quoted from employer representative G:

“There is some conflict between the agency workers and permanent workers within the organisation. Conflict between agency workers and permanent workers arose on the permanent worker side because the permanent workers wanted what is best for the organisation. Permanent workers tend to promote other permanent workers because they cost the organisation less in the long run. Nevertheless, the employment of individuals on short-term contracts tends to be difficult to achieve so agency workers are quite a practical solution. Conflict on the agency worker side mainly arose through the vacancies board. Agency workers are not allowed to apply for jobs on the vacancy board until all permanent workers interested in the position have applied. This sometimes caused conflict with the two sets of workers.”

Conflict was therefore between both sets of workers. Conflicts were also explained through departmental differences in attitude as quoted from employer representative H:

“Some managers may not value the work of the agency worker and if they upset the agency worker then the manager’s attitude is that they could find another agency worker relatively easily. However, HR [department] actively discourages this mentality, as it is likely that employment agencies capitalise on the organisation’s problems of retaining both permanent workers and agency workers. The agency worker is promoted at the organisational level as a great help and benefit to the organisation.”

Conflicts were also explained in terms of interested third parties stirring up trouble enlisting the permanent workers to act against agency workers. This was seen in one organisation in particular (telecommunications company) where there was a very strong union control as quoted from employer representative D:

“Unions have a large influence on the negative working relationship between permanent workers and agency workers. Strikes have been called out in the past due to the increasing number of agency workers within the workforce and by the increasing skills and responsibilities given to agency workers. Agreements had to be made with the union to ensure that no more than 20% of the staff within call centres are agency workers. Agency workers are also only allowed to complete certain jobs, which ensured the responsibilities of permanent jobs remained superior to that of the agency workers. Conflict between the two sets of workers is considered non-existent before the unions stirred up differences between agency workers and permanent workers.”

In all accounts of a strained relationship between permanent workers and agency workers, the employer representatives stated that overall this was caused by negative individuals or by a negative third party. However, this was probably an overly simplified view of the dynamic relationship between the two sets of workers. Employers in the survey stated that they tried to actively promote the relationship between the two sets of workers as this harmonised the working environment making all workers satisfied in their jobs. However, how they did this was

not revealed. Only one organisation (Large cosmetic based manufacture and retail company) stated that it did not suffer from such problems and this was due to their active policy of not stating worker status.

All six employers that used agency workers (employer representatives C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J) linked worker relationship to agency worker job satisfaction as the following from employer representatives E and I:

“Some offices ... do not have a very sociable culture and the job satisfaction of agency workers varies due to these different organisational cultures.”

“Attitudes of staff members are a factor relating to job satisfaction especially if it is negative.”

Quotes such as these were gained from all six employers that used agency workers (employer representatives C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J). These quotes suggest that these employers thought that worker relationship had a positive association with agency worker job satisfaction therefore supporting Hypothesis H3.

8.2.4 Involuntary and voluntary work status

Involuntary and voluntary work status was discussed with some of the organisations; however, most felt they had insufficient knowledge of each agency worker to discuss this matter. Consequently, no data of worth was found on these variables to report in this chapter.

8.3 DIFFERENTIAL HYPOTHESES

8.3.1 Differences in Skill variety

Six of the employers that used agency workers (employer representatives C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J) reported that agency workers had different levels of skill variety depending on the type of agency assignment undertaken. In this regard, organisations reported cases where agency assignments had low, medium or high levels of skill variety. Five of the organisations (employer representatives C, D, E, F, H, I, J) deliberately gave agency workers tasks with a low level of skill variety, such as photocopying, filing or data input as shown by the following quotes from employer representatives C (first two quotes) and H:

“The work that gets given to agency workers is monotonous and routine.”

“Within the call centres, the agency workers tend to work in the lesser skilled functions such as the billing line or within customer services. Agency workers are used, to work on basic clerical duties, which may involve unskilled repetitive work.”

“95% of jobs that agency workers perform within the organisation are fairly routine administrative duties such as filing, photocopying, data input, etc.”

The only exception to this was found in the charity based organisation (employer representative G) who commented on having an ‘army’ of volunteers to complete menial tasks. All other employers of agency workers (employer representatives C, D, E, F, H, I, J) gave three main reasons for giving low skilled jobs to agency workers:

1. Jobs with low skill variety were quickly explained to agency workers by permanent workers.
2. Agency workers could be left to complete simple work without too much supervision.
3. Agency workers were not expected to cover other workers’ roles, unless they had been brought in especially for that purpose.

These reasons firstly state that permanent workers’ time was a precious commodity that could not be spent on training or supervising agency workers. The qualitative evidence from the workers collaborates with this finding, with many workers stating that permanent staff had little or no time to train and supervise agency workers. Secondly, employers stated that permanent workers were trained up to cover the jobs of colleagues or managers in their absence. This procedure encouraged skill variety, as individual workers need to use different skills dependent on the role that they were covering in their colleagues or managers absence. Agency workers were not given this opportunity and as a result, permanent workers have a greater variety of skills that can be called upon to replace absent colleagues or managers. Agency workers were therefore different to permanent workers in their skill variety as they were merely trained the skills necessary to complete one particular job rather than a multitude of jobs. Consequently, agency workers had little skill variety in their role compared with permanent workers.

Nevertheless, not all assignments given to agency workers had a low level of skill variety. Three of the five employers (employer representatives E, F, H, I) argued that they often needed specialist skills that may not be available in the permanent workers. Agency workers with specialist skills were thus recruited and used these skills in their agency assignment as described by employer representative F:

“If an agency worker has a specific role to complete such as a credit controller, it is likely that there is more skills needed for this role.”

Specialist skills required by employers vary considerably ranging from general administration skills through to IT and secretarial skills. In many instances if an employer found an agency worker with a good level of skill applicable to their business, often this agency worker was taken on to full time permanent employment, as in the following case quoted from employer representative D:

“The skills of the agency worker vary but there is a good chance that agency workers would use their skills within the business. Communication skills and customer care skills are desperately sought after in agency workers. If an agency worker has these skills then the agency workers position could be used as a stepping stone into the business as communication skills are a sought after commodity within the organisation.”

Employers tended not to give highly skilled jobs to agency workers because of the amount of permanent worker time needed to train and supervise the worker. Nevertheless, if an employer had spent considerable time on an agency worker they would try to keep that agency worker in their position. If one particular assignment had ended, often the employer would try and keep the trained agency worker by getting them to complete other assignments within the organisation. Alternatively, employers would hire back the agency worker if they had left the organisation as shown in this following case cited from employer representative G:

“The types of jobs agency workers complete are varied ranging from cash handling to processing orders so involve many skills. One of the problems of this varied work is the training time taken to develop the agency workers skills to use the organisation’s systems. If agency workers are needed having left the organisation, the solution is to try and get the temp back. So the organisation actively encourages former agency workers back.”

In conclusion, skill variety differed considerably dependent on the type of agency worker assignment. Employers had a vested interest in giving agency workers assignments that have a low skill variety as it meant a cost saving in terms of permanent worker time. It was also considered uneconomical to train agency workers to cover the roles of absent permanent workers and as a result, agency workers were given a very limited skill set needed for the completion of one task or role. This evidence supports Hypotheses H6a and H6b that agency workers have a lower level of skill variety than permanent workers (both those that work with and did not work with agency workers).

One of the seven organisations interviewed specifically did not hire agency workers (employer representatives A and B) and as a result, they were asked to comment on the differences between different permanent workers supporting or refuting Hypothesis H6c. The HR Manager of this organisation (employer representative A) said that call centre work was rather “samey” and in

this way did not contradict Hypothesis H6c stating that all permanent workers would have the same level of skill variety. Thus, Hypothesis H6c was not refuted by the employers' qualitative evidence.

8.3.2 Differences in organisational commitment

Organisational commitment was of key interest to the employers of the survey and respondents have many different views on whether agency workers were committed to their organisation. Four employers that used agency workers (employer representatives C, D, F, H, I, J) and the organisation that did not use agency workers (employer representatives A, B) stated that agency workers showed a low level of organisational commitment as in the following citations from employer representatives D, H and A:

“Organisational commitment is considered low, with agency workers showing no allegiance to the company. They will be committed to the job but not necessarily the organisation.”

“Organisational commitment to the company is generally low but it is even lower in agency workers than permanent workers.”

“The company has an active policy of not using agency workers. This is primarily due to the feeling that agency workers are not very committed to the company, in that their commitment is invariably inferior to permanent workers.”

Nevertheless, one of the employers (employer representative J) stated that organisational commitment varies according to the individual:

“Some of the agency workers are committed to the organisation but this is probably more to do with individual ethics rather than a commitment to the organisation as a specific company. Other agency workers may not be loyal to the organisation but they are certainly committed to the work they complete.”

In addition, another employer (employer representative G) stated that organisational commitment varies according to the organisation:

“Organisational commitment varies tremendously largely dependent on the organisation the agency worker is working in at the time. In the NHS, the agency workers went to their place of work and then came home without any real commitment to the organisation. Nevertheless, in the current organisation agency workers show 100% commitment to the charity. This is expressed in terms of agency workers working late for free and being flexible in helping out satisfying demands.”

Both the individual and organisation were considered to influence the organisational commitment of the agency worker. Committed individuals could be employed by organisations that give little commitment to them, which was reciprocated by the agency worker. This finding

was replicated in the agency worker qualitative data whereby one agency worker stated that if an organisation was unpleasant towards them, they would tend not to “do the extras in the job”, i.e., stay later than is expected, or work through the lunch hour. In this way, although the agency worker was committed to the organisation they wanted to reciprocating the employer’s unpleasantness.

Two employers (employer representatives E, J), with other organisations not commenting, claimed that organisational commitment was comparable in agency workers and permanent workers:

“Agency workers are not considered to be different to permanent workers in terms of organisational commitment.”

“Agency workers show 100% commitment ... expressed in terms of agency workers working late for free and being flexible in helping out satisfying demands.”

These two organisations (employer representatives E, J) provided evidence for Hypothesis H7a that agency workers have similar levels of organisational commitment to the permanent workers they work alongside. However, on the previous page four organisations (employer representatives C, D, F, H, I, J) stated that agency worker organisational commitment was likely to be inferior to permanent workers organisational commitment. This implies that employers, as expressed by their representatives, do not support the ideas expressed in Hypothesis H7a. Permanent workers who do not work with agency workers were said to have a high level of organisational commitment, which was unlikely to exist in agency workers, providing evidence for Hypothesis H7b. Unfortunately, these workers were not compared with other permanent workers who work with agency workers providing no evidence for Hypothesis H7c that permanent workers may be different.

8.3.3 Differences in job satisfaction

Job satisfaction was considered to be at different levels according to the employers. Four organisations (employer representatives C, D, F, G, H) stated that job satisfaction was low as in the following quotes by employer representatives C and H:

“Job satisfaction of the agency workers is considered to be low but this is also the case for the permanent workers. The low job satisfaction in all workers is attributed to the call centre job being mundane, pressurised with demanding performance targets.”

“Job satisfaction is low but is considered to be the same between permanent and agency workers in the head office. This is due by the organisation “suffering from growing pains” whereby the business had nearly doubled in size over the last few years.”

The other two organisations (employer representatives F, G) stated that the job satisfaction in both sets of workers was fairly high as in the following quotes by employer representatives G and F:

“Job satisfaction within the organisation is considered to be very high. Agency workers often come back to the charity at their request, often phoning up to see if there are any jobs that need completing.”

“Generally, agency workers have high levels of job satisfaction as other workers within the company. With agency workers this is shown by their tenure who once they join, they do not want to leave as they are happy working here.”

Thus, the employers were equally split between workers who have the same low level or high level of job satisfaction. Consequently, four organisations (employer representatives C, D, F, G, H) in total supported Hypothesis H8a that agency workers have the same level of job satisfaction compared with the permanent workers they work with. Hypothesis H8b stated that permanent workers who do not work with agency workers were more likely to have a higher level of job satisfaction than agency workers. Indeed, the HR manager of Credit Card Company 1 (employer representative A) stated that:

“Job satisfaction of the permanent call centre workers is considered high mainly from two sources of information. Firstly, from exit interviews with leaving staff, call centre staff are happy in the job but had to leave for other reasons. Secondly, a job staff survey was given to all employees from whom job satisfaction was found to be very high amongst all employees.”

This evidence could be used to support both Hypothesis H8b and H8c that permanent workers who do not work with agency workers may have a higher level of job satisfaction than agency workers or permanent workers who work with agency workers. This was due to the high amount of job satisfaction in permanent workers who do not work with agency workers, which may be greater than other workers. Nonetheless, no specific comparisons were made thus it is difficult to refute or not refute these hypotheses with this qualitative data.

8.3.4 Differences in job security satisfaction

Two of the organisations stated that recruitment of permanent workers was a problem and as a result, they (employer representatives H and F) resorted to employing agency workers:

“The company generally wants to employ permanent workers but turnover within the organisation and recruitment problems meant that just under 10% of all staff are agency workers.”

“We could not operate without agency workers, at times, they are a fill in, but they also help us meet the demands for business.”

Two organisations felt that the job security of agency workers was quite high, as they tended not to want agency workers to leave. Conversely, one of the organisations (employer representative H) used low job security as a way of keeping the permanent workers rather than the agency workers in check, in that permanent workers could be threatened:

“The organisation promotes a high number of working hours, to get the work done, of which permanent members of staff have to put up with it. Agency workers however could 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.”

The attitude of employer representative H was that agency workers could leave whereas permanent workers did not have this opportunity. For permanent workers, extended hours and leaving late was commonplace within the company. Permanent workers were therefore influenced by low job security rather than agency workers who could just leave the organisation. Further evidence from employer representative D showed how low job security did not influence agency workers:

“In the call centres, a code can be used to dial internationally which is paid for by the company. Agency workers were taking down these codes and using them outside of the organisation, as the codes worked on public pay phones. Agency workers therefore misused their position to phone friends and relatives internationally. Obviously, agency workers are much harder to trace and had less of a threat to their jobs than permanent workers so agency workers tend to take the risk even though it could lead to instant dismissal.”

Job security was therefore not seen to influence agency workers by four of the organisations that hired them. Indeed, inherent in both the Surrey and Northamptonshire areas where the employer interviews took place, unemployment was very low and therefore as quoted from employer representative F:

“If the agency worker could walk and talk, they are hired if suitable.”

In other words, there was such a great need for agency workers that they need not feel insecure as they were always needed by the employers. This evidence refutes Hypothesis H9a claiming that agency workers have the lowest level of job security satisfaction.

Hypothesis H9b and H9c, related to permanent workers who did not work with agency workers of which one organisation employed and was interviewed. Job security satisfaction was reportedly high in these workers, which was associated with the “caring” and open organisational culture of which the policy of not employing agency workers was a part. This provided some evidence for Hypothesis H9b as permanent workers who do not work with

agency workers may have higher levels of job security satisfaction than agency workers. This organisation did not comment on other types of permanent workers who were employed with agency workers so did not provide evidence for Hypothesis H9c. Nevertheless, to gain evidence for Hypothesis H9c, employers were asked whether they thought the employment of agency workers affects the job security of their permanent workers. Only three employers (employer representatives E, H and G) answered this question with two of the employers stating that agency workers did not affect the job security of permanent workers as in the following quote from employer representative E:

“The threat to permanent workers, in terms of losing their jobs or being replaced by better skilled cheaper paid staff, does not exist. Mainly as there is not a significant mass of agency workers to be a worry to permanent staff.”

Only one employer commented that agency workers did influence the job security of their permanent workers. Indeed, this organisation, as stated above, tended to use this to make the permanent workers work harder. Hypothesis H9c therefore had two organisations refuting the Hypothesis and one organisation supporting the hypothesis. Thus, overall Hypothesis H9c was refuted by the qualitative data from the employers.

8.4 CONCLUSIONS FROM THE EMPLOYERS SURVEY

The qualitative results from employers gave both supporting and contradictory evidence for the relational and differential hypotheses (See Table 8.2). Table 8.2 shows the employers' responses and counts the number of employers that support or contradict a particular hypothesis. This table has missing evidence on only four hypotheses, which contrasts to the qualitative survey of workers. The greater coverage of hypotheses was due mainly to the employer interviews being more structured and focused in nature as set out in the research design.

Hypothesis H1 was not refuted as employers considered that job-related conditions and especially skill variety related to agency worker job satisfaction. Hypothesis H2 that organisational commitment related to job satisfaction receives no evidence for or against this hypothesis. Employers stated that agency workers with a low commitment tend to be terminated quickly. It is therefore unlikely whether employers would know about an agency worker's level of organisational commitment as the agency worker has a vested interest to hide low levels of organisational commitment from the employer. Hypothesis H3 has some evidence that does not refute it as employers stated that a poor worker relationship results in low job satisfaction in agency workers. No evidence was gathered for either Hypotheses H4 or H5 as employer

representatives felt they could not comment on individual factors influencing agency workers' job satisfaction.

Table 8.2: Summary of qualitative results from the employers

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Summary	Employer responses
H1	Skill Variety contributes to agency worker job satisfaction	✓ (5)
H2	Organisational commitment contributes to agency worker job satisfaction	NEG
H3	Worker relationship contributes to agency worker job satisfaction	✓ (6)
H4	Voluntary worker status contributes to agency worker job satisfaction	NEG
H5	Involuntary worker status contributes negatively to agency worker job satisfaction	NEG
H6a	Skill Variety: ACC>P+	✓ (4)
H6b	Skill Variety: ACC>P-	✓ (5)
H6c	Skill Variety: P+=P-	✓ (1)
H7a	Organisational commitment: ACC=P+	X (4) ✓ (2)
H7b	Organisational commitment: ACC<P-	✓ (1)
H7c	Organisational commitment: P+<P-	NEG
H8a	Job satisfaction: ACC=P+	✓ (5) X (1)
H8b	Job satisfaction: ACC<P-	✓ (1)
H8c	Job satisfaction: P+<P-	✓ (1)
H9a	Job security: ACC<P+	X (4)
H9b	Job security: ACC<P-	✓ (1)
H9c	Job security: P+<P-	X (2) ✓ (1)

Evidence was also provided by the employers for the differential hypotheses. Hypotheses H6a and H6b, predicting that agency workers had a lower level of skill variety than permanent workers, was strongly supported with employers giving sound business arguments for the disparity between them. Hypothesis H6c also gains support as the employer of permanent workers who do not work with agency workers stated that call centre worker jobs were “samey”, i.e., that skill variety is equal between these permanent workers. Hypothesis H7a also received support as employers that used both agency workers and permanent workers together stated there was probably little difference between their levels of organisational commitment. Permanent workers who did not work with agency workers were credited with having a high level of organisational commitment, according to the employers, which was likely to be higher than agency workers supporting Hypothesis H7b. Permanent workers were not compared on organisational commitment giving no evidence for Hypothesis H7c. Hypothesis H8a gained credibility as agency workers were perceived as being as satisfied as the permanent workers they worked alongside. Permanent workers who did not work with agency workers reported a very high level of job satisfaction, which again was possibly higher than agency workers supporting Hypothesis H8b and permanent workers who work with agency workers supporting Hypothesis H8c. Hypothesis H9a was not supported as employers stated that the strong demand for agency workers meant that agency workers had high job security. Indeed, one organisation commented

that permanent workers who work with agency workers had very low job security, which the organisation used to endorse longer working hours and reduce conflict between workers. Hypothesis H9b received support from the organisation that did not employ agency workers but again was based on the conjecture that agency workers had little job security. This organisation did not want to comment on differences in permanent workers, however two of the three organisations that did comment stated that agency workers did not effect the job security of permanent workers refuting Hypothesis H9c.

The employers' qualitative survey represents a fascinating insight into the employers of agency workers and their opinions. These opinions especially regarding job security, seemed to contradict opinions given by both agency workers and permanent workers, a topic that will be explored in full in the following discussion chapter.

All results from the three main pieces of research have now been detailed. The results of these chapters will now be summarised and drawn together in a discussion of the relational and differential hypotheses. Through this discussion, the possible influences on agency worker job satisfaction is discussed along with differences between workers in the study variables.

CHAPTER 9

9. DISCUSSION

9.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapters 5 to 8, the results of this study have been presented. This chapter will now discuss these results in the context of the existing literature that was reviewed in Chapter 2 and 3. The hypotheses in the thesis were split into two groups consisting of the relational hypotheses, concerned with agency worker job satisfaction antecedents, and the differential hypotheses, concerned with differences between workers on job satisfaction and associated variables. Both these hypotheses are detailed combining the results of both the quantitative and qualitative studies. The relational and the differential hypotheses are discussed together examining the possible interactions between variables. Limitations to the research are considered. This will also examine what lessons were learnt from conducting the research and how it could be improved in future research designs. Contribution to knowledge and understanding that the thesis has made will then be highlighted. Future research will then be suggested.

9.2 RELATIONAL HYPOTHESES

The relational hypotheses made in the text related to the contributors or possible antecedents of agency worker job satisfaction. Skill variety (H1), worker relationship (H2), organisational commitment (H3) and voluntary worker status (H4) were all hypothesised to be positively associated to agency worker job satisfaction with involuntary worker status (H5) being hypothesised as being negatively correlated to agency worker job satisfaction. Table 9.1 shows the evidence gathered in the research (Correlation, Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression) against the hypotheses in the study. The support that was gleaned from the qualitative interviews with agency workers and employer representatives is also presented in Table 9.1. This is not to say that this evidence can in any way test the hypotheses, however, it does illustrate in Table 9.1, how the qualitative data served to support the quantitative results.

Table 9.1: Summary results for the relational hypotheses

Hypothesis	Correlation	HMLR	Agency worker qualitative interviews	Employer qualitative interviews
H1: Skill Variety	✓	X	✓ (9)	✓ (5)
H2: Organisational commitment	✓	✓	✓ (3)	NEG
H3: Worker relationship	✓	✓	✓ (9)	✓ (6)
H4: Voluntary worker status	✓	X	X	NEG
H5: Involuntary worker status	x	X	X	NEG
✓ (not refuted) X (refuted) NEG (No evidence gathered)				

Only the permanent call centre workers qualitative interview results have been omitted from this table as they provided no evidence on what might contribute towards agency worker job satisfaction. Employer representatives also had a similar perspective on individual antecedents to agency worker job satisfaction, i.e., organisational commitment and worker voluntary/involuntary status, giving a finding of No Evidence Gathered (NEG) for these results. However, employer representatives felt they could comment on wider influences on agency worker job satisfaction that they could effect such as skill variety and worker relationship. Four of the five pieces of evidence (consisting of correlation, HMLR, agency worker qualitative interviews and employer interviews) can therefore be used to evaluate the relational hypotheses made in the study.

9.2.1 Skill Variety

Four sources of evidence (correlation, HMLR, agency worker qualitative interviews and employer qualitative interviews) were gathered to examine the association between skill variety and agency worker job satisfaction. This critically evaluated the relationship between skill variety and agency worker job satisfaction, which was proposed in Hypothesis H1 as:

H1 Skill variety has a positive relationship with agency worker job satisfaction.

The correlation between the two variables was significant ($\rho=0.39$, $p<0.01$) clearly showing the association between skill variety and job satisfaction. The Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression analysis did not show a significant relationship between skill variety and job satisfaction, whereas other variables such as organisational commitment explained much more of the variance in job satisfaction. This suggests that although skill variety showed a significant correlation with job satisfaction other variables in the study had stronger associations. Indeed, autonomy was one such variable that also had a strong correlation with job satisfaction although, like skill variety, was not significant in either regression models used for the thesis. Hence,

Hypothesis H1 only received partial support as the regression model found this not to be a particularly associated variable.

The qualitative data gathered from agency workers and employers also explored the link between skill variety and job satisfaction. Jobs with low amounts of skill variety were found, supporting work completed in the US by Nollen (1996) who came across temporary work assignments that had little skill variety. These assignments were considered to be very unsatisfying by agency workers who quoted skill variety as being vital in contributing to job satisfaction. Indeed, although agency workers may perform low skilled jobs, if they have a variety of low skilled jobs rather than just one this seems to be more satisfying even though skill level was still low.

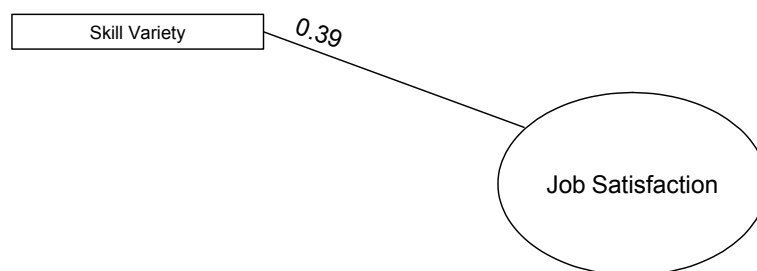
This finding also supports studies detailed in Chapter 2, carried out on job satisfaction in general using permanent workers. Classic studies such as Wall, Kemp, Jackson and Clegg, (1986) detailed how the collective control over task distribution influenced job satisfaction as these workers would self-regulate jobs and improve skill variety leading to greater job satisfaction. Glisson and Durick (1988) also found skill variety was significantly correlated with job satisfaction as did Burke (1999). All of these studies add weight to the assertion of the job characteristics model (Hackman and Oldham, 1975) whereby skill variety is an important job satisfaction antecedent. In the present study, this association has also been found with a specific group of workers being agency workers. This adds support to the job characteristics model serving as a useful model of research, even with workers with alternative working patterns. Thus although much of present day research examines individual based antecedents such as negative affectivity in general workers (Spector et al, 1999) and involuntary/voluntary work status in temporary workers (Ellingson et al, 1998; Feldman et al, 1995). Environmental based antecedents should not be discounted as this study has showed that aspects such as skill variety, as postulated by the job characteristics model and the research's theoretical model, are still just as important today as they have been in the past.

The qualitative data gained also supported work carried out by Heather et al (1996) on UK-based temporary workers. They argued that temporary work gives a worker an opportunity to gain skills needed for permanent employment. This was found in the current study whereby several of the agency workers stated that they undertook agency work to gain skills and qualifications in fields such as accountancy and business administration. Thus, when skill variety was high not only do the agency workers gain from an associated influence on their job satisfaction. They may also gain the skills necessary to equip them for their necessary careers.

Representatives from five of the six organisations that used agency workers (the representative from the sixth organisation did not comment on this matter) stated that skill variety was likely to contribute to agency worker job satisfaction. This was because “below par” agency worker assignments with low levels of skill variation or diversity were seen to be the most dissatisfying of all jobs within the organisation. Indeed, at least one of the employers commented that these jobs could only be given to agency workers as the permanent workers would not accept them. Agency workers, however, could be brought in to perform these unsatisfying low skill variety assignments. Employers therefore linked skill variety to agency worker job satisfaction. This qualitative evidence was similar to the agency worker interviews giving support for Hypothesis H1.

In summary, the data from the agency workers demonstrated that jobs with low skill variety were associated with lower levels of job satisfaction supporting the previous findings of Rogers (1995) and Smith (1998) detailed in Chapter 3 and being firmly based in the theoretical model described in Chapter 2. Jobs with high skill variety were associated higher levels of job satisfaction in part due to the influence that skill variety may have on job satisfaction. Causality cannot be ascertained between skill variety and job satisfaction due to limitations in the research design. However, the qualitative evidence suggested that skill variety was antecedent to job satisfaction, in that jobs with low levels of skill variety result in low levels of job satisfaction for agency workers. In the model of agency worker job satisfaction, the antecedent nature of skill variety was implied but not essential (See Figure 9.1). Consequently, the research concludes that a significant association exists between skill variety and agency worker job satisfaction as shown in Figure 9.1 although it is recognised that this was not as big a contributor to job satisfaction as other variables in the study as shown by the regression model. This figure directly contrasts with the research model of the thesis (See Figure 3.10) clearly showing the results found in the thesis.

Figure 9.1: Correlation between skill variety and job satisfaction



Skill variety was thus associated with agency worker job satisfaction indicating the importance of encouraging skill variety in agency worker assignments, if agency workers are to become

satisfied in their jobs. Yet, it seems that employers have a vested interest to give agency workers jobs requiring low levels of skill variety (for a more fuller discussion on this matter see the skill variety section below in the differential hypotheses). This represents quite a problem as if employers do not promote skill variety in agency workers then this may have a significant impact on the agency workers themselves.

Nevertheless, the inherent nature of agency work means that agency workers will be in a post temporarily. Indeed, this notion that “it’s only temporary” was noted from the qualitative interviews as almost a way of dealing with the low skill variety experienced in any one job. Yet, an agency worker can experience numerous different jobs and positions in any working period of time. They may receive their skill variety in this manner going from job to job rather than in the traditional manner. Certainly, at least one agency worker stated that although the jobs she undertakes were pretty much the same (being accountancy based), the organisations that she worked for were wholly different and require different skills and knowledge even for similar tasks. Without a doubt, measurement in an agency worker population could have been improved by the addition of extra questions customised towards their way of working rather than traditional ways of working on a permanent basis. Thus in measuring skill variety, a further metric may have benefited the study, in that inter-job skill variety over a number of assignments may have been assessed. Skill variety in the present study was measured from the Job Diagnostics Survey, produced by Hackman and Oldham (1975), which was seen as being both valid and reliable. Indeed, the Hackman and Oldham job characteristics model influences the research model used in the study. Yet, a measure that accounts for skill variety over a host of assignments may have revealed additional data.

9.2.2 Organisational commitment

Again, as with skill variety, not all of the evidence gathered examined the relationship between organisational commitment and agency worker job satisfaction. Permanent call centre workers, as previously stated felt they were not in a position to comment on what contributes towards agency worker job satisfaction. However, in addition, employers also declined to comment on the influence that organisational commitment might have on agency worker job satisfaction, primarily as they thought this an individual trait rather than an environmental based antecedent which they had control over. Notwithstanding, evidence was gathered from the quantitative data, consisting of correlation and Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression (HMLR) analyses and from the agency worker qualitative interviews on Hypothesis H2, which is:

- H2 Organisational commitment has a positive relationship with agency worker job satisfaction.

Correlation between organisational commitment and job satisfaction was large ($\rho=0.79$, $p<0.01$) showing a clear association between the two variables. The HMLR analysis also showed a significant relationship between organisational commitment and job satisfaction, with organisational commitment showing the largest amount of variance associated with job satisfaction ($\Delta R^2=0.64$, $p<0.01$). The quantitative evidence was therefore compelling suggesting that out of all the variables in the study, organisational commitment had the strongest relationship with job satisfaction. The quantitative evidence therefore supports Hypothesis H2.

Surprisingly, the qualitative evidence linking organisational commitment with job satisfaction was limited. McClurg (1999) and Newton (1996) stated that agency worker organisational commitment was dual in manner in that an agency worker may be committed both to the third party employing organisation and to the employment agency. The results of these previous research studies were adopted in the current study that in the quantitative study an overall level of organisational commitment was obtained, which accounts for both commitment to the third party organisation and the employment agency. Nevertheless, the richness of the qualitative data advocated that organisational commitment in agency workers should be split between the third party employing organisation and employment agency. This was because agency workers tended to speak about commitment to the third party employing organisation and employment agency as separate, although highly correlated, items. Nevertheless, despite all the qualitative evidence gathered about different levels of organisational commitment, only three coded responses from the agency workers mentioned that being committed was likely to influence their job satisfaction providing weak support for Hypothesis H2.

However, the question to ask at this point is about the agency worker's awareness about his or her own organisational commitment relating to job satisfaction. Indeed, it may be argued that agency workers have a certain level of organisational commitment, ranging as observed in the qualitative interviews from low to high, which was related to their job satisfaction without their knowledge. Thus, a highly committed agency worker may benefit from this commitment contributing to their level of job satisfaction. However, such individuals were likely to be committed all the time and therefore not experience what it was like to have low commitment and the subsequent effect on job satisfaction. The research therefore concludes that although the evidence for not refuting Hypothesis H2 was rather weak from the agency worker qualitative interviews. The hypothesis is still acceptable as the notion of awareness comes into play with

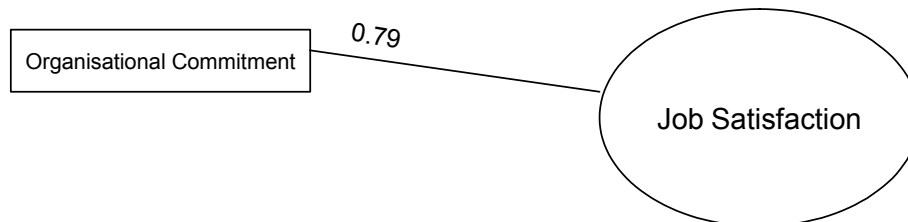
this particular qualitative data. Thus, it can be argued that the reason for the lack of qualitative data on this relationship was because commitment is likely to be fairly steady in agency workers and thus they will lack awareness on how different levels of organisational commitment will affect their job satisfaction. Such awareness can surely only arise in a quantitative study that examines organisational commitment as a unique variable amongst many participants.

Further qualitative evidence from the employer interviews provided no evidence for Hypothesis H2. This evidence can be taken two ways. Employers did not think there was a link between organisational commitment and job satisfaction so did not mention such a link even when prompted. Employers could not differentiate between low and high commitment in their workers (both agency and permanent workers) and its subsequent affect on job satisfaction. Overall, the second option seems more likely as employers felt that workers, even agency workers, should be committed to their organisation with non-committed agency workers finding themselves out of a job fairly quickly. The only time this would not happen is if all staff generally lacked commitment in the organisation as was suggested by one employer. Thus, agency workers must show a reasonable amount of organisational commitment as a prerequisite in keeping their assignment. Consequently, agency workers were unlikely to express any feelings of low organisational commitment to the employers and as such, employers were unlikely to see the difference between truly committed and uncommitted agency workers. Indeed, although agency workers may hide their feelings of low organisational commitment to the employer, it may difficult for them to do on a daily basis with the permanent workers that they work with and this is explored in Section 9.3.3 below. In summary, according to employers, all workers should be committed at a similar level so differences in commitment were not apparent and as such, the link between organisational commitment and job satisfaction was not mentioned by employer representatives. In this regard, the research can conclude that although employers did not comment on the link between organisational commitment and job satisfaction, this evidence does not suggest that the link does not exist. Hypothesis H2 was therefore not refuted by the employer's survey.

The relationship between organisational commitment and agency worker job satisfaction was shown primarily from the quantitative research (See Figure 9.2). This evidence was quite compelling linking organisational commitment with job satisfaction. On the qualitative side, only three agency worker responses linked organisational commitment with their job satisfaction. The reason behind this lack of qualitative data was possibly because agency workers and employers were unsure of the link between organisational commitment and agency worker job satisfaction. In addition, employers were unlikely to see uncommitted agency

workers as these workers had a vested interest in not showing low levels of commitment. Therefore, the research supported Hypothesis H2, that there was a significant positive association between organisational commitment and job satisfaction.

Figure 9.2: Correlation between organisational commitment and job satisfaction

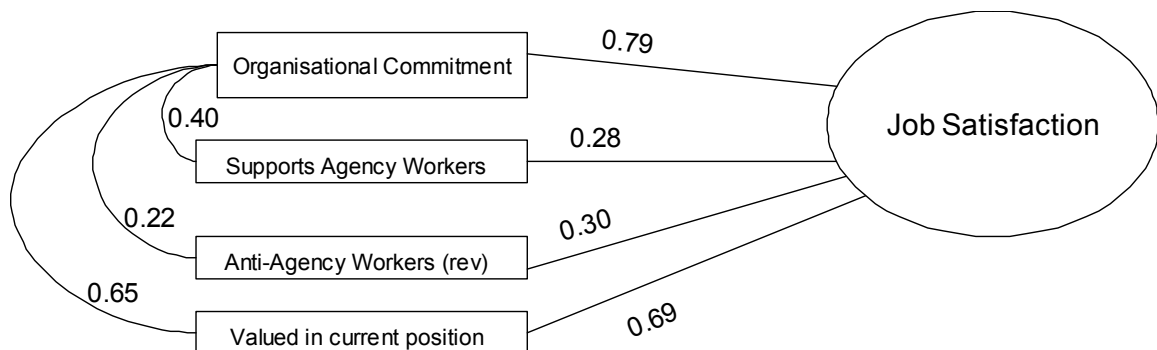


If the other results for the relational hypotheses are examined organisational commitment seemed to have the biggest effect on job satisfaction accounting for 64% of the total variance in this variable in the HMLR ($\Delta R^2=0.64$). So why does agency worker organisational commitment influence their job satisfaction to such a high degree? Three main reasons may explain the answer to this question.

First, if an agency worker has feelings of attachment to the goals and values of the organisation they are working for, which is basically the definition of organisational commitment, then they are bound to feel happier working for this organisation than for another organisation where they are not so attached and committed. Thus, it seems likely that if an agency worker has a high level of organisational commitment, they will feel attached to the organisation and as a result feel satisfied in the job they undertake.

The second reason for the strong relationship between organisational commitment and job satisfaction concerns the indirect relationship organisational commitment may have on job satisfaction through worker relationship as shown in Figure 9.3. Indeed, organisational commitment was significantly correlated with being valued in the current position ($\rho=0.65$, $p<0.01$) anti-agency worker feeling ($\rho=0.22$, $p<0.05$) and supports agency workers ($\rho=0.40$, $p<0.01$) as shown in Figure 9.3. In this regard, organisational commitment has a possible double effect on job satisfaction. Firstly as a variable in its own right and secondly by its influence on worker relationship, whereby agency workers that share the goals of the organisation were likely to be more accepted by the permanent workers as is suggested in the qualitative interviews with permanent workers.

Figure 9.3: Correlation between organisational commitment, worker relationship and job satisfaction



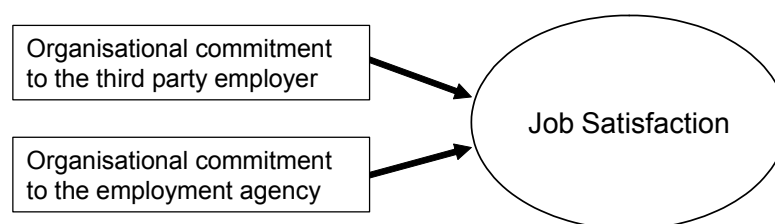
The third reason why organisational commitment could have a strong influence on agency worker job satisfaction is that organisational commitment in agency workers may not have any disadvantages unlike in permanent workers. Permanent workers are expected to show their organisational commitment through disadvantages to themselves such as working late. Being committed to the organisation could therefore bring disadvantages to permanent workers as their organisation may capitalise on their commitment. Agency workers are different as although they are expected to be committed to the organisation they are unlikely to be expected to complete additional work for no tangible reward, unlike permanent workers. This was found to be the case in one organisation that stated that if agency workers were not happy about working late then they would resort to contract and leave as opposed to the permanent workers who they, as an organisation, could influence to stay to carry out additional duties. Organisational commitment in agency workers is therefore unlikely to bring any unwarranted disadvantages.

The research's findings contribute to some of the studies that were detailed in Chapter 2. Unfortunately the causality between organisational commitment and job satisfaction cannot be determined with a cross sectional study of this nature. However, interestingly organisational commitment and job satisfaction were seen as quite distinct variables in the Principle Components Analysis (See Appendix G) suggesting that they are separate entities rather than being some all embracing work outcome variable. Previous models of organisational commitment (Steers, 1977; Lease, 1998) show how many of the antecedents of job satisfaction are shared by organisational commitment. What was also evident in agency workers was that organisational commitment had a very strong influence on job satisfaction. It is therefore important to include both variables in examining agency workers. Indeed, a recent study (McClurg, 1999) examined organisational commitment in agency workers and how it related to work outcomes such as turnover and intention to remain within the firm. It was found that,

unlike studies with permanent workers (Allen and Meyer, 1996), organisational commitment had little to do with turnover intentions. However, if the author had measured job satisfaction she may have found that turnover intentions were influenced by job satisfaction, as proposed by the research's theoretical model, which in turn was influenced by organisational commitment. Nevertheless, Allen and Meyer (1996) suggested that there was sufficient evidence to examine organisational commitment as a variable in its own right and thus separate the influence of it on other variables such as turnover intentions.

An additional point about the organisational commitment of agency workers is whether our current measures of organisational commitment were applicable to this worker group, due to its non-traditional non-permanent nature (a factor which incidentally may have been problematical to McClurg, 1999). The measure used in this study was the British Organisational Commitment Scale designed by Cook and Wall (1980). This measures affective commitment to the organisation and as such measures the feelings of attachment to an organisation. This is what the research wanted to measure but perhaps a more accurate measure could be devised separating out organisational commitment to the third party employer from organisational commitment to the employment agency (See Figure 9.4). Certainly, in the qualitative data it was found that agency workers did separate these two forms of commitment, so therefore in the future it may be better to do this rather than relying on a single measure of organisational commitment. Notwithstanding, for the purposes of this study the single measure of organisational commitment was acceptable for use confirmed by the Cronbach alpha reliability test and the confirmatory factor analysis.

Figure 9.4: Alternative model of organisational commitment in agency workers



The contribution that organisational commitment has on agency worker job satisfaction has not been examined in other studies. It is therefore important to note the research findings in this particular research and then suggest ways in which the evidence gathered in this study may be replicated in future research. This will invariably involve some refinement of the concept of organisational commitment as it relates to agency workers. Whether agency worker organisational commitment to the third party employing organisation and the employment

agency can be grouped together as completed in the quantitative research needs to be investigated in full. At the end of this chapter when areas of future research are examined, these questions will be discussed in suggesting ways forward in proposing new research designs.

9.2.3 Worker relationship

The third factor that was hypothesised to be associated with agency worker job satisfaction is worker relationship, that is, the relationship between permanent and agency workers. Indicators for this relationship includes all evidence in the study barring the qualitative interviews carried out with permanent call centre workers. The main hypothesis this data tests is Hypothesis H3, which is:

H3 Worker relationship has a positive relationship with agency worker job satisfaction.

The quantitative evidence for worker relationship relating to agency worker job satisfaction was influenced somewhat by the measure of worker relationship. The measure originally proposed was not combinable into a single measure by the reliability and principle components analysis. This was due in part to the questions measuring three quite distinct aspects of worker relationship, i.e.,

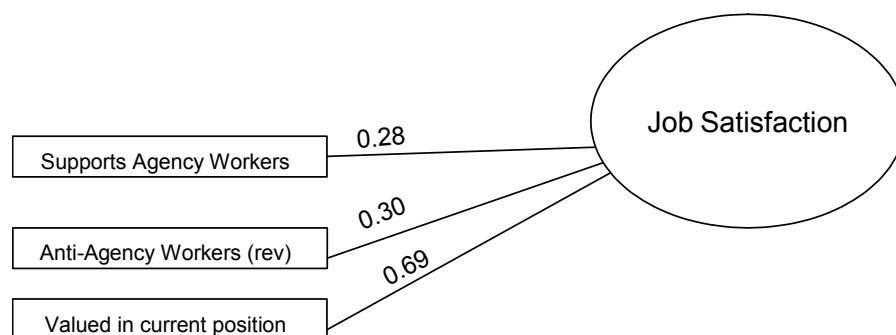
- “The organisation I work in supports employment agency workers in all job related and non-job related matters.” (supports agency workers)
- “Some of the permanent staff are anti-employment agency workers.” (anti-agency workers)
- “I feel valued in my current position.” (valued in current position)

In retrospect, it would have been beneficial to have created a more robust measure of worker relationship that included all of these factors but with a high internal consistency. Yet, these questions can be viewed as separate items in their own right that measure a specific aspect of worker relationship. In addition, although these measures should not be combined to form a composite variable, the three measures can be entered as one block comprising of the three variables in the hierarchical multiple linear regression (HMLR). Considering this, the correlation analysis treats the worker relationship items as separate entities but in the HMLR they were entered in together, which is preferential due to small sample size in the study.

Correlations were significant between job satisfaction and all three worker relationship items. The “valued in current position” item showed the highest correlation ($\rho=0.69$, $p<0.01$) indicating that if an agency worker feels valued, presumably by staff and the organisation although this is left open to the respondent in the questionnaire, this has an association with job satisfaction. This is an important finding indicating that organisations should promote the worth of the agency worker within their business. Permanent workers should also show the value that they put on agency workers helping them out when they need additional labour. Anti-agency worker feeling also correlated negatively with job satisfaction, although this item was reversed in the study meaning a positive correlation was shown ($\rho=0.30$, $p<0.01$). If permanent workers were against agency workers working in an organisation this will have a negative impact on agency workers in terms of their job satisfaction. A supportive environment in the organisation was also found to be conducive to job satisfaction with a positive correlation found ($\rho=0.28$, $p<0.01$). Consequently, the correlation evidence supported Hypothesis H3.

In the HMLR, the relationship between all three worker relationship items and job satisfaction was significant ($p<0.01$). Nonetheless, the change in the R^2 statistic was quite small when these three items were added to the regression model. Indeed, approximately 8% of the variance in job satisfaction ($\Delta R^2=0.08$) was accounted for by the three worker relationship items. This compares with organisational commitment ($\Delta R^2=0.64$) which explained much more of the job satisfaction variance. However, the statistics clearly show that although this change in the R^2 statistic was quite small it was still significant. Therefore, the HMLR supports Hypothesis H3, providing support for the assertion that worker relationship is associated with to job satisfaction. Both pieces of evidence from the quantitative data support Hypothesis H3 supporting the relationship between the two variables (See Figure 9.5).

Figure 9.5: Relationship between worker relationship and job satisfaction



The qualitative data from the agency worker interviews showed an overwhelming support for a relationship between worker relationship and job satisfaction. For instance, in one interview the

agency worker stated that worker relationship contributes to job satisfaction as much as all other aspects of the job itself combined. Indeed, an agency worker can find a great job, that has a wide amount of skill variety, is challenging, etc. However, if the permanent workers opposed the agency worker and were unpleasant towards him or her then the assignment does little for the job satisfaction received from the job, even though the job itself may be very enjoyable. Worker relationship was the most popular subject discussed in the worker interviews and the level of interest shown in this variable may be an indicator of how much this variable matters to agency workers regarding their job satisfaction. The agency worker qualitative interviews therefore support Hypothesis H3.

Permanent workers did discuss the relationship between them and agency workers. However, none of them linked this relationship with agency worker job satisfaction, primarily as they felt they could not comment on this. Permanent workers, as well as agency workers, did say that the relationship between workers could be strained. However, whether this contributed negatively towards job satisfaction they could not say.

Employers also mentioned worker relationship between permanent workers and agency workers. Employers felt that it was important to encourage a good working relationship between the two parties to encourage collaborative and productive working. They also said that a positive working relationship between the two was highly likely to contribute towards the job satisfaction of the agency worker. Thus, employers could see how worker relationship, as opposed to organisational commitment, contributed towards agency worker job satisfaction. Thus, Hypothesis H3 is supported by the employer's qualitative evidence.

All of the evidence that explores the link between worker relationship and job satisfaction supports Hypothesis H3. This finding supports qualitative findings (Feldman et al, 1994; Henson, 1996; Rogers, 1995; Rogers and Henson, 1997) on US-based agency workers demonstrating that a poor working relationship between permanent workers and agency workers can drastically reduce job satisfaction. It also supports the studies put forward in Chapter 2 (Van-der-Vegt et al 2001; Wall et al, 1986; Zalewska, 1999) that found when work groups were cohesive and worker relationship valued, there was a positive influence on job satisfaction. The study therefore found that not only was worker relationship important for permanent workers (as shown in Chapter 2) but it was also (as suggested by Chapter 3) an important antecedent of agency worker job satisfaction.

So why may the relationship between workers influence agency worker job satisfaction? The qualitative evidence answered this question. Agency workers stated that working in an organisation could be very unpleasant if permanent workers were uncooperative and unfriendly. Permanent workers could compromise worker relationship in a variety of ways ranging from subtle sarcastic comments to outright conflict. Relationships between workers were seen as having to be promoted by the permanent workers themselves rather than by the employing organisation stating a policy of “you will to be nice to agency workers”. Agency workers felt that when they had a disagreeable relationship with other permanent workers they had little job satisfaction. This supports the qualitative evidence put forward by Rogers (1995) who claimed that the strained relationship between the two sets of workers was usually caused by permanent workers in an informal way. In other words, there was often a subtle discrimination against the agency workers that may include not inviting them to tea or lunch breaks or not passing on phone personal messages.

9.2.4 Voluntary and involuntary work status

The fourth and fifth factors that were hypothesised to be associated with to agency worker job satisfaction were voluntary and involuntary work status, which form the last two relational hypotheses as follows:

- H4 Voluntary worker status has a positive relationship with agency worker job satisfaction.
- H5 Involuntary worker status has a negative relationship with agency worker job satisfaction.

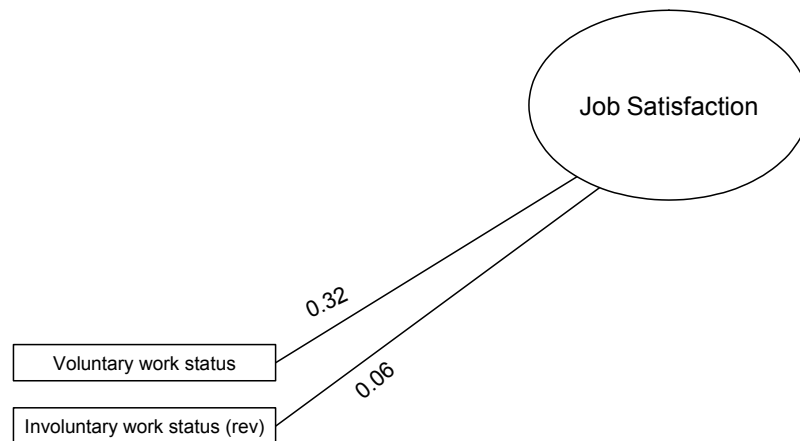
These variables were distinct in their own right but, just as with the worker relationship items, these variables were associated with each so will be considered together. Voluntary work status is when a worker is employed as an agency worker according to his or her own free will. In other words they take up an agency worker position willingly rather than being forced to complete this type of work because they cannot find a permanent job or because of redundancy. Involuntary work status is in effect the opposite of voluntary work status, whereby an agency worker is employed in a contract of this nature against their free will because of economic circumstances or because they cannot find a permanent job. Support for these variables and their relationship with job satisfaction includes all evidence barring the qualitative interviews carried out with permanent call centre workers.

The correlation data between the two worker status variables and job satisfaction was mixed. Voluntary work status showed a significant correlation with job satisfaction ($\rho=0.32$, $p<0.01$) indicating higher scores on the Ellingson voluntary work status scale were associated with higher job satisfaction scores. Nevertheless, involuntary work status shows no significant correlation with job satisfaction ($\rho=0.06$) suggesting that workers' scores on the Ellingson involuntary work status scale had no association with their job satisfaction scores, indicating the individual attribute of working involuntarily may have little to do with job satisfaction.

In the Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression (HMLR), the relationship between both the voluntary and involuntary work status variables and job satisfaction was also tested. This showed that these variables combined had little effect on the variance of R^2 statistic as the change in R^2 was small when these two variables were added to the regression model. Indeed, this was also the result found in a previous stepwise regression equation whereby even when involuntary and voluntary work status were split, they had little effect on the overall regression model.

The qualitative data from the agency worker interviews on these variables was very poor. Only one of the agency workers mentioned their work status in the interviews. When this happened, the agency worker was asked direct questions on whether work status contributed toward her job satisfaction. However, the agency worker's response indicated that there were no links between the two. Voluntary and involuntary work status was also discussed with employers. These interviews were more structured in design and as such, the voluntary/involuntary work status issues were investigated with employer representatives. Yet, employers had no comments on these variables and how they may relate to agency workers' job satisfaction.

Hypothesis H4, states that voluntary work status is positively associated with job satisfaction. This seems to be the case with the correlation between the voluntary factor and job satisfaction, however, all other data refute this hypothesis. In conclusion, Hypothesis H4 is refuted. Hypothesis H5 states that involuntary work status is negatively associated with to job satisfaction. These hypotheses received absolutely no support in the study. Thus, both Hypotheses H4 and H5 were refuted in this research (See Figure 9.6).

Figure 9.6: Relationship between voluntary/involuntary factors and job satisfaction

How then can the research explain how voluntary work status can be correlated to a significant degree to job satisfaction but involuntary work status not be correlated. The answer may lie in the issue, as Ellingson et al (1998) suggested, that voluntary and involuntary work status are not opposite factors. In other words, just because someone wishes to be employed as an agency worker (voluntary work status) this does not mean that they still do not seek permanent jobs (involuntary work status). So both factors can be seen independently of each other as measured by the Ellingson voluntary and involuntary factors. The correlation evidence suggests that higher levels of wanting to be employed as an agency worker were associated with positive levels of job satisfaction. Nevertheless, the reverse of this was not the case in that higher levels of wanting to be employed on a permanent position were not negatively associated with to job satisfaction. Indeed, just because an individual is forced to complete agency work as a means to an end while seeking permanent employment, this does not translate into an individual being dissatisfied at work. In fact, employment agencies when they recruit agency workers often prefer individuals who have had permanent full-time work in a similar role to the one that they are applying for, according to the preliminary interviews carried out with employment agency representatives. In this regard, this active selection of involuntary agency workers may have influenced the results of the survey in that these individuals were often given similar jobs to what they did on a full-time permanent basis, and thus experience the same levels of job satisfaction even though they were now employed on an agency worker basis.

The results of the present study differ somewhat from the conclusions of Ellingson et al (1998) and Feldman et al (1995). They suggested that agency workers that were more voluntarily employed have a greater job satisfaction than workers who are involuntarily employed. Ellingson et al (1998) used a slightly different measure of job satisfaction than the one this

research employs. They examined job satisfaction through job satisfaction facets based on Hackman and Oldham's (1975) Job Diagnostics Survey, the motivating potential score of a job (which they call overall assignment satisfaction) and temporary worker job satisfaction measured by a single item. The single item, measuring job satisfaction, was then significantly correlated with both the voluntary factor ($r=0.40$, $p<0.01$) and involuntary factor ($r=-0.48$, $p<0.01$). Feldman et al (1995) used a slightly different approach looking at differences between agency workers who are voluntarily employed as opposed to involuntary employed finding greater satisfaction levels with the former group. These results were not replicated in this study and there may be two reasons for this difference.

The first reason for this disparity is due to the wider range of variables that this thesis examined. Much of the recent job satisfaction literature, (e.g., Spector et al, 1999), has focused on individual aspects and antecedents of job satisfaction rather than on environmental and job related aspects of job satisfaction. Both Ellingson et al (1998) and Feldman et al (1995) used predominantly individually based antecedents for their work. Interestingly, the results of this research have shown that both environmental (i.e., skill variety, worker relationship) and individual (namely organisational commitment) antecedents were associated with job satisfaction in agency workers. Thus, in the work of Ellingson et al (1998), because environmental antecedents were not taken into account, their findings were much more biased towards individual antecedents being stronger. This, from the perspective of the thesis is good news as one of the eventual aims of this research is to improve job satisfaction for agency workers in the workplace. However, if job satisfaction is purely based on an individual's circumstances of so-called voluntary or involuntary employment then this aim would be hard to achieve.

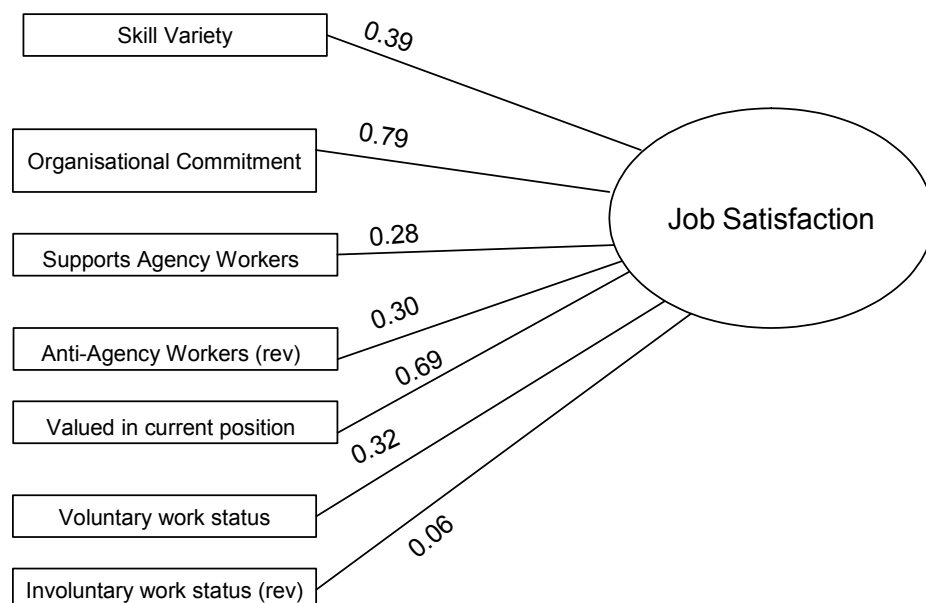
The second reason for the disparity may be the design of the questionnaire in this study, in that Ellingson et al's voluntary and involuntary factor question items were placed at the back of the questionnaire and the enthusiasm of filling out the questionnaire may have waned somewhat at this point giving us this inconclusive result. This is a difficulty in any quantitative study and the effects cannot be estimated. Yet, it would seem implausible that after successfully completing the entirety of the questionnaire in a responsible fashion only the Ellingson items were not completed correctly. Certainly there were some missing cases on this scale ($n=12$), but this implies that people gave up answering this part of the questionnaire rather than giving it less attention.

Unfortunately, it seems as though further research is needed to resolve this matter. In my opinion, differences between the studies are best explained through influential environmental and individual antecedents being left out of the work of Ellingson et al (1998) and Feldman et al (1995). Their studies played a greater significance than is perhaps warranted on the personal circumstances of agency workers. Thus, a distraction exists in both studies in that organisations cannot alter the job satisfaction of agency workers as this is based on personal circumstances of voluntary or involuntary employment. Yet, this study has surmised that if organisations do take action to improve the job satisfaction of agency workers they can by means previously identified, such as social inclusion, make agency workers happier in the workplace.

9.2.5 Conclusions on the relational hypotheses

Throughout the last section, the relational hypotheses (H1, H2, H3 H4 and H5) have been examined. Through this procedure, a model evolved to show the main factors that may influence agency worker job satisfaction (See Figure 9.7).

Figure 9.7: Relationship between all study variables and job satisfaction



This model shows all the variables that were tested in the research design relating to the relational hypotheses. This suggests that skill variety, organisational commitment, worker relationship and voluntary work status are all correlated with agency worker job satisfaction. Nevertheless, more stringent testing of this model suggested that primarily organisational commitment and worker relationship accounted for most of the variance within job satisfaction. Yet, what does this imply? In Chapter 2, the outcomes of job satisfaction were seen as withdrawal behaviour and counterproductive behaviour when job satisfaction was low and an

increased satisfaction with life and psychological and physical well-being when job satisfaction was high. Thus, organisational commitment and worker relationship out of all the variables in the study were found to be important to agency workers due to their association with job satisfaction and its relevant outcomes.

9.3 DIFFERENTIAL HYPOTHESES

9.3.1 Skill variety

Three sub hypotheses explored the differences between the worker groups and skill variety as follows:

- H6a Agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of skill variety than permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers
- H6b Agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of skill variety than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers
- H6c There is no significant difference in level of skill variety between permanent workers (both those who work with agency call centre workers and those who do not work with agency call centre workers)

Evidence gathered for these hypotheses was examined through a Kruskal-Wallis test, Mann-Whitney tests, interviews with agency workers, permanent workers and employers. The results of these analyses will initially be considered before discussing how this evidence contributes towards other studies completed in this area.

The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed a significant difference (Chi-square=13.00, $p<0.05$) between all call centre worker groups on skill variety. Further Mann-Whitney tests were therefore carried out to ascertain the precise nature of these differences. The first three tests were between the agency call centre workers (ACC) and the three groups of permanent workers who work with agency workers (P1+, P2+ and P3+). This revealed significant differences between the ACC group, the P1+ group ($z=-2.27$, $p<0.05$), the P2+ group ($z=-2.00$, $p<0.05$) and the P3+ group ($z=-3.06$, $p<0.01$). Thus, all Mann-Whitney tests showed significant differences between agency call centre workers and the permanent workers who work with them. This quantitative evidence corroborates supporting Hypothesis H6a that agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of skill variety than permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers.

The next Mann-Whitney test showed a significant difference ($z=-3.08$, $p<0.01$) between agency call centre workers (ACC) and permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers (P-). This analysis supports Hypothesis H6b that stated agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of skill variety than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers.

The third set of tests examined the differences between permanent workers (P-, P1+, P2+ and P3+) and skill variety. This revealed no significant difference between the P- group, the P1+ group ($z=-0.51$), the P2+ group ($z=-1.02$) and the P3+ group ($z=-0.46$). Consequently, the null Hypothesis H6c is not refuted as no significant difference was found in the level of skill variety between permanent workers (both those who work with agency call centre workers and those who do not work with agency call centre workers).

The qualitative data gathered from agency workers and employers also explored the differences between workers and skill variety. Evidence collected from the interviews with agency workers referred to the differences between them and permanent workers, whereby three responses in this category all gave accounts of a lower level of skill variety in agency workers as opposed to permanent workers. Evidence gained from the permanent workers was consistent with the agency workers, in that jobs with low levels of skill variety would be given to the agency workers suggesting that they generally have a lower level of skill variety than permanent workers. All the evidence gathered from interviews with agency workers and permanent workers supports both Hypotheses H6a and H6b. Permanent workers did not comment on their own level of skill variety so data from the qualitative interviews cannot be given on Hypothesis H6c.

The evidence gathered from the employers also examined differences in skill variety between workers. Employer representatives that used agency workers stated that they deliberately gave agency workers jobs with a low level of skill variety supporting Hypotheses H6a and H6b. The HR manager from credit card company 1 employed permanent workers only and as such could comment on Hypothesis H6c. This evidence supported Hypothesis H6c as the respondent stated that permanent workers do have the same level of skill variety in call centre worker type jobs.

All of the differential hypotheses relating to skill variety received unequivocal support. Hypotheses H6a and H6b, that agency call centre workers would have lower levels of skill variety compared with all permanent workers are supported with both quantitative and qualitative data. Hypothesis H6c, that permanent workers would have the same levels of skill

variety is also supported by all of the data, with the possible exception of the interviews with permanent workers where no evidence was gathered.

The results concerning Hypotheses H6a and H6b coincide with other studies (Cerulo, 1996; Smith, 1998) that have investigated differences in temporary workers' and permanent workers' level of skill variety. Hypothesis H6c, however has not been examined before in any study, which is not surprising given that the permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers group were in essence a control group to test the influence of the employment of agency call centre workers on permanent workers. Permanent workers who work with and do not work with agency call centre workers have the same level of skill variety in their roles. This finding supports the research design in that both groups of permanent workers were performing similar jobs so hopefully differences between them can be solely attributed to working with agency call centre workers.

Agency call centre workers were, as shown through this study, much more likely to have a perceived lower level of skill variety than permanent workers. This is an important finding given the correlation between skill variety and agency worker job satisfaction. To resolve this, employers could introduce agency workers to a magnitude of tasks that require a variety of skills. This would mean an increase in the skill variety of agency workers, which in turn may influence their job satisfaction. Nevertheless, employers in the study indicated a vested interest in giving agency workers repetitive jobs that have a low skill variety because of the amount of permanent worker time that is needed in training and supervising highly skilled jobs. Given this, it seems unlikely that employers would seek to increase the skill variety of agency workers. Agency workers may therefore have to suffer low skill variety, and given the contribution that skill variety has on agency worker job satisfaction this may be a bleak prospect for agency workers.

However, although agency workers may have a low level of skill variety in one assignment, perhaps agency workers going from job to job may build up their skills, and therefore skill variety. Skill variety measured in the survey is from the classic Job Diagnostics Survey (Hackman and Oldham, 1975) using the following items:

- How much variety is there in your job? To what extent does the job require you to do many things at work, using a variety of your skills and talents.
- The job requires a number of complex or high-level skills.

- The job is quite simple and repetitive.

Thus, skill variety is measured in terms of the current assignment. This could have been rectified in the qualitative survey, however this was not the case in the majority of interviews as skill variety was discussed mainly in terms of the current assignment that the agency worker is performing. Given these measures of skill variety, in hindsight perhaps it would have given us further information if the overall skill variety that an agency worker has throughout their various assignments was examined rather than concentrating on just their current agency assignment. Again this issue points out some of the measuring problems that are inherent in examining atypical working situations, as if a measure is constructed that looked at skill variety over a number of assignments it may be difficult to compare such a measure with permanent workers although it may give a fairer representation of agency work.

9.3.2 Organisational commitment

Again, as with skill variety, hypotheses relating to organisational commitment were split into three sub hypotheses due to the worker groups defined in the study. Consequently, differences between worker groups were explored as follows:

- H7a There is no significant difference between the levels of organisational commitment of agency call centre workers and permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers
- H7b Agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of organisational commitment than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers
- H7c Permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers have significantly lower levels of organisational commitment than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers

Quantitative data were initially investigated using a Kruskal-Wallis test to see if any differences exist between the groups. This test revealed a significant difference (Chi-square=16.87, $p < 0.01$) between all call centre worker groups on organisational commitment, however this only showed that differences exist and so further Mann-Whitney tests were used to explore the subtleties of the data. The first three Mann-Whitney tests were between the agency call centre workers (ACC) and the three groups of permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers (P1+, P2+ and P3+). This revealed no significant differences between the ACC group, the P1+

group ($z=-0.30$), the P2+ group ($z=-0.44$) and the P3+ group ($z=-1.68$). Thus, all Mann-Whitney tests showed no significant differences between agency call centre workers and the permanent workers who work with them and thus supported Hypothesis H7a.

The next Mann-Whitney test carried out showed a significant difference ($z=-3.03$, $p<0.01$) between agency call centre workers (ACC) and permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers (P-) on organisational commitment. This analysis therefore supported Hypothesis H7b that agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of organisational commitment than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers.

The third set of tests examined the differences between permanent workers (P-, P1+, P2+ and P3+) and organisational commitment. This revealed significant differences between the P- group, the P1+ group ($z=-3.10$, $p<0.01$), the P2+ group ($z=-2.94$, $p<0.01$) but not the P3+ group ($z=-1.53$). Consequently, the results for Hypothesis H7c were mixed as one group of permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers (P3+) showed no difference in organisational commitment to the P- control group. Hypothesis H7c was therefore refuted.

The qualitative data gathered from interviews with agency workers, permanent workers and employers also explored differences between workers and organisational commitment. Evidence collected from the agency worker interviews was fairly weak as only one agency worker response indicated their organisational commitment would be the same whatever their employment status. This supported Hypothesis H7a. Yet, this data does provide a weak suggestion refuting Hypothesis H7b as the agency worker claimed that organisational commitment would be equal no matter what their employment status. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that agency workers would be knowledgeable about their influence on permanent workers and as a result it is unlikely that when the agency worker referred to a permanent worker they were regarding both permanent workers who with and without agency call centre workers. Consequently, this statement does not constitute as evidence refuting Hypothesis H7b and as such, this hypothesis is not refuted. Data gained from the qualitative interviews with the permanent workers were also not particularly conclusive. Reading between the lines of these quotes (See Section 7.3.3), it seems that most agency workers, apart from a few, have similar levels of organisational commitment to the permanent workers they worked with supporting Hypothesis H7a. However, no direct evidence or statements regarding this difference was obtained and thus no support either way can be provided on the three hypotheses from the permanent worker interviews.

Data obtained from the employer interviews was varied. Two of the employer representatives interviewed believed that the organisational commitment of agency workers and permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers was comparable supporting Hypothesis H7a. However, four other employer representatives believed that agency workers were perceived to show less organisational commitment than permanent workers. One of these four employer representatives with this view was an employer of permanent workers who did not work with agency call centre workers, so this perspective provides evidence confirming Hypothesis H7b, that agency call centre workers are perceived to have a lower level of organisational commitment than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers. Nevertheless, according to the other three employer representatives, permanent workers who do work with agency call centre workers show a greater level of organisational commitment than agency call centre workers. This evidence refutes Hypothesis H7a that agency call centre workers have the same levels of organisational commitment as the permanent workers who work with agency workers. No comments were made by employers about the differences between permanent workers so therefore no evidence was gathered confirming or refuting Hypothesis H7c.

The support for differences in organisational commitment was varied in this study. Hypothesis H7b, relating to agency call centre workers organisational commitment being less than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers was supported through the quantitative evidence and qualitative evidence from employers. Only one agency call centre worker commented on this hypothesis so the qualitative data was inconclusive. However, overall it did seem that agency call centre workers had a lower level of organisation commitment than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers.

So why might the organisational commitment of agency call centre workers be less than that of permanent workers, once the effect of the employment of agency call centre workers on permanent workers is removed? Agency workers were asked this in the qualitative interviews and their responses varied. Nevertheless, one recurring theme was the lack of commitment the third party organisation had towards the agency workers. For most of the agency workers, this was an inherent aspect of being an agency worker, however they did state that some organisations tend to be more committed to them. How organisations can do this may be difficult to assess. In extreme cases that may involve legal proceedings, such as cases of sexual harassment, employers stated that all workers whether they were agency workers or permanent workers would be treated the same. However, as we saw in the study incidents of sexual harassment in UK agency workers were fairly rare and these incidences recorded all happened when the respondent was on a permanent contract. In subtler circumstances most of the

employer representatives who could comment on this stated they would tend towards the permanent worker's side if a problem ensued between permanent and agency workers. Indeed, some organisations stated that it was much easier to terminate the employment of a problematical agency worker than to resolve difficult situations, even though the agency worker may have a valid claim.

This finding ties in with the reciprocal view of organisational commitment found in the literature. Eisenberger, Fasolo and LaMastro (1990) initially stated that if employees had a positive perception of being valued by the organisation then organisational commitment was likely to be reciprocated by the employee. Benkhoff (1997) argued that a fundamental antecedent of organisational commitment were relationships at work thought to be long term (although this may not be the case for agency workers) and to be based on trust. Bishop and Scott (2000) also demonstrated how satisfaction with supervision and satisfaction with co-workers were related to organisational commitment in a study of 485 production workers. The present study found strong correlations between organisational commitment and worker relationship (See Figure 9.3) supporting this reciprocal view of organisational commitment. Nevertheless, with agency workers it is likely that relationships between workers are formed relatively short term within a few months as suggested by some of the interview responses from the agency workers (See Section 7.2.5). However, with agency workers they will not have longer term benefits from the organisation such as job security, which may also affect organisational commitment (Benkhoff, 1997). Thus, worker relationship is crucial for agency workers in not only determining their organisational commitment as the reciprocal theory would lead us to believe but in also determining job satisfaction. In addition, as stated by the permanent workers (See Section 7.2.6) agency workers who show organisational commitment were generally much more accepted by the permanent workers. This, as stated before (See Section 9.2.2) meant that organisational commitment had a double effect on job satisfaction as a variable on its own, and through its influence on worker relationship.

If the commitment of organisations to agency workers could be improved, agency worker organisational commitment may also increase. Ways in which organisations could show commitment to agency workers include:

- Treating permanent and agency workers equally;

- Providing forums to agency workers where they can state any grievances in a confidential manner not influencing either their assignment or their relationship with the employment agency;
- Providing estimates of time remaining on the agency assignment so agency workers could prepare to move on to other assignments.

Whether employers want to do this or not may be a different matter, especially as employers may not want to start treating agency workers the same as permanent workers as this could antagonise the permanent workers. Nevertheless, in the one organisation that actively used these policies, conflict between agency workers and permanent workers was considered non-existent. This organisation also reported a similar level of organisational commitment between both sets of workers so perhaps there is a lesson to be learnt here for employers who wish to improve the commitment that agency workers have towards their organisation. This suggestion reflects the perceived organisational support theory found in the literature whereby the level of organisational support perceived by an employee contributes towards affective organisational commitment (Eisenberger et al, 1990; O'Driscoll and Randall, 1999) or at the very least mediates the relationship between job related variables and organisational commitment (Moideenkutty, Blau, Kumar and Nalakath, 2001).

The other two Hypotheses H7a and H7c related to the differences in organisational commitment with permanent workers who worked with agency call centre workers. Hypothesis H7a, relating to the organisational commitment of agency call centre workers being the same as permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers was refuted by both quantitative and qualitative evidence. This result is interesting especially given the lower level of organisational commitment in agency call centre workers compared with permanent workers who work without agency call centre workers. Hypothesis H7c that permanent worker's organisational commitment would be lower in permanent workers who worked with agency call centre workers was refuted as in one group of workers (P3+) no difference in organisational commitment was found.

However, although both Hypotheses H7a and H7c were refuted, they are only rejected because one of the permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers groups (P3+) showed a higher level of organisational commitment compared with the other permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers groups (P1+ and P2+). In this regard, if more data on these Hypotheses is gathered in a future study, it may be found that the P3+ group is unusual and

as such, these hypotheses that state that there is a negative influence of agency call centre workers on the organisational commitment of permanent workers may be upheld. Consequently, it is my opinion that these hypotheses are still valid although they have been refuted in the research due to design limitations.

Interestingly, the evidence in this study contradicts previous research findings. Gardner and Jackson (1996) found that UK temporary workers had a significantly higher level of organisational commitment than permanent workers. Abroad, this study is not replicated with equal levels of organisational commitment found between permanent workers, US agency workers (McClurg, 1999) and US temporary workers (Smith, 1998). None of these findings were replicated in the current study with UK-based agency workers as differences were seen between agency workers and both sets of permanent workers, whereby both sets of permanent workers show higher levels of organisational commitment than the agency workers. This is intriguing only from the perspective that I expected to obtain the same results as some of these researchers (McClurg, 1999; Smith, 1998) with agency workers and permanent workers who work with agency workers. This difference was expected between the agency workers and the control group of permanent workers who do not work with agency workers. These are interesting findings that show that previous research may be limited for not taking into account the possible influence of agency workers on permanent workers. As a result, the findings clearly show a greater difference in the level of organisational commitment between permanent workers who do not work with agency workers and the agency workers themselves. Agency workers have a significantly lower level of organisational commitment than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers. Consequently, this supports some of the assertions in the thesis that permanent workers who work in organisations that do not use agency workers feel under no threat, in terms of their job or benefits the job affords them, from agency workers and as such do not resent the organisation they work for, elevating or at the very least maintaining their organisational commitment.

A low level of organisational commitment was found in two of the three groups of permanent workers who with agency workers although Hypothesis H7c is refuted. These findings, however, still have an important implication for organisations. Indeed, the reason why permanent workers in these two cases felt less organisational commitment if agency workers were employed in their organisation is explored in the qualitative interviews. This revealed that some permanent workers felt territorial and as such like to protect their job from the perceived negative effects of agency workers, which may range from a lack of competence to a lack of commitment. Permanent workers were also aware that agency workers were a cheaper form of

employee that could replace them as they were more expensive. Interestingly, the savings gathered from agency workers did not tend to be in terms of wages but in terms of no additional benefits (such as low mortgages, free alcohol or even pension provision) and any severance rights. Permanent workers could therefore see why agency workers may be more attractive to their employers and as a result feel less committed.

Remedies to this problem may include employers not using agency workers or employers separating workers. Employing no agency workers may seem drastic but perhaps this may be the only way to stop permanent workers feeling uncommitted to the organisation. In the sample of permanent call centre workers the numbers of agency workers were not specifically recorded. However, in the employer interviews it appeared that agency workers could represent between 10% to 25% of all staff. Perhaps it may be that if an employer used a number of agency workers the permanent workers have a lack of commitment to the organisation. One or two agency workers completing the same job may be fine with the permanent workers but if an organisation has a policy of using agency workers rather than permanent workers then the permanent workers may react against this lack of commitment towards them by having an equally low level of commitment to the organisation. Indeed, this suggestion may account for the one group of permanent workers (P3+) that shows no degradation in their organisational commitment. The key element here is that employers should ask the question why they are employing agency workers. If the reason is a short-term need, then this should be expressed to the permanent workers. If the reason is because permanent workers are expensive to dispose of and expensive in terms of benefits afforded to them then the employer should be careful this policy does not affect their existing staff.

Separating agency workers from permanent workers in terms of tasks may also be another solution. If permanent workers see that agency workers have a limited role within the organisation and that role does not affect their job then they may feel more committed to the organisation as the organisation is working for both its own and the permanent workers' interests. This follows reciprocity theory in that a caring attitude showed by employers is reflected in employees' level of organisational commitment (Eisenberger et al, 1990; O'Driscoll and Randall, 1999). Again, further research in this area is necessary if the relationship between agency workers and their influence on the organisational commitment of permanent workers is to be better understood.

9.3.3 Job satisfaction

Differences between the job satisfaction of agency call centre workers and permanent workers were stated in the three sub-hypotheses that make up Hypothesis H8, as follows:

- H8a There is no significant difference between levels of job satisfaction in agency call centre workers and permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers
- H8b Agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of job satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers
- H8c Permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of job satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers

The quantitative data collected for these hypotheses was initially investigated for overall differences through a Kruskal-Wallis test, which revealed a significant difference (Chi-square=21.19, $p<0.01$) between all call centre worker groups on job satisfaction. Further Mann-Whitney tests were therefore carried out to ascertain the precise nature of these differences. The first three Mann-Whitney tests were between the agency call centre workers (ACC) and the three groups of permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers (P1+, P2+ and P3+), which showed a significant difference between the ACC group, the P1+ group ($z=-2.02$, $p<0.05$) but no differences between the ACC group and the P2+ group ($z=-0.33$) and the P3+ group ($z=-0.56$). This data refutes Hypothesis H8a as agency call centre workers were seen to have a higher level of job satisfaction compared with one of the groups of permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers (P1+).

The subsequent Mann-Whitney test was carried out between agency call centre workers (ACC) and permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers (P-). This analysis showed a significant difference ($z=-2.87$, $p<0.01$) between the two groups and consequently did not refute Hypothesis H8b that agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of job satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers.

The final set of Mann-Whitney tests examined the differences between permanent workers (P-, P1+, P2+ and P3+) and job satisfaction. These revealed significant differences between the P-group, the P1+ group ($z=-3.83$, $p<0.01$), the P2+ group ($z=-3.21$, $p<0.01$) and the P3+ group ($z=-2.48$, $p<0.05$). Consequently, Hypothesis H8c was supported as significant differences were found between the job satisfaction of the permanent workers.

The qualitative data gathered from both the agency call centre workers and permanent workers was not sufficient to confirm or refute any of the hypotheses relating to differences in the job satisfaction of different workers. Employer evidence was fortunately slightly stronger providing qualitative data on the differences in job satisfaction for Hypothesis H8a. In this regard, five employers claimed that agency workers have the same level of job satisfaction to the permanent workers that they work with supporting Hypothesis H8a. Yet, data gathered for Hypothesis H8b and H8c was not as strong. It was therefore consider prudent not to use the employer qualitative evidence gathered for these hypotheses as although this information did not refute the hypotheses it was based on conjecture rather than knowledge.

Intriguingly, Hypothesis H8a was not supported by the quantitative evidence. This was because one of the groups of permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers (P1+) had a significantly lower level of job satisfaction than the agency call centre workers. The remaining groups however had similar levels of job satisfaction compared with the agency call centre workers. All of these findings are in line with the researcher's argument that agency call centre workers have equivalent or better levels of job satisfaction compared with permanent workers who work with agency workers. Indeed, both Hypothesis H8b and H8c are supported in the study. This clearly shows that when working with agency call centre workers is controlled for, as was done for both of these hypotheses, then permanent workers have a higher level of job satisfaction than agency call centre workers.

This finding clearly contributes to the existing literature. In essence, in Hypothesis H8a the study replicates findings of Allan and Sienko (1997), Gardner and Jackson (1996) that there is little difference between the job satisfaction of agency call centre workers and the permanent workers they work alongside, the only exception to this being that agency call centre workers had a higher level of job satisfaction to one of the three groups of permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers (P1+). Nevertheless, when the influence of agency call centre workers on permanent workers is taken into account, which is not done in Allan and Sienko (1997) and Gardner and Jackson (1996), then a clear difference emerges in which permanent workers are more satisfied than agency call centre workers.

Job satisfaction is therefore likely to be lower in agency call centre workers than in permanent workers, once the effect of the employment of agency workers on permanent workers is taken into account. Low job satisfaction in agency call centre workers is shown in Chapter 2 (Lease, 1998; Spector, 1997) to lead to a number of difficulties including:

- Lack of organisational citizenship behaviour

- Increasing counterproductive behaviour
- Increase in withdrawal behaviour, such as absenteeism
- Decrease in psychological well-being, physical health
- Increase in emotional exhaustion (burnout)
- Decrease in life satisfaction

The first three items are important from an organisation's perspective. Agency call centre workers with a low level of job satisfaction may show a lack of organisational citizenship behaviour and as a result will not aid the organisation. Counterproductive behaviour may also increase ranging from not aiding others in need to theft and industrial sabotage. Withdrawal behaviour may also increase and individuals may withdraw on a temporary or full time basis. Agency call centre workers may perform any three of these behaviours. The only exception to this is perhaps withdrawal behaviour as agency call centre workers do not get paid for when they are absent from the employer's site. Nevertheless, although agency call centre workers may be at an organisation in person they may not be in the organisation mentally, guilty of presenteeism (being present in body but absent in mind). One agency worker for instance stated how when she is not needed for any work she would go to the library, under the pretence she is researching topics for the organisation, but would be reading a Jane Austin novel!

The second three items are of greater concern to the agency call centre worker as an individual as lower levels of psychological well-being, physical health and satisfaction with life related to low job satisfaction are bound not to be pleasant for any worker. This has two connotations. First, agency work may not be a preferable type of employment. Secondly, improving aspects observed in the study such as organisational commitment and worker relationship may enhance agency worker job satisfaction to a level where it is equivalent to permanent workers. The first connotation is quite severe in that agency work may not be a preferable type of employment. Nevertheless, this connotation may be slightly harsh as agency work is often a way of obtaining employment for individuals who have been unemployed or are returning to the job market after years of absence. Casey (1988) argued that temporary work affords unemployed individuals the chance to gain full time permanent work as they learn job-related skills. Perhaps then, agency call centre workers' levels of life satisfaction should be compared with that of unemployed individuals to see whether agency work is preferable to no work at all. Indeed, some of the agency workers interviewed did state that they would be rather doing some sort of work than no work at all. Agency work may therefore not be as preferable as permanent work; however, it may be preferable to no work at all. Taking this into account it may be preferable to improve agency work so that it increases the job satisfaction of agency worker. One of the objectives of

the study has been to try and categorise the effects of certain variables on agency worker job satisfaction. In this regard, organisational commitment, worker relationship and skill variety all seem to be key in contributing towards agency worker job satisfaction. Third party employers and employment agencies alike should try to improve these factors and in doing so hopefully improve agency worker job satisfaction, although no causal relationship is assumed. Indeed, employers of agency workers possibly have a moral obligation to do this given the importance of job satisfaction on the agency workers themselves and indeed on their businesses.

Permanent workers who worked with agency call centre workers were also examined in some detail. Evidence for Hypothesis H8c found that permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers had a lower level of job satisfaction compared to permanent workers who do not work with agency workers. Reasons stated by the permanent workers in the qualitative interviews for this disparity included:

- Having to train agency workers when there is little time
- Having to supervise agency workers when there is little time
- Having trained agency workers and then they leave so someone else has to be trained all over again
- Disparity of wages in that agency workers may be earning more (or less) for the same job
- Feeling as though they are not special and unique within the company (i.e., agency workers can come off the streets and easily take up the work they are doing)
- Feeling as though the employer is willing to accept below standard work from agency workers who don't know what they are doing in the broader organisation
- Finding it difficult to socialise with other workers as the agency workers mean that a lot of the work force are migratory in nature
- Seeing the organisation treat agency workers in a derogatory fashion and wondering whether the organisation would like to treat all workers in this way
- Finding a lack of agency worker commitment to the job or organisation
- Theft by agency workers

The permanent workers therefore gave many reasons why there may be a disparity between permanent workers who work with and permanent workers who don't work with agency call centre workers. However, these reasons can be summarised into the agency worker themselves and their behaviour, the logistics of training and supervising agency workers with job related

tasks and organisational culture. Improving job satisfaction for permanent workers who work with agency workers would involve addressing all three issues.

Selection techniques conducted at employment agencies in pre-vetting agency workers or selection carried out at the third party employer may help improve the standard of agency workers. Indeed, test publishers have specifically created selection tests for agency workers. However these tests tend to assess ability rather than key agency worker aspects such as commitment and integrity. Perhaps there is a need to supply employment agencies tests of this kind to try and improve the selection of agency workers. Failing this, employers should pre-vet agency workers and possibly check up on agency workers' previous assignments to ensure they are honest and committed.

The logistics of training and supervising agency workers may be difficult to improve. Nevertheless, if the need for agency workers can be accurately predicted before an increase in work, then it may be possible to bring in the agency worker and train them up before the work escalates in volume. This planning may be difficult to achieve in practice however if it can be achieved it will take some of the burden from permanent workers. Another alternative to this is to have a specific employee responsible for agency worker training that can help alleviate some of the pressure from permanent workers. This may also be aided if an organisation has a listed set of procedures, such as those demanded by internal Quality Management Systems (e.g., ISO9001), which could be used to instruct the agency workers.

Aspects of organisational culture could also be improved. Permanent workers observing the derogatory fashion in which agency workers are treated may naturally become concerned. The solution to this is simple; employers should not treat agency workers in a derogatory fashion. Most employers interviewed stated that this is sometimes difficult to achieve with negative individuals making their views on agency worker employment known. Nevertheless, this may have an effect on the permanent workers so surely it is in an organisation's best interest to treat agency workers with respect. The other issue with organisational culture is the organisation's acceptance of a lowering of standards in regard to agency work. This was seen by permanent workers to be unacceptable. So if organisations do use agency workers they should ensure that the agency workers' output is of the same quality as the permanent workers'. If this is not the case then either the selection procedure for employing agency workers should be revised or further agency worker training must be provided.

9.3.4 Job security satisfaction

Job security satisfaction, in a similar manner to all of variables in the differential hypotheses, was split into three sub Hypotheses owing to the worker groups in the study as follows:

- H9a Agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of job security satisfaction than permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers
- H9b Agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of job security satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers
- H9c Permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of job security satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers

Quantitative data drawn out of the questionnaire for these Hypotheses were initially scrutinised by a Kruskal-Wallis test, which revealed a significant difference (Chi-square=24.67, $p<0.01$) between all call centre worker groups on job security satisfaction. Further Mann-Whitney tests were employed to investigate differences in the data. The first set of Mann-Whitney tests were between the agency call centre workers (ACC) and the three groups of permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers (P1+, P2+ and P3+). This demonstrated significant differences between the ACC group, the P1+ group ($z=-2.07$, $p<0.05$), the P2+ group ($z=-4.03$, $p<0.01$) and the P3+ group ($z=-3.47$, $p<0.01$). Thus, all Mann-Whitney tests showed significant differences between agency call centre workers and the permanent workers who work with them supporting Hypothesis H9a.

The next Mann-Whitney test carried out showed a significant difference ($z=-3.60$, $p<0.01$) between agency call centre workers (ACC) and permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers (P-) on job security satisfaction supporting Hypothesis H9b that agency call centre workers have a significantly lower level of skill variety than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers.

The third set of tests examined the differences between permanent workers (P-, P1+, P2+ and P3+) and skill variety. This revealed no significant differences between the P- group, the P1+ group ($z=-1.66$), the P2+ group ($z=-0.61$) and the P3+ group ($z=-0.01$) and consequently, refutes Hypothesis H9c as no difference between permanent workers was shown in job security satisfaction.

Qualitative data gathered from agency worker, permanent worker and employer interviews also explored differences in job security satisfaction between workers. Evidence collected from the agency workers indicated that they have generally a low level of job security satisfaction. This evidence supports Hypotheses H9a and H9b although some caution must be advised on this conclusion as no direct comparisons between the workers were made. Data from the permanent worker interviews provided no evidence for either Hypotheses H9a and H9b. Nevertheless, data were gathered on Hypothesis H9c, which overall was refuted by the permanent worker qualitative evidence opposite to that found in the quantitative results. Data obtained from the employer interviews also varied from the quantitative evidence. Employers stated that agency workers were always in demand and as such could not envisage agency workers feeling more insecure than the permanent workers they worked alongside. Indeed, one of the employers interviewed felt that a reasonable level of job security satisfaction in agency workers was sometimes a problem as contrary to permanent workers who often fear for their jobs, agency workers could just walk out at any moment and not return. This evidence refutes Hypothesis H9a. Interestingly, the employer interviewed who refused to employ agency workers stated that it was likely that their permanent workers were more secure in their job compared with agency workers supporting Hypothesis H9b. Yet, when employers were pressed on whether the employment of agency workers resulted in low job satisfaction in permanent staff, only one employer representative thought this might be the case although two other employer representatives rejected this claim. Hypothesis H9c was therefore refuted by the employers' views in addition to the quantitative evidence presented in Chapter 6.

The three hypotheses relating to job security satisfaction received mixed support. The first Hypothesis H9a stated that agency call centre workers have less job security satisfaction than permanent workers who work with them was supported by all of the quantitative results and by the agency worker qualitative results (no evidence was gathered from the permanent workers). Nonetheless, the employers argued against this result stating that agency workers should not feel insecure as they were always required and should therefore have a high level of job security satisfaction. Arguably, agency workers can move from job to job so even though they may not feel secure in any one assignment, they may have security in a number of assignments as work may be continuous. Nevertheless, if this is the case, why did the quantitative results show agency workers to have the lowest level of job security satisfaction out of all the call centre worker groups? Well the answer, maybe as with skill variety in the measure of job security satisfaction, which is measured on a seven point Likert scale ranging from Extremely Dissatisfied to Extremely Satisfied by the following items:

- The amount of job security that I have?
- How secure things look for me in the future in this organisation?

The first item does not specify a particular assignment or job but the second item does, stating that it is measuring how secure things look in the current organisation the person is working in. In this regard, perhaps the inter-assignment job security satisfaction should have been measured in addition to these items. Nevertheless, both job security satisfaction items were highly correlated ($\rho=0.65$) and had a good level of reliability (Cronbach alpha =0.81) so it is likely that if an agency worker was experiencing low job security satisfaction recorded in the first item then this was similarly disclosed in the second item. Thus, the notion of inter-assignment job security satisfaction may not be as relevant as initially claimed.

At any rate, completely contrary to the employers' perspective were the views of the agency workers. These workers stated that one of the biggest disadvantages of agency work was a lack of job security. This evidence supports the quantitative study of Hypotheses H9a and H9b rejecting the employers' claim that agency workers should have a high level of job security satisfaction.

The falseness of the employers' logic that agency workers should feel secure in their jobs, can also be shown by stating that employers will always need employees to carry out their business, whether they be agency workers or permanent workers, so no worker needs ever feel insecure. Nevertheless, studies (Burchell, Day, Hudson, Ladipo, Mankelow, Nolan, Reed, Wichert and Wilson, 1999) have shown that job insecurity does exist and is prevalent in the UK today. Moreover, studies on UK-based temporary workers (Tremlett and Collins, 1999) and US agency workers (Allan and Sienko, 1997; Feldman et al, 1994) showed agency workers were more liable to feel insecure than other workers as discovered in the quantitative data.

In conclusion, agency workers are likely to have lower levels of job security satisfaction compared to permanent workers. Indeed, Hypothesis H9b that agency call centre workers would have less job security satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers, was given full support by both the quantitative and qualitative results from agency workers and from the one employer interviewed who could comment on permanent workers who did not work with agency workers. It therefore appears likely that agency workers do have a low level of job security satisfaction but why is this?

Agency workers are by their very nature in a temporary position. This transient nature of their work may be the root cause of their low level of job security satisfaction. In addition, agency

workers are not protected by any employment rights (with the exception if discriminatory and harassment rights reaffirmed in the Employment Relations Act 1999) so they do not have the right to redundancy or even the right to appeal if they have been unfairly dismissed. Indeed one agency worker commented on how she felt totally abused by her employer of five years when they gave her just a few days notice before terminating her contract of employment. Improving the job security of agency workers may be difficult to achieve. Nonetheless, one way may be for UK law to change giving agency workers some sort of employment rights perhaps even equal to the employment rights given to permanent workers.

These findings in terms of the differences in job security satisfaction between agency call centre workers and permanent workers have been found in other studies examining UK based temporary workers (Tremlett and Collins, 1999) and US based temporary and agency workers (Allan and Sienko, 1997; Feldman et al, 1994; Rasell and Appelbaum, 1997; Wiley, 1995). These studies signify that job insecurity is a major concern of temporary or agency workers. The present study also found a similar result with UK based agency workers. Thus, it can be concluded that the concerns of other temporary workers with a lack of job security are shared with agency call centre workers.

The last hypothesis (Hypothesis H9c) examined job security satisfaction between permanent workers who worked with and who didn't work with agency workers. This hypothesis received support from the quantitative evidence. However, the qualitative evidence gathered from the permanent workers and the employers refuted this hypothesis. In the qualitative evidence, three out of five permanent workers who commented on this subject stated that the employment of agency workers did not affect them and so they would not feel any greater job insecurity. Two of the three employers, who commented on this subject, also stated that agency workers were unlikely to be a threat to permanent workers and therefore job security should be equal among all permanent workers whether they work or do not work with agency workers.

Nevertheless, whether the permanent workers and the employers would know the difference between permanent workers who work with agency workers and permanent workers who do not work with agency workers is a different matter. One could argue that neither worker nor employer may be aware of the influence that agency workers have upon them. Consequently, the quantitative data may be more reliable in showing a difference between the two sets of permanent workers whereby permanent workers who work with agency workers have the lowest level of job security satisfaction. This low level of job security satisfaction may even influence the permanent workers' overall job satisfaction giving the finding as above where two of the

three groups of permanent workers who work with agency workers have a lower job satisfaction level than permanent workers that do not work with agency workers. Whether permanent workers are influenced by agency workers in terms of their job security satisfaction is a matter for further investigation given the contradictory evidence in this research. Nevertheless, if the job security of permanent workers is compromised by the employment of agency workers then this makes for a worrying concern for employers as the feeling of job insecurity may contribute towards poor psychological well-being in their workforce (Burchell et al, 1999; Cooper, 1999; Ferrie, Shipley, Marmot, Stansfeld, and Smith, 1998).

9.4 LIMITATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

In the research design (Chapter 4), the limitations to this research were detailed. This included a debate on both practical and philosophical matters. Before concluding this chapter, it is useful to discuss further limitations that have arisen in the study due to the practical limitations of research. This debate is not meant to overshadow the main conclusions; indeed, it is designed to counsel the reader about the applicability of the study. It also provides an opportunity to detail the lessons learned from the research providing practical knowledge for further potential research.

9.4.1 Sample size

The sample obtained in the quantitative survey was less than hoped for in the research design. This is primarily due to the three organisations (the employment agency and the two credit card organisations) initially contacted for both samples providing fewer participants than expected. Problems with a low sample size primarily revolve around the increase risk of type II errors in which data is found not to be significant when in fact it is. This is due to the absolute size of the sample and its relation with the confidence interval that is normal at 95% in psychology-based doctorates. The sample size could have been increased if the research:

- widened its definitions to include non-agency workers in a temporary worker sample as opposed to an agency worker sample.
- had contacted further organisations obtaining additional participants.

Yet these actions seemed inappropriate due to the specific nature of the research, investigating agency workers rather than the broader category of temporary workers, and the time element in which to collect the data. Only agency workers were studied in this research for the relational hypotheses, which restricted the number of temporary workers that could be gathered from the

survey. However, this is important as the research has presented a case for agency workers being a specific form of temporary worker unique in their own right. Therefore, the option of extending the sample to include non-agency temporary workers was wholeheartedly rejected. Time is the other key factor that restricted the obtaining of further participants. Time to carry out the survey was limited due to the amount of funds available and limited period in which to complete the thesis. In addition, the survey was carried out in the space of a few months to give a snapshot of workers at that time. Since the time of the survey, the UK economy has changed; thus, results obtained from a further sample of agency workers are likely to influence the study as these workers would be obtained in a different time period.

In addition, other published research especially in the UK such as McDonald and Makin (2000) both eminent researchers from UMIST, has had similar difficulties in obtaining participants as shown in Table 9.2. Indeed, most other studies counteract low sample sizes by using all types of temporary workers and in some cases part-time permanent employees as well. Thus, the sample size can be defended in comparison with other researchers work in this difficult area who have obtained similar or less participants in their sample (See Table 9.2).

Table 9.2: Sample sizes in similar studies

Study	Type of temporary worker studied	Contingent / temporary / agency worker (n)	Permanent worker	Total sample
Biggs (2002)	UK Agency	96	126	222 (but arguably 253 as 31 ACC's used twice)
Gardner and Jackson (1996)	UK Temporary	74	36	110
McDonald & Makin (2000)	UK Temporary	43	102	145
Feldman et al (1995)	US Agency	186	0	186
Allan and Sienko (1997)	US Contingent workers (temporary and part-time)	48	149	197
Ellingson et al (1998)	US Agency	174	0	174

9.4.2 Limitations of geographical region

The hypotheses are measured with a sample of agency workers and call centre workers taken from the Northampton and Croydon regions. Initially, both these regions were noted as areas that employed many agency workers as opposed to areas such as North-West England or

Scotland that employed relatively few agency workers (See Chapter 3 for a fuller discussion on this matter from the analysis conducted on the Labour Force Survey).

Some variations between these two regions were noted in the results (See Chapter 5 and 6). More workers were surveyed in the Midlands than in the South East so the results given in the previous chapters and discussed in this chapter may be slightly biased towards this specific geographical areas. However, wider issues persist in the selection of these two geographical areas in that both are noted to have low levels of unemployment. This issue may have some bearing on both the agency worker and call centre worker samples. In that, if workers had been studied in an area of high unemployment, such as Wales, the thesis may have produced different results. Yet, it is difficult to ascertain this influence without conducting further research in other geographical areas with different economic circumstances. Therefore, it may be the case that the research gathered in this study may only apply to agency workers and call centre workers from regions that have similar economic circumstances to the ones studied.

9.4.3 Limitations of cross-sectional research

This research has been cross-sectional in nature and as such has examined participants in a finite period of time. It is recognised that while some aspects of the economy are still very similar to the conditions prevailing in the Winter/Spring quarter period of 2000. The research cannot be wholly sure whether time has influenced the results in anyway. This issue could have been counteracted with a longitudinal or panel design, however, it was decided that this approach was not feasible and not particularly necessary as the views of agency workers and permanent call centre workers were recorded at disparate times as a few months lapsed between the quantitative and the qualitative survey.

9.4.4 Limitations of generalising to agency workers in clerical occupations

The agency workers measured in the study were all employed in jobs in the clerical occupational category. In this manner, the discussion of agency workers may be limited to this particular occupational classification and as such may preclude agency workers employed in different occupational classifications such as skilled or professional roles.

9.4.5 Limitations of measurement

In the research design, measures were sought that did not assume a permanent tenure so that they could be used in studying agency workers. Yet, although these measures were perfectly acceptable for the study, the question arises whether the thesis could have been improved by the inclusion of additional measures that were more agency worker specific. This question came up

in the discussion with skill variety and job security satisfaction. Skill variety and job security satisfaction were measured through the reputable Job Diagnostics Survey (JDS) produced by Hackman and Oldham (1975). Yet, an agency worker can experience numerous different jobs and positions in any working week. Thus, although a single job may not have a great deal of skill variety or job security satisfaction as measured by the JDS because agency workers are experiencing a number of jobs they receive their skill variety or job security satisfaction in this manner. Agency workers may therefore be different to other workers as they frequently go from job to job and without a doubt, measurement in an agency worker population has to be customised towards their way of working rather than traditional ways of working on a permanent basis. Thus in measuring some of the variables in the study, a further metric may have advantaged the study, in that skill variety, job satisfaction or job security satisfaction over a number of assignments could have been assessed.

9.4.6 Ratio of agency to permanent workers

The ratio of agency workers to permanent workers as a statistic was not measured. Yet, this is a factor that may influence the relationship between permanent workers and agency workers due to the sheer numbers of agency workers that may threaten the job security of permanent workers. Thus, some measure of this ratio would have improved the research questionnaire when surveying the agency workers. Nevertheless, it is possible to estimate post-hoc the maximum ratio of agency workers to permanent workers as was done through the employer's survey. Two organisations estimated their highest ratio of agency workers to permanent workers was 1:5 although the telecommunications company sometimes reached 1:4 although could not exceed this limit as directed by the Union governing their workers (See Table 9.1). However, these ratios are estimated maximums with typically fewer agency workers being employed. Notwithstanding, some of the disparities in the research findings may have been explained by exploring this ratio (or even the ratio perceived by permanent workers) which was unfortunately not done at the time of the survey.

Table 9.3: Ratio of agency call centre workers to permanent call centre workers

Type of organisation	Type of respondents	Ratio between agency workers and permanent workers (Maximum ratio)
Credit card company 1	P-	N/A
Coffee Supplier	P-	N/A
Credit card company 2	P+ and ACC	1:5
Government Help-line Department	P+	1:5
Telecommunications company	P+ and ACC	1:4
Employment agency	ACC	n/k
Engineering consultancy	ACC	n/k
Key: P+ Permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers P- Permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers ACC Agency call centre workers		

9.5 LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE RESEARCH

9.5.1 Lessons Learned

One of the most poignant lessons concerns the contribution that the qualitative evidence gave to the thesis. The researcher, brought up on the side of quantitative research in the Universities of Nottingham and Ulster, was amazed to see the insight qualitative data gave to the research. The qualitative analysis software ATLAS-ti gave qualitative data a rigorousness and reliability approaching that of quantitative data.

Another lesson was the interesting finding that two research methodologies can have seemingly different results but still co-exist in reality. This refers primarily to the differences between qualitative and quantitative results found predominantly on US-based agency workers. Qualitative data, such as that conducted by Rogers and Henson (2001) maintained that agency workers were almost abused employees who were very dissatisfied in their jobs. Quantitative research on the other hand, found that there was little difference between the job satisfaction of agency workers and permanent workers (Allan and Sienko, 1997; Gardner and Jackson, 1996). The study attempted to, and I believe succeeded in, marrying up these two perspectives as agency workers were found to be dissatisfied compared with permanent workers who do not work with agency workers but equal in satisfaction to permanent workers who work with agency workers. This supports both the qualitative and quantitative perspectives and shows how quantitative research needs to be expanded to explain a particular phenomenon.

Lessons were also learned in carrying out the main questionnaire survey. The employment agency did suggest that a greater number of agency workers should be contacted due to possible

non-responses, however, due to the success of the pilot study in obtaining workers this opportunity was not taken, a decision I deeply regret as I believe an increased number of agency workers would have improved the overall integrity of the research. Indeed, on the other hand, I was taken aback by the hard work and effort of some of the questionnaire distributors in the organisations contacted. They noted my concerns of a low response rate and acted accordingly improving the response rate of the survey.

Project management was essential for the project. I adopted a project management system (PRINCE 2) which greatly aided the research process especially when conducting the questionnaire survey and the follow-up interviews with workers and employers. Indeed, using this system it only took about six months for the main data gathering process (questionnaire survey and qualitative interviews with workers and employers). This benefited the study by reducing time effects that the economy and other wider issues, such as the introduction of new agency worker regulations, had on the respondents. These effects had been pointed out in the preliminary research interviews conducted with employment agencies and as a result I was keen to reduce these as much as possible by getting the whole data gathering process completed within a limited timeframe. Indeed, the research was conducted while I was employed full time on other research and consultancy work and as such the project management system enabling the data gathering to be completed so quickly, was key to the success of the project.

A personal lesson I learned regarded my confidence in the project. There were many times when I wondered whether anyone apart from my supervisors and I would be aware of the results of my study, and if this was the case I would have surely given up by now. However, I kept my confidence high and have used the results in my professional life to benefit workers in two decommissioned nuclear power plants. The workers in these plants were highly divided between permanent and contractual staff. I used some of my suggestions in my thesis to reduce interpersonal conflict and improve the working relations between staff. This had important consequences of not only resolving potential areas of conflict, but of increasing safety (as the two parties were more likely to discuss matters of potential hazard) and improving the efficiency of the decommissioning process (Biggs, Crumbie and Jones, 2001; Biggs and Crumbie, 2001).

9.5.2 Further research

As with most exploratory research, this study has raised more questions than explored. Worker relationship was a key variable contributing to agency worker job satisfaction given the qualitative results. However, in my opinion, this concept was not measured particularly well in the quantitative survey. The first recommendation then is for further research that worker

relationship is better refined into a more reliable measure and then tested against the three groups identified in the research design.

On the subject of measurement, it is suggested that further research in the agency worker arena, while capitalising on measures that already exist, should produce and define agency worker specific measures. An example of this includes the inter-job skill variety metric previously stated. Such a measure would undoubtedly reveal much information on how agency workers develop skills and gain job satisfaction through performing a number of job roles. However, other measures could include splitting agency worker organisational commitment between the employment agency and the third party organisation, as well as improving the measure of worker relationship as mentioned above.

The direct effect of agency workers on permanent workers could also be explored more thoroughly especially in terms of assessing the ratio of agency workers to permanent workers. A further research question could explore whether there is an optimum level of agency workers, after which permanent workers start to feel threatened in their job.

On this point, worker relationship was seen as a key contributor to agency worker job satisfaction. Perhaps, this was also a key contributor to permanent worker job satisfaction. The relationship between permanent workers and agency workers, and permanent workers and their employer could be investigated further. This investigation may uncover why permanent workers who work with agency workers are possibly less satisfied in their jobs compared with permanent workers who do not work with agency workers.

Another important question concerns why agency workers reported the lowest level of job security satisfaction if employers always want them. Research could specifically examine job insecurity in agency workers and investigate the antecedents and consequences of job insecurity in agency workers. Research between agency workers and the unemployed may also be useful and could build upon some of the early economic based studies (e.g., Casey, 1988) but specifically the influence of job insecurity on agency workers.

CHAPTER 10

10. CONCLUSIONS

The results gathered from the study have now been discussed in context. This chapter seeks to conclude the major points of the thesis and reiterate what was found by testing the relational and differential hypotheses investigating the central themes of the thesis, being the investigation of antecedents to agency worker job satisfaction, investigating the differences between workers in job satisfaction and related variables and assessing the possible impact of agency workers on permanent workers.

10.1 ANTECEDENTS TO AGENCY WORKER JOB SATISFACTION

Five antecedents, being a mixture of environmental and individual variables in the relational hypotheses, were suggested by the theoretical model and literature review to be important to agency worker job satisfaction. Interestingly, not all of these variables did have a significant association with agency worker job satisfaction.

10.1.1 Skill variety

Skill variety was positively associated with to job satisfaction but was not found to be a significant variable in the multiple regression model. This finding gives partial support to previous research carried out by both Rogers (1995) and Smith (1998) who suggested that skill variety was key in the job satisfaction of agency workers. Both of these studies were qualitative in nature and as such did not correlate job satisfaction with skill variety. This study expands this previous research by using quantitative evidence to confirm previous qualitative findings.

10.1.2 Organisational commitment

A major conclusion in the research was the strong association found between organisational commitment and agency worker job satisfaction. This was a vital finding in the study as it suggested that employers of agency workers should seek ways of improving their organisational commitment, possibly by reciprocating trust within the organisation, and positive benefits on the

job satisfaction of the agency worker in addition to positive outcomes on the relationship between permanent workers and agency workers will occur.

Three reasons were thought to contribute towards this finding of organisational commitment being important to agency worker job satisfaction, which included:

- Agency workers with feelings of attachment to the organisation were likely to be more satisfied as they share that organisations goals.
- Organisational commitment had a significant effect on worker relationship which was also associated with to job satisfaction.
- There were fewer disadvantages of higher commitment to the organisation for agency workers unlike permanent workers.

10.1.3 Worker relationship

Worker relationship, being the relationship between permanent workers and agency workers, was found to be notably associated with agency worker job satisfaction. This research finding supports previous qualitative studies on US-based agency workers (Henson, 1996; Rogers, 1995). Improving worker relationship is a must if the job satisfaction of agency workers is to be improved. Employers could change their policies treating workers more equally. However, what was certain from the qualitative data was that the views of permanent workers were more prevalent in this relationship than the views of the employers. All employer representatives surveyed claimed to foster a symbiotic relationship between the two sets of workers. However, in some cases this failed miserably, as stated by employer representatives, due to the permanent workers resisting the introduction of agency workers. Such permanent workers were often described as backward in terms of not realising the importance and benefits of agency workers. However, these permanent workers existed and did disrupt worker relationship.

10.1.4 Voluntary and Involuntary work status

Voluntary work status was found to have a significant correlation with agency worker job satisfaction, although involuntary work status had practically no correlation with job satisfaction. However, when both of these variables were tested in the hierarchical multiple linear regression they had seemingly little influence on agency worker job satisfaction. This was an important finding which disputes recent investigations on US based agency workers where both voluntary and involuntary work status were found to be significantly associated with job satisfaction

(Ellingson et al, 1998; Feldman et al, 1995). Differences between these studies were noted, whereby influential environmental and individual antecedents were left out of the work of Ellingson et al (1998) and Feldman et al (1995). Indeed, both of these studies tended to concentrate on individual based antecedents rather than environmental based antecedents, which seems to be the trend in current job satisfaction research (Spector, 1997), and as such their studies may of placed a greater significance, than is perhaps duly warranted, on the personal circumstances of agency workers.

10.2 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AGENCY CALL CENTRE WORKERS AND PERMANENT WORKERS IN JOB SATISFACTION AND RELATED VARIABLES

Differences between agency call centre workers and permanent workers were measured in the differential hypotheses that examined variation between these groups in skill variety, organisational commitment, job satisfaction and job security satisfaction.

10.2.1 Skill variety

A key finding in the study was that agency call centre workers had a lower level of skill variety compared with permanent workers. This difference in skill variety allied with the correlation of skill variety with agency workers' job satisfaction was important as agency call centre workers had a lower level of skill variety compared with permanent workers. This finding has serious implications for the job satisfaction of agency workers. If agency worker skill variety cannot be increased then their job satisfaction may remain at a low level. Employers had a vested interest to keep agency workers' skill variety as low as possible due to the time taken to teach agency workers a multitude of skills, which makes for worrying reading as it is unlikely that employers will seek to increase the job satisfaction of agency workers by increasing skill variety.

Nevertheless, before the research concludes with a gloomy outlook, a limitation was noted on the actual measure of skill variety. Skill variety was tested in both the relational and differential hypotheses and in this regard, it was essential that skill variety could be measured in both agency and permanent workers. Yet, adopting this perspective may have overlooked the diversity of skills gained through different temporary assignments, which was not taken into account. It may be that an agency worker has a low level of skill variety in any one job, but they may be able to increase their skill variety by being employed on numerous assignments. Future research in this area is recommended to explore the intricate relationship between skill variety in one assignment and in multiple assignments and its impact on job satisfaction.

10.2.2 Organisational commitment

Agency call centre workers had a lower level of organisation commitment than permanent workers. This evidence contradicts previous research findings conducted in the US (McClurg, 1999; Smith, 1998) which found little difference in the organisational commitment between workers. It also contradicts UK-based research, which found that temporary workers had a significantly higher level of organisational commitment than permanent workers (Gardner and Jackson, 1996). None of these previous findings were replicated here with UK-based agency workers. Differences were seen between agency workers and both sets of permanent workers, whereby permanent workers showed higher levels of organisational commitment. This was not expected in the study between agency call centre workers and the permanent workers they work with as the study expected to obtain similar results as observed in US-based contingency workers (McClurg, 1999; Smith, 1998). Nevertheless, the difference between agency call centre workers and the control group of permanent workers who did not work with agency call centre workers was expected as previous research had not taken into account the influence of working with agency workers. Thus, it can be concluded that agency call centre workers have less organisational commitment than permanent workers.

10.2.3 Job satisfaction

Agency call centre workers had a lower level of job satisfaction compared with permanent call centre workers once the influence of their employment had been removed. This is a key finding in the study, which suggests that agency work may not be a preferable type of employment in comparison with permanent work if a worker seeks job satisfaction. This makes for worrying reading given the utilitarian and humanitarian benefits of job satisfaction detailed in Chapter 2. However, this is only a concern if agency call centre workers are compared with permanent workers. Indeed, some authors suggest (Casey, 1988; Tremlett and Collins, 1999) that temporary work may be a way out of unemployment especially for disadvantaged members of the community. In this regard, perhaps it is unfair to compare agency workers with permanent workers and perhaps a better comparison would be between agency workers and the unemployed. Some of the agency workers interviewed did state that although agency work was not the most preferable form of employment, it was better than nothing. Yet this study has shown that agency call centre workers are less satisfied than permanent workers who do not work with agency workers. Certain steps can be undertaken to improve aspects of agency work, which may enhance agency worker job satisfaction.

10.2.4 Job security

Agency call centre workers had the lowest level of job security satisfaction between all call centre worker groups. Employers disputed this claim stating that agency workers should not feel insecure as they are always required, yet, this evidence can be discounted as the employers' view was based on their conjecture of what it was like to be an agency worker. Indeed, both the quantitative and qualitative evidence gathered from the agency workers suggested that their level of job security satisfaction was lower than permanent workers replicating with an agency call centre worker sample other UK studies based on temporary workers (Tremlett and Collins, 1999). Two reasons for this were apparent:

- Agency workers are in a temporary position that is transient in nature.
- Agency workers are not protected by any employment rights so they do not have the right to redundancy or even the right to appeal if they have been unfairly dismissed.

Improving the job security of agency workers may be difficult to achieve. However, if UK or European law could change giving these agency workers some sort of employment rights perhaps even equal to the employment rights given to permanent workers, then their job security satisfaction could be improved.

10.3 THE POSSIBLE IMPACT OF AGENCY CALL CENTRE WORKERS ON PERMANENT WORKERS

10.3.1 Skill variety

The skill variety of permanent workers was not affected, as hypothesised, by the employment of agency call centre workers. This was a minor conclusion but one that supported the notion that the permanent workers in the study did perform a similar job and had a similar level of skill variety.

10.3.2 Organisational commitment

An important finding in the research was that two out of three permanent workers who worked with agency call centre workers groups had a lower level of organisational commitment than permanent workers who did not work with agency call centre workers. This partially supports the notion (partially because one group of permanent workers who did work with agency call centre workers did not show this difference) that agency call centre workers may have a negative influence on the organisational commitment of permanent workers.

10.3.3 Job satisfaction

Permanent workers who worked with agency call centre workers had a lower level of job satisfaction compared with permanent workers who did not work with agency call centre workers. This suggests that the employment of agency call centre workers in an organisation may have a negative influence on the job satisfaction of permanent workers. This serves as a caution to employers not to be complacent when deciding to use agency workers in their human resource strategies due to the possible affects that this policy may have on their permanent workers.

Improving job satisfaction for permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers would involve either not employing so many agency workers or separating agency workers into succinct tasks or roles that do not undermine the permanent workers. Selection techniques could also be used to pre-vet agency workers to ensure they are honest and committed to the work they carry out. Logistics may also be improved through planning where increases in work may occur so that permanent workers can train agency workers before they get short of time. Organisational culture could also be improved with employers not treating agency workers in a derogatory fashion, alarming permanent workers.

10.3.4 Job security

No difference in job security satisfaction was noted between the permanent call centre workers. This was a surprise as it was expected that permanent workers who work with agency call centre workers would have a lower level of job security satisfaction than permanent workers who do not work with agency call centre workers. This finding suggests that the influence of agency call centre workers on permanent workers may be more complicated than previously thought. Originally, the study assumed that the reasons for the lowered job satisfaction in permanent workers who worked with agency call centre workers was the agency call centre workers themselves influencing the job security of permanent workers. Yet, through the evidence gathered in this thesis, it appears that the agency call centre workers did not threaten the job security of permanent workers. In this regard, it may be the employers' use of agency call centre workers rather than the agency call centre workers themselves that influences the job satisfaction of these workers.

10.4 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE AND FINAL REMARKS

10.4.1 Contribution to knowledge

This research has been exploratory in nature and as such has taken a broad approach towards understanding the field. These findings would have not been possible without the innovative research design examining agency workers, permanent workers working with agency workers and permanent workers not working with agency workers. This approach singled out the influence of working with agency workers on permanent workers. Given this, the main findings in the study were as follows:

- Organisational commitment was positively associated with to agency worker job satisfaction.
- Worker relationship was positively associated with to agency worker job satisfaction.
- Organisational commitment had a possible doubling effect on job satisfaction as a distinct variable and through its possible influence on worker relationship.
- Skill variety, while being correlated to job satisfaction, was not shown as a strong predictor of agency worker job satisfaction.
- Voluntary work status, while being correlated to job satisfaction, was not shown as a strong predictor of agency worker job satisfaction.
- Involuntary work status and job satisfaction in agency workers appear to be unrelated.
- The employment of agency call centre workers in an organisation had a negative effect on the job satisfaction of permanent workers.
- The employment of agency call centre workers in an organisation had a lower level of skill variety and job security satisfaction than all permanent workers.
- Agency call centre workers had the lowest level of skill variety, organisational commitment, job satisfaction and job security satisfaction when compared with permanent workers who did not work with agency call centre workers.

Several other research findings were also stated in the discussion with a strategy of how the situation could be improved for the relevant parties, be it worker or employer.

10.4.2 Final remarks

This thesis has taken an exploratory look into the world of agency workers and how they may affect permanent members of staff. It has taken a wide-ranging approach to distinguish between many of the variables said to be antecedents to agency worker job satisfaction and to determine the influence that agency call centre workers may have on permanent workers. Nevertheless, the approach has been successful in making a number of findings contributing towards knowledge in the area. Further research is still needed in this area as the study has possibly raised more questions than it began with. Worker relationship seemed to be a key variable relating to agency worker job satisfaction and improvements could be made on consolidating this into a unified measure improving the results of the study. The effect of agency workers on permanent workers could be explored more thoroughly especially given that the number of agency workers on an employer's site may have an effect on permanent workers. Investigations into agency worker job security and skill variety in going from assignment to assignment could also be examined deciding whether this alternative way of work is superior to more traditional forms of permanent employment.

Overall, this research has contributed to existing knowledge by sampling UK based agency workers investigating what antecedents led to their job satisfaction, what differences exist between agency call centre workers and permanent workers, and what are the possible influences that agency call centre workers have on permanent workers. Through the use of an innovative methodology splitting permanent workers into those who worked with and those who didn't work with agency call centre workers, the research has been able to confirm, critique and expand upon previous studies built upon temporary workers and US based agency workers (whom are very different to UK based agency workers as stated in Section 3.2.1) with UK based agency workers.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS USED IN THE RESEARCH

Definitions of work

Warr (1991) defined work as an activity directed to value goals, which tend to be financial gain in Western culture. The notion of work could be applied to all types of situations including unpaid work such as housework. However, this research was not concerned with unpaid work. Work was therefore defined for the purposes of this research as an activity that someone performs to receive a financial reward for a particular service. Warr (1991) further suggested that work might be carried out for intrinsic goals such as self-esteem or social belonging. In performing paid work, an individual not only received financial reward to enable them to survive in society but also rewards such as social belonging. In summarising these concepts work may be defined as:

An activity, which a person engages, primarily to earn an income or to receive other benefits such as social contact, in exchange for labour or services provided.

Prieto and Martin (1990) believed that work was an activity that involved a number of atypical working patterns such as part time and temporary employment. The definition of work as stated above does take into account atypical work patterns as no criteria of permanent employment was made in this definition.

Definition of a worker

An individual conducting the activity of work can be defined as a worker. Recent legislation, such as the Employment Rights Act 1996, used this definition of a worker to define not only traditional permanent employees but also individuals who have a non-typical working arrangement. Section 230 (3) of the Employment Rights Act 1996 stated:

In this Act "worker" (except in the phrases "shop worker" and "betting worker") means an individual who has entered into or works under (or, where the employment has ceased, worked under) -

(a) a contract of employment, or

(b) any other contract, whether express or implied and (if it was express) whether oral or in writing, whereby the individual undertakes to do or perform personally any work or services for another party to the contract whose status was not by virtue of the contract that of a client or customer of any profession or business undertaking carried on by the individual

This legal definition therefore included both typical and atypical forms of employment as there is no essence of permanency given in the definition. Nevertheless, this definition of a worker in the UK is slightly long winded for use within this research. The definition of a worker is therefore simplified as:

An individual who earns monetary reward from work carried out for a third party employing organisation

This definition of a worker does not presume any permanent relationship with an employer and thus includes alternative forms of employment important in this study.

Definitions of temporary worker used in other research

This research project concentrated on just one type of temporary worker, the agency worker. However, it is important to realise that agency workers belong to a wider category of temporary workers. In addition much of the research carried out in this area of study has examined temporary workers only rather than separating out the different categories of temporary worker and treating them as separate groups (McGregor and Sproull, 1992). It is therefore important to investigate the different sets of workers that may belong to the definition of a temporary worker. Casey (1988) stated that a variety of temporary workers should be recognised and included the following:

- Consultants or freelancers: Self employed individuals who work in different organisations for a short duration.
- Labour-only subcontractors: Semi-skilled or skilled labour in the building industry.
- Casual workers: workers who perform tasks of short duration.
- Seasonal workers: workers employed to meet seasonal demands.
- Fixed term contract workers: workers employed for a predetermined period.
- Workers on a training contract: apprentices that are employed during training.
- Temporary workers on indefinite contracts: employees for temporary manpower for an indefinite period of time.
- Agency workers: workers that work through an employment agency on a temporary basis for a third party.
- Workers with a contract dis-chargeable by performance: who are employed for a duration of a task.
- Employees of work contractors: employees hired out by their employer to other organisations.
- Participants in special programmes for the unemployed: employees who work on government funded schemes.

Other workers could also be added to this list such as zero hour contractors, who are temporary workers that are not guaranteed any hours of work during a working week and may thus be given zero hours of working time so they do not receive an income (Tremlett and Collins, 1999). This clearly shows the diversity of temporary workers that exist in the UK, which any definition of temporary worker must include.

Casey (1988) generates his list of types of temporary worker from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS surveys a proportion of the population every quarter examining personal

characteristics, economic activity and employment (Atkinson, Rick, Morris and Williams, 1996; Casey, 1988). Consequently, the LFS is an important survey examining the UK labour force contributing towards many studies of temporary worker research (Atkinson et al, 1996; Casey, 1988; Tremlett and Collins, 1999). The LFS definition of temporary workers is:

employees who assess themselves to have either a seasonal, temporary or casual job or a job done under contract or a fixed period. (Labour Force Survey, 1996).

The LFS definition therefore classifies workers performing four types of work being seasonal work, temporary work (including agency temping and other types of temporary workers), casual work or fixed term contract work. Tremlett and Collins (1999) used a similar definition to the LFS of temporary workers but they expanded the definition to include home working and working under a zero hours contract, as follows

People aged 16 years and over working in a paid job that is, in some way, not permanent. By not permanent we mean working in a job that was either; seasonal, casual or as and when required, under a contract for a fixed period of time or for a fixed task, agency temping, home working or under a zero hours contract. (Tremlett and Collins (1999) p.2)

This definition identifies the concept of temporary work, through the worker's definition, as the work is "in some way" not permanent. The LFS also asks this question,

Leaving aside your own personal intentions and circumstances, is your job...

- 1 a permanent job
- 2 or is there some way that it is NOT permanent?

(Question 74: taken from LFS Questionnaire p.20, 1998)

The idea of a job being permanent or not permanent is therefore crucial to both the LFS (1998) and Tremlett and Collins (1999) definitions.

Definitions of permanent work and temporary work

Permanent may be defined as lasting or intending to last indefinitely. Something that is permanent therefore lasts for an unlimited, indefinite period of time and combining this concept of permanent with the previous definition of work this thesis defines permanent work as,

An activity which a person engages for an indefinite lasting period of time, primarily to earn an income or to receive other benefits such as social contact, in exchange for labour or services provided.

The idea of temporary may be defined as something that is meant to last only for a limited period of time. In combining the previous definition of work with the concept of temporary, temporary work can be defined as,

An activity which a person engages for a limited amount of time, primarily to earn an income or to receive other benefits such as social contact, in exchange for labour or services provided.

The difference between temporary work and permanent work is therefore the period of time that the work lasts. Permanent work is lasting employment whereas temporary work only lasts for a definite, specific or non-specific, period of time.

Definitions of permanent worker and temporary worker

A worker is previously defined as a person who carries out the activity of work for a third party employing organisation. In combining the definition of a worker with the concept of temporary, a temporary worker can be defined as,

An individual who earns monetary reward from work carried out for a third party employing organisation whereby that work only lasts for a limited period of time.

A permanent worker may also be defined as,

An individual who earns monetary reward from work carried out for a third party employing organisation whereby that paid work lasts for an indefinite unlimited period of time.

These definitions have their predicaments. Casey (1988) poses the question that if a lecturer has a ten-year contract is the lecturer a temporary worker or permanent worker. One may argue that because the duration of the contract is of a specific amount of time, the lecturer is a temporary worker. Yet, if the ten-year contract were continually renewed then the lecturer's employment would be permanent as it lasts for an indefinite period. The employment of the lecturer can thus be both permanent and temporary meaning that an all-encompassing definition of temporary work and permanent work is difficult to achieve (Casey, 1988). Yet, in using the research's definition, the lecturer would be classed as a temporary worker because, although the lecturer's employment contract is likely to be renewed, there is no definite contract or commitment from the employer that the contract will be renewed so the lecturer is employed on a fixed term contract of a limited period of time and is thus a temporary worker.

Definition of an employment agency

The Employment Agencies Act 1973 (amended recently by The Employment Relations Act 1999) governs employment agencies. This legislation separates the term employment agency into two categories, an employment business and an employment agency. An employment business is defined by The Employment Agencies Act, 1973 as a business involved in,

Supplying personnel in the employment of the person carrying on the business to act for, and under the control of, other persons in any capacity.

Thus, the employment business only provides agency workers to third party employers. An employment agency is defined through the act as,

providing services...for the purpose of finding workers employment with employers or of supplying employers with workers employed by them. (The Employment Agencies Act, 1973.)

Employment agencies therefore find work for agency workers, "workers employed by them" and permanent work for permanent workers "finding workers employment with employers". Indeed, most employment agencies tend to hire both temporary workers and permanent workers for third

party employing organisations (Flynn, 1995a; Price, 1995; Wiley, 1995). This legal definition of an employment agency is thus used in this research. In addition, an employment business is found to be synonymous with an employment agency as far as the agency workers are concerned. Employment businesses are therefore included in the definition of an employment agency as it is not necessary in the thesis to separate the two legal entities.

Definition of an agency worker

Howlings (1997) explains that no general rule of law exists in the UK stating that an agency worker is not an employee of an employment agency. Indeed, The Employment Agencies Act (1973) seems to state that agency workers are “workers employed by them (the employment agency)”. Nevertheless, most legal cases consider agency workers not to be the employees of UK employment agencies (Howlings, 1997; Mordsley, 1995). The exact employment position of agency workers is therefore presently unclear (Howlings, 1997). In the thesis, the triangular relationship between agency worker, third party employing organisation and employment agency was presented. This combined with the previous definition of a temporary worker leads us to define an agency worker as,

An individual who is employed on a temporary basis, through an employment agency, (for supply, on a fixed or limited period) to a third party employing organisation.

An agency worker is therefore a temporary worker but a specific type of temporary worker supplied to a third party employing organisation through an employment agency.

Definition of an agency assignment

Temporary work is previously defined as an activity that a worker is involved in to earn an income or to receive other benefits in exchange for labour or services provided. The work undertaken by an agency worker may be described as temporary work however the work of an agency worker is often termed an agency assignment in the literature. This combines with the previous definition of temporary work defining as agency assignment as,

An activity which an agency worker engages for a limited amount of time, primarily to earn an income or to receive other benefits such as social contact, in exchange for labour or services provided to a third party employing organisation.

The definition of an agency assignment is that it must be an agency worker carrying out the activity of work. This definition thus excludes non-agency temporary workers, such as contractors, who may indeed work for a third party employing organisation.

Definition of non-agency temporary workers

Temporary workers not including agency workers are also discussed in this research and defined as non-agency temporary workers. This is because they are temporary workers but temporary workers that do not work through an employment agency. A non-agency temporary worker is therefore defined as,

An individual employed on a temporary basis (but not through an employment agency) for supply, on a fixed or limited period, to a third party employing organisation.

APPENDIX B: RESULTS OF THE PRELIMINARY AGENCY WORKER RESEARCH

Question	Participants				
	A	B	C	D	E
Current Job	Office Assistant	Trainer	Software Developer	Contractor	Technical support co-ordinator
Period in job	3 months	2 months	18 months	4 months	3 months
Job as a agency worker	Receptionist	Accounts	Secretary	Various	Technical Analyst
Period in agency job	2 weeks	6 months	2 years	Still a temporary worker	1 year
Advantages with Pay?	Paid more as agency worker	Paid more as permanent worker	Paid not well as a agency worker	Not as a agency worker	Yes good money as agency worker
Can just leave the company when working on a agency basis	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/K	Sometimes depends
Organisational Commitment	Not as much as perm	No, can leave as a agency worker	Same as permanent worker	N/K	More committed as a contractor
Personal reasons for working as a agency worker	N/A	Could go to Malta	Student	Back injury, agency work was better for my health	Deepen awareness more money
Freedom of hours	Not work late	N/K	Yes	Yes	No (contract)
Lack of responsibility as a agency worker	Yes can go whenever	N/K	No	Yes salaries were for that	No have more contracting
Know more companies as a agency worker	Yes see how they work	Yes	Yes	N/K	Yes
Learn different systems inside third party employing organisation	Yes experience varies	Yes	Yes	N/K	No get boxed in
CV more impressive after working as a agency worker	Yes good experience	Yes	No	N/K	Yes
Worked as a agency worker to found the right job	No	Yes	Yes not sure job wanted	N/K	Yes
Flexibility in hours?	Reasonable	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Location of the employing organisation	No hassle	Pain, have to travel	Can choose	Travel all around	No not flexible
Have to put up with horrible tasks as a agency worker	Yes as a agency worker	N/K	Yes get horrible jobs	N/K	No

Question	Participants				
	A	B	C	D	E
Get horrible jobs as a agency worker	No	N/K	Yes	N/K	No
How were the relations with permanent staff	Generally ok, but Permanent staff talk down to you	Never make friends, she is going to go	Low perception of you	Don't like you coming in (vibes)	Mostly good some look down and up at you
Lack of training as a agency worker	No	N/K	No didn't expect it	Yes skills static	Yes
Job Security as a agency worker	No had to be careful	N/K	No, insecure in agency position	No, lack of security in agency position	No
No rights as a agency worker	No but fine	No holiday or sick pay	Depends on agency	No holiday or sick pay	Yes no rights
Agency paid too much?	N/K	Yes	Yes	Not now but I am a contractor not agency worker	Far too much for too little
Feel as though you don't belong as a agency worker	Yes, Talk down to you	Yes, no friends	Yes, ok sometimes	Yes like to be more involved	Yes, no feeling of belonging
Job Description in writing for agency job	No	Sometimes	No	No	Yes
Have to prepare for agency job in own time	No	N/K	No	Not as a agency worker	No
Did want a permanent job	Yes	No, not at the time	No, student	No	No
Feelings about organisations worked for as a agency worker	Good	Treated well	Low perception noted	Ok (here)	Distant
Problems with permanent staff or organisation	Talk down to you, one man harassed me to go out with him.	Yes, she's not here for long	Yes, low perception of temps	Yes, want to get more involved	Yes, management got rid of perms for contractors
Improve employability as a agency worker	Yes	Yes for my accountancy skills	No	Not as a agency worker	Yes
Didn't know what were doing in the agency job	No	Yes	N/K	N/K	Yes
Go back to working as a agency worker	No	No, wouldn't like it	Yes	Yes, would not go back to permanent work	No, Only if I had to
Key	N/K – respondent did not discuss this issue. No – respondent gave a negative answer to the topic disagreeing with the question. Yes – respondent gave a positive answer to the topic agreeing with the question.				

APPENDIX C: QUANTITATIVE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Remove and place questionnaire p1 here

Remove and place questionnaire p2 here

Remove and place questionnaire p3 here

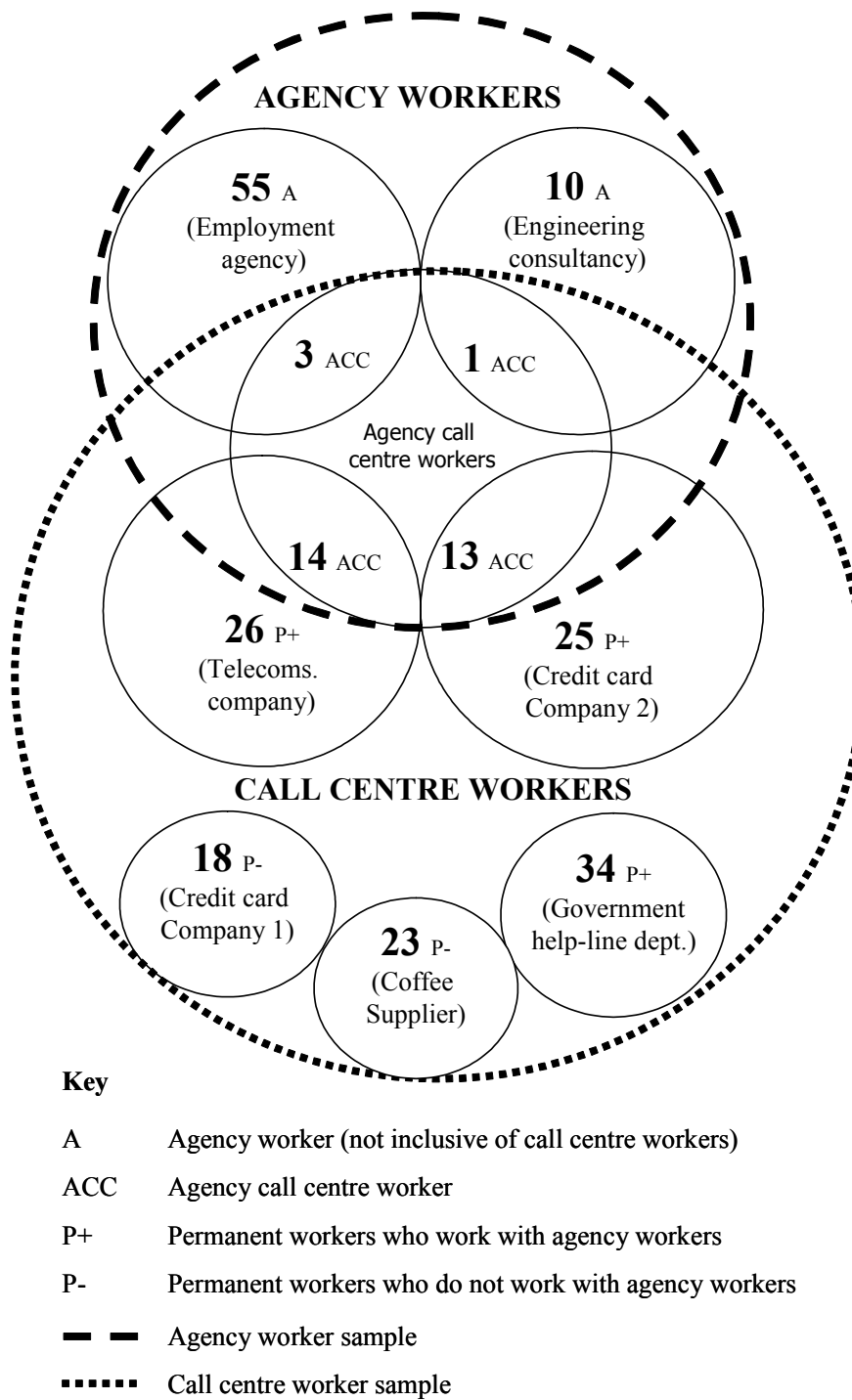
Remove and place questionnaire p4 here

APPENDIX D: LIST OF EMPLOYERS QUESTIONS

1. Employers use of agency workers
 - 1.1. Background of Interviewee, positions, responsibilities etc
 - 1.2. How do you as an Employer use Agency workers throughout your business?
 - 1.3. What are the types of jobs Agency workers do (description only at this stage)
2. Specific worker job aspects and differences between workers
 - 2.1. How do the Agency workers jobs rate in terms of
 - 2.1.1. Task variety/routine?
 - 2.1.2. Task identity?
 - 2.1.3. Skills?
 - 2.1.4. Responsibilities?
 - 2.1.5. Autonomy?
 - 2.1.6. Opportunity for social contact?
 - 2.1.7. Organisational commitment
 - 2.1.8. Social Status
 - 2.1.9. Feedback from the job
 - 2.1.10. Job Satisfaction
 - 2.1.11. General Well Being
 - 2.1.12. Pay
 - 2.1.13. Other variables, e.g., voluntary / involuntary work status
 - 2.2. How do the agency workers jobs differ from the permanent jobs?
 - 2.3. How do agency workers differ from permanent workers in terms of
 - 2.3.1. Task variety/routine?
 - 2.3.2. Task identity?
 - 2.3.3. Skills?
 - 2.3.4. Responsibilities?
 - 2.3.5. Autonomy?
 - 2.3.6. Opportunity for social contact?
 - 2.3.7. Organisational commitment
 - 2.3.8. Social Status
 - 2.3.9. Feedback from the job
 - 2.3.10. Job Satisfaction
 - 2.3.11. General Well Being
 - 2.3.12. Pay

- 2.3.13. Other variables, e.g., voluntary / involuntary work status
- 3. Organisation culture/climate
 - 3.1. What is the general organisational culture of the company, e.g., open, bureaucratic?
 - 3.2. How does this general organisation culture influence both agency workers and permanent workers?
 - 3.3. What is it like to work for the organisation?
 - 3.4. How do you feel other workers, including Agency workers, think about working for the organisation?
 - 3.5. Are Agency workers invited to social events, such as conferences etc?
 - 3.6. Are permanent workers worried about their job because agency workers in some parts of the company can replace them?
 - 3.7. Is there any conflict between permanent workers and agency workers?
 - 3.8. If there is any conflict how is this managed?
- 4. Personnel policy questions - How are the following acts applied and used in the business and do they apply to Agency workers?
 - 4.1. Discrimination Acts (Sex discrimination act 1975, Race relations act 1976, Disability Discrimination Act, Equal Pay Act 1970)
 - 4.2. Recent acts (Employment Rights 1996, Employment Relations Act 1999, Working time regulations)
 - 4.3. Sexual Harassment legislation
 - 4.4. How are individuals disciplined if a claim for SH arises if they are the
 - 4.4.1. Harasser
 - 4.4.2. or the Harassed
 - 4.5. Does this differ if they are a Agency workers and either harasser or harassed?
- 5. Summary question. Do you think Agency workers are a good way of managing specific business functions. Or are they simply a fill-in resource?

APPENDIX E: VENN DIAGRAM OF SAMPLES



APPENDIX F: INTER ITEM CORRELATION

Inter-tem non-parametric correlation (Spearman's rho) are shown here as representing the internal consistency of the major variables examined in the study. Negative items on measures have been reversed for ease of analysis.

Job Satisfaction

Item name	1	2	3	4	5
1. Job satisfaction Item 1	1.00				
2. Job satisfaction Item 2	0.73**	1.00			
3. Job satisfaction Item 3	0.65**	0.44**	1.00		
4. Job satisfaction Item 4	0.50**	0.46**	0.42**	1.00	
5. Job satisfaction Item 5	0.40**	0.33**	0.43**	0.47**	1.00
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01 n=84-96					

Skill variety

Item name	1	2	3
1. Skill Variety Item 1	1.00		
2. Skill Variety Item 2	0.73**	1.00	
3. Skill Variety Item 3	0.65**	0.44**	1.00
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01 n=84-96			

Organisational commitment

Item name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Organisational commitment Item 1	1.00								
2. Organisational commitment Item 2	0.62**	1.00							
3. Organisational commitment Item 3	0.42**	0.44**	1.00						
4. Organisational commitment Item 4	0.33**	0.36**	0.35**	1.00					
5. Organisational commitment Item 5	0.57**	0.47**	0.49**	0.40**	1.00				
6. Organisational commitment Item 6	0.43**	0.26**	0.28**	0.41**	0.58**	1.00			
7. Organisational commitment Item 7	0.23**	0.38**	0.45**	0.17*	0.33**	0.19**	1.00		
8. Organisational commitment Item 8	0.55**	0.54**	0.34**	0.35**	0.42**	0.40**	0.20**	1.00	
9. Organisational commitment Item 9	0.44**	0.35**	0.33**	0.39**	0.44**	0.60**	0.14*	0.34**	1.00
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01 n=84-96									

Worker relationship customised items 1, 2 and 3

Item name	1	2	3
1. Supports agency workers Item 1	1.00		
2. Anti-agency workers Item 2	0.01	1.00	
3. Valued in current position Item 3	0.23**	0.22**	1.00
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01 n=84-96			

Dealing with others

Item name	1	2	3
1. Dealing with others Item 1	1.00		
2. Dealing with others Item 2	0.44**	1.00	
3. Dealing with others Item 3	0.18	0.33**	1.00
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01 n=84-96			

Ellingson Involuntary Factor

Item name	1	2	3	4
1. Ellingson Involuntary Factor Item 1	1.00			
2. Ellingson Involuntary Factor Item 2	0.28**	1.00		
3. Ellingson Involuntary Factor Item 3	0.42**	0.40**	1.00	
4. Ellingson Involuntary Factor Item 4	0.17	0.53**	0.54**	1.00
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01 n=84-96				

Ellingson Voluntary Factor

Item name	1	2	3	4
1. Ellingson voluntary Factor Item 1	1.00			
2. Ellingson voluntary Factor Item 2	0.40**	1.00		
3. Ellingson voluntary Factor Item 3	0.39**	0.33**	1.00	
4. Ellingson voluntary Factor Item 4	0.30*	0.32**	0.18	1.00
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01 n=84-96				

Job security

Item name	1	2
1. Job security Item 1	1.00	
2. Job security Item 2	0.68**	1.00
* p<0.05, ** p<0.01 n=84-96		

APPENDIX G: PRINCIPLE COMPONENTS ANALYSIS OF VARIABLES

Principle Components analysis (PCA) was chosen over factor analysis (FA) because as Pallant (2001) suggested:

1. It avoids some of the problems associated with factor indeterminacy associated with FA
2. It is the best method of summarising an empirical data set,
3. It is psychometrically sound,
4. It is simpler mathematically,

Principal Component Analysis was therefore used in the study with an Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization Rotation Method. This rotation ensures that the data fits better with the rationalised factors. Rotation converged in 164 iterations with components with Eigenvalues over 1.00 shown below.

Item	Components														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Comfortable physical working environment	0.76														
General Satisfaction 5	0.70														
General Satisfaction 3	0.63														
Organisational commitment 2	0.62														
General Satisfaction 4	0.60														
Organisational commitment 3	0.56														
Organisational commitment 8	0.50														
Organisational commitment 7	0.44								0.33						
General Satisfaction 1	0.41														
Valued in current position	0.38														
General Satisfaction 2	0.35														
Dealing with Others 2		0.80													
Task significance 2		0.68													
Dealing with others 3		0.53													
Task Significance 1		0.45													
Job pressure		0.41										0.34			
Task identity 3			0.78												

Appendices

Item	Components														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Task Identity1			0.45									-0.31		0.32	
Task identity2			0.39												
Involuntary 3				0.81											
Involuntary 4				0.78											
Involuntary 2				0.77											
Involuntary 1				0.61											
Voluntary 2					-0.78										
Voluntary 4					-0.71										
Voluntary 1					-0.65										
Current Pay						0.79									
Expected Pay						0.76									
Importance of Pay						0.37		0.36							
Feedback 3							-0.87								
Feedback 2							-0.69								
Feedback 1		0.34					-0.60								
Autonomy 3							-0.36				0.36				
Job Security 2								-0.87							
Job Security 1								-0.86							
Satisfaction with Growth 1								-0.35							
Worker relationship: Angry against society									0.67						
Satisfy work/home demands								-0.30	-0.39						-0.36
Autonomy 2										0.77					
Growth 3										0.49					
Autonomy 1										0.45	0.44				
Organisational commitment 1										0.42			0.36		
Satisfaction with Growth 2	0.35									0.36					
Skill variety 3											0.66				
Skill variety 1											0.65				
Voluntary 3					-0.37						0.52				
Skill variety 2		0.36									0.41				
Satisfaction with Growth 4											0.35				
Worker relationship: Anti-agency workers (reversed)												-0.83			
Organisational commitment 6													0.71		
Organisational commitment 4													0.70		
Organisational commitment 5													0.58		
Organisational commitment 9	0.40												0.50		
Task significance 3														-0.61	
Worker relationship: Supports agency workers															-0.79
Dealing with others 1		0.36													-0.40

APPENDIX H: MULTIPLE REGRESSION ASSUMPTION TESTS

Tests for assumptions in the multiple linear regression were carried out as follows. Residuals represent the error in the multiple regression model. Standardised residuals were calculated to be at a minimum of -2.46 and a maximum of 2.37 well within normal tolerances as suggested by Field (2000) meaning that the level of error within the model is within an acceptable level. A Durbin Watson test was also performed on the data to test correlation between adjacent residuals to ensure their independence. This statistic was calculated to be 1.83, which is close to the recommended value of 2.00 by Field (2000) and thus not of any concern. Pallant (2001) advises that any variables that have a high correlation above 0.7, as organisational commitment has with job satisfaction, a test of multicollinearity should be performed. Multiple collinearity statistics showed data above tolerance of 0.2 described as acceptable by Field (2000) with the variance inflation factor (VIF) statistic being at most 4.47 with satisfaction with growth and 2.62 with organisational commitment, which is again below 10 as recommended by Field (2000). The average VIF figure is also close to one suggesting that multiple collinearity is not a problem with the data. Another, assumption of HMLR is that the sample size needs to be adequate to perform this test. Pallant (2001) recommends that for every predictor, 15 subjects at least are needed. By grouping the worker items, the Ellingson's voluntary and involuntary factors and the non-hypothesised variables together in the HMLR, this assumption is not violated as the sample contains more than 75 participants (i.e., 15 participants for the 5 blocks in the model). The assumptions of homoscedasticity, linearity and normality in the data were also met as can be observed in the following graphs.

Figure H.1: Tests of normality

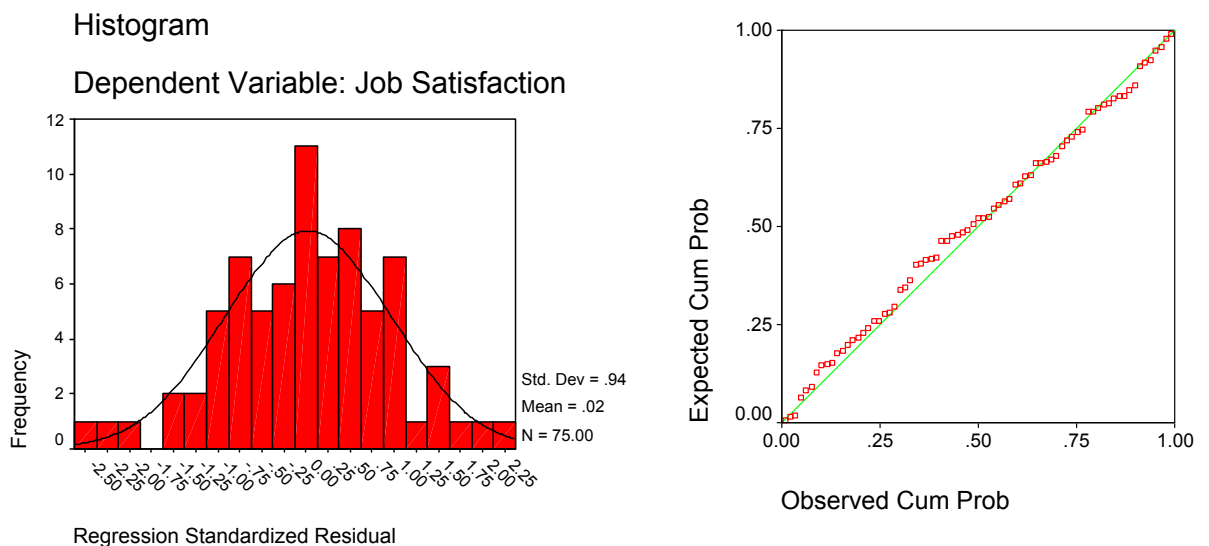
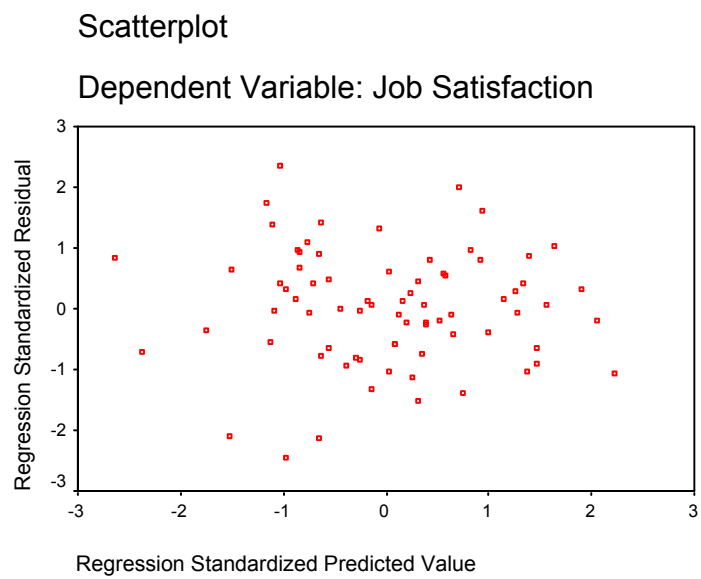


Figure H.2: Scattergraph showing assumptions of homoscedasticity and linearity



APPENDIX I: THEMATIC CODES DEVELOPED TO ANALYSE THE QUALITATIVE DATA FROM WORKER INTERVIEWS

Boyatzis (1998) stated there are four stages in developing and using thematic analysis coding qualitative data. These are

- Sensing themes, parts of the data that seem to discuss the same issue.
- Reliability, using codes in a consistent fashion
- Developing codes, codes invariably evolve the more the data is examined and re-examined
- Interpreting the information in a theory or conceptual framework

These four stages are taken into account when developing the code that would show similar themes within the interviews carried out with the workers. The process of developing these codes went through an iterative process governed by both the qualitative data and the theory postulated in the thesis. Table I.1 gives the initial coding categories developed.

Table I.1: Initial coding categories used in analysing the worker qualitative data

Advantage of temping	Anti agency feeling/behaviour by permanent staff	Autonomy	Bridge into permanent employment	Disadvantage of temping
Employment being employed in whatever form	Environment (physical)	Feedback on job, behaviour and performance	Flexibility of hours	General health and well-being
Job pressure	Job satisfaction	Job security satisfaction	Job/task variety & routine	Lack of work
Organisational commitment (to the third party employer)	Organisational commitment (to the employment agency)	Organisational variables, turnover, what it's like to work there	Pay (immediacy, satisfaction & reward value of pay)	Personal growth (learn new skills etc)
Physical security	Reason for temping	Satisfy work/home demands	Skill use and variety	Social position
Socialising at/out of work	Task complexity	Task identity	Task significance	Voluntary / Involuntary status

The factors initially examined were too numerous to make use of in the thesis and clouded the analysis examining themes that are not essential to the thesis. The next step therefore rationalised the thematic codes into skill variety, organisational commitment to agency, organisational commitment to third party employer, worker relationship, job satisfaction, job security satisfaction, voluntary / involuntary status. These thematic codes then mapped directly on to the variables studied in the quantitative data. This coding frame was then applied to all worker transcripts by the researcher. Nevertheless, to ensure that there is no bias in the coding. Two of the transcripts were coded by another PhD researcher. The differences between the two researchers were then compared and were found to be reasonably similar suggesting a low bias within the coding of the transcripts.

APPENDIX J: TYPICAL CODED TRANSCRIPT

The following represents a transcript taken at random from the worker interviews. ATLAS-ti has numbered the sentences from the transcript, which is presented with the actual transcript and the codes that are applied.

Coding Key:

JS – Job satisfaction OCE – Organisational commitment to third party employer OCA – Organisational commitment to employment agency Sec – Job Security SV – Skill Variety
WR – Worker Relationship

Sentences	Code
DB represents the researcher and DW the participant being interviewed.	
DB <i>Explains about the survey, would the participant like to take part and how the follow-up works...</i> So the second stage asks you	
About what you think of agency work and things like that really?	
DW Oh right, oh right, right, right, ok, well ok as far as that's concerned specifically this age, because I am fifty years of age and I was brought up in a situation where quite frankly you could change jobs from one day to another, not that you necessarily Wanted to but you could do as work was plentiful, it was a different ball game then to what it is now, and sometimes it's difficult to get into permanent work if you have been out of work for a some time so there is a strong case for agency for agency work, yeah. The only unfortunate thing is, that erm, erm, that er there is a tendency for	WR
Employers think that if they employ agency people maybe they are getting the dregs of society, I think there is some case like that yeah, but nevertheless all in all I think is a good thing, yes.	WR
DB Ok so let me get this straight then, you think it is a good thing because you, why because you have a variety of work or.	WR
DW I think it is a good thing because, the biggest thing is it get you work, it gets you, you have had a long period of illness, which I have had often, or you have been out of the work for what ever reason, you've been out of the country or what ever reason and you've got a, gaps in your CV or something, then at least in the main agencies are pretty good and they will usually will get you work, they won't necessarily to start with get you consistent work or with the same company necessarily, it could well be a day here two days there three days there and the work, yes you're quite right, can be a bit varied, it's likely to be in the warehouse field in the distribution field because most of erm the firms operate in that field now in Northampton it being the centre of the country and so on, we're a distribution county at the moment really so there is more and more, much more on the warehouse side, er we get the work and of course it could be shift work, it can be varied in that sense you're not sure where it's going to be when it's going to be and er it's going to be shift work or not.	
DB Ok, so what you're saying then really it's a bridge into permanent employment really	
DW It is really, some people of course, there are some people who tend to look at it as a permanent thing and I say yes you er if they get in with the right company and they have been with that company a long time then they can create the situation where you could create a full time job for yourself, yes. So erm, it can be either way it's a bridging situation or a way of getting work, because lets face it nowadays if you actually write for jobs being what the qualifications you've got you are be very well down the pecking order so that's it at least you will get some work with the agencies	
DB Right I am with you so it is good then if you experience a period of illness or unemployment or something like that	

Sentences	Code
DW Yes in my case I have actually been quite fortunate because I have been with, I started	
with a number of different agencies and then I was with about 6 7 8 I think you've got	
to do that as I say one particular agency are very good they've given me reasonably	
regular work and now I've got involved with a small company on the Brackmills	
industrial estate at since 9 months ago and I have been there ever since, as I said I've	
worked 9 months which is some kind of record, as agency work is week by week and	
I've worked 9 months solid so there very please with what I do and so is the agency	
so it has worked out quite well	
DB Ok, ok that sounds pretty good, what about the disadvantages of agency work then	
you said	
DW Well the big disadvantage is, the obvious disadvantage is you are, you are, the work	Sec
can dry up the next day or the next, probably if you have been working a little while,	Sec
and with the company, you are more likely to be next week as opposed to next day but	Sec
it can be, particularly in very early days if your starting off, it can be, so in other	Sec
words it's a day at a time or a week at a time, no more than that. Even in my situation	Sec
now I have been with this company nine months but it's still no more than a week at a	Sec
Time, you know work could dry up or whatever, I was still very pleased with the time	Sec
With that and so is the agency but the work can dry up you know the uncertainty of it	Sec
Whereas if you are in any other sort of job you are under contract you've got a little bit	Sec
Of back up there	Sec
DB Right does the uncertainty of it matter in terms of money and stuff. Is that what it I	
Is it the fact you don't know whether you've got a job or what.	
DW Well, well, I think by the time you go ahead because if you are permanent	
somewhere	
Or you are on a monthly contract or you are paid monthly or you're paid wages or	
something, if there is redundancy or there's heaven forbid something outside of that,	Sec
the company will have to give you some sort of notice and therefore some sort of	Sec
money. Now when your work for an agency, erm, no notice whatsoever is given and	Sec
no reason need be given either because you are only hired for that day and sometimes	Sec
for that half day even	Sec
DB Right, do you think that is a source of stress at all?	
DW Well you know, without realising it you are speaking to someone who knows an	
awful lot about that because in fact I am a manic depressive	
DB Oh right, right,	
DW I have had three nervous breakdowns between 91 and 94, so yeah 91 and 94, and I,	
apart from working pretty near full time now, full time hours I should say, through the	
agency since august last year, admittedly I did part time work before that erm so I can	
talk with some a plant. So erm, well yeah, yes, but in my particular case I would prefer	
to be working, I think you go in with your eyes open don't you, like I just said, the	
agency offload you the next day or something, you know that, they know that, the	
company knows that and therefore you go in with your eyes open but as far as I am	
concerned I am much more, from my particular point, if for any reason this job ceases	
I have got much much much much more chance of taking up something similar or	
something akin to it that's right yeah whatever the number of agencies than I would	
have actually writing and actually applying for jobs through a normal chance of filling	
out an application or so on	
DB Right so what you are saying is that you have got more of a chance to get a	
temporary	
job than	
DW Oh absolutely without a d, absolutely	
DB oh ok that's pretty interesting really. Are there aspects of the temporary job that are	
quite satisfying at all.	
DW I think the majority of the jobs going in Northampton at the moment are in the	
distribution environment, so by that I mean warehouse work that's what you're	
looking at, it's either warehouse work or to some extent it's production work. But out	

Sentences	Code
DW I think what they do promote is the family type atmosphere it's almost like I say the company that I work for is almost like a family	WR
DB Ok, erm, right, in terms of your commitment to that organisation do you feel you are pretty committed to that organisation	WR
DW Oh absolutely, absolutely, I have already told them that, it's absolutely ess, I may or may not be put on, well you know I would go back as a perm, well I not be made permanent but they know how I feel and so on, but although it's a small company its actually part of a quite large group so the site is quite small you got, there are other companies in the organisation, erm and if you look in to France and the US of A and Europe so it's not a tin pot outfit at all. it's just the site is quite small.	OCE
DB Ok, ok, that's pretty interesting really, I've got a list here of job factors I mean I read them out and if you said there important or not really that's a good way forward as I know you have only got ten minutes or whatever	OCE
DW Well yeah I think what you are doing is important and unfortunately I am a single guy at the moment so I can talk so go ahead shoot.	OCE
DB Yeah sure well some of the other things we found important was dealing with other people and that	OCE
DW Yes very yeah	
DB Erm how about opportunity for skill use	
DW Erm yeah that is fair enough I think it is more important for the younger people I would say, erm, than when you get 50 plus the person is more concerned about doing a good job and being conciseness and not in being pushed into new skills necessary but with the younger people I think that is a good point yes	SV
DB Ok how about the sort of identity that you place on the work do you see the tasks from start to finish sort of thing	SV
DW Fortunately I do I do, again because I am the forced into the situation where I support the company and I can do all the jobs now and that can well happen, I can see the job from start to finish, I go and get a pick note to pick the stuff, and then I go and pick I pick it pack it and then actually distribute it, change the packaging on it as well and this sort of thing. And I think you've raised a good point there if you do see the job from start to finish that, that is probably better, yes.	SV
DB That's interesting really, do you think your job allows you to satisfy both home and work demands	
DW Erm absolutely because, because erm because of the work I do I was a manic depressive I had the breakdowns years, quite a few years ago now but I was doing work since then doing it part time, it's given me, because I stuck with it, I don't know if I stuck with it because erm I was interested in sort of thing but I was appreciative with it, and I can actually do a good job in a warehouse environment which is what I do do, so obviously it gives me job satisfaction and so of course having gone out and done a reasonable, a good days work I can then come back and then you know I am in a good frame of mind to do things in the evening	JS
DB right I am with you so you almost feel as though you've done you days work	JS
DW And you've earned your money and so on and you're pleased to do it and you come back and then you've got the chance to enjoy yourself at night for whatever you want to be doing	JS
DB Just on the money aspect do you get paid weekly where you are	JS
DW Yeah I get paid weekly where I am yeah	
DB Is that quite good that you do your weeks worth of work and then you get paid	
DW Yes I have had it always most of my life I have actually worked in management so I have had it all different ways. The advantage with weekly is it is more helpful for budgeting, it is more difficult monthly as you have to pay four weeks off and not one so I think that's better. I think that's better. Actually in my particular case, it might not be one of you questions, but in my particular case, it took me 2 things maybe in my case it took me quite some time to adapt into a factory type environment, a factory floor type environment, whereas I have always been working in administration, you	

Sentences	Code
know I used to go working in suits and ties and all that sort of stuff, now of course its	
open neck shirts, fennel trousers or whatever, so that was a difference and obviously I	
had to find something, and try and come to terms with it, and then stick with it and	
then gain confidence that way, to get over my being manic depressive thing	
DB Right I am with you, oh ok brilliant, well I haven't got any other types of questions,	
it's been very interesting talking to you and stuff and you have	
supported a lot of things we have been looking at . well we have put various sort of	
agency workers into different groups and you are in one of the happiest and most	
satisfied groups you'd be pleased to know	
DW Well yeah, because, I must be fortunate once I have always been trying to do a good	WR
job right from the start and of course the older people get they get a bit more polite	WR
and get on well with the staff, right from day one, I do what everyone asks and do as	WR
good a job as I could, I've been supportive and the rest of it and that's the same as the	WR
rest of the people in the company, so yes I may have been fortunate as well in finding	WR
the right company, I think it's a bit of a 2 way thing obviously I have found the right	WR
company, and you do the job well and you get on with people then you get the	WR
feedback don't you. DB Yeah	WR
DW So at the end of the day they respect you, talk to you and so on and then take you on	WR
term as an agency worker and so on	WR
DB Yeah, I mean you said you feel committed to the organisation you are work for DW	OCE
Yes	
DB I mean is that a two way street and you feel as though they are committed to you as	OCE
well	
DW That's right	OCE
DB I mean even though, I know that they are not offering you a permanent job	OCE
DW That's right, That's right	OCE
DB You still feel that commitment is quite strong	OCE
DW Well without mentioning the name of the company, because, well what I will say is	OCE
that they are going to move up north, they are talking, it's being considered. So if that	OCE
happens they'll take the line they'll need me, but as I said they have promised to keep	OCE
me posted and they have said if that comes about they will give me a cracking	OCE
reference, and do what they can to help to get future employment yeah	OCE
DB That's pretty good on the contractual side I don't suppose they have to do that	
DW There not suppose to do that, but if they move out they could get me on the other site	
they will give me notice and give me time off to look for other work, and give me the	
reference. Obviously the agency have done well as I have been working for 9 months	OCA
so the agency won't give me a bad reference either will they.	OCA
DB Do you feel the agency are committed towards you as well	OCA
DW Erm, you know, I think obviously it has to be said that the company, you tend to think	OCA
of the company more so as you are working with the people, but agencies, agencies	OCA
obviously want to get hold of people because they want to get their money, you can't	OCA
blame them that and they want to supply as many people as they can to lots of	OCA
companies, to some extent you could be classed, if you're not careful, as a name on a	OCA
payroll and nothing more, but erm, erm fortunately I have had, I have had to speak	OCA
about different things on the way so I have got a nice name not a bad name with them	OCA
so that's one advantage, the other second advantage is my son also went with the	OCA
same agencies work before I did, he's about twenty, twenty one, and through this	OCA
agency, he is in a similar history to me he worked for a company for quite some time	OCA
and then this company offered him a permanent job, so what I am saying there is	OCA
dedication there, yeah	OCA
DB That's sort of gets back to what you were saying before that sometimes it can be a	
bridge into employment	
DW Yes that's right, absolutely, absolutely.	
DB Or, even for yourself it's a bridge into an employment situation	
DW absolutely	
DB Yeah, I mean it can be up and down or whatever	

Appendices

Sentences	Code
DW But if the company does finally move and they don't take everybody which is unlikely that they will do which is likely I would say up North, assuming I don't want to go anyway as I got things this end, but saying that it would give me whatever 9, 10, 11 months of permanent work DB No that's pretty good. End of interview	

APPENDIX K: SYNOPSIS OF THE RESPONSES FROM THE QUALITATIVE SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS

Insurance company

Agency workers are hired from the same employment agency and are used primarily to support clerical roles within the organisation to cover individuals who are on leave. The insurance company used only one employment agency, which supplied both permanent workers and agency workers, and as a result secures preferential rates.

The organisation employed agency workers with a multitude of skills, however the agency workers fell into three distinct categories of:

1. General administrative all-rounder, a person that can do many administrative tasks within an office, photocopying, filing, etc.
2. Secretary, different levels of ability required depending on whom the agency worker is replacing, so the jobs of a secretary would range from being practically a personal assistant to the managing director through to a secretary used by a number of different people in a typing pool.
3. Receptionist, specific receptionist skills required for instance, greeting clients, directing telephone calls, taking telephone messages.

Skills are identified as being different between agency workers depending on the agency workers role. Yet, it is required that agency workers use their initiative and highlight what skills they have for additional jobs that may arise. Agency workers skills would be promoted within the organisation for alternative work that may occur, although overall agency workers would perform the tasks in their assignment.

Worker relationship differs between offices as some offices do not have a sociable culture and would not include agency workers in social events. Individual differences are also identified by the respondent as effecting worker relationship with some agency workers preferring their own company to the social company of others. Length of tenure also influences whether an agency worker would be invited to a social event, whereby long term agency workers would be more likely to be included in social events. Interestingly, the respondent could not see how an agency worker could be committed to the company although they may have commitment to the job rather than the organisation. No one single factor is considered as effecting the agency workers job satisfaction although it is suggested that worker relationship may be a strong influence on job satisfaction through the organisational cultures of the different offices.

Agency workers are not considered different to permanent workers in terms of skill use, social status and job satisfaction. However, the major difference between the two groups of workers is permanent workers would be trained to cover the roles of their colleagues, whereas, agency workers are only taught about their specific job only. Skill variety may therefore be slightly higher in the permanent workers as they can cover additional jobs if there colleagues are on leave. The threat to permanent workers, in terms of loosing their jobs or being replaced by better skilled cheaper paid staff, does not exist according to the respondent. This is primarily as there

is not a significant number (mass) of agency workers to worry permanent staff. Any conflict between the two sets of workers is reasonably rare and managed at a local level.

Cosmetic based manufacturer

The company employs agency workers both as a fill in resource to cover holiday and maternity leave. They also use agency workers to ease heavy periods of workload. Agency workers perform all types of roles within the company ranging from manufacturing functions to administration jobs. Jobs completed by agency workers are considered the same as jobs completed by permanent workers. The only exception to this is when agency workers are employed on short-term jobs such as VDU work for a specific project but this is quite rare. Variety of skill use in part depended on the job being performed with manufacturing positions having less of a need for skill use than administrative functions.

Organisational commitment is said to vary in the agency worker population really depending on the individual. One agency worker employed for the human resources department was not committed to the company and this showed through this particular agency worker's attitude. Nevertheless, the respondent stated that this is probably a rare case and most agency workers she had known are highly committed to the organisation. Indeed, this one individual displaying low levels of organisational commitment was quickly replaced.

Generally, agency workers are considered to have high levels of job satisfaction. This is shown by the tenure of agency workers, who "once they join, they do not want to leave as they are happy working here". Agency workers are treated as equals to permanent workers with all staff being treated as the organisation's employees whatever their employment contract.

Telecommunications company

The organisation uses many agency workers within the company. The operations manager stated this is because agency workers are:

1. Cheap and inexpensive labour compared with permanent workers
2. Easily disposable, no redundancy commitments with letting agency workers go
3. Easily persuaded to work unsociable hours to manage peaks and troughs in customer demand.

Differences between the permanent worker jobs and the agency worker jobs are noted by the departmental manager but not by the operations manager who comments that the jobs are the same. Within the call centres, the agency workers tend to work in the "lesser skilled functions" such as the billing line within customer services. Agency workers also work on basic clerical duties, which may involve "unskilled repetitive work", throughout the business as they are inexpensive resources in the short term. The skills of the agency worker are varied which may be used within the business. Communication skills and customer care skills are desperately sought after in agency workers however the employer found these skills to be very low. If an agency worker did have these skills the agency workers position could be used as a "stepping stone into the business" as communication skills are a sought after commodity within the organisation.

No "them and us" attitude is said to have existed between the permanent and agency workers. Agency workers are invited to social events and given the opportunity to join in with social activities. The departmental manager added, "many of the permanent staff were once agency

workers and therefore have a high regard for other agency workers.” The social status of agency workers within the company is considered equal to permanent workers by the departmental manager. The operations manager had a different perspective and thought that the social status of agency workers is extremely low, with agency workers being jealous of permanent members of staff, and permanent workers thinking that agency workers are “the scum of the earth” as they haven’t got permanent jobs.

Organisational commitment is considered low by both respondents, with agency workers showing no allegiance to the company. The departmental manager added that agency workers will be committed to the job they are performing but they may not be necessarily committed to the organisation. The job satisfaction of the agency workers is considered low but this is also considered the case for the permanent workers as the work is mundane, pressurised and demanding.

One major difference identified between agency workers and permanent workers is that agency workers are more likely to misuse their position. In the call centres, a code could be used to dial internationally which the company would pay for. Agency workers were taking down these codes and using them outside of the organisation, as the codes worked on public pay phones. Obviously, agency workers are much harder to trace and have less of a threat to their jobs than permanent workers so may take the risk.

Conflict between the two sets of workers is considered non-existent with the unions being blamed for stirring up differences between agency workers and permanent workers. Unions had called out strikes due to the increasing number of agency workers within the workforce and by the increasing skills and responsibilities given to agency workers. Agreements had been made with the union to ensure that no more than 20% of the staff within call centres are agency workers. Agency workers are also only allowed to complete certain jobs, which ensured the responsibilities of permanent jobs remained superior to that of the agency workers.

Credit card company 1

This organisation contributed towards the sample of permanent call centre workers who did not work with agency workers in the call centre worker sample. The company had an active policy for not using agency workers. This is primarily due to the feelings that agency workers are

1. not very committed to the company
2. not cost effective as the agency worker had to be paid in addition to the employment agencies profit
3. would not give a consistent approach and view of the organisation, whereas, permanent staff are strongly trained and socialised into the organisational culture.

The respondent therefore suggested the commitment, cost and approach of agency workers would be invariably inferior to permanent workers.

Job satisfaction and general well-being of the permanent call centre workers is considered high mainly from two sources of information. Firstly, from exit interviews with leaving staff, call centre staff are happy in the job but had to leave for other reasons. Secondly, a job staff survey was given to all employees from whom job satisfaction is found to be very high amongst all employees. The organisational culture had a great deal to do with the high levels of job satisfaction according to the HR manager. The open, flexible and relaxed climate encouraged an open and participative environment. The managing director’s door is literally open and could be

approached by any member of staff. All members of staff are made to feel part of the organisation and are able to influence key decisions in the organisation.

Public house retail company

Seven percent of the workers in the organisation are agency workers. Agency workers are used to manage large workloads while taking on specific projects or taking over specific companies that existed as retailers in their own right. The use of agency workers is a way of dealing with heavy workloads while recruiting for permanent staff.

Most (95%) of the jobs that agency workers performed within the organisation are administrative in nature. This would mean that agency workers would be given routine administrative duties such as filing, photocopying, data input, etc. A smaller number of agency workers are given specialists roles which could be in finance, dealing with payments, or human resources, helping out in the human resources department. About half of the jobs given to agency workers are described as “not the nicest” being monotonous with little skill variety. The main reason given for this is that permanent workers had little time in which to train the agency workers, especially short term agency workers, and as a result the agency workers tend to be given the most simplest of tasks that can be explained easily and quickly by the permanent workers.

Worker relationship is considered low outside work. However, social interaction is supported within work whereby agency workers and permanent workers interacted socially with each other. The social status of the agency worker is considered quite high, there are so few of agency workers that they are valued within the culture. Yet, some managers would forget this and may not value the work of the agency worker as much thinking that they could find another agency worker relatively easily. However, the HR department actively discouraged this mentality, although they did not say how, and promoted the social status of the agency worker as being a great help and benefit to the organisation.

Organisational commitment to the company is considered low generally for all workers with employees in general being more committed to their career than to the company. Agency workers have a lower organisational commitment than permanent workers, although the respondent did not say why.

Job satisfaction is next considered with the respondent stating that job satisfaction depends on two issues:

1. The job
2. The department that the agency worker is based

The job is considered a factor influencing the job satisfaction of an agency worker in terms of the job's nature as mentioned above, i.e., varied work considered better than monotonous work. The department is also considered a factor because the attitudes of members of staff within particular departments are seen as negative. Many departments made no effort to include agency workers as part of a team. Generally then the organisation did have a rather negative outlook of agency workers which is seen more strongly in particularly negative departments.

Conflicts between agency workers and permanent workers are unlikely to occur because permanent workers are insecure in their jobs and would put up with the situation. Nevertheless, occasionally there may be conflict due to personality clashes and the solution to this would be to “get rid of the temp” so the agency worker would be dismissed resolving the conflict.

Charitable organisation

The organisation utilises agency workers as a minor part of the business mainly to cover

1. Permanent staff on annual leave
2. Peaks and troughs in the work demand

The types of jobs that agency workers complete vary ranging from cash handling to processing orders. Skill variety is thus very high with the agency workers having “a lot of jobs to cover, for instance there are 13 steps to raise an invoice so it is very varied”. One of the problems of this varied work however is the training time taken to get agency workers to use the charity’s systems. Agency workers are never brought in specifically to complete menial tasks, with the respondent arguing, “we have enough volunteers working for free who will do that and don’t mind doing that for us.” Opportunity for social contact is high and agency workers are not treated any differently to permanent workers. The agency workers are also often invited to large organisational events again with no distinctions being made between the two sets of workers.

Interestingly, the respondent stated that organisational commitment varies largely dependent on the organisation the agency worker is working in at the time. In the NHS, the agency workers went to their place of work and then came home without any real commitment to the organisation. Nevertheless, in the current organisation agency workers show 100% commitment to the charity. This is expressed in terms of agency workers working late for free and being flexible in helping out satisfying demands. The respondent stated that the reason for this high organisational commitment might be because the organisation is a charity and most of the individuals who work here have been touched by the medical condition, the charity aims to reduce or help, in one form or another.

Job satisfaction within the organisation is considered very high. Agency workers often come back to the charity at their request, often phoning up to see if there are any jobs that need completing. The organisation is generally relaxed as it is a charitable organisation. Permanent and agency workers therefore felt positive about working for the charity and in a way believe as though they are giving something back to society.

There is some conflict between the agency workers and permanent workers within the organisation. Conflict between agency workers and permanent workers seems to arise on the permanent worker side because they want what is best for the organisation and promote the employment of other permanent workers because they cost the organisation less in the long run than employing agency workers. Yet, the employment of individuals on short-term contracts tends to be difficult to achieve so agency workers are quite a practical solution. Conflict on the agency worker side mainly arose from them not being allowed to apply for jobs in the organisation until all permanent workers interested in the position had applied. This sometimes caused conflict with the two sets of workers as generally agency workers are considered the same as permanent workers, however this issue did possibly make them feel different. The organisation managed this conflict by watching vacancies that arrived and letting the permanent workers apply first. Problems did arise if agency workers did then want to apply for permanent positions as the organisation would have to pay an agency fee to employ the worker on a full time permanent basis.

Mobile telecommunications company

The organisation has a preferred suppliers list of approximately 30 employment agencies, although in practical terms only two employment agencies are used to supply agency workers on

a regular basis. The company used agency workers throughout its business and these are classed into three different types of agency worker.

1. General “temps”, these agency workers are used on a short-term basis and are needed to cover extra workload.
2. “Temps” on 6-month contracts, these temporary workers are initially employed through an employment agency but then are paid for directly by the organisation. In this regard, these workers became fixed term contract temporary workers rather than agency workers.
3. “Temp to perm”, these are agency workers but agency workers who are hired on a temporary contract initially but with the intention of making these workers permanent after an eight-week period. This method of recruitment is almost a “try before you buy” experience for both agency worker and the employer. The employer stated that 94% of the “temp to perm” agency workers became permanent workers after the eight week period, with only the agency workers who did not like the organisational culture not accepting a permanent job.

The organisation therefore used both agency workers and non-agency temporary workers (fixed term contractors). Agency workers perform every task within the organisation. Indeed, the organisation would fail to operate if it did not have agency workers. The only part of the organisation that did not have agency workers is the call centre. The reason for this is that call centre workers need a large amount of training before they completed the job. It is therefore too expensive to use agency workers in the call centres as the training costs and time would make the use of agency workers uneconomical.

Skills are considered different between the agency workers. Some of the agency workers have a lack of administration skills, which need to be trained within the job. The respondent found the lack of skills sometimes very sad but stated that some on-the-job training would usually be provided. On a social level, agency workers tend to be invited to social events outside of work. However, sometimes the agency worker did not fit in with the other workers so they would not be invited to social events. Otherwise, individual differences made an impact with introverted individuals not attending social events as they are genuinely not interested in group activities. In this regard, opportunity for social contact depends on the permanent workers opinions of the agency worker and in part, whether the agency worker wished to attend social gatherings.

Some of the agency workers are committed to the organisation but this is probably more to do with individual ethics rather than a commitment to the organisation as a specific company. Other agency workers may not be loyal to the organisation but they are certainly committed to the work they completed. Everyone in the organisation is treated equally so the social status of agency workers is equivalent to permanent workers. Job satisfaction varies between the different agency workers, primarily because of the nature of the work they perform. Some of the jobs performed by the agency workers are on “a par” with the permanent worker jobs and so job satisfaction is at a similar level to the permanent workers. Yet, some of the agency worker jobs are “below par” being very monotonous in nature creating little job satisfaction.

Competition and conflict between permanent workers and agency workers is thought not to exist. Indeed, most permanent workers thought of agency workers as a “god-send” as by the time the agency worker had been hired the work would have already mounted up. If conflict did arise between the two sets of workers, it would be dealt with by discussing the matter with both parties. Any conflicts of this nature that are usually down to personal disputes and clashes of personality. The outcome of these conflicts would be that either the agency worker would have their employment terminated or they would be reassigned within the company as appropriate.

APPENDIX L: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abbreviation	Full term
ACC	Agency call centre workers
ELUS	Employers labour use survey
GHQ	General health questionnaire
HR	Human resources
JCM	Job characteristics model
JDI	Job description index
JDS	Job diagnostics survey
LFS	Labour force survey
MSQ	Minnesota satisfaction questionnaire
OCB	Organisational citizenship behaviour
P-	Permanent workers who do not work with agency workers
P+	Permanent workers who work with agency workers
WERS	Workplace employee relations survey
WIRS	Workplace industrial relations survey

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