COMMUNICATION & SOCIETY

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Strategies of employer branding with temporary workers: Possibilities and obstacles towards their integration as branding ambassadors

Abstract

This study analyses temporary employees' perceptions and experiences with respect to temporary employment companies (TECs), which contract them, and to the companies where they provide their services. Their level of possible integration in the strategies of employer branding in both types of companies is analysed. To that end, both the causes for their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with those companies have been studied and the temporary employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS) has been analysed in order to determine to what extent they may act as a company branding ambassador. This analysis has been carried out on the basis of two investigations conducted among employees from the same TEC before and after the Covid-19 pandemics, which has allowed us to count on a series of values to identify trends and, at the same time, to ascertain their impact on this type of employees caused by such a dramatic and global event as the recent pandemics started in 2020. With this in mind, we have reached a set of conclusions on how to improve the integration of this type of workers in companies through the improvement of internal communication and the strengthening of the corporative culture to foster their role as branding ambassadors in the companies where they operate.

Keywords
Employer branding, eNPS, branding ambassador, internal communication, corporative culture, employee's experience.

1. Introduction

1.1. *Employer branding among temporary workers*

Companies are increasingly the people who integrate them. In a productive environment like the current one, in which assets exchanges are tremendously easy and fast, any company may access many a same resource as its competition. The true differentiating fortitude between corporations lies in their intangible elements. One of the most outstanding being employees, who become a strategic factor to represent the strength of a brand so that it may reach the expected results (Kumar & Anand, 2012).

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In this context, employer branding turns into a critical element for the success of the brand and, therefore, for the own company (Goom, 2008; Kucherov *et al.,* 2022; Sarabdeenet *et al.,* 2022), although its implementation is still scarce in Spanish companies (Martín Pérez, 2019). Given the close relationship between employee engagement and employer branding (Suomi, 2019), companies must orientate their relations with their workers so that the latter do not only lend their best service possible but become also branding ambassadors (Gillis, 2011; Helms, 2020).

The management of how experienced a staff member is as a resource towards the promotion of the brand turns out to be especially significant in those areas with a greater contact or relationship with the company's public, such as clients. Jobs present a high rotation and, in many cases, vacancies are covered by employees recruited by TECs. According to the latest data published by the Ministry of Labour and Social Economy in November 2022, the number of people contracted by TECs in Spain amounted to 774,326, which stands for the 3,78% of the total of wage-earners. This type of labour intermediation represented the 3,5% of all the employment in 2020. These figures reflect over a 50% mark of the EU average (2,1%), according to the data published by Eurostat in 2021.

Temporary work is a necessary phenomenon in the labour market. Many a company require temporary workers due to seasonal reasons in order to cover medical leave, or because they have a contract for the development of a specific project within a specified time. Thus, this kind of contract has been specially developed via the so-called TECs, ensuring the legality of temporary workers' contracts and, on the other hand, meeting the need to seek and shortlist candidates according to the required profiles in each case. TECs are configured as a contact medium between available workers and the companies that need them. There exists, thus, a double employee belonging: to the TEC that contracts them and to the company where they are going to work.

The special weight of TECs in the Spanish labour market has encouraged us to study the temporary workers' predisposition to recommend, or not, the TEC that has contracted them, as well as to advocate for the company where they provide their services. That is, to assess to what extent these temporary workers may act as ambassadors of their respective brands. We have adopted the application of the eNPS, and have analysed the reasons for its recommendation or non-recommendation.

1.2. *From client to employee NPS scores*

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is one of the most extended indicators in the professional field to measure client loyalty and, therefore, a company's capacity of growth, since it allows to anticipate the level of future sales (Reichheld, 2003; Kaplan, 2016). The NPS concept (Reichheld, 2003) is based on analysing a company's client response to the question: "What are the chances of your recommending a certain company to a friend or pal?"

The growing importance of the NPS in the corporate sector is such that many of the principal multinational companies, like Apple, General Electric, or Delta Airlines, among others, have placed this indicator as the most significant of their marketing metrics, in such a way that it even gets to condition employees' remuneration as well as being disclosed to investors as a substantial benchmark regarding the present and future running of the company (Safdar & Pacheco, 2019). Despite its comprehensive development in the world of business, only five scholarly articles, including Reichheld's seminal work of 2003, have studied the direct relations between the NPS score and the growth in sales, and except the first one, none of them have demonstrated a direct correlation between both variables. However, the latest research into this field carried out between sportswear brands in the USA shows that the NPS can be a valid indicator to predict a company's future growth in sales and the methodological differences being attributable to the lack of previous academic evidence.

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Recent research (Raassens & Haans, 2017) has proven that there exists a distinct correlation between those clients with promoter scores and the electronic word of mouth (eWOM).

Conversely, the employer Net Promoter Score (eNPS) is the transition from the NPS methodology to the employees' sphere, in a way that it becomes a metric to assess one of the relevant aspects regarding employee experience: to what extent they feel positively linked to become ambassadors of the company's brand that employs them.

1.3. *Employee experience and employer branding*

The experience (virtual or physical) that employees live and perceive at work on a daily basis conditions their performance, engagement, loyalty, customer service, and the results of the company. In such wise, employer branding turns into a lever so that employees are vectors of values and of the brand commitment to customers, potential employees, and their social environment (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2001; De la Guardia, 2014; Helms, 2020), so that they truly become brand ambassadors (Gillis, 2011). However, this requires an employee's full satisfaction to act as a brand ambassador from experience and conviction (Vallaster & De Chernatory, 2006; Botella-Carrubi *et al.,* 2021).

Understanding what "employee experience" (EX) consists of, how it impacts and how to activate it, is key to attracting and engaging the most talented individuals, improving customer experience, complying with the business goals as well as promoting brand ambassadors amongst the staff. The moments that matter during the employer–employee relationship (Employee Journey) forge EX and form a perception towards their Employer Brand that motivate the recommendation of the organisation as best working place (eNPS). In short, the EX is determined by the sum of interactions, experiences, and emotions between professionals and their respective organisations, from the moment they are candidates until their admission, career development, and dismissal (Rodríguez-Tarodo, Recuero & Blasco, 2018).

The EX is positively associated with employee performance, their willingness to make efforts, and their intention to remain in or abandon the organisation, according to a survey by IBM and the Globoforce Workhuman and Analytics and Research Institute. In general, the study conducted by Durai and King (2018) confirms that there exists a positive relation between employee experience and their commitment to the company that has contracted them.

The organisations above the 25% in EX obtain a 3X in return on assets (ROA), and a 2X in return on sales (ROS), as shown by the study analysis of IBM Globalforce 2016 Worktrendssurvey. The organisations with better employee experience multiply by four their average profit, by two their average revenue, having a 40% less in rotation and a 24% less in headcount. Their share prices also exceed the S&P 500 and the Nasdaq, according to Jacob Morgan (2017).

The companies with better EX (low complexity, clear rules of behaviour and collaboration, creativity, and empowerment) were twice as innovative and a 25% more profitable than their competitors (Dery & Sebastian, 2017).

Likewise, there is a correlation between employee engagement and success in customer experience. Yohn (2016) claims that whenever a company deals with employee experience at the same level of discipline and intention as with customer experience, employees are more satisfied, companies have greater employee retention, and customer service improves. Thus, each one-star improvement in a classification from 0 to 5 by employees is associated with a rise of 1.3 points in customer satisfaction over 100. Keeping a satisfied labour force, whose functions are especially customer oriented, must be regarded as a previous requirement to assuring good customer service (Zhao & Chamberlain, 2019).

Employees play a fundamental role in customer experience since they are the true creators of that experience; an exceptional customer experience is just impossible with a poor

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employee experience (Díaz-Vilavella & Calleja, 2018). To provide this employee experience is key to listen to and understand what their critical moments in both their professional and personal life are, as well as their interests, aspirations, and the reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction. This way, an employer branding strategy will be able to be designed in order to communicate the employee value proposition (EVP) managed by segments.

> A good employer brand is achieved on keeping the promise made to employees, by providing them with a great professional and personal experience (Rodríguez-Tarodo, Recuero & Blasco, 2018, p. 39)[1].

In addition, Mosley (2016, p. 237) remarks that "in order to keep your employer brand promise, your communication and talent management must be aligned and integrated".

2. Objectives

From the above context, this survey aims to:

- Analyse to what extent temporary workers feel identified or not with the TECs which have contracted them and with the companies where they develop their work and, therefore, to what extent they would recommend them.
- Know what the main reasons for substantiating the eNPS are; that is, what their willingness to recommend or not is based on. Thus, we seek to identify which aspects of employee experience are more significant in their relation to the company where they work and the TEC which contracts them.
- Learn about the impact of the pandemics on the working expectations amongst this kind of temporary workers.

So that we are aware of the possibilities and the obstacles companies must face when it comes to being able to manage their relationship with temporary workers as brand ambassadors and, from there, to suggest possible strategies of employer branding for this type of employees.

3. Methodology

We have used a quantitative methodology by means of an online survey in Spain of temporary workers contracted by a TEC. This survey has been conducted in two processes of measuring, in 2019 and 2021, which has allowed us to carry out an evolutionary study. Furthermore, we have managed to compare the results with the interviewees' profiles (in this case, gender, ages, and whether they are active workers or redundant).

Our sample totals 2,053 people, with a sampling error margin of ±2.2% for a confidence range of 95.5%. This total sample has been divided into two subsamples: one of them of active temporary workers contracted by a TEC, and the other of temporary workers who are redundant but have provided their services in one or more companies contracted by a TEC over the last 12 months. The sample of active temporary workers amounts to 967 people (sampling error margin: ±3.2% for a confidence range of 95.5%), while the subsample of redundant temporary workers totals 1,086 people (sampling error margin: ±3% for a confidence range of 95.5%).

Tables 1, 2, and 3 in the Annex show the distribution of the sample by age range, gender, and by geographical area of the participants.

A structured questionnaire has been used, with open and closed questions in a three-block sequence:

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[1] Texts translated by the authors.

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Block 1

With respect to the TEC and the user company an eNPS was applied, the eNPS (employer Net Promoter Score) is the transfer of the methodology of the NPS (applied to clients) to the field of employees, so that it becomes a metrics to gauge one of the relevant aspects of employee experience: to what degree they feel positively bound to become brand ambassadors for the company that employs them.

In order to calculate the eNPS, the interviewees are asked to what degree, in a scale from 0 to 10, they would recommend a friend to work in their respective companies. The way to work out the results of the NPS (applied to customers) and the eNPS (applied to employees) is a worldwide generalized standard: it is defined as "promoters" who score 9 or 10 on answering about their predisposition to recommend their company, "passive" or "neutral" who score 7 or 8, and "detractors" who score between 0 and 6.

To calculate the eNPS, the percentage of promoters is deducted from the percentage of detractors, thus achieving a single figure, the scoring of the level of predisposition to recommend. This percentage allows to establish comparisons between different companies, or to analyse the evolutionary changes of a same company between two or more metrics. The latter has been used in the present study, by comparing the results of metrics in 2019 with those in 2021. In addition, we managed to compare the results according to the interviewees' profiles (in this case, gender, ageing, and whether they are active or redundant).

Block 2

Unlike the commonly used simple closed questions of the eNPS, this survey introduces an additional methodological resource, which has allowed to adequately deal with the objective of knowing the principal reasons on which the employee predisposition is based as to whether or not to recommend a TEC and the company where they provide their services, and to identify what aspects of the employee experience are more relevant in their relation to the company where they work and to the TEC. To add this extra analysis, an open question was used complimentary to the closed one from the eNPS. To the "promoters" of the employer brand and/or the consumer brand (they scored 9 or 10 their level of predisposition to recommend working there), the open question asked was: "Why would you recommend it with this level of certainty?" And to the "detractors" the open question: "Why isn't your level of recommendation higher?"

The answers to these open questions have been codified and analysed quantitatively, what has allowed to prepare the corresponding Graphs in order to distinctly identify the respective weight of the reasons for recommending or not in each case.

Block 3

Lastly, in the questionnaire, three closed questions have been included concerning the influence of the pandemics on the interviewees' job opportunities.

The fieldwork of this survey was conducted between July and September of 2021. The results have been analysed in themselves and in comparison to those of the same survey made before the outset of the pandemics, particularly in April 2019.

4. Results

4.1. *Results of the eNPS in relation to the TEC*

The results of this study have shown that, broadly speaking, the eNPS referred to the TEC has been 20.3% in 2021, compared to the 12% in 2019. A slight superiority is noticed in men's eNPS (22.4%) compared to that of women's (Graph 1 of the Annex), and we see how this indicator rises as the age range expands, by going from 9.3% in those below 30 years old to 30.9% in those over 50 (Graph 2 of the Annex).

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When analysing the results of the temporary workers being active at that time, the eNPS rises up to 36.3% in 2021 and to 19.1% in 2019, while among the population that no longer work at the time of the survey this indicator reaches 6.1% in 2021 and 4.1% in 2019. Therefore, there exist almost 30 points of difference between the active workers' eNPS compared to that of those who are redundant (Graph 3 of the Annex).

To verify whether the variances between the subsamples are meaningful, we will use the means of the scores over the level of recommendation of the TEC in a scale ranging from 0 to 10.

The mean of recommendation in 2019 was 7.20 and in 2021 it was 7.40 (Table 4 of the Annex).

The outcome of the T–Student test of independent samples shows that with a significance p (2 tails) = 0.036 (lower than 0.05) the null hypothesis is rejected; consequently, the variance between 2019 and 2021 is statistically significant (Table 5 of the Annex).

To use the T–Student test with respect to ageing in the survey of 2021, it has been grouped into two ranges by dividing the total sample into the median: less than 38 years old and from the age of 38 onwards. The recommendation means of the TEC have been 7.09 and 7.70 respectively. The significance p (2 tails) turns out to be lower at 0.05, consequently the variance is statistically significant.

As for the responses according to the interviewees' gender, the means of recommendation of the TEC has been 7.39 for men and 7.41 for women. The significance p is 0.90; that is, higher than 0.05, so the variance is not significant in this case.

Eventually, regarding the employees' employment situation, the recommendation means with respect to the TEC are 8.14 in the case of those being active and 6.74 for those who are redundant. The significance p (2 tails) is lower than 0.05. Therefore, the variance at the level of recommendation concerning the TEC is statistically significant between both groups.

In the promoters' opinion (those who score the TEC with 9 or 10), the reasons that weigh the most when it comes to recommending the TEC are those related with the communication, the relationship and the work environment (44.6%), whereas those having less importance are the working conditions (6.3%), which we understand that they are not a differentiating element between the different TECs, but that they represent a legal or sectoral standard.

This scoring, shown in more detail in Graph 3, hardly varies between the active employees and those who have already left office. Likewise, significant differences are also not appreciated between the results of 2019 and 2021, which indicates that those aspects related to the internal communication are a steady and permanent factor in order to achieve a positive scoring of the employer branding (Graph I).
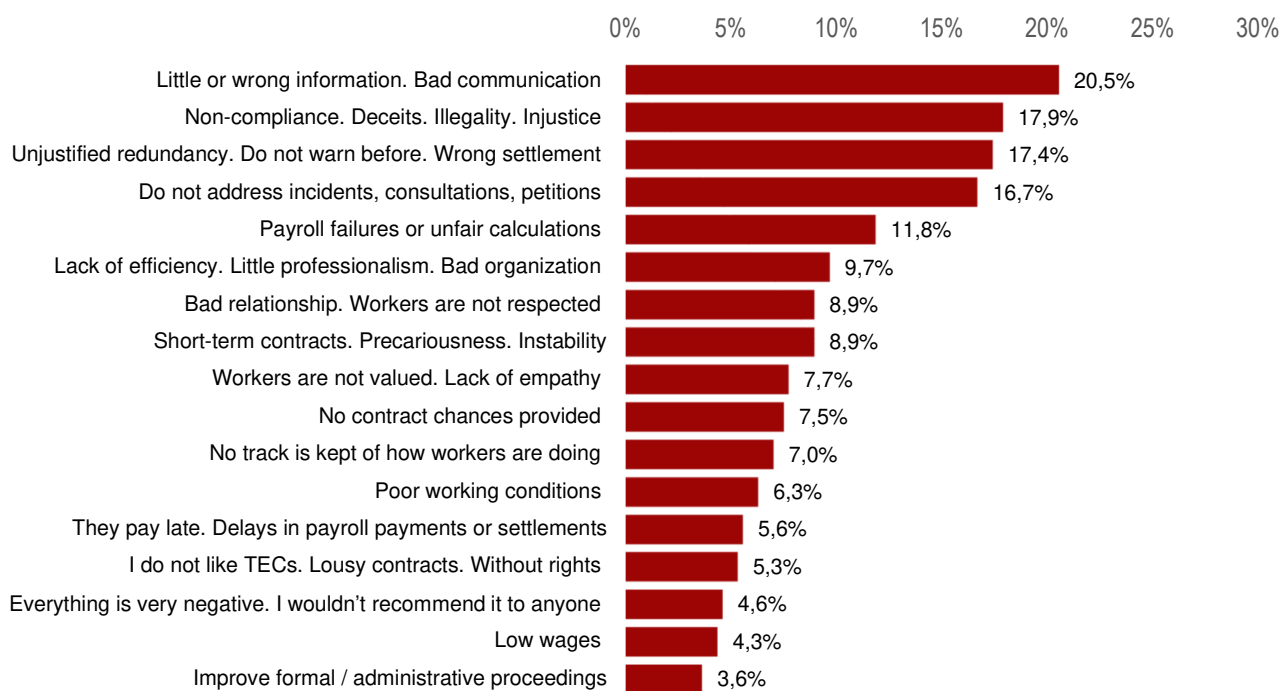
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Graph I. Opinion of the "promoters" (score 9 or 10). Why would you recommend the TEC with this level of certainty? (Active + redundant temporary workers).

Caring and friendly relationship. Good service. Kindness. Empathy	30,1%
All very well. Happy at work. I had no problems	26,2%
Efficiency. Good management. Professionalism	18,6%
Engagement. Trust. Honesty. Reliability	17,2%
They are always accessible and solve any problem	13,2%
Payrolls are on schedule. Before other TECs	10,3%
Clarity. Information. Good communication. Transparency	7,3%
I was given the opportunity to work. Job offers	6,3%
I feel valued. They value workers. We are taken care of	5,0%
Good formal / administrative proceedings	3,8%
Job growth chances provided. Training	3,7%
Good working conditions	3,3%
They pay wages correctly and without errors	1,3%
Continuity; Stability; There is permanent work	1,3%
Monitoring at the work place. They watch for us	1,2%
It's an important company. Referent. Leading	1,2%
Living wage. Acceptable salary	0,8%

Source: Own elaboration.

In respect of the detractors' scores, those who have scored the TEC between 0 and 6 points, most of the critics are related to aspects such as ethics, security or the work rights (41.3%), followed by those linked with communication and the working environment (35%). Again, the aspects influencing the least are those concerning the working conditions (Graph II).

Graph II. The opinion of detractors (they score between 0 and 6). Why is not your level of TEC recommendation higher? Active+ redundant temporary workers.

Little or wrong information. Bad communication	20,5%
Non-compliance. Deceits. Illegality. Injustice	17,9%
Unjustified redundancy. Do not warn before. Wrong settlement	17,4%
Do not address incidents, consultations, petitions	16,7%
Payroll failures or unfair calculations	11,8%
Lack of efficiency. Little professionalism. Bad organization	9,7%
Bad relationship. Workers are not respected	8,9%
Short-term contracts. Precariousness. Instability	8,9%
Workers are not valued. Lack of empathy	7,7%
No contract chances provided	7,5%
No track is kept of how workers are doing	7,0%
Poor working conditions	6,3%
They pay late. Delays in payroll payments or settlements	5,6%
I do not like TECs. Lousy contracts. Without rights	5,3%
Everything is very negative. I wouldn't recommend it to anyone	4,6%
Low wages	4,3%
Improve formal / administrative proceedings	3,6%

Source: Own elaboration.

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In the collective of detractors some significant variations are observed between the active temporary workers and those who are redundant, since the former give more importance to the aspects of relationship and communication in their critics, whereas the latter do so towards working rights, ethics, and security. Between the surveys conducted before and after the Covid-19 pandemics, some diverse scores can be seen although they do not vary in terms of the elements with the highest scores in each case.

When we group promoters' and detractors' motivations, we can clearly notice how most of them are related to the treatment, the communication, and the work environment, whereas the least significant are the working conditions (Graph 4 of the Annex).

4.2. *Results of the eNPS with respect to the companies where they operate*

For the eNPS referred to the company where people work or have worked, we see it is very low, the 6% in 2021 and the 3.7% in 2019, with a slight improvement in men (8.8%) with respect to women (4.1%), and with more critical positions amongst the youngest population, above all in their 30s, with a -1.1%, whereas between 40 and 49 years of age is 10.9% and 12.8% for those over 50 (Graphs 5 and 6 of the annex).

Among the active temporary workers, the eNPS is 24.8% in 2021 in view of the 14.1% in 2019, while among those who are redundant at the time of the survey the indicator is -8.1% in 2019, and -10.8% in 2021 (Graph 7 of the Annex).

There is again a substantial difference between the eNPS of the active temporary workers and those redundant at the time of the survey (Graph 8 of the Annex).

We have also used, in a scale from 0 to 10, the means of the level of willingness to recommend the companies where the temporary workers are providing (or have been providing) their services to verify whether the deviances between the subsamples are significant.

As for the year of the measurement, the recommendation means in 2019 was 6.85 and 6.94 in 2021. In the T-Student test to compare the means of these two subsamples, the significance was 0.381. Consequently, on being higher than 0.05, the variance of means between both measurements is not significant (Table 6 of the Annex).
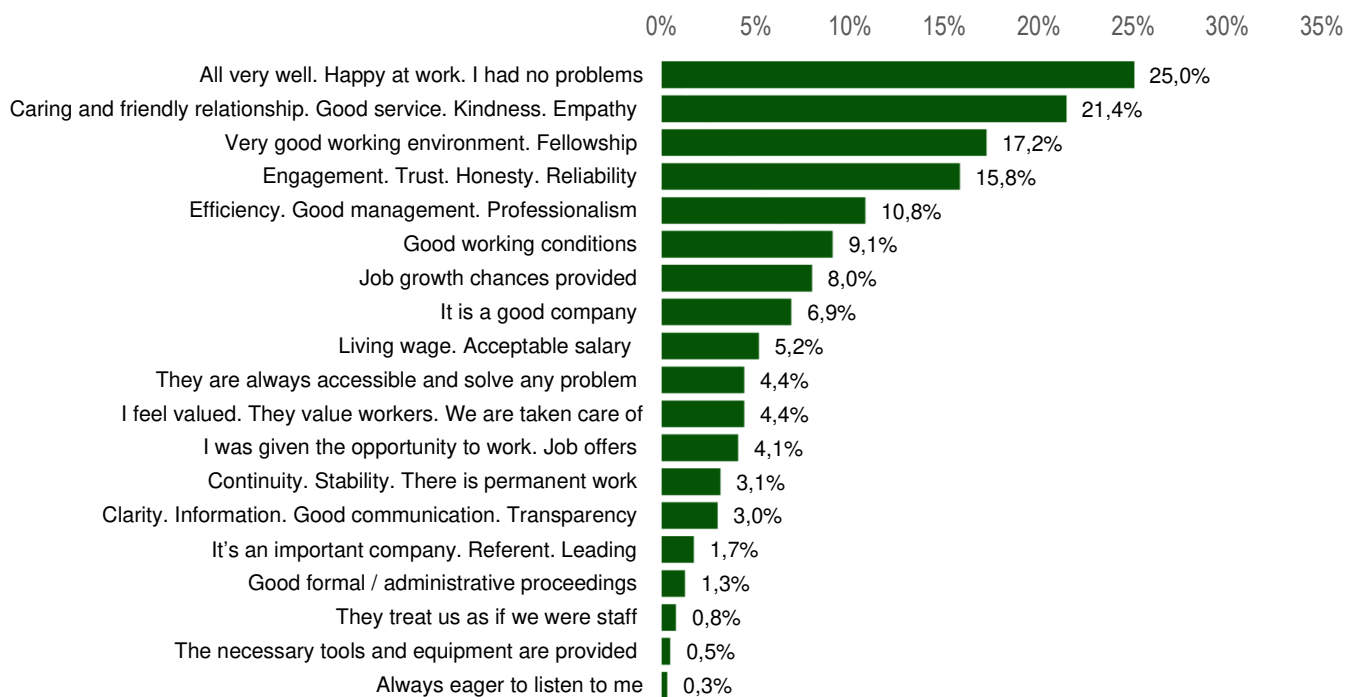
The means of the level of predisposition to recommend according to ageing have been 6.69 in the survey of 2021 for those under 38 years old, and 7.19 for those who are 38 or over. In the T test the significance p is 0.000. It is less than 0.05 and, therefore, in this case the variance is significant.

The mean of recommendation in women is 6.93, and 6.95 in men. In the T test the significance p is 0.916. That is, the variance in the level of recommendation is not significant according to the workers' gender.

Taking into account the present workers' employment situation, the mean of recommendation for those who are active is 7.83, and 6.14 for those who are redundant. In the T-Student test the significance p is 0.000. There is, therefore, a significant variance in the predisposition of both groups to recommend the company where they provide or have been providing their services.

For the promoters, the reasons that weigh the most when it comes to recommending the company they work for are those related to communication, the relationship, and the work environment (43.3%), whereas the reasons that weigh the least are those concerning with the management, efficiency, and professionalism in the company (17.4%). This scoring, shown in detail in Graph III, hardly varies among active workers and those already dismissed. Likewise, no significant differences are appreciated between the results of 2019 and 2021.
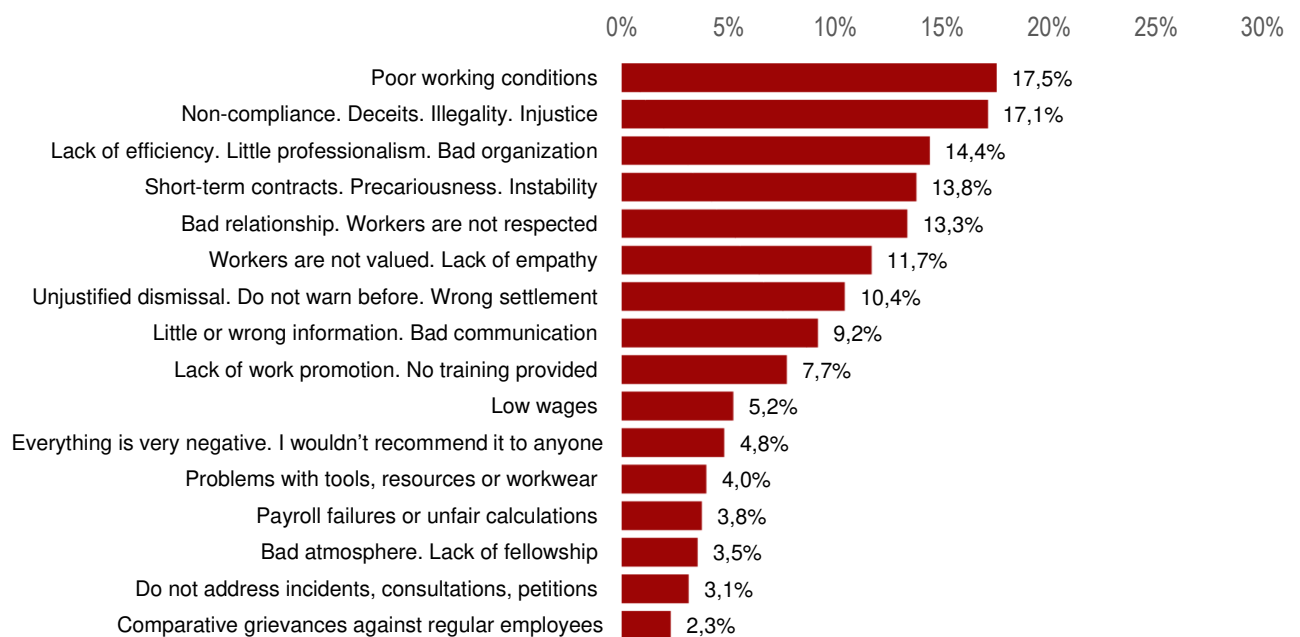
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Graph III. The promoters give their opinions (they score 9 or 10): Why would you recommend that company using the temporary work service with this level of confidence? Active + redundant temporary workers.

Category	Percentage
All very well. Happy at work. I had no problems	25,0%
Caring and friendly relationship. Good service. Kindness. Empathy	21,4%
Very good working environment. Fellowship	17,2%
Engagement. Trust. Honesty. Reliability	15,8%
Efficiency. Good management. Professionalism	10,8%
Good working conditions	9,1%
Job growth chances provided	8,0%
It is a good company	6,9%
Living wage. Acceptable salary	5,2%
They are always accessible and solve any problem	4,4%
I feel valued. They value workers. We are taken care of	4,4%
I was given the opportunity to work. Job offers	4,1%
Continuity. Stability. There is permanent work	3,1%
Clarity. Information. Good communication. Transparency	3,0%
It's an important company. Referent. Leading	1,7%
Good formal / administrative proceedings	1,3%
They treat us as if we were staff	0,8%
The necessary tools and equipment are provided	0,5%
Always eager to listen to me	0,3%

Source: Own elaboration.

As for the detractors, most of their criticisms have to do with the working conditions (34.6%), followed by those related to the management, the efficiency and the professionalism of the company (Graph IV).

Graph IV. The detractors give their opinions (scoring between 0 and 6): Why is your level of recommendation of that company using the temporary work service not higher? Active + redundant temporary workers.

Category	Percentage
Poor working conditions	17,5%
Non-compliance. Deceits. Illegality. Injustice	17,1%
Lack of efficiency. Little professionalism. Bad organization	14,4%
Short-term contracts. Precariousness. Instability	13,8%
Bad relationship. Workers are not respected	13,3%
Workers are not valued. Lack of empathy	11,7%
Unjustified dismissal. Do not warn before. Wrong settlement	10,4%
Little or wrong information. Bad communication	9,2%
Lack of work promotion. No training provided	7,7%
Low wages	5,2%
Everything is very negative. I wouldn't recommend it to anyone	4,8%
Problems with tools, resources or workwear	4,0%
Payroll failures or unfair calculations	3,8%
Bad atmosphere. Lack of fellowship	3,5%
Do not address incidents, consultations, petitions	3,1%
Comparative grievances against regular employees	2,3%

Source: Own elaboration.

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Some significant variations are observed in the detractors' group between the active temporary employees and those who are redundant, since the former group give more importance in their criticism to the aspects of work rights, ethics, and security, whereas the latter group do so to the working conditions. Between the surveys conducted before and after the Covid-19 pandemics, one can see some scores which vary the elements that are most important in each case.

Once we bring the promoters' motivations together (their praises), and the detractors' (their criticisms), we can distinctly notice how most of them are related to the relationship, honesty, and the work environment, as shown in Graph 9 of the Annex.

Lastly, if we compare the eNPS obtained in the TECs with those of the companies where the activity takes place, we can observe how they distinctly drop in the second case, both among the active population and that which is redundant (Graph V).

Graph V. Comparative results of all the eNPS.
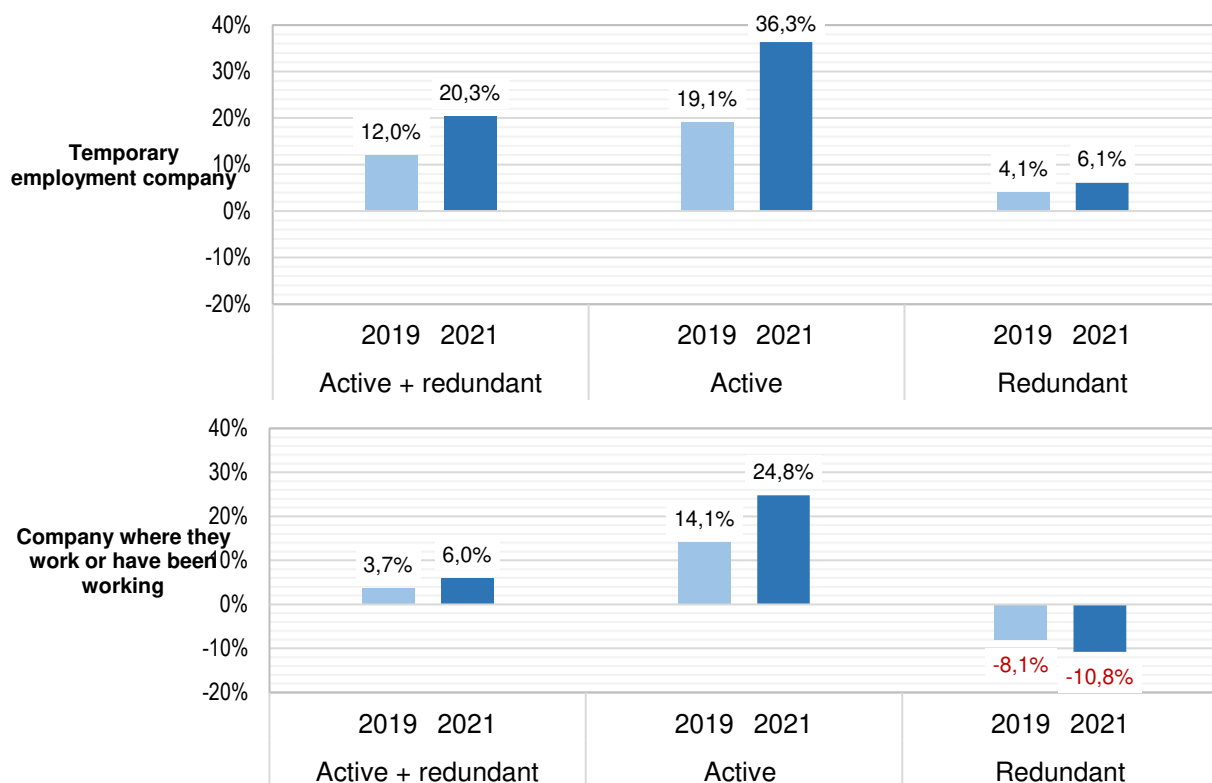
Source: Own elaboration.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The research we have carried out has allowed us to verify the fundamental role played by the aspects related to the relationship, the empathy and the engagement with people, as well as the development of an adequate working climate, with a good atmosphere of companionship, in order to achieve a positive assessment by employees, and thus strengthen the employer branding. In this regard, the eNPS methodology has allowed us to know the assessment made by temporary workers both from the companies that contract them (the TECs) and from those where they provide their services, and in which, on many occasions, they are the principal point of contact between the brand and its audiences. The results obtained represent an important development in research on employer branding made to date (Theurer *et al.*, 2018), both for the use of a methodology not used to date in the study of temporary workers, that of the eNPS, and for the reinforcement of the elements linked to the communication management in the construction of emotional bonds with the employer branding.

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Our research has shown that the duality of the temporary workers' employment relationship is also manifested at a different level of company involvement and assessment to which they are related –the one that contracts them and the one where they carry out their activity–, always in favour of the first versus the second. In both cases, the temporary workers' sense of belonging is very precarious, which makes it very difficult to build engagement between these workers and the brands and, therefore, that they may become truly "branding ambassadors." As we have explained, this is an essentially critical point for all types of companies, since without an adequate affective commitment of all the workers towards the brand it is impossible for it to achieve a good reputation (Helm, 2011).

For this reason, we propose a strategy of employer branding specific to temporary workers, which must be implemented by the contracting companies, in order to favour a greater ownership of this type of employees by the companies where they provide their services. Thus, to the usual practices to create an attractive brand as an employer, based on the attraction of talent and on the workers' retention and engagement (Fernández Lores, 2014; Rodríguez-Tarodo *et al.*, 2018), we propose a series of actions based on the particularities of temporary workers which our research has revealed and which should be developed in three stages, coincident with their arrival at the company, their time spent and their departure.

When joining the company, we propose a specific host program for temporary workers, which may adopt, as a starting point, that of the company for their own employees but also that it incorporates some specific training and communication sessions so that they may contribute to internalizing the company culture as well as reaching a greater identification with it. This aspect reinforces our conclusions on the importance of support in the training processes of personnel as shown by Clardy (2005), when he analysed its impact on corporative reputation.

While temporary workers carry their duties in the contracting company, it is also necessary to set an engagement program into motion which includes specific internal communicative actions for this type of employees, as well as a career program which allows to bring their working conditions closer to those of the rest of employees.

Lastly, and given the deep disengagement produced when stopping working for a company, it is essential to establish a specific alumni program for temporary workers, so that their bond with the company does not disappear on ending the employment relationship. This point is especially significant for TEC workers, as seen earlier on, since the recommendation mean between the workers who continue in the company and those made redundant is of a point and a half in favour of the former. Therefore, companies must establish contact and relationship programs with those temporary workers who stop keeping a working relationship with the brand. To that end, both commercial advantages and permanent communication actions can be arbitrated by means of a specific e-newsletter, for instance, or even other linking instruments such as the preferred communication of job offers. Our research has shown that the connection is definitely lost as soon as temporary workers stop being active. Therefore, their loss of employment status entails an important reputational risk for the brands they have worked for. Thus, we have clearly seen how the eNPS of the companies using the services of TECs leans towards that of the promoters when the workers are active, whereas among those who are redundant, detractors predominate. In the companies using the service, the bond is broken once temporary workers complete their duties: they no longer are potential branding ambassadors, and they can even become detractors of it.

In many companies the strategy of employer branding is not only oriented towards present employees, but also towards former employees, which represent a group with extensive experience in the brand and, therefore, with a great capacity to impact on its reputation. As we have verified, this situation is not applied neither in the case of TECs nor in the companies where these temporary workers develop their work, which could be solved with that alumni program for temporary workers.

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In opposition to other studies that place professional development and salaries as the principal elements to achieve workers' affective engagement (Botella-Carrubi *et al.*, 2019), our study has shown that the principal reasons for high recommendation (both of the TEC and of the companies using their services), and, therefore, of a greater affective engagement, concentrate on aspects related to the quality of the relationship, the empathy, the respect, the kindness, and a pleasant atmosphere of relationships between workmates. That is, those who can be manageable by the internal culture, the management of bonding and the internal communication.

On the contrary, the detractors' main reasons are, in the case of the TEC, the little or wrong information on the working conditions or the lack of communication on dismissals, the non-compliance of the agreed conditions, deceits, injustices, consultations or petitions. And in the case of the companies using temporary workers' services, the main brand detractors' reasons are the poor working conditions, breaches, illegalities or injustices, the lack of efficiency and professionalism of the company, its bad organisation. They are more structural factors, which depend on objective facts, although there exists a reason for great dissatisfaction and resentment, which a significant large number of temporary workers complain about, being that they are dismissed without notice and without being informed about the reasons. That is, in this case they are not objective factors but belonging to the area of bonding management, the quality of the relationship and the communication.

In view of the above, we can conclude that the TECs, on the one hand, and the companies using their services, on the other, should put their efforts into improving personal relationships, their relation and their internal communication towards this kind of temporary workers in order to join them, to some extent, in their respective strategies of employer branding. Likewise, the corporative culture, the bonding management and the internal communication are configured as indispensable elements to boost the number of promoters, and therefore of brand ambassadors, both in the TECs and in the companies using their services. And for this latter are of paramount importance the area of management of people and the figure of the Dircom as the principal manager of companies' intangible values.

The value of internal communication to reach workers' involvement and, therefore, as a key tool for the management of the brand is a fully consolidated concept (Capriotti, 1999; Villafañe, 1999, 2006; Welch, 2007; Fernández-Beltrán, 2011), but to date it had not been compared with other substantive elements concerning workers' relation to the brand (Theurer *et al.*, 2018). Thus, the results of this research show that investing efforts on internal communication and on the creation of a favourable working environment is what yields higher results in the objective that the likely greater number of temporary workers become brand ambassadors, even above the weight that objective working conditions have.

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Annex

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