



## Psychological Contract Profiles: A comparison between Permanent and Temporary Agency Workers

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# Psychological contract profiles among permanent and temporary agency workers

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Abstract

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Agency Workers

**Abstract**

**Purpose** - Based on the Psychological Contract Theory, this study aimed to identify psychological contract profiles, differentiating between permanent and temporary agency workers (TAW). Moreover, we analyzed whether different profiles presented different levels of work engagement. **Design/methodology/approach** – A cross-sectional survey data analysis of 2867 workers, of whom 1046 were TAW, was analyzed using latent profile analyses. **Findings** - Four latent psychological contract profiles were identified, which differed quantitatively in terms of the overall levels of dimensions (i.e. balanced, relational and transactional) for psychological contract (i.e. content and fulfillment). Finally, ANCOVAs showed that for both permanent and temporary workers the profile with strong fulfillment of Balanced, Relational and Transactional psychological contract (i.e. dominant fulfillment) had greater work engagement than the profile with weak fulfillment. **Research limitations/implications** - The cross sectional design and the reliance on self-report measures are the limitations of this study, although no causality was claimed and method biases were controlled. **Practical implications** – Actions that increase a strong PC and its fulfillment positively affect the employment relationship of TAW with the client organization. **Originality/value** - Few studies have addressed psychological contract typologies. Moreover, most studies have focused on temporary workers, but not on TAW and their contract with the client organization. Finally, this study emphasizes the crucial role played by the psychological contract in the levels of work engagement.

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6 *Key words:* Psychological contract profiles, permanent workers, temporary agency  
7 workers, work engagement.  
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### 10 11 12 **Introduction**

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14 Over the past two decades, the use of temporary agency employment has  
15 increased in the European Union (CIETT, 2013). These workers are legally employed  
16 by temporary agencies, which provide the “labor contract” containing information on  
17 payments and working conditions, however this contract is utilized by the client  
18 organization. These client organizations use TAW to temporarily replace permanent  
19 workers, to develop specific tasks or projects or to adjust staffing levels in response to  
20 changes in market demands.  
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24 The Psychological Contract Theory (Shore and Tetrick, 1994) has been considered a  
25 solid basis for the assessment of emerging contingent employment relationships (De  
26 Cuyper et al., 2008a). The psychological contract (PC) refers to an individual’s belief  
27 regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between that  
28 focal person and the organization for which he or she works (Rousseau 1995). Some  
29 authors have considered that TAW well-being, attitudes and behaviors are related not to  
30 their worker status but rather to their PC (Chambel and Castanheira, 2006; Guest,  
31 2004).  
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35 Rousseau and Tijoriwala (1998) affirmed that in order to understand the variety of  
36 associated issues, it is helpful to differentiate *Content* - the terms and interrelations of  
37 such terms – and *Evaluation* - the fulfillment and change within the PC. On the other  
38 hand, the Psychological Contract Theory distinguishes three types of PC: transactional,  
39 relational and balanced (Rousseau, 1995). Therefore, any PC will contain these different  
40 dimensions, but to differing degrees.  
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Based on the above, this study aims to identify PC profiles, differentiating between permanent workers and TAW. We specifically differentiate profiles of PC content and PC fulfillment. Furthermore, we analyze whether different profiles present different levels of work engagement. This variable was selected since it is affected by differing work and organizational resources in the worker-organization relationship.

The current study builds on the work of a previous one (De Cuyper, Rigotti, De Witte and Mohr, 2008b), which was based on the construction of PC profiles. However, this study used samples that included different kinds of temporary employment., namely fix-term (the majority), seasonal, TAW, and probationary. Connelly and Gallagher (2004) suggested that part of the inconsistencies across studies with temporary workers might be related to sample characteristics, since they merge different temporary arrangements bearing different characteristics, which influence the workers' outcomes. Our study has the advantage of using solely TAW in the temporary sample. On the other hand, this previous study analyzed the content and balance of the PC. Our study has not only analyzed the content but also the fulfillment of the PC.

### **Psychological contract typologies**

The PC theory is part of the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which considers the existence of reciprocity because the actions of a party (i.e. organization or worker) are contingent upon the reactions of the other party. The involvement of one part in relation to another, forces mutuality, since both parties expect to maintain a balanced relationship and this reciprocal relationship usually leads to a relatively similar exchange of resources. In the employment relationship, this theory differs between social exchange and economic exchange. In economic exchange, the obligations of each party are well specified, usually supported by the existence of a formal contract. On the contrary, in social exchange, obligations are nonspecific and each party is required to

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6 trust the other. Inspired by this differentiation, the psychological contract theory has  
7 distinguished three types of PC: transactional, relational and balanced (Rousseau, 1995).  
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9 *Transactional* PC includes tangible exchanged promises, with a focus on the economic.  
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11 Moreover, terms and conditions tend to remain static during the period of time specified  
12 in the contract. It usually involves performance-based pay as the employer's obligation  
13 and the meeting of performance standards as the workers' obligation. According to  
14  
15 Rousseau, those with transactional PC are characterized as having an absence of long-  
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17 term commitment and the involvement of both sides tends to be limited. On the other  
18  
19 hand, *relational* PC involves open-ended and long-term relationships and, potentially,  
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21 considerable investment (socio-emotional as well as economic) by both employees  
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23 (company-specific skills and long-term employment) and employers (concern with  
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25 employees' well-being and employment security). *Balanced* PC includes extensive  
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27 mutual exchanges (of time, efforts, mutual contributions and development) that are  
28  
29 dependent on the capacity of the individual to provide adequate levels of performance,  
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31 and on the organization's ability to develop and utilize the individual's capacities.  
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36 Previous studies have primarily investigated individuals' perceptions of the  
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38 employer's obligations (e.g., Conway and Briner 2002; Lambert, Edwards and Cable  
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40 2003), in line with the seminal work of Rousseau (1995), who regarded the employee's  
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42 perceptions as being of central concern. In the specific context of temporary  
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44 employment, where there is no legal employment contract, we may expect TAW  
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46 perceptions of client obligations to be different when compared with permanent  
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48 workers' perceptions of the employer's obligations (Rousseau, 1995). This author  
49  
50 argues that TAW have a more transactional PC, while permanent workers hold a more  
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52 relational / balanced PC. TAW have a short-term contract which may be more  
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54 transactional in nature, while long-term contracts or open-ended contracts may be more  
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6 likely to develop a relational or balanced PC (De Cuyper et al., 2008a). In fact, some  
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8 studies have shown that the PC content of TAW tends to be more narrow: they consider  
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10 the company to have fewer obligations towards them (Guest, 2004), but most are  
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12 transactional (Millward and Brewerton, 1999) and less are relational / balanced  
13  
14 (Chambel and Alcover, 2011).  
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16 Furthermore, most authors have conceptualized the PC as simultaneously consisting  
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18 of these different dimensions (e.g. Rousseau, 1995), indicating that the phenomenon is  
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20 multidimensional. Most authors agree that all PCs are likely to have a strong economic  
21  
22 focus, i.e. all will likely include transactional content. PC variations across employees  
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24 are primarily found at the relational or balanced content level (Coyle-Shapiro and  
25  
26 Kessler, 2000). More specifically, permanent workers may have a PC characterized by  
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28 dominant relational and balanced content, whereas TAW may have psychological  
29  
30 contracts with dominant transactional content.  
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32 *Hypothesis 1.* Permanent workers are more included in the profile with strong  
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34 Balanced PC, strong Relational PC in combination with weak Transactional PC (i.e.,  
35  
36 Balanced/Relational PC dominant content) than TAW, who are more included in the  
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38 profile with strong Transactional PC in combination with weak Balanced PC and  
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40 Relational PC (i.e. Transactional PC dominant content).  
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42 In line with earlier authors, we might distinguish between perceived obligations,  
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44 which constitute the psychological contract content and the fulfillment of these  
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46 obligations (Coyle-Shapiro and Conway, 2005; Rousseau, 1995). Worker perception of  
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48 breach has been defined as a cognitive appraisal of the extent to which the organization  
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50 has to fulfill its obligations or not. As previously considered, as far as TAW are  
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52 concerned, the organization has fewer obligations towards them, thus, fulfillment of  
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54 their obligations is easier (De Cuyper and De Witte, 2008). Furthermore, the PC of  
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6 TAW is transactional dominant and since this content might be easier to monitor, it may  
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8 also evoke less breach (Guest, 2004).  
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10 *Hypothesis 2.* TAW are more included in the profile with fulfillment of Balanced PC,  
11 Relational PC and Transactional PC (i.e. dominant fulfillment) than permanent workers,  
12 who are more included in the profile with weak fulfillment of Balanced PC, Relational  
13 PC and Transactional PC (i.e. dominant un-fulfillment).  
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### 18 **Consequences of psychological contract typologies: Work engagement**

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20 Based on the norm of reciprocity, when workers perceive extended organizational  
21 obligations they feel obliged to reciprocate with extended involvement and, conversely,  
22 whenever they perceive narrow organizational obligations they restrict their  
23 involvement in this employment relationship.  
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28 This study analyzes the relationship between worker perception of organizational  
29 obligations and work engagement. Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, and Bakker  
30 (2002, p.74) defined this psychological state as “a motivational and positive state of  
31 mind related to work that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption”. Vigor is  
32 characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience, the willingness to invest  
33 effort and persistence, even in the face of difficulties. Dedication is characterized by a  
34 sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. Absorption is  
35 characterized by being fully concentrated and happy in one’s work, with distortion of  
36 time and intrinsic enjoyment. However, this last characteristic, absorption, has been  
37 viewed as the result of engagement, leaving vigor and dedication as the core dimensions  
38 of engagement (Salanova, Llorens, Cifre, Martínez and Schaufeli, 2003). More  
39 specifically, our assumption is that workers who perceive more organization relational  
40 and balanced obligations are those who reciprocate with more work energy and  
41 dedication, e.g. higher work engagement, whereas workers who perceive the  
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organizational obligations as being restricted to the transactional conversely respond with narrow work involvement, e.g. lower work engagement.

*Hypothesis 3.* The profile with strong Balanced PC, strong Relational PC in combination with weak Transactional PC (i.e., Balanced/Relational dominant content) has greater work engagement than the profile with strong Transactional PC but weak Balanced PC and Relational PC (i.e. Transactional dominant content ).

On the other hand, we may expect PC fulfillment to be related to work engagement. This psychological state is dependent on the resources the individual obtains in the work context (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner and Schaufeli, 2001), namely the resources which have a high potential in the promotion of intrinsic motivation and well-being at work (Salanova and Schaufeli, 2008). In turn, the promises included in the PC are based on the assumption of an obligation to provide resources that will bring about such motivation. When there is a fulfillment of the obligations on the part of the organization, the individual considers him/herself to be receiving available job resources that stimulate personal development and work motivation (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004) and, consequently, the worker shows his/her engagement (Demerouti et al., 2001). Some studies have confirmed this relationship between PC fulfillment and engagement. For example, Bal, De Cooman and Mol (2013) found that psychological contract fulfillment was longitudinally related to higher work engagement and Chambel and Oliveira-Cruz (2010) found that psychological contract un-fulfillment longitudinally reduced engagement levels. Parzefall and Hakanen (2010) showed that the positive effects of perceived PC fulfillment occur through work engagement.

*Hypothesis 4.* The profile with strong fulfillment of Balanced PC, Relational PC and Transactional PC (i.e., dominant fulfillment) has greater work engagement than the

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profile with un-fulfillment of Balanced PC, Relational PC and Transactional PC (i.e. dominant un-fulfillment).

## Method

### Participants and Procedure

The research for this study was conducted with Portuguese workers. The sample included 2867 workers: 1780 contact center workers (73.3% of the population) holding different employment statuses (permanent (N = 1105) and temporary (N = 675)); 1087 industry workers (78.8% of the population), who were manufacturing operators. It also included permanent (N = 716) and temporary (N = 371) workers.

The workers of TAW carried out their activities within the client company and they worked in close proximity with permanent workers, developed similar tasks and were coordinated by the same supervisor. In both samples, the workers were predominantly female and the mean age was similar (Table 1) The research procedure was similar in both samples. The questionnaires were given to each respondent along with an envelope to enclose the completed survey. All the individuals participated voluntarily and all the respondents completed the survey anonymously. The results were reported directly to them as well as to their respective managers (survey feedback method).

### Materials

**Psychological Contract Content.** The worker's perception of the organization's obligations was assessed using a Portuguese translation of the Rousseau scale (2000), which has been used in previous studies (Chambel and Alcover, 2011). This scale included 9 items from a transactional dimension (eg., "employment for a specific or limited time"), 11 items from a relational dimension (eg., "to be responsive to employee concerns and well-being") and 14 items from a balanced dimension (eg., "potential job opportunities outside the company"). Items were answered on the basis of 0 = *is not an*

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*obligation of the company* and 1 = *is an obligation of the company*. High scores on this scale indicate high levels of transactional, balanced and relational obligations.

Cronbach alphas for Permanent and TAW were: balanced (.85 and .84), relational (.81 and .83) and transactional (.70 and .72).

**Psychological Contract Fulfillment.** The same scale of the PC content assessed PC fulfillment. If an individual responded 0 on the Rousseau scale, it meant that the item was not part of the PC content and was consequently excluded for the PC fulfillment measure (considered as a missing value). If the respondents believed the company to have a certain degree of obligation, they were asked to score, on a 5-point Likert scale, the extent to which that obligation was being fulfilled (1 = *has been fulfilling much less than what it promised* and 5 = *has been fulfilling much more than what it promised*). Scores lower than 3 indicated un-fulfillment obligations, scores of 3 indicated fulfillment of these obligations and scores higher than 3 indicated over-fulfillment of obligations. Cronbach alphas for Permanent and TAW were: balanced (.93 and .92), relational (.91 and .92) and transactional (.80 and .81 for).

**Work Engagement.** We measured the vigor and dedication dimensions of Work Engagement using a translation of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES, Schaufeli et al. 2002) that has previously been used in Portugal (Salanova et al., 2011), made up of five items (eg., “At my work, I feel bursting with energy”,  $\alpha = .86$  for Permanent and  $\alpha = .87$  for TAW) and five items respectively (eg. “I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose”,  $\alpha = .89$  for Permanent and  $\alpha = .87$  for TAW). The participants answered the questionnaire items using a 7-point Likert scale (0 = *never/nothing* and 6 = *always, everyday*).

**Control variables.** Age and gender may be related to PC (Turley and Feldman, 2000). On this basis, we controlled these demographic variables (gender and age).

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Furthermore, in order to control for possible confounding effects, the sector was also controlled (contact center and manufacturer).

### Results

Harman's single factor test (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012) was carried out for the variables in the study in order to test for bias due to common method variance. We cannot consider common method variance to be a deficiency. The hypothesized 8-factor model for permanent workers ( $\chi^2(840) = 6548, p > .001$ ; SRMR = .08; CFI = .91; TLI = .90; RMSEA = .06) and for temporary workers ( $\chi^2(840) = 6548, p > .001$ ; SRMR = .08; CFI = .91; TLI = .90; RMSEA = .06) revealed an acceptable fit. We compared these Models with one single factor Model where all items loaded on a single latent variable for permanent workers ( $\chi^2(854) = 32373.94, p < .001$ , SRMR = .15; CFI = .51, TLI = .48; RMSEA = .14) and for temporary workers ( $\chi^2(854) = 32373.94, p < .001$ , SRMR = .15; CFI = .51, TLI = .48; RMSEA = .14). Results revealed a significantly poorer fit of the model with one single factor ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 2268.65, p < .001$ ) in comparison to the model with eight latent factors for permanent workers, and a poorer fit of the model with one single factor ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 1712.59, p < .001$ ), for TAW.

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among the study variables are presented in Table 2. We began the LPA by specifying a two-profile model and added successive profiles until we encountered non-convergence problems (Vermunt and Magidson, 2002). The optimal model included four profiles. Tables 4, 5, and 6 present fit statistics, profile membership, and posterior probabilities, respectively. The four-profile model showed the lowest SABIC in PC content in both permanent workers and TAW (see Table 4). As for PC fulfillment for TAW and for permanent workers, despite the lowest SABIC being in the five-profile model, we observed that there were profiles with a

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small number of individuals. Hence, on analyzing the fit as a whole, we considered the four-group solution to fit the best solution. Results in Table 5 indicate that the number of cases in each profile group is sufficient to warrant retention. The posterior probabilities (see Table 6) indicate that the profiles in the four-profile model are distinguishable from one another. Finally, we present plots of the standard scores of contract types (i.e. balanced; relational; transactional) for the PC (i.e. content and fulfillment) of permanent and TAW across the four profile groups in Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The results of the ANOVAs led to a comparison of types of contact levels across profile groups of permanent workers and TAW. We observed significant differences in balanced ( $F(3, 3.62 = 154.13, p < .00)$ ) relational ( $F(3, 5.68 = 799.13, p < .00)$ ) and transactional ( $F(3, 7.85 = 4716.86, p < .00)$ ) for PC content for permanent workers and also significant differences in balanced ( $F(3, 4.22 = 187.98, p < .00)$ ), relational ( $F(3, 7.11 = 1704.21, p < .00)$ ) and transactional ( $F(3, 3.19 = 348.26, p < .00)$ ) for PC content for TAW. In the same vein, we observed significant differences in balanced ( $F(3, 240.48 = 1470.81, p < .00)$ ), relational ( $F(3, 231.32 = 1680.83, p < .00)$ ) and transactional ( $F(3, 163.05 = 1199.12, p < .00)$ ) for PC fulfillment for permanent workers and also significant differences in balanced ( $F(3, 108.96 = 564.57, p < .00)$ ), relational ( $F(3, 167.75 = 1123.63, p < .00)$ ) and transactional ( $F(3, 93.08 = 678.31, p < .00)$ ) for PC fulfillment for TAW. We used the results of the ANOVAs and post hoc comparisons to name the profiles (See Table 7). With regard to the content profiles, as may be observed in figures 1 and 2, profile 1 has all the PC types with the highest values. Therefore, this profile for permanent workers and TAW has been labeled Balanced / Relational / Transactional PC strong content. In the same vein, in profile 4 similar PC type values for permanent workers and TAW may be observed, namely with high values in the

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transactional type. Hence, profile 4 for both samples has been labeled Transactional PC dominant content. Profiles 2 and 3 are distinct in both samples. For permanent workers all the PC types presented moderate values in profile 2, thus, this profile has been labeled Balanced/ Relational/ Transactional PC moderate content. For TAW balanced and relational types are the highest compared with transactional, thus this profile has been labeled Balanced/Relational PC dominant content. As for profile 3 for permanent workers, balanced and relational presented moderate scores compared with transactional, therefore, this profile has been labeled Balanced/ Relational PC moderate dominant content. Finally, we decided to highlight the relational type in profile 3 for TAW as this type presents weak scores compared with balanced and transactional scores, thus, this profile has been labeled Relational PC weak content.

As may be observed through table 5, the results are contrary to Hypothesis 1, in both samples the major prevalence of workers was in profile 1 (Balanced / Relational / Transactional PC strong content). However, as postulated in this hypothesis, we also observed that there were more TAW in profile 4 (Transactional PC dominant content) than permanent workers. Therefore, our hypothesis 1 was partially supported.

With regard to the fulfillment profiles, as may be observed in figures 3 and 4, profile 1, 2, 3 and 4 presented similar values for permanent workers and TAW. Consequently, the profiles for both samples were labeled with the same names. Profile 1 presented moderately low values for all the scores of PC types thus, this profile was labeled moderate un-fulfilment. Profile 2 is the profile with the lowest values of PC types thus; this type was labeled dominant un-fulfilment. Profile 3 presented high scores for all the PC types thus, the label dominant fulfillment was used. Finally, profile 4 presented the highest scores in all the PC types; therefore this profile was labeled over-fulfillment.

We found results contrary to our hypothesis 2. We observed that there was an

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identical distribution of permanent workers and TAW across all profiles. The profile with more prevalence of workers is profile 3 – dominant fulfillment and profile 2 – dominant un-fulfillment which also has an identical and lower prevalence of workers, regardless of whether they are permanent workers or TAW. Considering these results, our hypothesis 2 was refuted.

The correlations in Tables 2 and 3 provided justification for controlling gender, age, and sector in tests of our hypotheses. Therefore, we chose to test our hypotheses using one-way ANCOVAs with profile membership as the independent variable and age, gender, and sector as covariates. The results revealed significant differences among the profiles with regard to dedication for PC content for permanent workers ( $F(3, 5.87) = 2.61, p < .05$ ), vigor for PC content for TAW ( $F(3, 4.54) = 3.03, p < .05$ ), vigor for PC fulfillment for permanent workers ( $F(3, 109.38) = 71.45, p < .00$ ), dedication for PC fulfillment for permanent workers ( $F(3, 221.38) = 120.58, p < .00$ ), vigor for PC fulfillment for TAW ( $F(3, 40.46) = 29.30, p < .00$ ) and for dedication for psychological contract fulfillment for TAW ( $F(3, 77.42) = 48.28, p < .00$ ). There were no significant differences among profiles in terms of vigor for PC content for permanent workers ( $F(3, 2.78) = 1.60, p = n.s.$ ) and dedication for PC content for TAW ( $F(3, 2.59) = 1.40, p = n.s.$ ). For those variables where overall effects were found, post hoc pairwise comparisons were conducted. The results of these post hoc analyses are shown in Tables 8 and 9.

The Hypothesis 3 was refuted as ANCOVAs did not produce significant differences among the profiles with regard to TAW for engagement and to permanent workers for the vigor dimension of engagement. However, regarding permanent workers and the dedication dimension of engagement, we may observe that profile 3 – Balanced/Relational dominant content presents high scores of dedication compared with

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6 profile 4 – Transactional PC dominant content. Thus, these results partially support our  
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8 hypothesis 3, but only for permanent workers.  
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10 Finally, as expected, in Hypothesis 4 comparing profile 3 – dominant fulfillment  
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12 with profile 2 – dominant un-fulfillment, we may observe that for the vigor and  
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14 dedication dimensions of engagement for permanent and TAW, greater engagement is  
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16 presented in profile 3 – dominant fulfillment, compared with profile 2 – dominant un-  
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18 fulfillment. Therefore, these results support our hypothesis 4.  
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### 20 Discussion

21 This study showed that multiple profiles with distinct patterns of Balanced PC,  
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23 Relational PC and Transactional PC (content and fulfillment) existed within the  
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25 permanent workers and TAW samples. Moreover, in both these samples the major  
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27 prevalence of workers was in the profile that perceived a lot of the organization's  
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29 balanced, relational and transactional obligations. However, there were more TAW in  
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31 the profile with transactional PC dominant content than permanent workers. Contrary to  
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33 our expectations, we observed that there was an identical distribution of permanent  
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35 workers and TAW across both profiles (dominant un-fulfillment and dominant  
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37 fulfillment). Regarding the differences in engagement, we observed that the profile  
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39 Balanced/Relational dominant content presented higher scores of dedication for  
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41 permanent workers compared with the profile transactional PC dominant content. On  
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43 the other hand, for both permanent workers and TAW, the profile with strong  
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45 fulfillment of Balanced PC, Relational PC and Transactional PC (i.e. dominant  
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47 fulfillment) had greater work engagement than the profile with un-fulfillment of  
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49 Balanced PC, Relational PC and Transactional PC (i.e. dominant un-fulfillment).  
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51 In the transactional dominant content profile more TAW were observed than  
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53 permanent workers, which was similar to that of the previous study of De Cuyper et al.  
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(2008b), and temporary workers were also found to be somewhat less likely to perceive mutual high obligations and somewhat more likely to engage in mutual low obligation psychological contracts. These findings also replicate earlier evidence on dominant TAW' perceptions of the transactional nature of employers' obligations towards them (Chambel and Alcover, 2011; De Cuyper and De Witte, 2006). However, contrary to our expectations, we verified that the major prevalence of workers, both TAW and permanent workers, was in the profile that perceived a lot of the organization's balanced, relational and transactional obligations. This result is in keeping with Shore and Barksdale (1998) However, we expected TAW to have a narrow employment relationship and the majority to have a low perception of organization obligations. We assume that this result may be due to the fact that the TAW sampled in our study have identical working conditions, and a similar employee-organization relationship to that of permanent workers, namely high perceptions of the organization's obligations (Chambel and Castanheira, 2007). This argument might also justify the unexpected result that TAW and permanent workers have identical perceptions of the fulfillment of the organization's PC. On the other hand, both the majority of TAW and permanent workers perceive a fulfillment of organizational obligations. This result is not in line with the observation of the studies of Robinson, Kraatz and Rousseau (1994) and Robinson and Rousseau (1994), which found that the majority of workers believed that some aspect of their psychological contracts had been broken. Furthermore, sample characteristics may explain these differences: in the current study, workers come from call center and manufacturing sectors and their expectations about organization obligations might be easier to fulfill. The MBA population sampled by Robinson's studies is not comparable and might be more demanding and vigilant in relation to the organization's obligations.

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Theoretically, the Balanced/Relational dominant content profile is expected to be most beneficial in terms of workers' engagement (Hypothesis 3). This was partly supported for permanent workers and the dedication dimension: workers perceiving high balanced and relational and low transactional obligations were more dedicated to their work than those perceiving low balanced and relational and high transactional obligations. However, with regard to TAW, no significant differences were observed for dedication among the content profiles. Such pattern of results is in line with the fact that this modality of employment is involuntary (CIETT, 2012; Lopes and Chambel, 2014) and most TAW worldwide, including Portugal, would rather have a permanent employment contract, and aspire to be hired by the company in which they perform their job. This desire suggests that TAW are highly vulnerable (De Jong and Schalk, 2010), as they avoid showing bad results since they depend on the client organization to fulfill their desires (Chambel, Sobral, Espada and Curral, 2013). Thus, TAW might show dedication towards their work, regardless of their perception of the organization's obligations. However, we observed that both permanent workers and TAW show lower engagement when they perceive un-fulfillment than when they perceive fulfillment of the organization's obligations. This fact is in line with Morrison and Robinson's (1997) distinction between the un-fulfillment/fulfillment, the cognitive evaluation that one's organization has failed or not fulfilled its obligations, and the violation, the emotional and affective state that may stem from the un-fulfillment/fulfillment cognition. Psychological contract un-fulfillment/fulfillment is a significant workplace event that triggers the employee's affective reactions, (Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski and Bravo, 2007), namely workers' engagement. This reciprocity is valid for permanent workers and for TAW.

### Study Limitations

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Perhaps the most relevant limitation of this study is the type of analyzed information, since all the measures were self-reports. Some experts consider this kind of measure a significant limitation, as it may be affected by a number of other factors. In this sense, Podsakoff, MacKenzie and Podsakoff (2012) indicate that although there is some disagreement about the way “method” and method “biases” are defined, the evidence shows that method biases can significantly influence item validities and reliabilities as well as the covariation between latent constructs. Therefore, researchers must be knowledgeable about the ways to control method biases that might be present in their studies. Therefore, we used Harman’s single-factor test and the results revealed that common method variance was not necessarily a serious deficiency in this data set. Moreover a cross-sectional design was used, instead of a longitudinal one, although no causality has been claimed.

### **Future Research**

Future studies could be addressed to scan for PC profiles found in this study, but using larger samples and involving other countries. Moreover, it would be interesting to analyze the relationship that specific PC profiles have with other positive results such as job satisfaction or job performance.

### **Final note**

The significance of the present study lies in the fact that few studies have addressed psychological contract typologies. Moreover, most studies have focused on temporary workers, but not on TAW and their contract with the client organization. Finally, this study emphasizes the crucial role the psychological contract plays in the levels of work engagement.

Our study has several practical implications for TAW management. It has shown

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6 that the PC is as important for these workers as it is for permanent workers. Actions that  
7 increase a strong PC and its fulfillment positively affect the employment relationship of  
8 TAW with the client organization. This observation indicates that it is a good option for  
9 the organization to invest in clarifying obligations and presenting legitimate  
10 justifications when it is not possible to fulfill it. On the other hand, the agency is the  
11 TAW contractor; thus, employment agencies are responsible for ensuring that the client  
12 entails these practices.  
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**Tables and Figures**

Table 1. Personal Characteristics: Temporary and permanent workers

	Temporary workers	Permanent workers
<u>Call center sample</u>		
Sex (%female)	64.5%	65.0 %
Age (Average age)	32.2	31.4
<u>Manufacturer sample</u>		
Sex (% female)	60.0%	53.2 %
Age (Average age)	31.4	37.9

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Table 2. Means, SD and correlation

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 Gender	-	-	1	.11	-.04	-.10*	-.10*	-.03	.00	.03	.01	.00	.04
2 Age	33.7	9.4	.03	1	-.03	-.04	-.01	.04	.05	.04	.02	.27**	.22*
3 Sector	-	-	-.04	.33**	1	.00	.02	-.09*	.09**	.09**	-.02	.10**	.12**
4 Balan Cont	.86	.18	.00	.05*	.06**	1	.59**	.37**	.13**	.15**	.08**	.06*	.05
5 Relat Cont	.92	.15	.00	.05*	.09**	.57**	1	.53**	.08**	.09*	.06*	.06*	.06*
6 Trans Cont	.94	.14	.06*	-.01	-.09*	.36**	.42**	1	.02	.00	.03	.08**	.07*
7 Fulfill Balan	2.53	.75	.01	.02	-.12*	.11**	.07**	-.06*	1	.74**	.60**	.34**	.40**
8 Fulfill Relat	2.51	.72	.04	.03	-.04	.09**	.05*	-.06*	.78**	1	.71**	.32**	.38**
9 Fulfill Trans	2.71	.64	.07**	.00	-.17	.01	.00	-.01	.66**	.72**	1	.23**	.27**
10 Vigor	4.11	1.44	-.02	.19**	-.09*	.07**	.03	-.03	.42**	.39**	.33**	1	.81**
11 Dedication	4.16	1.59	.03	.18**	-.04*	.11**	.07**	-.02	.49**	.44**	.33**	.83**	1

Note. Permanent workers n = 1821 (below the diagonal). TAW n = 1046 (above the diagonal). \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

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Table 4. Model Fit statistics

SABIC*	Permanent workers		Temporary workers	
	Content	Fulfilment	Content	Fulfilment
2 Profiles	-7428.70	9935.03	-3419.63	5994.90
3 Profiles	-8614.44	9031.45	-3833.44	5420.41
4 Profiles	-9878.38	8495.73	-4136.18	5157.42
5 Profiles	-9074.83	8334.16	-4364.86	5085.86

\* SABIC = Sample – adjusted Bayesian Information Criterion

Table 5. Profile membership for the profile models

Content	Permanent workers				Temporary workers			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
2 Profiles	1639	162			865	165		
3 Profiles	1491	43	267		56	839	135	
<b>4 Profiles</b>	<b>1491</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>167</b>
	<b>(82.8%)</b>	<b>(10.9%)</b>	<b>(2.4%)</b>	<b>(3.9%)</b>	<b>(77.1%)</b>	<b>(2.7%)</b>	<b>(4%)</b>	<b>(16.2%)</b>
<i>Fulfilment</i>								
2 Profiles	553	1248			665	365		
3 Profiles	449	1226	126		228	720	82	
<b>4 Profiles</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>998</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>65</b>
	<b>(30.1%)</b>	<b>(8.7%)</b>	<b>(55.4%)</b>	<b>(5.8%)</b>	<b>(35.5%)</b>	<b>(8.2%)</b>	<b>(50.3%)</b>	<b>(6.3%)</b>

% = Percentage of workers comparing with total number of permanent or temporary workers

Table 6. Classification posterior probabilities for the 4-profile model.

Content	Permanent Workers				Temporary Workers			
	Profile 1	Profile 2	Profile 3	Profile 4	Profile 1	Profile 2	Profile 3	Profile 4
<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	0	0	0	<b>.91</b>	.03	0	.06
<b>2</b>	0	<b>1</b>	0	0	0	<b>.98</b>	0	.02
<b>3</b>	0	0	<b>1</b>	0	0	0	<b>.98</b>	.03
<b>4</b>	0	0	0	<b>.99</b>	0	.04	.01	<b>.94</b>
<i>Fulfilment</i>								
<b>1</b>	<b>.88</b>	.04	.08	0	<b>.86</b>	.03	.11	0
<b>2</b>	.05	<b>.94</b>	0	0	.07	<b>.93</b>	0	0
<b>3</b>	.06	0	<b>.93</b>	.01	.07	0	<b>.92</b>	.01
<b>4</b>	0	0	.07	<b>.93</b>	0	0	.05	<b>.95</b>

Note: Values in bold are the average posterior probabilities associated with the profiles to which individuals were assigned.

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Figures

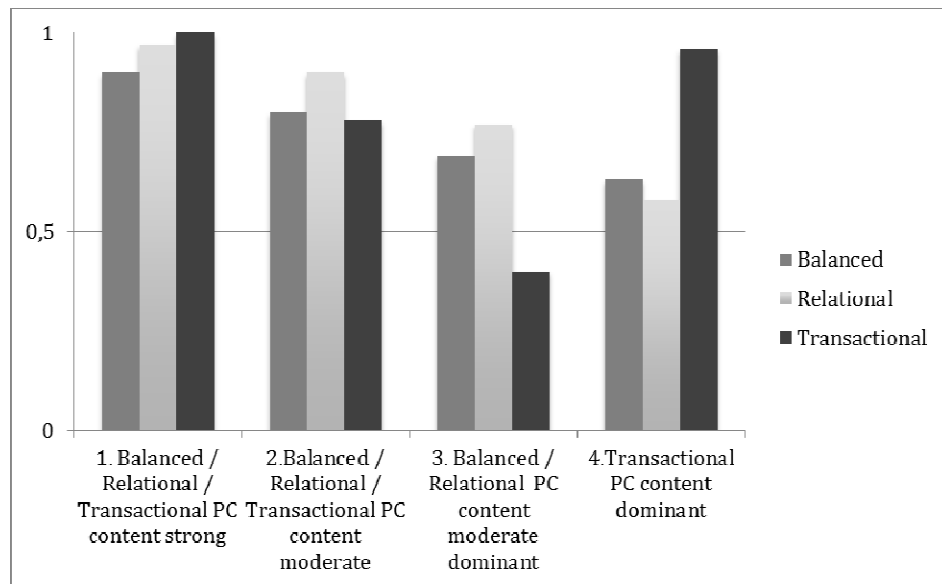


Figure 1. Psychological contract content for Permanent workers

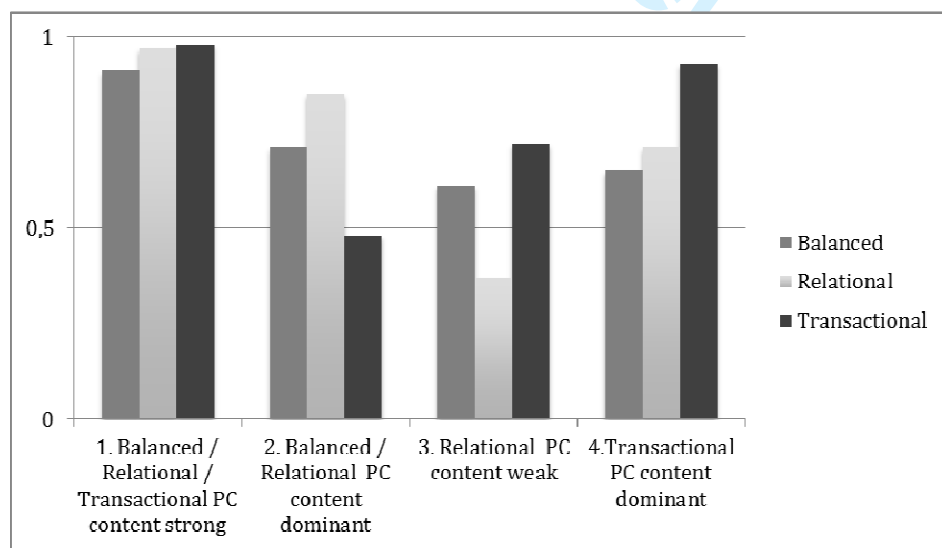


Figure 2. Psychological contract content for Temporary workers

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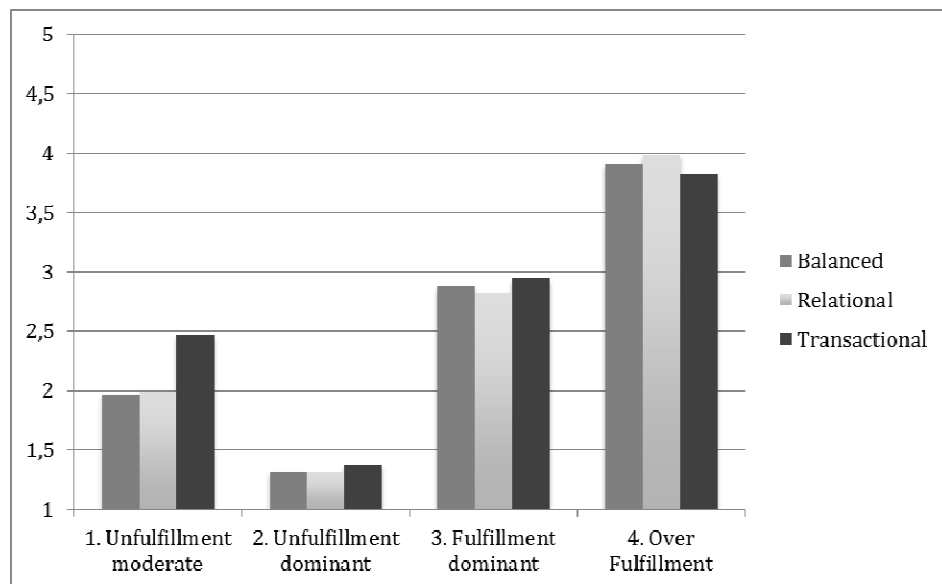


Figure 3. Psychological contract fulfillment for Permanent workers

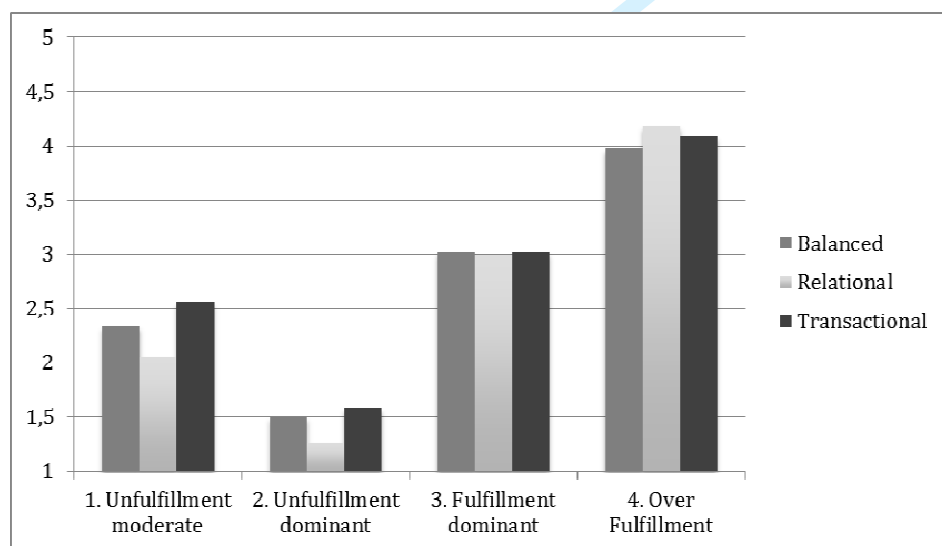


Figure 4. Psychological contract fulfillment for Temporary workers

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Table 7. Types of contract means associated with 4-profile models

<i>Content</i>	Permanent Workers			Temporary Workers		
	Balanced	Relational	Transactional	Balanced	Relational	Transactional
<b>Profile 1</b>	.90	.97	1	.91	.97	.98
<b>Profile 2</b>	.80	.90	.78	.71	.85	.48
<b>Profile 3</b>	.69	.77	.40	.61	.37	.72
<b>Profile 4</b>	.63	.58	.96	.65	.71	.93
<i>Post-hoc comparisons<sup>a</sup></i>	1>2>3>4	1>2>3>4	1>4>2>3	1>2>3,4	1>2>4>3	1>4>3>2
<b>Fulfillment</b>						
<b>Profile 1</b>	1.97	1.99	2.47	2.34	2.05	2.56
<b>Profile 2</b>	1.32	1.32	1.37	1.50	1.26	1.58
<b>Profile 3</b>	2.88	2.83	2.94	3.02	2.99	3.02
<b>Profile 4</b>	3.91	3.99	3.83	3.97	4.19	4.09
<i>Post-hoc comparisons<sup>a</sup></i>	4>3>1>2	4>3>1>2	4>3>1>2	4>3>1>2	4>3>1>2	4>3>1>2

<sup>a</sup> Post-hoc comparisons indicate which profile means differ significantly at  $p < .05$ .

Table 8 - Means associated with the 4 profile model for permanent workers

<i>Content</i>	Permanent workers	
	Vigour	Dedication
<b>1.Balanced/ Relational/ Transactional PC strong content</b>	4.18	4.23
<b>2.Balanced/ Relational/ Transactional PC moderate content</b>	4.23	4.25
<b>3.Balanced/ Relational PC moderate dominant content</b>	3.77	4.06
<b>4.Transaction PC dominant content</b>	4.02	3.83
<i>Post-hoc comparisons<sup>a</sup></i>	2,1,4,3,	2,1,3>4
<b>Fulfillment</b>		
<b>1. Moderate unfulfillment</b>	3.75	3.53
<b>2. Dominant unfulfillment</b>	3.19	2.96
<b>3.Dominant fulfillment</b>	4.47	4.69
<b>4.Over Fulfillment</b>	4.93	5.03
<i>Post-hoc comparisons<sup>a</sup></i>	4>3>1>2	4>3>1>2

<sup>a</sup> Post-hoc comparisons indicate which profile means differ significantly at  $p < .05$ .



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Table 9 - Means associated with the 4 profile model for temporary workers

<i>Content</i>	<b>Temporary workers</b>	
	<b>Vigor</b>	<b>Dedication</b>
<b>1.Balanced/ Relational/ Transactional PC strong content</b>	4.43	4.50
<b>2.Balanced/ Relational PC dominant content</b>	4.38	4.33
<b>3.Relational PC weak content</b>	3.86	4.04
<b>4.Transaction PC dominant content</b>	4.54	4.45
<i>Post-hoc comparisons<sup>a</sup></i>	4,1,2,3	1,4,2,3
<b><i>Fulfillment</i></b>		
<b>1.Moderate unfulfillment</b>	4.12	4.08
<b>2.Dominant unfulfillment</b>	3.65	3.33
<b>3.Dominant fulfillment</b>	4.69	4.84
<b>4.Over Fulfillment</b>	4.99	5.15
<i>Post-hoc comparisons<sup>a</sup></i>	4,3>1>2	4,3>1>2

<sup>a</sup> Post-hoc comparisons indicate which profile means differ significantly at  $p < .05$ .