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Being a temporary agency worker: A motivation profile analysis

F. Sobral¹, M. J. Chambel², & F. Castanheira³

¹Centro de Estudos em Desenvolvimento Humano, Universidade Católica Portuguesa- Porto, Portugal, fsobral@ucp.porto.pt

²Faculdade de Psicologia, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal, michambel@psicologia.ulisboa.pt

³Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal, fcastanheira@novasbe.pt

Abstract

Purpose - The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) establishes that human motivations can take different forms (e.g., amotivation, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation). The purpose of this study was to analyse how these different forms of motivation combine to influence labour relations in TAW.

Design/Methodology - We tested this theory with data from seven temporary agency companies (N=3766) through latent profile analysis (LPA).

Results - We identified five distinct profile groups and found that they differed in their commitment to the agency and to the client-company, and in the perception of human resources practices (HRP). We verified that temporary agency workers (TAW) in more autonomous motivation profiles had more positive outcomes and a better perception of the investment made by the companies, than TAW in more extrinsic motivation profiles. Additionally, when TAW were able to integrate more autonomous reasons to be in this work arrangement, the negative effect of the extrinsic motivation was attenuated and it was possible to find moderated profiles in which TAW also showed more positive results than TAW presenting only extrinsic motives.

Limitation - The study is limited, due to the nature of the data (self-reported) and the lack of a longitudinal design.

Research/Practical Implications - Generally, the results suggest that a motivation profile provides a context that determines how the individual components are experienced. Furthermore, is crucial that TAW integrate more autonomous motivations to develop a positive employment relationship.

Originality/Value - To our knowledge, the study is the first to conduct a motivation profile analyze with TAW.

Keywords: Motivation Profiles; Affective commitment; Human Resource Management Practices