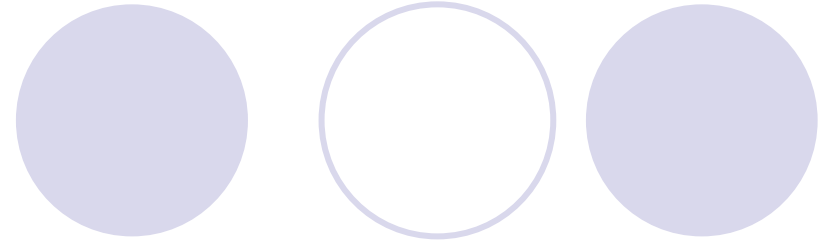


# Temp agency work satisfaction: Evidence from the Netherlands

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# Overview



- Definition
- Relevance
- Sample & Method
- Findings
- Conclusion

# Definition Temp agency work (TAW) satisfaction

- *A pleasurable or positive emotional state towards temp agency work resulting from the appraisal of one's experiences as temp agency worker (derived from Locke's (1976, p. 1300) definition of job satisfaction)*



# Related constructs

- Voluntary vs. involuntary temp agency work (e.g., Feldman et al., 1995; Krausz et al., 1995)
- Commitment to temp agency work (Felfe et al., 2007)



# Explorative approach

- ... a lack of knowledge on job security issues in satisfaction research (Rose, 2003)
- ... transferability of attitude research and theories to 'non-traditional' workers (Gallagher & McLean Parks, 2001)

# Sources of temp agency work satisfaction: what do we know?

- In general: Organisational conditions, personal and environmental sources; *some knowledge on*
  - HRM offered by TW agency and client organisation including manager responsiveness
  - Personal sources: personal traits, occupational self-efficacy & sensation seeking???
  - Environmental sources: quits and layoffs (Kalleberg & Mastekaasa, 2001)

# Sample description and methodology

- 54 semi-structured interviews with welders and fitters in two Dutch companies
- Interview-protocol: questions on biographical data, HRM policies and practices (client & agency) and attitudes towards TAW



# Findings: well known sources ...

- Job characteristics (client)
- Development and (internal) mobility opportunities (client & agency)
- Physical and social work conditions (client & agency)
- Employee involvement and participation (EIP) practices
- Pay and benefits





# ... as well as the 'the unknown'

- Labour market hardiness (Kobasa, 1979) as a consequence of layoff experiences
- Perceived alternatives on the external labour market
- Work experience in sectors where non-permanent employment relationships are more common (Haunschild, 2003)
- Up-to date self-presentation competencies necessary for acquiring employment
- Experiences with the state employment office
- Other work-related obligations

# Labour market hardiness (LMH)

- *What does job security mean? If the bosses want you out, they get you out. So, you better always be prepared (welder, 50 years of age)*
- Definition of LMH: hardy people do not passively wait until something happens to them (e.g. dismissal, job opening), they make things happen (e.g., through networking, information seeking) and create their own opportunities.



# Perceived alternatives

- *If I don't work here, I will do so somewhere else (welder, 60 years of age)*
- Perceived alternatives seem to relate to sensation seeking behaviour: choosing agency work to prevent routine and boredom
- *I was tired of my permanent job and my colleagues. Every day the same, the same work, the same environment, the same faces*

# Remarkable findings concerning perceived alternatives

- TAW's are more positive about alternatives than permanent staff (and especially those with long company tenure)
- Long-term temp workers (up to 20 years) are most confident → occupational self-efficacy

# Work-experience in sectors where non-traditional work is rather old

- Here,
- Sailors



# Labour market competences

- Permanent employees and involuntary TAW's show more insecurity concerning how to find a job and self-presentation competencies (e.g., experiences with job interviews, making vita's and writing letters of application) than voluntary agency workers

## (Bad) Experiences with the state employment office

- *I was registered at the employment office for three years. I never received a job offer. But, when I was unemployed, they called me immediatly. A temp agency helps you to get in the right way*

# Other work-related obligations

- One metalworker preferred agency work over permanent work because he works in the family business in times of need (i.e. more flexibility in working hours) and wants to increase his experience and knowledge at other companies in order then bring these to the family company (TAW as push for improvement and innovation; Matusik & Hill, 1998)



# Conclusions: where should we go?

- Still large knowledge gaps concerning the mentioned 'new' findings as well as very limited knowledge on
  - Longitudinal research on changing attitudes towards temp agency work
  - Organisational conditions and especially the way client and agency try to influence those and each other
  - Personal sources (e.g., traits, socialisation, workers' work- and non-work related history)
  - Environmental sources (e.g., national and individual cultural differences in attitudes towards temp work)