

Employment Modes from Transactional and Relational Perspectives: An Exploratory Case Study

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Abstract

The current study uses a case study approach to investigate why organizations allocate different kinds of employees. We adopt relational (social exchange theory) and transactional (agency theory) perspectives to explain the increasing allocation of external employees, in contrast to previous scholars who only emphasize cutting operating costs as the main reason for hiring external employees. Our study shows that opportunism is assumed to be important — not because everyone is opportunistic but because it is impossible to obtain reliable information concerning the opportunism of the partner. Therefore, to control risk, it is perhaps safer for an organization to hire external workers and then to shorten the cognitive distance between managers and new hires, thereby fostering opportunities for mutual understanding. When trust is built, long-term relationships are easier to maintain and turnover rates typically decrease.

Keywords: Employment Modes, Social Exchange Theory, Agency Theory

1. Introduction

Recently there has been a rapid increase in the use of external labor arrangements such as workers from temporary help services and limited-duration direct hires in industry. The growth of external labor arrangement use suggests the need for a theory to explain the sorts of jobs that should be externalized. Ettorre (1994) suggested that overuse of external labor arrangements might reduce an organization's core competencies, and Pfeffer (1994) noted that the trend toward using temporary help, part-time employees and contract workers, particularly when such people are used in core activities. Nesheim's (2003) survey shows empirical support for the use of external arrangements in core value-creating areas. Externalization of work is explained as a response to intensified competition. To bolster an organization's core competency, there is increasing demand for numerical flexibility as well as a strategy that fits easily with the mentioned situation (Lepak and Snell, 1999; Kalleberg, 2001). In particular, as business closures and unemployment levels rise amidst a protracted global economic downturn, we are seeing a rise in "external" forms of employment. "External employment" refers to employing temporary or contract employees. Temporary work is usually part-time and casual, with the salary usually paid by the hour. Contract work is typically set up for a specified working period such as one year. Workers need to negotiate a contract extension to stay on longer; otherwise, they must leave the firm when the term expires. Those employed in these

kinds of jobs generally do not enjoy standard benefits such as pensions, health insurance, and social security. A sign of this trend is the growing inclination of companies to hire temporary or contract workers to replace permanent employees, as they search for ways to lower operating costs. Mile and Snow (1984) noted that while certain human resource practices are centralized or standardized for all employees, others might be customized to match the specific requirements of particular employee groups. These distinctions are, in fact, crucial aspects of a firm's strategic approach to human resources. Accordingly, core competency employees are no longer internal employees in organizations, due to changes occurring in firms' organizational strategies. Studies on external employment arrangements emphasize that these practices are intended to lower costs and allow firms to decrease or expand their workforce quickly in response to changing market conditions. In the present study, we clarify how these kinds of working arrangements should be handled, using transactional and relational approaches. This study explores why organizations in the hospitality industry allocated different kind of employees the way they did. Using a case study approach, we evaluate both agency theory and social exchange perspectives.

2. Employment modes in the hospitality industry

Soltani and Wilkinsons (2010) note the widespread "adoption of flexibility strategies" in the hospitality industry, which involves a variety of employee arrangements. Bridges (1994) observes that organizations are decreasingly likely to commit to full-time "permanent" employees and would rather hire employees on a project-by-project basis. Employers are more agile without the long-term commitment and salary burden of an extensive full-time workforce because part-time employees could be easily deployed on a "contingency" basis as long as required. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) estimates that the global hospitality industry is responsible for creating approximately 194.2 million jobs in 2003, growing to 351.6 million jobs (or one in every 11 jobs) by 2010 (World Tourism Organization, 2004). Among those jobs offered by the hospitality industry, 92% use external employees. Milman (2003) showed that the employment market in the U.S. had undergone restructuring and offered three reasons to explain this trend. First, the majority (81%) of the new positions created since 1993 were in categories paying above-median wages. Second, a large majority of new good jobs in many industry and occupational categories were more likely to be filled by non-college graduates. Third, a strong labor market expansion generated rising real wages for most workers, especially among low-wage workers. All of these explanations for labor market restructuring mostly emphasize "transactional" concern, which means that organizations hire a greater number of external employees to lower operating costs. Kochanski and Ruse (1996) are among those who have observed that the human resource function has been under pressure to decrease costs for multiple reasons: to improve its services; to increase its impact; and to provide a more satisfying work experience for its own employees, given the challenges of a rapidly changing business environment, a tight labor market, changing customer demand, and increasing competition. Because of these challenges, organizations in the hospitality industry are facing serious challenges in balancing quality and cost control, given the labor-intensive nature of the hospitality industry.

3. The employment relationship

3.1 Transactional perspective

From an agency perspective, the relationship between employer and employee are treated as one of principal and agent. This relationship should reflect the efficient organization of information and risk-bearing costs (Eisenhardt, 1989). Under conditions of incomplete and asymmetric information, when a principal hires an agent, the problem is that the two may not have the same interests. Alternatively, the principal hires the agent to pursue the interests of the principal. There are a variety of mechanisms that can be adopted to align the interests of the employee with those of the employer, including commissions, profit-sharing, efficiency wages, performance measurement, or fear of termination. Methods such as deferred compensation and tournaments are usually suitable to create incentives for employees to maximize their contributions to output over longer periods. Some contingency employees are paid by the hour rather than by direct measurement of results. However, it might be more efficient to use indirect systems of controlling the quantity and quality of effort because a variety of informational and other issues, including turnover expenses, determine the optimal length of the relationship between employers and employees.

3.2 Relational perspective

The social exchange perspective, in contrast, contends that relationships develop over time into trust, leading to loyal and mutual commitments. Trust is usually described as a psychological status wherein an individual deliberately accepts a position of vulnerability through his or her positive expectations of the behavior of another person (Rousseau, 1995). Research shows that there are two kind of trust (cognitive and affective) in employment relationships. Cognitive trust refers to individual beliefs about supervisor reliability, dependability and competency. Affective trust derives from the feeling of having trust in another person and is associated with reciprocal interpersonal relations of care (Mayer et al., 1995). Hon and Lu (2010) try to apply this trust-based social exchange concept to the specific labor conditions in the hospitality industry. The result shows that cognitive trust is displayed by supervisors and job satisfaction and organizational commitment by their employees; on the other hand, affective trust involves the level of employee satisfaction with altruism toward their supervision. These two kinds of trust between supervisors and subordinates result in expectations of reciprocity. Hutchison (1997) found that individuals with a strong exchange orientation are more likely to return a good deed than those who possess a low exchange disposition. For example, in his investigations of perceived organizational support and absenteeism, Hutchison found that exchange ideology strengthens the relationship of perceived organizational support with felt obligation, citizenship behavior and effort, and performance. These investigations of how exchange orientation influences organizational relationships are of great importance in applying social exchange theory to explain relational-based ties between employees and their organizations.

4. Shamrock organization vs. employment modes

4.1 Internal development and external alliance

As mentioned above, employment relationships could be viewed from both transactional and relational perspectives. Nevertheless, different kinds of employment arrangements would directly influence the relationships between employer and employees. Handy's (1990)

shamrock model of organization explained the different expectations of the organization in dividing employees into three groups.

The first group is a core of qualified professional supervisors. They have detailed knowledge of the organization and are rewarded with high salaries and associated benefits. This kind of working arrangement is usually assumed to be based on permanent hires. Lepak and Snell (1999) used the dimensions of value and uniqueness of human capital and identified some unique forms of human capital that are less codified and transferable than generic skills such as chief chefs in the hospitality industry. These skills are intangible and difficult to imitate. In such cases, firms face a paradox. They would like to internalize this kind of employee, but cost-benefit considerations may prevent the organization from doing so. In this regard, Lepak and Snell (1999) demonstrated two kinds of working arrangements (alliance and commitment) to reflect this contradiction. Collaborative relationship refers to an external alliance relationship wherein each party can contribute to a jointly shared outcome. A commitment relationship involves supporting or creating an employment arrangement that is organization-focused and developed.

4.2 Internal acquisition

The second group of employees possesses core skills that are essential for competitive advantage. Their contribution to the organization is measured in results rather than in hours. Because these employees' skills are valuable but not unique, organizations may justify hiring such personnel.

4.3 External control

The third group consists of a flexible labor force, using part-time, temporary and seasonal roles. This kind of human capital has generic and limited strategic value. Because these lower-level skills can be purchased easily on the open labor market (Leonard-Barton, 1995), organizations are able to replace them easily from many alternative sources. Meanwhile, firms are able to obtain contingent labor for contract work without exposing their competitive advantage.

Therefore, in this study four kinds of working arrangements were adopted to explore the relationships between employers and employees.

5. The Cases

A multiple case study methodology was utilized herein to map the structure among employment modes. It offers useful insights that cannot be achieved with other approaches. In particular, it provides high levels of detail and allows for multiple data collection methods. Larger organizations were chosen because they possess significant numbers of employees in different employment modes. Moreover, this study has characteristics of an exploratory case study that is focused on employment relationships, and thus, ownership plays an important role in how the organization deploys its employees (Lepak and Snell, 2002). Therefore, five types of ownership structures (company-owned, franchise, independent management, referral chain and management contract) were chosen from the hotel and restaurant industries to represent different points of view. In so doing, five hotels and five restaurants that employed more than 50 workers and have different kinds of ownership structures were selected. Table 1 shows the profile and characteristics of the cases involved. Table 2 explains how each organization ranks their important attributes of human capital. From this table, "salary" ranks as the most important attribute for five out of ten companies in our study. The result from table

2 shows that cost is still a big concern in the hospitality industry. It is interesting that none of the hotels or restaurants list “job security” as a first–rank attribute; most of them position it as a second or third consideration. This situation was consistent with the discussion above on why organizations increasingly externalize employment arrangements rather than internalize them.

Table 1

Profile and Characteristics of Cases

Case No.	Industry	ages (years)	No. of Employees	Respondents Position in the Firm	Ownership
H001	Hotel	12	386	General Manger ∙ Senior HR staff	Company Owned
H002	Hotel	6	134	Senior Manager ∙ HR Manager	Franchise
H003	Resort	18	456	Senior Manager ∙ Senior HR staff	Independence
H004	Hotel	4	256	Vice General	Management
H005	Resort	17	795	Manager ∙ HRManager	Referral Chain
R001	Restaurant	10	56	Senior Manager ∙ HR Manager	Management
R002	Restaurant	3	87	President ∙ HR Manager	Contract
R003	Restaurant	25	50	General Manager ∙ HR Manager	Company Owned
R004	Restaurant	2	78	President ∙ Vice President	Franchise
R005	Restaurant	12	126	General Manager ∙ HR Manager	Independence
				General Manager ∙ HR Manager	Management
					Referral Chain
					Management
					Contract

Table 2

Important Attributes of Human Capital

Case	Human Capital Characteristics				
	Salary	Benefit	Job Security	Promotion	Training
H001	V1	V2	V3		
H002		V2		V3	V1
H003	V1		V3		V2
H004	V2		V3		V1
H005	V1	V3		V2	
R001	V1		V3		V2
R002		V1	V2		V3
R003	V3	V1			V2
R004	V1		V2	V3	
R005		V2	V3	V1	

*This shows important attributes in rank order: V1: First-rank attribute; V2: Second-rank attribute; V3: Third-rank attribute.

During each case study, the organization was visited at least twice. At the initial stage, an interview was held between the researchers and each organization’s senior human resource staff or manager. Over the course of a typical 60-90 minute interview, the HR managers or staff

provided overviews of their employee arrangements. In particular, the details on different types of employee salaries, conditions, human resource practices and future prospects were discussed. Extensive company documentation was also gathered. Next, an hour-long, one-on-one interview with each company's senior manager (general manager, vice president or president) was conducted. The purpose was to interview senior management to understand each company's organizational strategies.

While it was not possible to make exact demands on the case study organizations regarding whom would be interviewed, the senior HR representatives and senior managers were familiar with the topics of interest and, having been provided with the research project outline, easily grasped the intentions. It was made clear that all interviews would be private and confidential, and managers appeared extremely candid and forthcoming.

The main research questions addressed in the interview were as follows. What is your organizational strategy, especially as it pertains to human resources? What are the different kinds of employment arrangements in your company and who allocates them? What are the differences between these employment arrangements? How do you define the core competency workforce in your company? Which type of employment modes are used for the company's core competency workforce and why?

6. Validity and Reliability in Case Studies

Case studies use a research strategy involving triangulation, in which the protocols that are used ensure accuracy and alternative explanations (Stake, 1995). Yin (2009) showed that triangulation can occur with data, investigators, theories, and even methodologies. The need for triangulation arises from the ethical requirements to verify the validity of the processes.

The data in this study follow four conventional types of triangulation (Denzin, 1984) to ensure validity. First, for data source triangulation I collected the data from multiple sources (at least two interviewees from each organization, along with documentation) to ensure equivalency across different contexts. The rationale for using multiple sources of data is the triangulation of evidence, thereby maximizing reliability and validity. In the context of data collection, triangulation serves to corroborate the data gathered from other sources. Second, investigator triangulation implies the use of two interviewers to examine the same phenomenon. Third, theory triangulation is accomplished by using agency theory and social exchange theory to interpret the same data, thus improving the explanation. Finally, methodological triangulation, e.g., the case study approach, was used first to confine the data and then to follow up the semi-structured questionnaire survey to increase confidence in the interpretation.

7. Case Analysis

7.1 Employment mode from transactional analysis

The characteristics of the parties to the transaction, i.e., the firm and the worker, have received increasing attention in recent research. Studies in the organizational theory literature have focused on exploring which firms will use external labor arrangements and which characteristics of firms determine the intensity of use and the characteristics of the workers found in external labor arrangements. Understanding the characteristics of positions that entail the use of either permanent or external workers may be key to reconciling external labor

arrangement use with the creation and maintenance of competitive advantage. Ettorre (1994) suggested that overuse of external labor arrangements may reduce a firm's core competencies. However, Pfeffer (1994) argues that the trend toward using temporary help, part-time employees and contract workers, particularly when such people are used in core activities, flies in the face of the changing basis of competitive success.

We have over 200 branches in Taiwan. Except for the branch manager, we utilize external employees in our branches. Our standardized system provides a good way to train and manage external employees...Our core competency workforce should consist of external employees in our standardized system. (R005 HR manager)

Our hotel is located in the eastern part of Taiwan. There are not many schools around this area. During the peak season, we often offer a higher pay and a transportation subsidy to attract experienced contingency staff. This kind of temporary workforce helps our hotel to be flexible in job arrangements. (H004 HR manager)

Williamson (1981) attempts to explain the conditions under which a given transaction will be internalized within the governance of a firm or externalized to the governance of market forces. In other words, the transaction, with respect to employment, is the firm's decision concerning whether to fill a given position using outside or internal labor. Therefore, the characteristics of the position may play an important role in the firm's determination of whether it should use market-mediated mechanisms (external labor arrangements) or hierarchical mechanisms (permanent employment relationships) to govern the transaction. Likewise, cost variables, when tested independently of skill level, have shown a significant, negative correlation with external labor arrangement use (Williams, 1981). Nonetheless, in studies that have controlled for skill level, cost has not been significantly correlated with external labor arrangement use (Cohen & Haberfeld, 1993). In fact, two of these studies found temporary workers with high skill levels who earned more than did their permanent counterparts.

Recently we hire all of our employees externally at first, no matter what the position's skill level, because of a new government law that constrains us from easily laying off employees. In addition, we offer chances for external employees to be promoted to internal workers after six to twelve months. This presents a good chance for both of us to understand each other more. By doing so, the turnover is lower than it used to be. (H003 Senior manager)

Contingent employees transition from external to internal status. This process reduces the cognitive distance between principal and agent by learning through interaction. The contracting problem in adverse selection is solved by trust, which emerges over time (Russell & Marie, 2005).

In addition, internalizing transactions through permanent employment relationships requires a substantial investment in governance structures, such as creating and administering employment policies and procedures, as well as termination costs. Such costs are only justified if they are likely to be paid back over an extended period.

Thus, to the extent that a firm can confidently predict a recurring need for a worker in a given position, it will be more likely to employ such a worker permanently. When the firm is uncertain about its future demand for workers in a given position, it will be more likely to use an external labor arrangement (Masters & Miles, 2002).

Regardless, the development of employees with such skills relies on training acquired within a given firm rather than on a search in the open labor market (Lepak & Snell, 1999). The cost comes with the development of a labor pool with firm-specific skills that represent the firm’s sources of competitive advantage (Pfeffer 1994). Idiosyncratic skills are characterized by high levels of professional skills, specialized know-how, and customization; because of their intangibility, they are among the most difficult skills for competitors to imitate (Barney, 1991). Asset specificity is represented by the degree of idiosyncrasy that characterizes a service (Erramilli & Rao, 1993). Furthermore, employees who have acquired firm-specific skills are less able to move to alternate employment without losing productive capacity, as compared to employees who have acquired more generic skills. Both organizations and employees have an interest in internalizing positions that rely on idiosyncratic skills.

Our restaurant is well known for its Thai dishes. We have only been open for three years, so we rely heavily on professionals to stabilize our business, e.g., accountant and the sous-chef de cuisine. (The under-chef of the kitchen is the direct assistant of the executive chef and is second in command. They may be responsible for scheduling and filling in when the executive chef is off-duty.) They are only hired internally because of the special knowledge demanded in those positions. (R002 General Manager)

While organizational knowledge is embedded in a variety of entities such as tools, tasks, technologies and people, people-embodied knowledge is the foundation of a firm’s core capabilities and is fundamental to the development of its value proposition (Argote & Ingram, 2000). From this point of view, human capital has been tied to the larger context of strategic management.

Table 3 summarizes a tentative schema for an employment mode based on a transactional perspective, as discussed above.

Table 3

A Tentative Schema for Employment Mode from a Transactional Perspective

Type of Employment Mode	Rent	Skill Investment	Uncertainty of Performance	Opportunism
Internal development	Fixed Seniority Performance	Firm specific skill(Higher) General Purpose skill	Low	Low
Internal acquisitions	Process based Seniority	Firm specific skill	Low	High
External alliance	Performance Achievement	General Purpose skill(Higher) Firm specific skill	High	Low
External control	Hourly based	General purpose skill	High	High

7.2 Employment mode from relational analysis

Kelman (1958) argues that commitment to an organization is predicated on three separate bases of attachment: compliance, identification and internalization. Compliance refers to instrumental attachment undertaken for specific rewards; identification refers to attachment based on a desire for affiliation with the organization; and internalization refers to congruence between individual and organization values.

Fifteen years ago, I opened my first restaurant. However, it went bankrupt within three months. The reason was communication problems with the managers in our restaurant. Therefore, when I started my current restaurant 10 years ago, I tried to maintain relationships with our top managers through informal channels such as inviting them to my private farm to strengthen the relationships. We also offer benefits to their family such as scholarships to enhance their loyalty. (R001 President)

In the past five years, our turnover rate is lower than one percent. Our management team truly believes that “employees” are our most valuable assets. We offer strong commitment to take care of our internal employees¹ and their families. (H002 Senior HR Manager)

Almost 70 percent of our employees are external. Our experience is that external employees are not so willing to take extra training because they might not know if the skill would be useful in their next job or not. Therefore, we offer a cash reward to our external employees for skills training that may contribute to the firm’s competitive advantage. (H003 Senior HR staff)

O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) argue that commitment is best defined as the basis of an individual's psychological attachment to the organization. This basis of attachment is distinct either from the antecedents of commitment or from its consequences.

Organizations' increasing use of external employee arrangements has been difficult to reconcile with resource-based propositions concerning the development of organizational capabilities. If a transaction is a decision to fill a given job opening by using external labor or employment, a central consideration is how likely a firm is to need a person in that position in the future. To ensure compliance¹, firms likely would concentrate on enforcing rules and regulations, upholding specific provisions regarding work protocols and ensuring conformance to preset standards. The likelihood of repetition entails more than the duration of the relationship. The likelihood of repetition is important because both market and hierarchical governance mechanisms create transactions. Market contraction can impose a cost for negotiating and writing each employment contract.

Last year our restaurant faced a serious sales drop. We used to pay the chief chef a fixed salary each month; however, we found this to be a big burden for our restaurant, especially during economic depression. Hence, we changed our relationship with the new chief chef to

¹ Internal employees refer to the employees who were hired directly from the organization but who did not set up a fixed term of employment in advance. External employees refer to the employees who were hired directly from the organization and set up a fixed term of employment, e.g., one year. Members of the latter group might need to renegotiate another contract to stay or might have to leave when the time expires.

form an alliance. It seems the chief chef is more committed to inventing new dishes and reducing unnecessary expenses. (R003 President)

With the global economic recession, our managers have voluntarily reduced their salary and increased their working hours. We seem to take organization survival as our group responsibility because we believe our company will in some way return to us in the future. (R005 General Manager)

As the likelihood of the long-term need for an employee in a position increases, the potential cost of negotiating a series of contracts to fill the position decreases the efficiency advantages of market contraction. Individuals in close relationships may feel the need to negotiate, such as when team members negotiate tasks and responsibilities. It also relates to the parties' ability to predict the duration of the need with confidence.

Our company has created a very good external employee promotion strategy. Although our starting pay is lower than other competition, our faster promotion and better job security policies are incentives that enhance external employees' job performance. (R002 HR manager)

We believe "justice" is the most important reason for employee retention. Therefore, our external employees have higher salaries than our internal employees because these benefits are reimbursed in cash. (H005 HR manager)

Foa's (1980) resource theory indicates six types of resources in exchange: love, status, information, money, goods and services. These resources are structured into two dimensions. One of the dimensions is particularism (universalism), meaning that the resource's worth varies based on its source; for example, money is fairly low in particularism because its value is constant, regardless of who provides it. The other dimension is concreteness, meaning how tangible or specific the resource is; for instance, most services and goods are at least somewhat concrete. As a result, the less particularistic and the more concrete a benefit is, the more likely it is to be exchanged in a short-term relationship.

Table 4 provides a brief summary of a tentative schema for employment mode, displayed from a relational perspective.

Table 4

A Tentative Schema for Employment Mode from a Relational Perspective

Type of Employment Mode	Negotiated Rules	Exchange Horizon	Exchange source	Control mechanisms	Relationship
Internal development	Responsibilities	Long	Status	Social Sanctions Macroculture	Commitment
Internal acquisitions	Firm specific skill/time	Long	Stable	Macroculture	Symbiotic
External alliance	Task	Short	Bargain Power	Generalized Reciprocity	Collaborative

External control	General purposed skill /labors	Short	Money	Transactional Reciprocity	Compliance
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*Exchange horizon refers to the expected temporal duration of generalized social exchange.

Summing up, opportunism is assumed to be important — not because everyone is opportunistic, but because it is impossible to obtain reliable information concerning the opportunism of the partner. Therefore, to control risk, it is perhaps safer for an organization to hire external workers and then to shorten the cognitive distance between managers and new hires, thereby fostering opportunities for mutual understanding. When trust² is built, a long-term relationship is easier to maintain, and the turnover rate typically decreases in these situations.

8. Conclusion

As Tsai, Chen & Fang (2009) stated at the outset of their article, one feature of the economic recession has been layoffs of experienced internal employees. This study demonstrates that allocating more external employees to reduce budgets will result in higher employee turnover, greater recruiting and training costs, and potentially poorer service. Instead of merely cutting costs, this study suggests that hospitality firms might consider ways to re-engineer their companies, particularly their HR practices, towards a higher level of quality. Achieving this goal might depend on the contribution of experienced internal employees. This result demonstrates that the employment relationship requires emphasis on both the transactional and the relational dimensions.

By identifying and explaining different types of employment modes, drawn from Handy's (1990) shamrock model of organization and the study by Lepak and Snell (1999), we attain a better understanding of how such employment arrangements can be more effectively implemented. This study further suggests that organizations in the hospitality industry should allocate different kinds of employees based not only on transactional concerns but also by taking into account relational considerations. In addition, the key to balancing both transactional and relational relationships was "cognitive distance," which implies that opportunism is assumed at the beginning of a relationship when information is scarce. At this time, allocating the employees as external to gather more information once the trust is built facilitate the maintenance of the relationship.

Bridges (1994) coined the phrase "dejobbing" to describe the trend towards non-standard employment. He indicates that "although there will always be enormous amounts of work to do in our economy, the work will not be contained in that old familiar employment form of standard full-time, full-year jobs." It shows how employment relations shift between internal and external. Furthermore, employees are likely to work for more than one organization and to move back and forth across organizational boundaries—being hired to do contract work, then

² Blau (1964) identified trust as an identifiable outcome of favorable social exchanges and found that trust in one's supervisor is mediated between procedural justice and organization citizen behavior. The two kinds of trust (cognitive and affective) were discussed before; however, "trust" in this paragraph refers to favorable reciprocal feeling between employer and employee.

employed full-time for a period of time, and finally brought back in-house on a long-term project (potentially becoming part -time and full-time). A similar research study could be undertaken to investigate employees' perspectives on the employment relationship, which would be an interesting topic to compare with the present study in future research.

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