

# Perceived responsibility of client organizations and training offers for temporary agency workers:

## Results from a study on German entrepreneurs



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# Temporary Agency Work: An adverse Setting for Training

- Triangular Relationship (agency, client, temp worker): Temps are employed by a staffing agency and they are assigned to different client organizations → responsibility unclear. (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004).
- Restrictions of the work-arrangement: short-term tenure, local distance, variety in work-tasks, low-qualification of the workers etc.
- Provision of training and qualification may not „pay off“, neither for the agency nor for the client. (Burda & Kvasnicka, 2005).
- Clients „order“ workers who fit and fulfill the work tasks. Focus on selection of the „fittest“ instead of individual development. (Feldman, Doeringhaus, & Turnley, 1994; Kallberg & Reve, 1992; Kalleberg & Rognes, 2000; Von Hippel et al., 1997).



# Findings on Training Provision for Temporary Agency Workers

- In general there is little research on Human Resource practices concerning TAW. Neither from the part of the agency nor from the client organization. (Mitlacher, 2010)
- Temps are mostly excluded from training and learning opportunities in the client organization. (Finegold, Levenson, & Van Buren, 2005; Kalleberg, Reskin, & Hudson, 2000)
- Findings in Europe indicate that temps have less training offers than permanent workers. (Letourneux, 1998)
- Formal training is unlikely for temps and it is more often provided by the client organization than by the staffing agency. (Galais, Moser & Münchhausen, 2007)
- For the US it has been reported that training offers (computer training) were wide-spread but had more or less a screening function. (Feldman et al. 1994).



# Training Provision in Psychological Research

- Training and skill-development in psychological literature:
  - Psychological contract literature & Social exchange (Chambel & Sobral, 2011; Chambel & Castanheira, 2006,)
  - Studies on POS (Buch, Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2010, Connelly, Gallagher & Gilley, 2007)
  - Boundaryless careers: Workers fall back on themselves (Sullivan, 1999)
  - Human capital literature (no interest in exchangeable workers).



# Motives and Culture of the Client Organization as Determinants of Training provision

- Organizational determinants of training provision are neglected so far.
- We suggest that training provision is related to the motives (and expectations) that organizations have for using TAW.
- Further we suggest that the organizational culture has an impact on Training provision for external workers.
- Logic of the use and the spirit of the organization.



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# Goal of the present study

- Investigation of organizational determinants of training offers to temporary agency workers
  - Focus on motives for using temporary agency work
  - Focus on organizational culture

# Approach of the present study

- Online study on entrepreneurs in Germany
- Survey (paper-pencil) on temporary agency workers



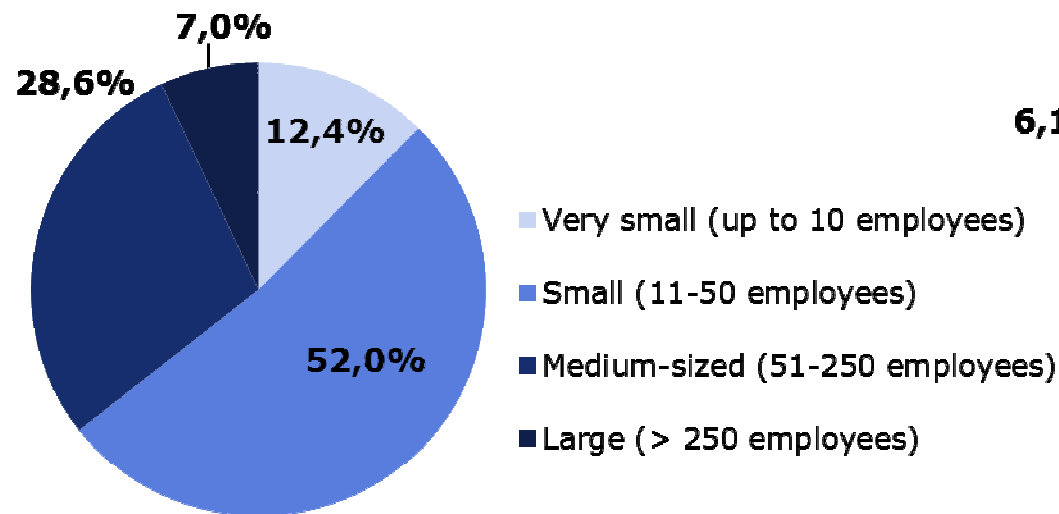
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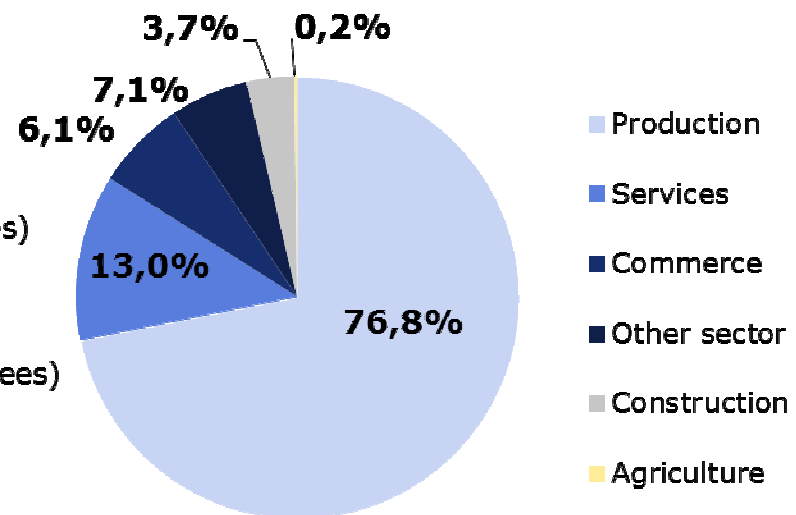
# Sample: Entrepreneurs

- 1.221 Small- and medium sized companies.
- Participants mainly owners and CEOs (n = 1079)
- Subsample production sector (n = 495).

## Company Size



## Industry Sector



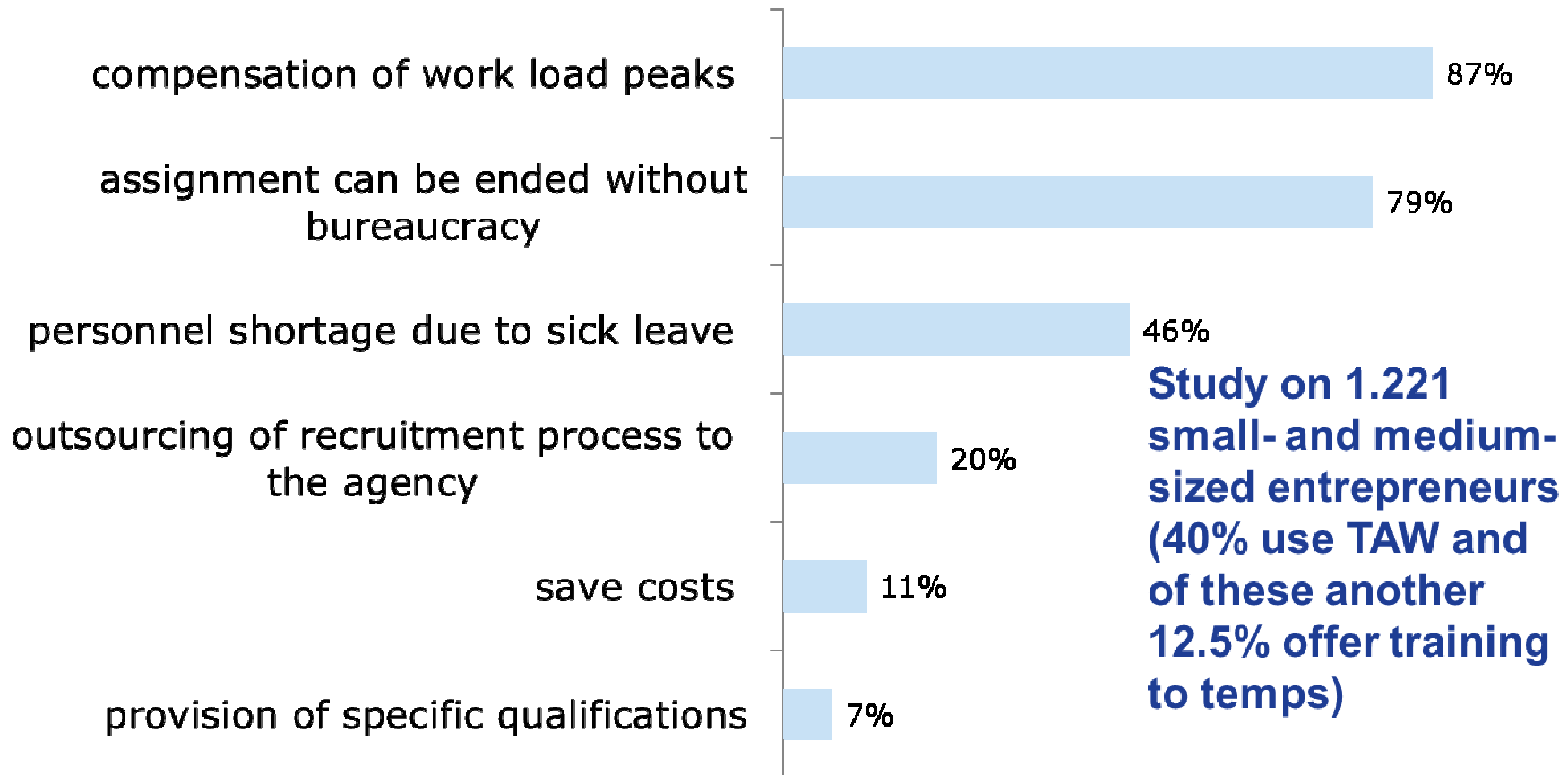
# Organizational Culture

## Focus Questionnaire (van Muijen et al, 1999)

- **Support orientation:** cooperation, participation, mutual trust and support (“How typical is mutual support in solving work problems?”).  
(7 items 1= “not typical at all” to 6= “very typical”;  $\alpha = .92$ ).
- **Innovation orientation:** search for new information, creativity, openness to change (“How often does your organization search for new markets for existing products?”)  
(6 items; 1= „never“ to 5= „always“;  $\alpha = .78$ ).
- **Rules orientation:** Respect for authorities, obeying of rules and procedures (“How typical is compliance to standards?”)  
(4 items; 1= “not typical at all” to 6= “very typical”;  $\alpha = .83$ ).
- **Goal orientation:** Rationality, accountability, measurement of indicators (“How typical is responsibility for performance?”)  
(6 items; 1= “not typical at all” to 6= “very typical”;  $\alpha = .86$ ).



# Motives of the organizations for using TAW



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**Results: Use of temporary agency work and determinants of training offers to temporary agency workers**

**Training offers**

**Use of TAW**

**Step 1: Control variables / Org. characteristics**

(Industry sector, Size of Organization, Age of Organization, Proportion of low skilled workers, Product complexity, Training provision for core workers).

**Step 2: Assignment characteristics**

Limited qualifications needed in assignment

-0.54\*

--

Reduced responsibility

-0.23

--

Reduced variability of tasks

-0.09

--

Temps are important for company's success

0.60\*\*

--

**Step 3: organizational motives**

Compensation of work load peak

-0.67\*\*

--

No obligations

-0.00

--

Compensation of sick leave

0.27

--

Recruitment

-0.01

--

Cost reduction

0.01

--

Specific qualifications needed

-0.26

**Step 4: organizational culture**

Support

-0.04

-0.29\*

Innovation

0.62\*

0.60\*

Rules

0.09

0.17

Goals

-0.29

-0.01

Constant

-0.72

-0.17

*Nagelkerkes R<sup>2</sup>*

0.32

0.26

# Organizational motives and culture count for the treatment of temporary agency workers

- The motive of compensating work load peaks has a negative effect on the probability of training provision → Flexibility motives reduce the readiness for investments in external workers.
- When higher qualified temporary workers are needed, training provision is more probable. When temps count for organizational success training provision is more likely.
- High innovation orientation of the client organization has a positive effect on training provision of temporary agency workers (as well as on the use of temporary work in general).
- High support orientation reduces the probability of the use of TAW but has no effect on training provision.

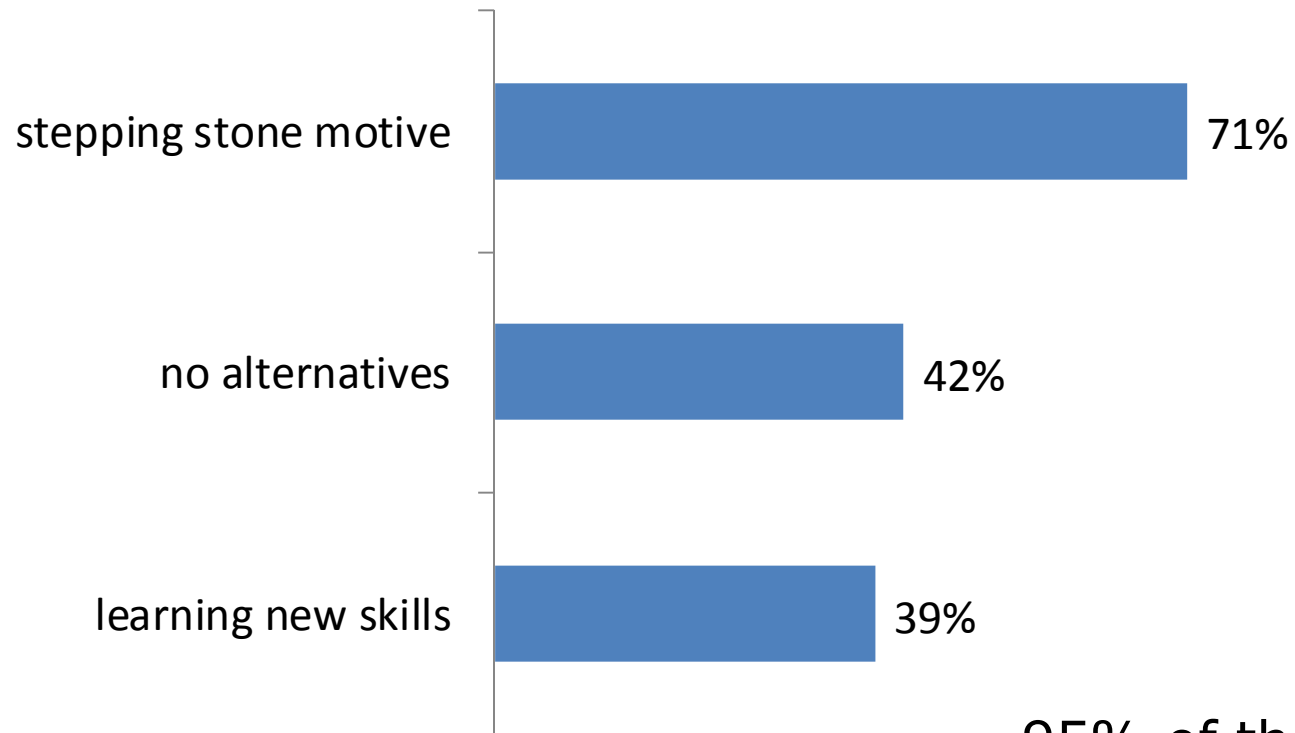


# Perceived organizational motives and training offers for temporary agency workers: Asking temps

- N = 269 workers of a single agency (aerospace)
- 79% male,  $\bar{X}$  age = 39 years (Min = 19, Max = 64, SD = 10)
- 55% were assigned for more than a year to the client
- 47% of the workers were working more than two years in TAW
- 73% worked in their first assignment
- 75% were skilled workers
- 39% received formal training (yes/no) by the client



# Motives for temping



95% of the temps prefer standard employment



**Results: Individual motives for temping, perceived organizational motives for using TAW and probability of training offers for temps**

**Training offers  
(yes/no)**

**Step 1: Control variables**

Age	.00
Gender	.34
Duration of Assignment in Client	.22***
Qualification level of assignment	-.03

**Step 2: Individual motives for temping**

Voluntariness (no/yes)	-.24
Stepping stone motive	-.04
Lack of alternatives	-.07
Learning new skills	.03

**Step 3: Perceived organizational motives for using TAW**

Compensation of work load peak	-.04
No obligations	.14
Compensation of sick leave	-.15
Screening and recruitment	.03
Cost reduction	-.22*
Specific qualifications needed	.12
Constant	-2.95*

*Nagelkerkes R<sup>2</sup>*

.29

# Individual motives and perceived organizational motives

- Individual „learning“ motives have no effects on training provision of the client.
- Perceived cost reduction motive is negatively related with the probability of training provision.



# Summary and Conclusion

- Higher qualified or specialized temporary workers have higher chances to receive training by the client.
- Organizations that signal to temps that they use TAW for cost reduction reasons offer less often training.
- Flexibility motives are negatively related to training provision.
- Organizational culture determines the use of TAW as well as the probability of training offers to the workers.
  - Innovation orientation is related to both: The use of TAW as well as on probability of training provision.
  - Support orientation is related to non-use of TAW but has no effects on training provision.
- Organizations seem to only take responsibility for training for workers they really need for their organizational success. Flexibility motives reduce the responsibility for the external workers.

