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## **Investigating Ways to Motivate Zero-Hour Contract Employees to Improve The Retention Rate: A Case Study of the UK Employment Agencies**

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigates the right motivational factors and retention strategies that UK employment agencies should consider in their policies to face the ongoing employee retaining challenges. It has been found from various researches that due to economic and political challenges across Europe UK organisations are facing challenges over attracting new talent and keep their existing employees. The importance of retaining employees has grown higher than ever before. Employees on a zero-hours contract are also part of organisational success and organisation should have policies to retain zero-hours contract employees to reduce recruitment and selection cost and to get valuable benefits of experienced employees knowledge. The research output has significantly demonstrated that motivation factors are important for employee retention. The co-relation between participants demographic information and motivational and factors shows the necessity of understanding employees need before designing motivational policies.*

**Keywords:** Motivational, Retention, Zero-hours contract, employment agencies.

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## **Introduction**

Human resource at any organisation is a potential source of advantage to face challenges from its competitors (Nabi et al, 2017). HR designs different functions for employees and a good HR plan helps the organisation to operate smoothly. Factors relating employees remains one of the most important but critical aspects of gaining competitive advantage (Conrad, Ghosh, Isaacson, 2015). To achieve organisational excellence human resource management uses different tools and techniques. Motivation is suggested to be a key component to make employees satisfied and work on the aspects to gain competitive advantage (Erceg and Suljug, 2016), (Staunton et al., 2014). Motivational factors can have a different level of effects on employees considering the size of the organisation, a sector the organisation belongs and organisational offerings to its employees. In the current scenario of the UK employment market indicates several challenges are facing the employers in order to recruit and retain talents.

The economic and political changes across Europe and other parts of the world have grown challenges for employers to attract and retain talent (CIPD, 2017). The importance of developing and retaining talent has become crucial in the UK for all kind of organisations. According to Mohr, Young and Burgess (2012), because of high employee turnover employment agencies face sustainability challenge.

In UK, organisations offer different types of contracts, such as full-time and part-time contracts, fixed-term contracts, agency staff, freelancers, consultants, contractors and zero-hour contracts. Among them zero-hour contracts remain a controversial topic as this casual contract give staffs no guarantee of their hours. However, zero-hour contracts have also been accepted by many organisations and individuals positively and as a favour depending on the organisational type and individual status and flexibility (Whitehead and Phippen, 2015). As many businesses are offering zero-hour contracts in the UK it is important to research what motivational factors they should consider retaining employees and remain competitive in today's modern business world.

### ***1.1 Objectives of the study***

- To identify the motivational factors that zero-hours contract employees believe as most effective in the UK.
- To demonstrate the most effective motivational ways to retain zero-hour contract employees.

## **2 Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Motivation***

Baldoni (2004) defined motivation as an art of making employees do what organisations required to do as employees want to do it. Both definitions pointed to some common factors. Such as, organisations always required high employee performance to get organisational success and it is one the crucial part where many organisations struggle to achieve. At the same time to enhance organisational performance motivating employees is one of the vital tools used by organisations (Conrad, Ghosh, Isaacson, 2015). It shows the significance of organisational success on motivated employee performance and to get the best result of motivation it requires the right selection of guidance, direction, resources and rewards (Torrington et al., 2009) Lussier (2005), Linder (1998).

### ***2.2 Theories of motivation***

Theories of motivation address several factors that help employee job satisfaction, performance, retention etc. Content and Process theories are the two board classes of motivation theory. Content theories address what factors motivate employees and process theories to address how the people are motivated (Pratap, 2016). Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Federick Herzberg's two

factors theory and David C. McClelland's human motivation are some of the most known theorists and theory of content theories.

Process theories are also a group of theories of motivation that attempt to identify the relationships among the dynamic variables actions required to influence behaviour (Richard, 2014). Adams's equity theory, Vroom's expectancy theory, Locke's goal setting theory are the most known theorists and theory of process theories. Though these theories have given helpful understanding what motivates people still they can be verified by applying in various settings (Nabi et al., 2017).

### **2.3 Retention**

Employee retention is described as a process in which employees encourage to stay with the organisation for maximum time or until a project finish (Sandhya and Kumar, 2011). Retention defines at what extent an employer keeps its employees and it can be measured as the portion of employees with a specific time stays with the company as a percentage of overall workforce typically in a year (CIPD, 2017). According to Steel, Griffeth and Hom (2002), the reason or facts that make employee stay in any organisation are not always the same reasons employee leave. There is a number of reason behind low retention rate. New career opportunity attracts employees and pulls them from the organisation. On the other hand, an internal organisational problem such as dissatisfaction, organisational changes, Lack of growth, poor relation with managers and co-workers are common push factors of employees leaving any organisation (Das and Baruah, 2013). Organisations in the UK are now finding it hard to keep retention rate high because of various internal and external factors. Writers in various research have recognised various factors of employee retention. Osteraker (1990) stated in his work that employee satisfaction and retention are two vital factors of organisational survival. Human resources plan and management plays an important role on employee retention, Parker and Wright (2001), Clarke (2001), Stein (2000) have observed that employers must utilise the human resource management factors to influence staff retention and commitment.

#### ***2.4 Significance of motivation on retention***

The significance of motivation is vital for individual and organisational performance as employees are not solely motivated by money and employee behaviour is linked to their attitudes (Nabi et al., 2017). According to Erceg and Suljug (2016), companies can increase their competition by using motivation as one of the vital tools of HRM. Motivation is a method to inspire, increase stamina and workability of employees in any organisation (Dysvik and Kuvaas, 2012). In another word, motivation inspires employees to work with their internal force. In the rapidly changing workplaces, motivated employees are the key to organisational survival (Smith, 1994). A motivated employee is an asset and managers must need to understand right motivational factors within their organisational contexts. Studies on motivation demonstrate that from all the managerial duties motivation is arguably the most complex but the most crucial for organisational success. According to Nabi et al., (2017), motivation is an important part of understanding behaviour. Motivation consists of 3 interdependent elements needs, drives and incentives. Employee commitment is necessary to attain the organisational goal. Motivation is a tool that contributes to a person's degree of commitment and it is a human psychological characteristic. According to the study of Maylett and Nielsen (2012), an organisation can play a vital role in employee satisfaction by changing organisational practices and policies to bring effectiveness, but motivation stands out as loose variables.

#### ***2.5 Zero-hours Contracts***

Zero-hours contracts guarantee no fixed amount of work. Zero-hour contracts have been controversial as it exposes uncertainty on working hours. According to CIPD (2017), the zero-hours contract is an agreement between two parties that one may be asked to perform work for another but there is no minimum set of contract hours. The term 'contract' do not state that there will be consistent work however employees are expected to rely on the employer when needed (Whitehead and Phippen, 2015). Employees on a zero-hour contract do not the same employment rights as others on the traditional contracts and it may arise concern that employers can avoid their responsibility to the employees (BBC, 2014). According to McCrory (2014), zero-hour contracts

have exploited and undermined UK's working population. The latest estimate of ONS (2017) shows 883,000 people are reportedly on a zero-hours contract. Students in many cases are considered a good beneficiary of zero-hour contracts. It gives them the scope to adjust their working hours and take a long period of holidays from work. Although it has been widely criticised some employee benefits of this contract are also present. There are many reasons for people working on zero-hours contracts. Focusing on the fact about what motivates employees to work on zero-hour contracts will provide good indication why employees could be happy on this contract.

**Zero-hours contract and motivation theories:** Frederick Winslow Taylor introduced Taylorism theory that suggests that employees work solely for reward. The theory states that people only work for money (Armstrong, 2012). This idea has been defined more depth on Taylor's book of scientific management where he stated that prosperity of the employer could not happen unless it is being cooperated by the prosperity of the employee and vice versa (Taylor, 1998). In the case of zero-hour contracts employer has acquired their prosperity, however, employees have not received enough prosperity.

Another motivation of theory is Maslow's hierarchy of needs. As stated earlier Maslow's hierarchy focuses on different needs and lower needs must be satisfied to ensure the higher needs are being made. The lower needs section focuses on psychological, safety and social needs. Employees who don't have a minimum earning guarantee may be unable to be seen themselves within the growth needs of Maslow's hierarchy.

Two-factor theory of Herzberg focuses on both factors that motivate and dissatisfy employees Whitehead and Phippen (2015). Hygiene factors represent the elements that are known as dissatisfaction elements. Intrinsic factors include Achievement, recognition and work itself creates job satisfaction. Zero-hour contracts have lack of job security and dissatisfaction likely to be caused. According to the theory, the dissatisfied factor can hinder the further growth or improvement of employees' skills.

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### **3 Research Methodology**

This aim of this research study is to investigate a current phenomenon which is finding the best ways to motivate employees for high retention. To investigate the factors influencing its practices, a deductive research approach will be adopted. Deductive research approach will allow the researcher to start with existed motivational factors and they can be testified in the UK employment agency workers to understand their psychological process.

A case study research approach has been adopted for this research because this study aims to investigate a current phenomenon and it will allow the researcher to retain the true characteristics of group behaviours, organisational and managerial process (Punch, 1998). To understand the in-depth view of a problem and providing an understanding of important aspects of new or existing problematic research area case study method is used (Gomm et al., 2000). This research also aims to investigate in-depth view of retention and motivational difficulties in UK organisations and to provide an understanding of important motivational factors. The primary data of this research will be collected through questionnaires and a case study supports this data collection and it will researcher to go in depth of a specific current phenomenon.

The quantitative research methodology is considered the most appropriate method for this research because data for the research will be primary data that will be collected through sample questionnaire. Through sample questionnaire, the researcher will be able to collect detailed information that describes an ongoing phenomenon. The survey questionnaire will be developed to collect data and it will be designed for the review of the literature. The researcher has mentioned several motivational factors of employee retention on the literature review section. The most relevant motivational ways will be selected on designing the questionnaire. The questionnaire will be distributed to the target agency employees in person or use electronics medias such as email and social sites. As the research does not aim to collect data from employers the researcher will only take survey approach to get a better understanding of the motivational rank. According to Anderson (2009), quantitative research method will allow researchers to measure and compare data..

As mentioned earlier the data that will be collected for this research will be primary data. Primary data will provide information about the ongoing trend and practices. The questionnaire will be used as a research data collection instrument. The questionnaire of this study has 3 sections. The first section asked respondents some general personal information. The second section of the questionnaire asked respondents to identify and rate the factors motivate them. This section has been designed from the factors discussed in their literature review as the most important motivational factors for high retention. The third section of the questionnaire asked respondents about the retention practices and their importance to respondents. The factors included in section three are the key factors of retention strategies identified in the literature.

The population for this study consisted all the present and ex-worker of employment agencies on a zero-hours contract in the UK. Employees from different agencies, sectors and experience level will be chosen as the target population. Researcher currently working with agency workers and data will be collected from them also it will be sent to the past workers through social media, However, this study was limited to only 120 workers of employment agencies in the UK. From 120 targeted population 100 people respondent on the questionnaire. As this study aims to study the motivational factors and retention strategies of employment agencies for zero-hours contract employees both present and previous workers were chosen to be the population of this study. The respondents were chosen from different levels such as lower, middle and high / management level.

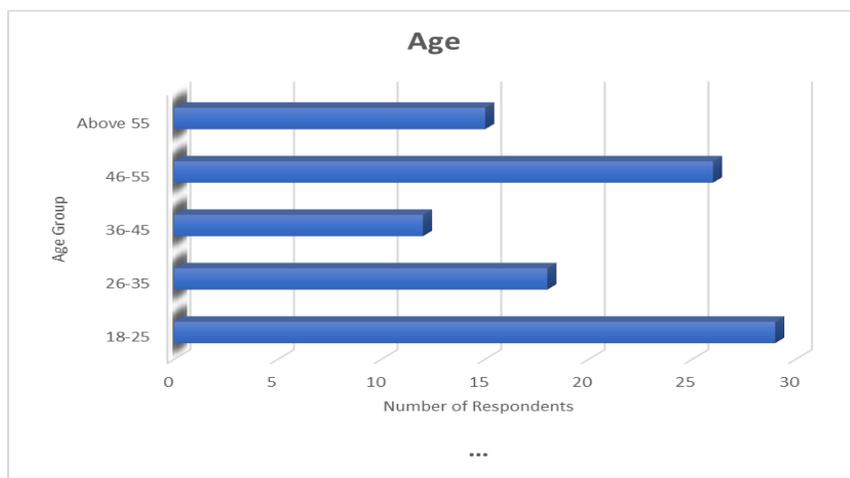
After receiving 100 filled questionnaires from respondents' quantitative method was deployed for the data analysis. Quantitative analysis use table and diagrams to show the frequency, using statistics such as comparisons, creating a statistical relationship between variables for statistical modelling (Saunders et al., 2007). The findings of this study were analysed and presented in forms of tables and percentages. To show the distribution of respondents' perception data for several research questions were analysed using percentage.

## **4 Presentation of Data, Analysis And Discussion Of Findings.**

### **4.1 General information:**

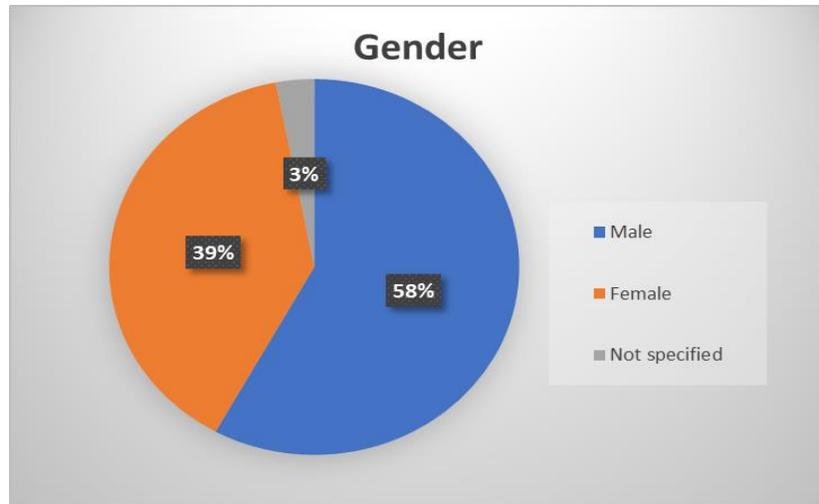
**Age of respondents:** Figure 1 demonstrates that, among 100 people the research was conducted, 29 individuals are the age of 18-25 years, 18 individuals are the age of 26-35 years, 12 individuals are the age of 36-45 years, 26 individuals are 46-55 years, 15 individuals have categorised themselves age of 55 and above. Figure 4 also demonstrates that from 100 respondents the biggest age groups found are 18-25 years.

**Figure1: Age of respondents**



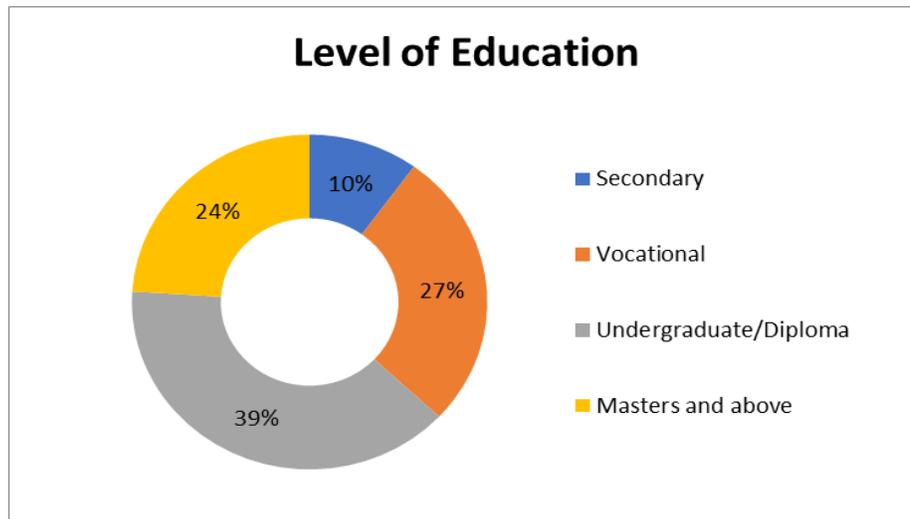
**Gender of respondents:** From Figure 2, among 100 individuals respondent on this research 58% were male, 39% were female and 3% did not specify their gender. The number shows a higher number of male working on a zero-hours contract among the 100 individuals however 39% of the female is also a good indication of good acceptance and popularity of zero-hours contract among female workers. Also, it indicates that employers are not gendered biased on recruiting employees.

**Figure 2: Gender of respondents**



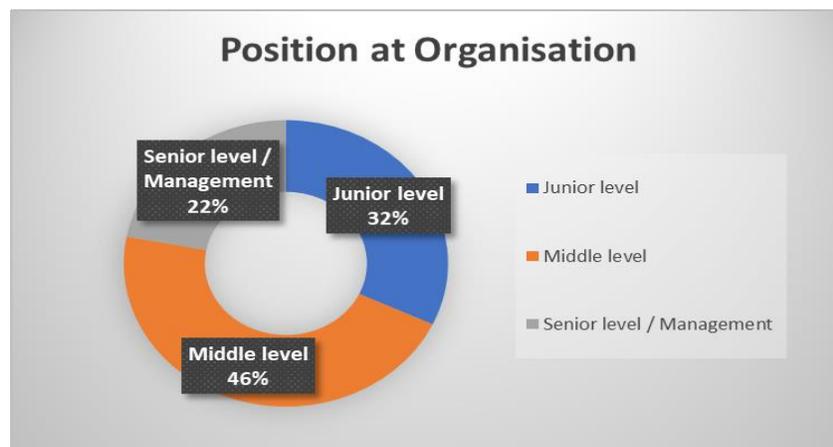
**Level of education of respondents:** Individuals response on their education shows that 24% of individuals have masters or above qualification, 39% individuals are undergraduate, 27% have the vocational qualification and 10% have a secondary level of education. The data indicate that well-educated workers are working on zero-hour contracts which also indicates a positive acceptance of zero-hours contract among educated individuals.

**Figure 3: Level of education of respondents.**



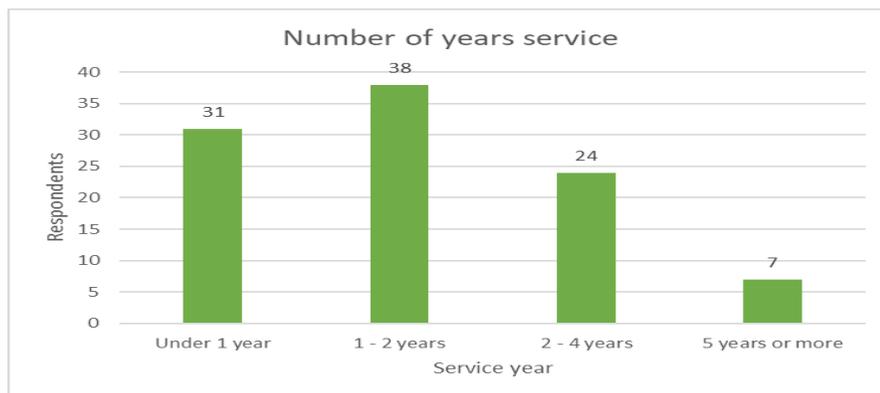
**Position at the organisation:** This research questionnaire reveals that 32% of the total individuals are junior level workers. 46% individuals have a middle level position at their organisation and 22% holds senior or managerial level position at their organisation showed in figure 7. The percentage suggests that greater number of zero-hours contract individuals are holding middle-level ranks in the service and lowest number individuals are holding senior/management level ranks.

**Figure 4: respondents position at organisation**



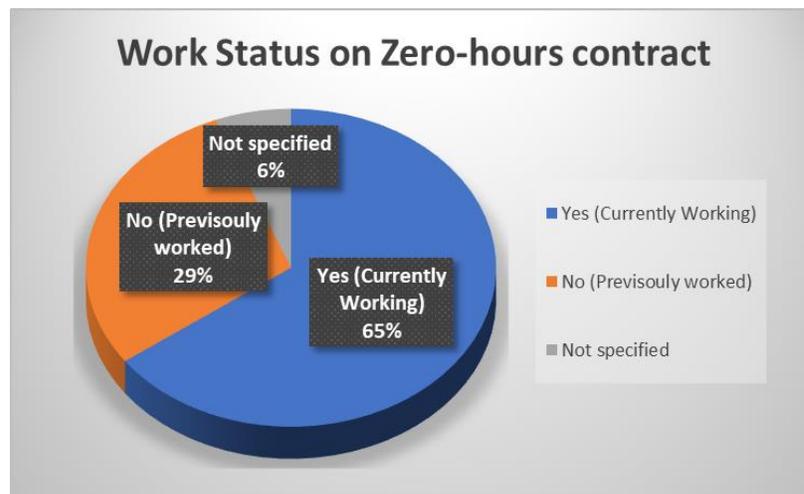
**Years of service on a zero-hour contract:** Figure 5 indicates that 31% individuals have worked under 1 year and 38% individuals among 100 individuals have worked 1-2 years. 24% and 7% individuals have worked 2-4 years and 5 or more years respectively. Percentages on figure 8 further indicate that workers on a zero-hours contract have not worked a long time in this contract and stayed with their company for a long period of time. When an employee leaves a company they take their experience and a higher level of performance also depends on employees valuable knowledge and experience (Taylor, 2009).

**Figure 5: Years of service.**



**Current work status:** Figure 6 indicates that from 100 respondents of this study 65 are currently working on a zero-hours contract and 29 individuals have previously worked on a zero-hours contract.

**Figure 6: Current work status.**



#### **4.2 Motivational Factors**

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement to the motivational factors and indicate how these factors motivate employees on a zero-hour contract. In an attempt to explore the types of motivation, respondents were asked to provide their responses to key motivational factors. The responses from present and ex-employee on a zero-hour contract were used to determine the importance of key motivational factors to them. The motivational questions that were asked to employee demonstrate some key areas such as:

- Salary and other monetary benefits
- Job Security
- Respect and fair treatment from management and co-workers.
- Promotion and career advancement opportunities
- Regular Training and development
- Authority of decision making while performing a job

##### **4.2.1 Salary and other monetary benefits**

Questionnaire respondents were asked whether salary and other monetary benefits motivates them to stay at their organisation. Table 1 demonstrates that 52% of the respondents are in strong

agreement that salary and other monetary benefits motivate that. Whilst 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the fact that money and other monetary benefits motivate them at work. 24% respondent indicated salary and other monetary benefits somewhat important whilst other 9% were uncertain. Although Frederick Herzberg (1968) suggested that money is not a motivational factor but in this case, employment agencies employees on a zero-hours contract have indicated strongly that it is one of the leading motivators for them to stay or leave an organisation. The finding of this study supports Aswathappa (2003) literature where he mentioned wage payment and monetary rewards as a determinant of job satisfaction. Organisations should employ wage and reward system accordingly to motivate and retain employees.

**Table 1: Salary and other monetary benefits**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly disagree	10	10.0	10.0	10.0
Neutral	9	9.0	9.0	19.0
Agree	24	24.0	24.0	43.0
Strongly agree	52	52.0	52.0	95.0
Not specify	5	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

#### 4.2.2 Job Security

Table 2 indicates most respondents representing 91% agreed that job security motivates them to stay with the organisation where 71% strongly agreed and 20% agreed with the factor. Only 3% of the respondents disbelieves motivation as an important element of motivation whilst 2% remain neutral with the factor. Maslow suggested job security as on the important factor of safety needs in his work. The percentage of this study also gives a similar indication that when job security is available employees feels staying with an organisation for a longer period. Herzberg (1968) stated

in hygiene factors that when employees feel lack of job security it could cause dissatisfaction at work.

**Table 2: Job security**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	Disagree	3	3.0	3.0	4.0
	Neutral	2	2.0	2.0	6.0
	Agree	20	20.0	20.0	26.0
	Strongly agree	71	71.0	71.0	97.0
	Not Specify	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

#### 4.2.3 Respect and fair treatment from management and co-workers

Employees treatment by their superiors and peers is a strong factor in motivation. Participants for this study also reveals that it is one of the important factors in their decision making of whether staying or leaving a company. 54% of respondents strongly agreed with the fact that respect and fair treatment from managers and co-workers is a vital fact of motivation whilst 6% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. According to Lawler (2003) to create organisational efficiency and success treating people is a fundamental need.

**Table 3: Respect and fair treatment from management and co-workers**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	6	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Neutral	12	12.0	12.0	18.0
	Agree	28	28.0	28.0	46.0
	Strongly agree	54	54.0	54.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

#### 4.2.4 Promotion and career advancement opportunities

Respondents were asked their opportunities for growth and career advancement have any aspiration and 58% respondents agreed with the factor. Table 4 also indicates that 36% respondents disagreed with this fact while 6% were neutral. Employees promotion and growth opportunity available in their organisation lead them toward their own goal. According to Locke’s goal setting theory, the intentions to work towards a goal are a major source of work motivation. 36% respondents who did not agree with the statement also indicates a big portion of employees’ disagreement with the fact. One of the reason could be the lack of job security and guarantee of minimum working hours for zero-hours contract staffs. Employees who work on this contract does not consider a career advancement in future. This implies that the management must ensure that promotions in the organisation are done fairly to encourage employees and Maslow’s (1946) hierarchy of needs and Locke (1968) goal setting theory which believes that the intentions to work towards a goal are major sources of work motivation.

**Table 4: Promotion and career advancement opportunities**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	16	16.0	16.0	16.0
	Disagree	20	20.0	20.0	36.0
	Neutral	6	6.0	6.0	42.0
	Agree	14	14.0	14.0	56.0
	Strongly agree	44	44.0	44.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

#### 4.2.5 Regular Training and development

Respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree with the regular training and development empowered their decision to stay at any organisation Table 5 shows that 28% of the respondents strongly agreed and 40% agreed that regular training and development empowered their decision

to stay at their organisation. Table 5 also indicates that 10% respondents disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed with the fact whilst 19% remain uncertain. Training is an attempt to bring organisational efficiency and employees working on a zero-hours contract are also part of companies' operation. So, it indicates that the zero-hour contract employees should not be judged as a temporary worker rather training should have provided them as well to improve retention rate.

**Table 5: Regular Training and Development**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Disagree	10	10.0	10.0	13.0
	Neutral	19	19.0	19.0	32.0
	Agree	40	40.0	40.0	72.0
	Strongly Agree	28	28.0	28.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

#### 4.2.6 Authority of decision making while performing a job

Table 6 demonstrates that 24% of respondents strongly agreed that authority of making decision motivates them whilst 26% agreed with the fact. On the other hand, 33% disagree with this term and 9% strongly disagreed. Authority of making a decision while performing a job enhances employees flexibility and level of performance. This agrees with Fredrick Herzberg (1968) hygiene theory which states that responsibility at work motivates employees.

**Table 6: Authority of decision making while performing a job**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	9	9.0	9.0	9.0
	Disagree	33	33.0	33.0	42.0
	Neutral	8	8.0	8.0	50.0
	Agree	26	26.0	26.0	76.0
	Strongly agree	24	24.0	24.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Motivational Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage
Salary & monetary benefits	52	24	9	0	10
Job Security	71	20	2	3	1
Respect and fair treatment	54	28	12	6	0
Career advancement	44	14	6	20	16
Training and development	28	40	19	10	3
Authority of decision making	24	26	8	33	9

#### 4.2.7 Motivational packages at the workplace in terms of their importance

The finding from above table shows that job security (71%) is rated most important by the highest number of employees followed by respect and fair treatment from management and co-workers (54%), salary and other monetary benefits (52%), promotion and career advancement plan (44%), training and development (28%) and the lowest rating was authority of decision making (24%).

The outcome of this study demonstrates Maslow’s safety needs. Safety needs suggest the need for a stable environment and relatively free from threat. Maslow suggested job security as on the important factor of safety needs in his work and good relationship with management and co-workers is a vital element of the stable work environment. This study also suggests that job security and employee relation with others are highly rated by the zero-hours contract employees. The

percentage of this study also gives a similar indication that when job security is available employees feels staying with an organisation for a longer period. Herzberg (1968) stated in hygiene factors that when employees feel lack of job security it could cause dissatisfaction at work. From the literature review, it has indicated that incentive compensation is one of the strongest motivators. The reward is what employees receive in exchange for their contributions to the organisation (William and Werther, 1996). Rewards can come in form of salary, promotion, bonuses and other incentives. Respondents were asked whether salary and other monetary benefits motivates them at work and 52% of the respondents strongly agreed with the fact. Another factor of reward that motivates employees has also got positive acceptance of 44% respondents. It demonstrates when the reward system is effectively managed it can help to achieve organisational objectives and goals.

**4.2.8 Co-relation analysis between demographic characteristics and motivational factors.**

This section presents the co-relation between respondents’ general information and key motivational factors.

From different studies, it has been found that salary and other monetary benefits encourage employees to their work. Aswathappa (2003) stated salary system as a determinant of employee satisfaction. This study also found 52 respondents strongly agreed with the term. Although the demographic information shows respondents of different age have a different opinion about salary and monetary rewards. Table 7 below demonstrates the number of respondents in different age groups strongly agree with salary and monetary benefits as an important factor of motivation.

**Table 7: Respondents strongly agreed to salary and other monetary benefits as an important factor of motivation by their age groups.**

Table 7		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	18-25	7	7.0	7.0
	26-35	7	7.0	7.0

36-45	11	11.0	11.0
46-55	10	10.0	10.0
Above 55	17	17.0	17.0
Total	52	52.0	52.0

10 respondents have disagreed with the term that salary and monetary benefits motivate them, and table 8 below shows their age groups.

**Table 8: Respondents disagree to salary and other monetary benefits as an important factor of motivation by their age groups.**

Table 8		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	18-25	6	6.0	6.0
	26-35	4	4.0	4.0
	36-45	0	0.0	0.0
	46-55	0	0.0	0.0
	Above 55	0	0.0	0.0
	Total	10	10.0	10.0

From both above tables, it indicates that respondents age group between 18-25 years are less motivated by salary and other monetary benefits on the other hand age groups of 46-55 years and above 55 are highly motivated by salary and monetary benefits. People at their young age seems to become more ambitious about their career growth, learning and growth opportunities, challenges rather than monetary benefits (Nabi et al., 2017). This reinforces Frederick Herzberg (1968) doctrine that money is not a motivational factor. This study demonstrates that while

designing motivation for an organisation employer must give importance the factors are chosen to motivate employees according to their needs.

**Table 9: Respondents disagree to authority of making decision as an important factor of motivation by their level of work.**

<b>Table 9</b>		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Junior level	24	24.0	24.0
	Middle level	11	11.0	11.0
	Senior level / Management	7	7.0	7.0
	Total	42	42.0	42.0

Participants of this study were asked whether career advancement opportunities motivate them to plan a further career in their existing organisation. More female participants have strongly agreed with this term rather than male participants. From 100 participants 44 have strongly agreed with career advancement in the current organisation. Among them 27 are female and 17 are male participants. Table 10 indicates female employees are more interested in career advancement opportunities in their existing organisation rather than male employees. In many cases men and women have different preferences at work. New emerging studies have identified although men and women working side by side, tackling the same problem but they experience very different workplace (Waller,2016).

**Table 10: Respondents strongly agree to career advancement in the current organisation as an important factor of motivation by gender.**

<b>Table 10</b>		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Male respondent	17	17.0	17.0

Female respondent	27	27.0	27.0
Total	44	44.0	44.0

The co-relations above demonstrates the importance of understanding employees need by their demographic information. According to Maslow (1954), employers must understand employees level of need because a satisfied need can no longer bring positive impact on employees.

### 4.3 Retention Strategies

The respondents were asked 12 questions covering 4 key retention areas to indicate their knowledge of the availability of retention strategies at their organisation and its level of importance. These questions were designed in relation to meet the research objectives and questions of this study. Respondents were asked a question regarding four key retention areas such as work environment, relationships and security, rewards and recognition and growth opportunity.

#### 4.3.1 Work environment

The work environment is a vital determinant of employees’ commitment to staying or leaving work. If a suitable work environment is not provided by the management, it could pose a serious threat to performance. Respondents were asked four different questions about the work environment and their indication of the availability. From table 1.1 to 1.4, the responses show that most of the respondents on these four questions believe that working environment is a very important element of staying or leaving their organisation.

<b>Table 11 Right working condition</b>		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Uncertain	6	6.0	6.0
	Somewhat important	18	18.0	18.0
	Very important	74	74.0	74.0
	Not specified	2	2.0	2.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0
	Availability – Yes	65	65.0	65.0

Availability – No	32	32.0	32.0
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From table 11, the responses show that 74% of the respondents agree that right working condition is very important that determines their performance. The table also indicates 18% respondents stated the term as somewhat important whilst 2% are uncertain. and none of the respondents disagrees with the statement. In the case of availability of this strategy at their organisation 65% reveal that they have received right working condition whilst 32% said not having the right working condition available. These responses have reflected on the SHRM (2010) work that, it is employer duty to provide resources, opportunities, recognition and a cohesive work environment for employees to be successful. It can be concluded that the employees believe that better working conditions can help them to improve on the level of their long-term agreement with the organisation. Management should endeavour to improve the working conditions of employees for better performance.

<b>Table 12 Leadership skills</b>		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Neutral	8	8.0	8.0
	Somewhat important	23	23.0	23.0
	Very important	66	66.0	66.0
	Not specify	3	3.0	3.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0
	Availability – Yes	43	43.0	43.0
	Availability – No	32	32.0	32.0

Table 12 indicates that 66% of the total respondents believe that enough scope to show leadership at their workplace is very important, where 23% stated it somewhat important and 8% remain uncertain. Employees believe to have enough scope within their organisation to develop their leadership skills and it is an important element that should be provided by the management. 43% respondents indicate that they have this scope available at their organisation and 32% indicated that they don't have this scope although it was rated highly by the employees. To motivate employees and improve retention rate one of the strategies that UK employment agencies work on

is to make leadership scope available to employees who want to show or improve their leadership skill.

**Table 13 Management is open to communicate.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Not very important	1	1.0	1.0
	Neutral	10	10.0	10.0
	Somewhat important	35	35.0	35.0
	Very important	52	52.0	52.0
	Not specify	2	2.0	2.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0
	Availability – Yes	55	55.0	55.0
	Availability - No	36	36.0	36.0

Table  
13

indicates that communication from management is an important element to employees. 52% of the respondents strongly agreed that open communication from their management is very important while performing their job. Another 35% respondents believe that open communication from their management is somewhat important. On the other hand, 10% respondents' states that they are neutral and only 1% indicated that open communication is not an important element of retention strategies. A big majority of employees stated the importance of effective communication and Gopinath and Becker (2000) indicated in their study that effective communication enhances staff identification in the organisation and creates trust and openness culture.

<b>Table 14 Health and Safety</b>		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Not very important	2	2.0	2.0
	Uncertain	7	7.0	7.0
	Somewhat important	33	33.0	33.0
	Very important	58	58.0	58.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0
Availability – Yes		88	88.0	88.0
Availability – No		6	6.0	6.0

Table 14 indicates that 58% respondents believe that health and safety at the workplace are very important and 33% indicated health and safety as somewhat important. From a total of 100 respondents, only 2 respondents said that health and safety are not important very important at work although a big majority respondent (91%) was in favour of health and safety at the workplace. The responses confirm Aguinis (2009) work that if the working environment is hazardous, it could endanger the lives of employees.

#### **4.3.2 Relationships and security**

Findings from various studies support that relationship and security is an important element of employee retention. According to the research of Morgan and Hunt (1994) on marketing channel, which states that once trust is built into a relationship, the probability of either party ending the relationship decreases because of high termination costs. Table 1.5 and 1.6 below indicates the responses received on relationships and security of this study.

<b>Table 15 Superiors and peers maintain a good relationship</b>		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Not very important	6	6.0	6.0
	Neutral	12	12.0	12.0
	Somewhat important	28	28.0	28.0
	Very important	54	54.0	54.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0
Availability – Yes		40	40.0	40.0
Availability – No		55	55.0	55.0

Respondents were asked whether their good relationship with superiors and peers are important and 54% respondent agreed with the factor as very important. Whilst 28% respondents stated this strategy as somewhat important and 6% indicated it not very important. When respondents were asked if they have a good relationship with their superiors and peers and 55% respondent negatively whilst 40% indicated that they have a good relationship with their superiors and peers. The finding of this study also shows similarities of Clarke (2001) work which indicates that employees stay when they have strong relationships with others with whom they work. Organisations should encourage various projects and assignments where employees get the opportunity for interaction with their colleagues both on and off the job (Johns et al 2001).

**Table 16 Organisation has established clear future career**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid			
Not very important	5	5.0	5.0
Uncertain	2	2.0	2.0
Somewhat important	38	38.0	38.0
Very important	49	49.0	49.0
Not specified	6	6.0	6.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0
Availability – Yes	38	38.0	38.0
Availability – No	53	53.0	53.0

Table 16 indicated that 49% of respondents believe that their organisation has created a clear future and it is very important whilst 38% stated it somewhat important. With this factor, 2% respondent remain uncertain and 5% indicated that it is not very important.

### 4.3.3 Rewards and Recognition

Respondents were asked about different rewards and recognition strategies and the majority of the respondents support that it makes a great impact on their decision of staying or leaving an organisation. Abassi & Hollman (2000) and Sherman et al. (2006) highlighted lack of recognition, lack of competitive compensation system, lack of job security, lack of promotion and inadequate training and development opportunities, job and personality mismatch as vital reasons of employees leaving an organisation. Table 17 to 19 below, indicates the same statement as Abassi & Hollman (2000) and Sherman et al. (2006) literature.

**Table 17 Organisation uses performance appraisal tools**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid			
Not very important	5	5.0	5.0
Neutral	9	9.0	9.0
Somewhat important	33	33.0	33.0
Very important	53	53.0	53.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0
Availability - Yes	43	36.0	36.0
Availability - No	57	47.0	47.0

Respondents were asked whether their organisational performance tools are important, and 53% respondent agreed with the factor as very important whilst 33% stated somewhat important. 5% participants respondent that performance appraisal tools are not very important. Table 17 indicates that 57% of the respondent stated that their organisation does not use performance appraisal tools and 43% indicated their organisation have performance appraisal tools. Performance appraisal tools is a good way to evaluate and measure where improvement is needed (Nabi et al., 2017).

**Table 18 Employer carries out an annual performance appraisal.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Not very important	7	7.0	7.0
	Neutral	8	8.0	8.0
	Somewhat important	28	28.0	28.0
	Very important	57	57.0	57.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0
	Availability - Yes	39	39.0	39.0
	Availability - No	61	61.0	61.0

Table 18 indicates that 57% respondent stated annual performance appraisal as a very important retention element of retention and 28% indicated it as somewhat important. Whilst 7% participants stated annual performance appraisal is not very important. 61% indicated annual performance appraisal system is not available at their organisation and 39% participants indicated that performance appraisal system is available at their organisation. Performance appraisal can have a major positive impact on the corporate culture of an organisation if implemented seriously (Grote, 1996).

**Table 19 Employer rewards me for good performance.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Not very important	3	3.0	3.0
	Neutral	10	10.0	10.0
	Somewhat important	27	27.0	27.0
	Very important	56	56.0	56.0
	Not specify	4	4.0	4.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0
	Availability - Yes	59	59.0	59.0
	Availability - No	41	41.0	41.0

Table 19 indicates that rewards for good performance are an important element of retention. 56% respondents strongly agreed and 27% believes it is somewhat important. On the other hand, 10% of respondents remain neutral and 3% stated not very important. 59% respondents stated their

organisation practices rewards for good performance and 41% stated rewards for good performance is not available in their organisation.

#### 4.3.4 Growth Opportunity

**Table 20 My employer has motivated me to put an extra effort to complete a task.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Not very important	4	4.0	4.0
	Neutral	7	7.0	7.0
	Somewhat important	24	24.0	24.0
	Very important	62	62.0	62.0
	Not specify	3	3.0	3.0
	Total		100	100.0
	Availability - Yes	46	46.0	46.0
	Availability - No	54	54.0	54.0

Growth opportunity at any organisation is crucial for retaining employees. Employees encourage to stay and work for a company where they see the future progression (Dysvik and Kuvaas, 2012). Table 20 and 21 demonstrates the importance of growth opportunities.

Respondents were asked whether motivation to put an extra effort at completing a task is important at work and 62% stated it as a very important and 24% as somewhat important. Whilst 4% stated motivation to put an extra effort at work is not very important. Table 20 also indicates that 54% respondent stated they have not received motivation to put an extra effort to complete tasks and 46% indicated that they have received motivation. According to Koch (1990) and Stuart (1992) appreciation for a work is often among the top motivators.

**Table 21 Employer gives me opportunities to learn and grow here.**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Not important at all	3	3.0	3.0
	Not very important	10	10.0	10.0
	Neutral	18	18.0	18.0
	Somewhat important	40	40.0	40.0

Very important	25	25.0	25.0
Not specify	4	4.0	4.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0
Availability - Yes	36	36.0	36.0
Availability - No	64	64.0	64.0

Table 21 indicates that 25% agreed with the term that opportunity to learn and grow is very important at work and 40% believes it as somewhat important. Whilst 10% stated the term as not very important and 3% indicated as not important at all. Table 21 also indicates that 36% respondents agreed that there are opportunities to learn and grow at their organisation whilst 64% stated that there are no opportunities available at their organisation for learning and growth. Although 64% respondents don't have learning and growth opportunities available at their organisation, but the strategy remains highly important. According to Llophis S, et al., (2012) everyone wants to be noticed and recognized for their work, therefore employees are motivated to achieve to remain relevant and as such, employees are in search of new ways to learn, improves their skills and invests in themselves.

### **Summary of Findings**

The analysis of motivational factors indicates that job security, followed by respect and fair treatment, salary and other monetary benefits, career advancement plan, training and development and authority of decision making were rated the most important motivational factors by the zero-hours contract employees. This is in direct relation with the principal objective of this study which is to investigate from different motivational ways what are the most effective for high employee retention in the UK employment agencies, the implication of this means the principal objective of this study has achieved.

Another objective of this study was to identify the role of motivation on employee retention. The literature review of this study emphasis that motivation and its factors are playing a vital role in enhancing employee retention. Literature from renowned authors have made that statement clear

that without the right motivation an organisation can fail to retain their well-qualified employees. Meyer and Herschovitch (2001) stated that when employees were dissatisfied with their jobs, their desire to remain in their organization started to erode.

Job security is the top motivational factor that has been identified by the participants of this study who works on a zero-hours contract. The employees feel the need for job security and fixed income. The employment agencies have been seen using zero-hours contracts as ways to deal with the unforeseen event, to cover a particular event or absences or a busy period of the year (Justin, 2017). But in order to create a long-term work agreement and retaining employees for a long period of time employees must ensure job security and efficient practices of human resources functions can ensure this motivational factor. Respect and fair treatment of employees is an obvious fact that always should be present in every organisation. According to Lawler (2003) to create organisational efficiency and success treating people is a fundamental need. Treating employees with respect should come from management as well as employees one to another. Organisations take various steps to create team building and good relation between their employees. Organisations should encourage various projects and assignments where employees get the opportunity for interaction with their colleagues both on and off the job (Johns et al 2001). Salary and other monetary benefits generally treated as the obvious motivators for employees. This study demonstrates that salary is an important motivator but not just the only motivator. Organisation must understand employees need as they could change over the rapidly changing facts surrounds them (Nabi et al., 2017). Due to lack of guaranteed income and working hours employees on a zero-hours contract always seen switching jobs more often but this study reveals that employees consider the scope of career advancement in their existing organisation. If the employees get job security and work for an organisation for their career advancement it can enhance the employee retention rate. Also, in the literature review chapter, it has been analysed that, Maslow's (1946) hierarchy of needs and Locke (1968) goal setting theory believes that the intentions to work towards a goal are major sources of work motivation. In order to retain employees' organisation must work on their skill development because it strengths both individual and organisational capabilities (Pratap, 2016). The participants of this study have identified training and development

as an important factor of motivation and high retention. Authority of decision making has identified the least important motivational factors in this study among all factors but among employees at the senior managerial level still considers it as an important motivational factor. Fredrick Herzberg (1968) hygiene theory states that responsibility at work motivates employees. Although many employees get motivated by allowing them taking responsibilities and others prefer supervision and fewer responsibilities in their job, but the organisation must understand the need of every individual Maylett and Nielsen (2012). This is in direct relation to the objective of this study which is to demonstrate the most effective motivational ways to retain zero-hour contract employees.

Another objective of this study was to explore the retention strategies that have been widely used expecting to meet the high level of retention. A wide range of employee retention strategies has been identified in the literature review chapter. This study has included and discussed the work of Kehr (2004), Walker (2001), Parker and Wright (2001), Clarke (2001), Stein (2000), Fitz-enz (1990) and Das and Baruah (2013) whose works have identified several retention factors and strategies. Among the factors identified in literature review chapter the most relevant one to zero-hours contract and in the UK employment agencies perspective have been chosen for this study. The four key factors of employee retention were identified as work environment, relationships and security and rewards and recognition and growth opportunity. Among four 'work environment retention' strategies participants have identified the right working condition as the most important strategy. Among two 'relationships and security' strategies, the most important one identified was a good relationship with superiors and peers. Among four 'rewards and recognition' strategies, annual performance appraisal has been identified the most important and among two growth opportunity strategies motivation to complete a task has been identified the most important by this research participants. Participants were also asked about their organisation's adoption to these strategies. Many of this strategy have identified not available in many UK employment agencies. To reduce employee turnover and become beneficial to experienced employees' skills and knowledge employers should ensure these strategies available in their organisations. To conclude

the findings, it can be said that this study has met all the research objectives and answered all the research questions.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The importance of employee management and retaining talent has grown the importance of better management of employees. Due to economic and political changes across Europe, employers in the UK are facing challenges attracting new challenges and retaining existing employees (CIPD, 2017). This study suggests that right motivational factors create influence on employees' decision over staying or leaving their organisation. Organisational success depends largely on its employees and motivation enhances the will of employees to perform and achieve the organisational goals. The factors that have been identified from this study remain popular among employees and while forming retention plan employers should consider these important variables. These variables are both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and if implemented in employment agencies it can reduce employee turnover. The motivation and retention factors that have been chosen in this study have demonstrated how they can satisfy employees need and uplift their performance.

This study has analysed both theoretical and practical data. Theoretical data has justified current literature and the findings can add knowledge to the existing body of the literature. Practical data has been collected from employees directly which gives a better understanding of current employee needs. This case study shows that the motivational factors and retention strategies can create organisational efficiency in terms of employee retention and achieve organisational goals and objectives. After analysing all the perspectives, it can be concluded that when employees get a good working environment and some extra drive and exertion they would be more interested to work for that organisation for a long period.

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**APPENDICES**

**Questionnaire**

**Topic:** Investigating ways to motivate zero-hours contract employees to improve the retention rate: a case study of the UK employment agencies.

(Please tick  or write your answers as applicable)

**PART A: GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. Age

(a) 18 -25                      (b) 26 – 35      (c) 36-45      (d) 46-55      (e) above 55

2. Gender

(a) Male      (b) Female

3. Level of Education

(a) Secondary      (b) Vocational      (c) Undergraduate/Graduate      Diploma  
(d) Masters and above

4. What level you consider your position in the organisation?

(a) Junior level (b) Middle level      (c) Senior level / Management

5. How long have you worked on a zero-hour contract?

(a) Under 1 year      (b) 1 - 2 years      (c) 2 – 4 years      (d) 5 years or more

6. Are you currently working on a zero-hours contract?

(a) Yes      (b) No (Previously worked)

**PART B: MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS**

This part contains the motivational factors that have been identified in different studies. Please rate the following considering the factors which motivates you to stay on the job. Please answer the questions and use scale between 1 to 5 where relevant. Please rate all the questions.

**1 = Strongly Disagree**

**2 = Disagree**

**3 = Neutral**

**4 = Agree**

**5 = Strongly Agree**

No.	Questions	Level of Motivation				
		1	2	3	4	5
7.	Salary and other monetary benefits encourage you to stay with the organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Job security is an important element to stay with the organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Respect and fair treatment from management and co-workers are essential to become motivated.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Promotion and career advancement opportunities motivate you to plan your further career in your existing organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Training and development program empowered my overall decision of staying with the company.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Authority of decision making while performing a job has motivated me.	1	2	3	4	5

**PART C: RETENTION STRATEGIES**

This part contains retention strategies organisations implies for retaining their employees. Please answer yes or no according to your organisation adoption to these strategies. Than please rate how much each strategy is important to you. Whether these strategies are available at your organisation or not please do provide ratings for all.

Please rate the following statement on a scale of 1 to 5

- 1 = Not important at all                      2 = Not very important                      3 = Uncertain  
4 = Somewhat important                      5 = Very important.

No.	STRATEGIES	AVAILABILITY AT YOUR ORGANISATION (Please Tick ✓)		RATE HOW MUCH EACH STRATEGY IS IMPORTANT TO YOU. (Please Tick ✓)				
		YES	NO	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Work Environment</b>								
13.	I have received with right working conditions to perform my work.			1	2	3	4	5
14.	There is enough scope to show my leadership skills.			1	2	3	4	5
15.	My management is open to communicate.			1	2	3	4	5
16.	Health and safety instructions courses are available.			1	2	3	4	5
<b>Relationships and security</b>								
		<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>					

17.	Superiors and peers maintain a good relationship with me.			1	2	3	4	5
18.	My organisation has established clear future career path for me.			1	2	3	4	5
<b>Rewards and Recognition</b>		<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>					
19.	My organisation uses performance appraisal tools to meet my goals.			1	2	3	4	5
20.	My employer carries out an annual performance appraisal.			1	2	3	4	5
21.	My Employer rewards me for good performance.			1	2	3	4	5
22.	My roles and duties are valued in my organisation.			1	2	3	4	5
<b>Growth Opportunity</b>		<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>					
23.	My employer has motivated me to put an extra effort to complete task.			1	2	3	4	5
24.	My employer gives me opportunities to learn and grow here.			1	2	3	4	5