Het Kenniscentrum
ARBEIDSMIGRANTEN

Trapped in Low-Skilled Work

The Role of Employment Conditions and Gender in the Perceived Employability of Migrant Workers

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Abstract

Although employability is seen as important for all workers, the literature and practice show little attention to the employability of migrant workers, especially those in low-skilled work. The flexible firm model shows how the degree of investment in workers' employability is related to their type of contract. Drawing from the conservation of resources theory, precarious employment conditions as found in the flexible ranks of a firm, can create a negative spiral of resource loss to which migrants in low-skilled work, especially women, may be more vulnerable. This study aims to investigate whether perceived compliance-based HRM by migrants in low-skilled work mediates the relationship between their type of contract and their perceived employability and whether this relationship is stronger for women. Assumptions were first tested in a sample of migrants in low-skilled work only, and afterwards in a sample of migrants in all job levels. The latter sample provided evidence for the mediation of perceived compliance-based HRM in the relationship between the type of contract and perceived employability. This study found no evidence of moderation of gender. Overall, the results of this study highlight the vulnerable position of migrants in low-skilled work in general, and migrant workers on temporary and agency contracts in particular. The findings gave rise to the formulation of several theoretical and practical implications.

Keywords: migrant workers, low-skilled work, employment conditions, perceived employability, gender, survey data

Trapped in Low-Skilled Work - The Role of Employment Conditions and Gender in the Perceived Employability of Migrant Workers

"In today's literature, employability is seen as important to the entire working population" (Dries et al., 2014, p. 566).

Employability encompasses an individual's capability to gain and maintain employment and, if necessary, to obtain new employment (Hillage & Pollard, 1998). Instead of requiring employers to provide their workers with employment security, more emphasis is nowadays placed on providing employability security through continuous skills development (Clarke & Patrickson, 2008; Dries et al., 2014). A major incentive is an aging workforce, which particularly affects high-income countries and is associated with labor market shortages (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2020b). Migrant workers are considered a valuable resource to fill these gaps and have become an increasingly important part of the workforce of high-income countries (OECD, 2020a). However, both research and practice often neglect the employability of migrant workers. Especially migrants in low-skilled work seem to be in a vulnerable position and perceive low levels of employability (Newlands, 2022), despite the importance of perceived employability, for example, for job search behavior, well-being, and health (Berntson & Marklund, 2007; McArdle et al., 2007). Environmental factors affect perceived employability (Vanhercke et al., 2014), particularly precarious working conditions (e.g., Burgess et al., 2013; Fudge, 2012), which are characterized by insecurity and limited skills development and career opportunities (Campbell & Price, 2016). Therefore, this study investigates the role of employment conditions in the perceived employability of migrants in low-skilled work.

The conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001) can explain the influence of employment conditions on perceived employability (Kerti & Kroon, 2020; Vanhercke et al., 2014). COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001) states that when individuals are provided with resources, they are better able to acquire additional resources, whereas when they have few resources at their disposal, they are more vulnerable to losing them. Certain groups of individuals, such as migrants, workers in low-skilled jobs, and women, may be limited in their access to resources, which may make them more vulnerable to resource loss (Paraskevopoulou, 2020). As people identify with their resources, the number of available resources affects their perceptions, for example, of their employability (Kerti & Kroon, 2020).

Organisations contribute to workers' resources through their approach to human resource management (HRM). For migrants in low-skilled work, many are associated with 'hard' HRM, characterised by short-term employment and few career opportunities (Forde & MacKenzie, 2009). The flexible firm model (Atkinson, 1984) explains how organisations link the degree of investment in workers' employability to the type of contract under which they are employed. Organisations for labour migrants on agency contracts for example, often adopt a compliance-based approach, offering them training only to comply with the organisations' regulations, but not to develop their employability (Forde & MacKenzie, 2010). In line with COR theory, it can be expected that environmental factors, such as the type of contract and perceived compliance-based HRM, as well as gender differences, function as resources that can influence the perceived employability of migrants in low-skilled work.

The influence of employment conditions on perceived employability is considered a blind spot in the employability literature (Forrier et al., 2018). Although some researchers have used COR theory to explain this relationship, research investigating this in the context of migrants in low-skilled work is scarce (Kerti & Kroon, 2020; Vanhercke et al., 2014). Moreover, gender differences have not previously been considered in this context, while women are seen as more vulnerable to resource loss (Peck, 2021).

To contribute to this gap in the literature, this study formulated the following research question:

'*To what extent does the perceived compliance-based HRM of migrants in low-skilled work mediate the relationship between their type of contract and their perceived employability? And to what extent is this relationship moderated by gender?*'

This research could be of practical relevance to (HR) managers who are faced with shortages in the labour market and employ migrants in low-skilled work. It could lead to applying a more inclusive approach of HRM to migrants on temporary and agency contracts (Borghouts-van de Pas & Freese, 2017). Evidence of gender differences in the relationships proposed adds to the relevance of combating stereotypes in the workplace (Sawyer & Clair, 2020). Lastly, the findings of this study are relevant to policymakers and may emphasize the importance of additional legislation to protect migrants in low-skilled work.

Theoretical Framework

Type of Contract and Perceived Employability

Employability is a broad and multidimensional concept that can be investigated from a social, organizational, and individual perspective (Guilbert et al., 2016; Thijssen et al., 2008). Perceived employability focuses on the individual perspective and is defined as: "The individual's perception of his or her possibilities of obtaining and maintaining employment" (Vanhercke et al., 2014, p. 593). Perceived employability can be determined by individual characteristics, but also by perceptions of environmental factors, such as the type of contract (Kerti & Kroon, 2020; Vanhercke et al., 2014).

The type of contract is defined as the employment arrangements between the worker and the employer (Cappelli & Keller, 2013). This study distinguishes between three types of contracts: permanent, temporary, and agency contracts. Compared to migrants in low-skilled work on permanent contracts, for those on temporary and agency contracts, the objective conditions for termination are specified. Migrants in low-skilled work on agency contracts are distinguished in that they are not employed directly, but indirectly through an intermediary third party (Cappelli & Keller, 2013; OECD, 2021).

The relationship between the type of contract and perceived employability can be explained using the flexible firm model (Atkinson, 1984) and conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). Organizations that employ workers on low-skilled jobs often apply the principles of the flexible-firm model (Butterick & Charlwood, 2021; Thijssen et al., 2008), which distinguishes between core workers (permanent), peripheral workers (temporary), and external workers (e.g., agency). The model argues that, compared to core workers (permanent), whose skills cannot be easily purchased, peripheral workers (temporary) and external workers (agency) should be offered less or no job security and long-term investments (e.g., career opportunities). Specifically, investments in workers on agency contracts are considered to be the employment agency's responsibility (Atkinson, 1984). However, employment agencies that employ migrants in low-skilled work often focus on economic gains and minimal invest in their workers (Samaluk, 2016).

COR theory argues that people strive to retain, protect, and build valuable resources, which are "those objects, personal characteristics, conditions or energies that are valued by the individual" (Hobfoll, 1989, p. 516). Individuals who possess resources are better able to protect established resources and gain additional resources in an upward positive spiral. Individuals with fewer resources are less able to protect established resources and more vulnerable to loss of resources in a downward negative spiral (De Cuyper et al., 2012; Hobfoll, 2001; Vanhercke et al., 2015). In this situation, the loss of resources disproportionately outweighs the gain of additional resources (Hobfoll, 2011).

Resources are aspects of the self that are associated with resilience and the ability to influence the environment (Hobfoll et al., 2003). Perceived employability is interpreted as a reflection of the resources a worker has acquired. Consequently, resource gains will be positively, and resource losses negatively related to perceived employability (Kerti & Kroon, 2020; Vanhercke, 2015). A permanent contract, which provides workers with additional resources such as security and career opportunities, can be associated with resource gain, while a temporary or agency contract, which does not or to a lesser extent provide workers with these additional resources, can be associated with resource loss. Because agency workers receive even fewer investments than temporary workers, they are expected to be the most vulnerable to the loss of resources. Combining the flexible firm model's assumptions (Atkinson, 1984) and COR theory

(Hobfoll, 1989, 2001), low skilled-migrant workers on permanent contracts are expected to perceive high, those on temporary contracts lower, and those on agency contracts the lowest levels of employability.

Literature shows mixed findings on a relationship between the type of contract and perceived employability, with some researchers finding no clear difference between the perceived employability of workers on permanent and temporary contracts (Berntson et al., 2006; Kirves et al., 2014). A possible explanation for this inconsistency may be found in the reason workers perform temporary work. Researchers found that workers in low-skilled jobs and migrant workers often engage in temporary and agency work on an involuntary basis, which negatively influences their employability (Connell & Burgess, 2006; Hopkins & Dawson, 2016). Forrier et al. (2018) confirm that workers in low-skilled jobs on an agency contract perceive low levels of employability.
Altogether, based on these findings and the assumptions of the flexible firm model and COR theory, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Compared to migrants in low-skilled work on permanent contracts, those on temporary contracts have lower levels of perceived employability, but higher than those on agency contracts.

Perceived Compliance-Based HRM as a Mediator
Central in this section is how human resource management (HRM) is associated with different types of contracts. Following the flexible firm model (Atkinson, 1984), the HR architecture model (Lepak & Snell, 1999) also distinguishes between the degree of investment in different types of workers and in addition links this to specific forms of HRM. Their HR architecture model adds that for workers whose skills are not seen as valuable and unique and in whom there is hence no long-term investment, HRM must ensure that they perform their work properly and comply with prevailing rules. This so-called compliance-based HRM (Lepak & Snell, 2002) is most applicable to external workers (e.g., agency workers). Compliance-based HRM focuses on "the economic aspects of the contract and strive to ensure worker compliance with pre-set rules, regulations and/or procedures" (Lepak & Snell, 2002, p. 522). Compliance-based HRM is characterized by little investment in training, and when there is training, it is focused on company-specific policies, systems, and procedures (Becker, 1964; Lepak & Snell, 2002). Because this study examines migrant workers' viewpoints, the focus is on perceived compliance-based HRM.

When the assumptions of the flexible firm model are combined with those of the HR architecture model, it is expected that migrants in low-skilled work on permanent contracts (long-term investments) are less likely, those on temporary contracts (less long-term investments) more likely, and those on agency contracts (no long-term investments) most likely to be provided with compliance-based HRM. The literature shows that, in contrast to more mixed findings for high-skilled workers, differences are found in the training opportunities offered to workers in low-skilled work on temporary and permanent contracts (Connell & Burgess, 2006; Finegold et al., 2003). Specifically, researchers found that when temporary and agency workers were offered training opportunities, they were primarily job-related or focused on health and safety (Connell & Burgess, 2002; Forrier & Sels, 2003), which is consistent with compliance-based HRM. Forde and MacKenzie (2010) drew the same conclusions from a study on migrant agency workers in the United Kingdom.

From COR theory, it can be expected that when organizations apply compliance-based HRM, workers perceive this as a loss of resources because it does not contribute to their own development, which negatively influences their perceived employability. A longitudinal study of the determinants of perceived employability found that organizational support for career and skill development was associated with higher levels of perceived employability (Wittekind et al., 2010). Fontinha et al. (2018) found a similar positive influence on migrant workers' perceived career opportunities in the organization.

Combining these suggestions from theory and empirical findings, the type of contract of migrants in low-skilled work appears to be related to their perceived employability via the extent to which they perceive compliance-based HRM. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 2: Compared to migrants in low-skilled work on permanent contracts, those on temporary contracts are more likely and those on agency contracts are most likely to perceive compliance-based HRM, which is associated with lower perceived employability.

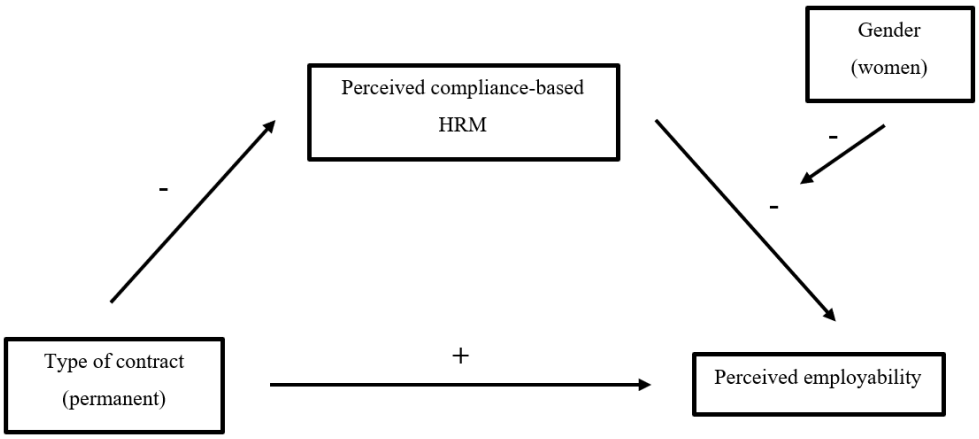
Gender as a Moderator

Drawing on COR theory, Peck (2021) argues that women are generally expected to have fewer resources than men, especially when it comes to career opportunities. Employers often have the stereotype that women are less career-oriented, which influences their judgments and decisions, resulting in women experiencing barriers to career advancement (Heilman, 2012). Additionally, in line with intersectionality perspectives, workers in low-skilled jobs, migrants, and gender are interpreted as social categories. When these social categories become intertwined, it is suggested that stereotyping and discrimination increase disproportionately (Paraskevopoulou, 2020). For example, Kusterer and Bernhard-Oettel (2020) argue that migrant women experience stronger stereotypes than migrant men in low-skilled work, which leads them to experience lower levels of perceived employability.

These findings could be explained using COR-theory (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). When women already have fewer resources than men, the loss of additional resources associated with perceived compliance-based HRM will reinforce the negative spiral of resource loss, which in turn will stronger negatively influence their perceived employability. This gives rise to the following hypothesis:
Hypothesis 3: Compared to migrants in low-skilled work on permanent contracts, those on temporary contracts are more likely and those on agency contracts are most likely to perceive compliance-based HRM, which is associated with lower perceived employability. Here, the negative relation between perceived compliance-based HRM and perceived employability is stronger for women than for men.

Figure 1 summarizes the hypotheses in a conceptual model that will be central in the empirical analysis.

Figure 1 *Conceptual Model*



Method

Research design

This study uses secondary data collected by a research panel of 'Het Kenniscentrum Arbeidsmigranten' called 'Share my voice' (Cremers & Van den Tillaart, 2022). Because this study uses only the data collected for the third survey of this panel, which was compiled at one point in time, it has a cross-sectional design (Levin, 2006). By attempting to explain the concept of perceived employability through employment conditions, this study has an explanatory design (Baskerville et al., 2010).

Sample

The research panel aims to get insight into the opinions, feelings, and experiences of migrant workers in the Netherlands. The survey on which this paper is based, focuses on the education and career development of migrant workers (Cremers & Van den Tillaart, 2022). The sample is compiled using non-probability sampling based on convenience (Etikan et al., 2016); the researchers approached migrant workers who were most accessible, namely those recommended by stakeholders. This sampling strategy makes the data subject to bias, reflected, for example, in an underrepresentation of migrant workers on agency contracts (Cremers & Van den Tillaart, 2022). While 49 percent of migrant workers in the Netherlands were employed as agency workers in 2019 (Nederlandse Bond van Bemiddelings- en Uitzendondernemingen, 2021), in the sample only 18 percent were employed on an agency contract. The total survey sample consisted of 777 respondents.

This current study concentrates first on a sample of migrants in low-skilled work only, and then on the entire sample with migrants at all job levels. The migrants in low-skilled work are filtered out of the data based on the occupation level of their current job (unqualified and self-learned manual labour) or the level of salary (when the occupational level is middle). Statistics Netherlands (CBS, 2003) classifies low-wage workers as those with salaries of up to 130% of the minimum wage, which in December 2021 was 1701 euros (Rijksoverheid, 2021). Therefore, migrant workers with a middle level of occupation and a gross monthly salary of a maximum of two thousand euros are included in the sample.

This final sample consisted of 284 respondents. The respondents originate mainly from CEE (central and eastern Europe) countries (focused sample 90.5%, general sample: 53.2), are mostly middle-aged (focused sample: 25-34 years: 41.3%, 35-49 years: 33.9%, general sample: 25-34 years: 43.8%, 35-49 years: 38.5%) and are employed on different types of contracts. In the general sample a majority of respondents are employed on a permanent contract, in the focused sample, the distribution is fairly even. Both samples consist of slightly more women than men (focused sample: 56.4%, general sample: 55.4%). The demographic characteristics are shown in more detail in Table 1

Table 1 *Demographic Characteristics*

Measure	Focused sample		General sample	
	N	%	*N*	%
Type of contract				
Permanent	79	30.2	341	48.9
Temporary	86	32.8	231	33.1
Agency	97	37.0	126	18.1
Gender				
Men	123	43.6	341	44.6
Women	159	56.4	424	55.4
Age				
18 - 24 years	45	15.9	59	7.6
25 - 34 years	117	41.3	339	43.8
35 - 49 years	96	33.9	298	38.5
50 - 64 years	25	8.8	70	9.0
65+ years	0	0.0	8	1.0
Country of origin				
Central / eastern Europe	257	90.5	412	53.2
Europe (other)	4	1.4	111	14.3
Outside Europe	23	8.1	152	32.5

Procedure

The secondary data of this study were collected by I&O research in December 2021. The survey was conducted among panel members who had already participated in two previous surveys in 2021. To recruit members for the panel, 'Het Kenniscentrum Arbeidsmigranten' conducted a communication campaign, which included the use of social media, newsletters, posters, flyers, and word-of-mouth advertising. Respondents were asked to complete an online survey, which was available in four languages: Dutch, English, Polish, and Spanish. Upon completing the survey, respondents were offered compensation of a 2.50-euro voucher. Due to high turnover in the panel, extra respondents were recruited for the third survey in addition to the existing panel members. Before completing the survey, respondents were made aware of the voluntary basis of participation and the completely confidential and anonymous treatment of the data. At the end of the survey, participants could make comments or additional recommendations and they could indicate whether they would like to receive the study results (Cremers & Van den Tillaart, 2022).

Instruments

All items are compiled by the researchers from 'Het Kenniscentrum Arbeidsmigranten' themselves. To create valid scales, the items were compared to the definitions of existing measures of the concepts, and validity and reliability analyses were performed.

Perceived Employability

Perceived employability was measured with three items (see Appendix A), which reflected the definition of Vanhercke et al. (2014). The response scale consisted of a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from completely disagree (=1) to completely agree (=5). The answer options "Don't know/No opinion" and "Not applicable" were coded as missing values. However, the results of both a factor analysis (Principal Axis Factoring, low and conflicting loadings on one factor, KMO-value = .48) and a reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha = -.17) provided no support for combining the three items into a single scale. Therefore,

the three items were included in the analysis as three separate measures of perceived employability, as follows:

One item was selected to reflect the perceptions of migrants in low-skilled work in obtaining employment:

PE-job change: "I would like to follow a study course so that I can find another job."

Two items were selected to cover their perceptions of maintaining employment:

PE-qualifications: "I have enough qualifications to develop my career."

PE-opportunity: "My job offers me the opportunity to develop my career."

Type of Contract

The type of contract was measured by asking respondents about their current type of employment contract, where the study distinguishes between permanent, temporary, and agency contracts. Respondents were given six response options, three of which were coded as dummies: "Yes, a permanent contract" (30.2%, reference category), "Yes, a temporary contract" (32.8%), and "Yes, an agency contract" (37.0%). The other options, such as "No, I am self-employed" were coded as missing values (see Appendix A).

Perceived Compliance-Based HRM

The concept of perceived compliance-based HRM was measured by providing the respondents with a list of nine different types of training opportunities and asking them to tick the opportunities that their employer had offered them since they had started the job (see Appendix A). This is consistent with the approach of Lepak and Snell (2002), who measured compliance-based HRM based on characteristics related to the concept's definition and determined the extent to which compliance-based HRM was applied based on a list of HR practices (Youndt et al., 1996).

Table 2 *Coding of the Perceived Compliance-Based HRM Scale*

Items	**Coded**
On-the-job guidance by a colleague	1
Safety instructions	1
Practical training at work	1
Re-education, retraining or further training	0
Language courses	0
Internal courses offered by the employer	0
External courses at an external agency	0
E-learning and other digital training possibilities	0
No, I was not offered any study courses'	1
Other, namely…	Missing value
I don't know anymore	Missing value

Four items were associated with compliance-based HRM, for example: "Safety instructions". Five items were associated with more long-term investments and thus not with compliance-based HRM, for example: "Internal courses offered by the employer". Lastly, "Other" and "I don't know anymore" were coded as missing values. A factor analysis, which indicated that the items loaded on two factors, largely confirmed this classification (see Appendix B). Because the item 'Re-education, retraining or further training' did not clearly load on one of the two factors, it was decided to remove it. A factor analysis with the remaining eight items yielded a two-factor solution that together explained 52.99% of the total variance in the perceived compliance-based HRM scale. The KMO-value was .75, exceeding the retained minimum of .60. The Bartlett's Test was significant ($\chi^2(28) = 458.90$, $p < .001$). Reliability analysis showed a Cronbach's alpha of .75 for the eight items combined and a Cronbach's alpha of .81 for the items associated with compliance-based HRM, both implying good internal consistency between the items

(Evers et al., 2009). Cronbach's alpha of the items associated with more long-term investment was .50, implying a low internal consistency (Evers et al., 2009). Low consistency may be initiated because if respondents received training, they often received only one long-term investment. Since Cronbach's alpha did not increase by removing one of the items, it was decided to include all four of them.
A very skewed distribution of the final scale (see Appendix C, Figure 6) led to the decision to dummy-code the concept of compliance-based HRM (0 = items associated with more long-term investments, 1 = items associated with compliance-based HRM).

Gender
This study focuses on a distinction between men and women. Gender was measured by asking the respondents to tick the box that applied to them; "Man" (coded 0), "Woman" (coded 1), and "Other" or "Prefer not to say" (coded as missing values).

Control Variables

To prevent the model from explaining spurious relationships, two control variables were added.

Age. First, age is controlled for as literature argues that older people generally have more demands and fewer resources than younger people (Treadway et al., 2005). Consequently, the negative spiral of resource loss could be stronger for older migrants in low-skilled work than for younger ones (Hobfoll, 2001), which could influence the relationship between perceived compliance-based HRM and employability. Age was measured in five categories with a range of 18 to 65+ years. Because of its normal distribution, this variable was included as an interval variable. The "Prefer not to say" answer option was reported as a missing value.

Country of origin. Secondly, the country of origin is controlled because European Union (EU) regulation can stimulate precarious working conditions, as it imposes lower income requirements on migrant workers from CEE countries (McGauran et al., 2016). This greater vulnerability to uncertain working conditions may lead to a stronger negative spiral of resource loss for CEE migrants (Hobfoll, 2001), allowing the country of origin to influence the relationship between perceived compliance-based HRM and employability. The concept was measured by asking respondents about their country of origin. The responses were categorized into three dummies: workers from CEE countries other EU workers, and workers from outside the EU. The "Prefer not to say" response option was reported as a missing value.

Analysis

The analyses were conducted using the statistical program IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 28). Before starting the analysis, the data was cleaned and checked for missing values and outliers. A missing values analysis showed that the items belonging to perceived compliance-based HRM (10.6% missing values), and perceived employability (22.9% missing values) exceeded the baseline rule of five percent missing values (Schafer, 1999). Because the number of missing values was the same for each item belonging to one of the concepts, it was decided not to remove any of them. The missing values were not found to be more prevalent among specific groups of respondents and were deleted pairwise. Additionally, histograms were used to check the data for outliers and the items that measured perceived employability for a normal distribution. There appeared to be no outliers. However, the perceived employability items showed a (more or less) skewed distribution (see Appendix C, Figure 7, 8, 9). Thereafter, one item measuring perceived employability was reverse-coded, so that higher scores reflected more positive perceptions. Dummies were created for the type of contract, gender and country of origin. Factor analysis (Principal Component Analysis (PCA)) was performed for the compliance-based HRM scale, to verify that the items load on two components. To this end, the use of a PCA for dichotomous variables is sufficient (Song et al., 2019). As criteria, it was checked that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value did not exceed 0.60 (Kaiser, 1974) and that Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (1954). The scales' reliability was examined through reliability analysis, using Cronbach's alpha. Because the scales consist of fewer than ten items, the mean inter-item correlations were considered, checking that the values are

within the range of .20 to .40 (Briggs & Cheek, 1986). Then, an initial understanding of the relationships between the different concepts was obtained through Pearson's correlation (Pallant, 2011). Since the PROCESS (version 4.1) macro of Hayes (2022) cannot handle analyses with a categorical mediation variable, the mediation analyses were performed by linear regression to examine the relationship of the type of contract with perceived compliance-based HRM and multiple regressions to examine the relationships of type of contract and compliance-based HRM with the different measures of perceived employability (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The data violates the normality assumption of regression analysis but given the sample size, this violation is unlikely to affect the results (Schmidt & Finan, 2018). Sobel's test (1982) was used to calculate the mediation effect. Next, PROCESS model 1 (Hayes, 2022) was used to test the moderation of gender on the relationship between perceived compliance-based HRM and the three measures of perceived employability. In the regressions that included the relationship between compliance-based HRM and perceived employability, age and country of origin were added as covariates.

Results of the Focused Sample

Descriptive Statistics

The means, standard deviations, and correlations among all concepts of this study are presented in Table 3. Notable is the high average score of compliance-based HRM; 78,0% of respondents perceived compliance-based HRM. The results show a positive relationship between gender and PE-job change (r = -0.14, p = .043) and between perceived compliance-based HRM and PE-opportunity (r = -0.25, p = <.001). No significant relationship is found for gender and compliance-based HRM with the other two measures of perceived employability.

In addition, the table shows significant correlations between some measures of perceived employability and between the different types of contracts. The results do not support a significant relationship between the different types of contracts with perceived compliance-based HRM and the three different measures of perceived employability. The control variables of age and country of origin are not significantly correlated to one of the other concepts.

Table 3 *Correlation Matrix*

	N	*M*	*SD*	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. PE-job change	205	1.620	0.863									
2. PE-qualifications	200	3.600	1.107	-.323**								
3. PE-opportunity	185	2.380	1.155	.175**	-.001							
Type of contract[a]	262											
4. Temporary contract		0.330	0.470	-.047	-.069	.049						
5. Agency contract		0.370	0.484	-.002	.099	-.102	-.536**					
6. Compliance-based HRM[b]	254	0.780	0.415	-.112	.103	-.251**	.077	.047				
7. Gender[c]	282	0.560	0.497	-.142*	.069	.005	-.082	-.048	.052			
8. Age	283	2.360	0.853	.067	.015	-.127	-.044	-.003	.082	-.008		
Country of origin[d]	284											
9. Europe (other)		0.010	0.118	-.041	.052	.016	-.087	.033	.067	-.076	.020	
10. Outside Europe		0.080	0.273	.095	-.123	-.060	.003	.094	.022	-.023	-.044	-.035

*p < .05. **p < .001.

[a] Reference = Permanent contract. [b] 0 = Long-term investments, 1 = Compliance-Based HRM. [c] 0 = Male, 1= Female.

[d]Reference = CEE countries.

Regression analyses

This section first reports the conducted analyses' results to examine the direct relationships between the type of contract, perceived compliance-based HRM and perceived employability, as predicted in Hypotheses 1 and 2. Successively, the results of the multiple regressions to the predictors of PE-job change, PE-qualifications and PE-opportunity and the results of the linear regression to the predictors of compliance-based HRM are discussed. Lastly, the results of the mediation and moderation analyses are presented, as predicted in Hypotheses 2 and 3.

Predictors of PE-Job Change

The type of contract, which was included in the first step of the regression analysis (presented in Table 4), explained 0.3% of the variance of PE-job change. Adding the concept of compliance-based HRM provided an additional 1.0% of the variance in the measure of perceived employability. The final model, in which the control variables of gender, age, and country of origin were also added, explained 5.0% of the variance of PE-job change, which was not significant ($F(7, 187) = 1.50$, $p = .171$). Only gender emerged as a significant predictor of PE-job change ($B = -0.26$, $p = .043$). Finding no significant relationship between the type of contract ($B = -0.13$, $p = .427$ and $B = -0.07$, $p = .655$) and perceived compliance-based HRM ($B = -0.21$, $p = .166$) with perceived employability, these results do not provide support for the predictions of Hypothesis 1 and 2.

Table 4 *Multiple Regression of Predictors of PE-Job Change*

	Block 1		Block 2		Block 3	
Predictors PE-job change	*B*	*SE*	*B*	*SE*	*B*	*SE*
Constant	1.691**	.113	1.846**	.154	1.818**	.240
Type of contract[a]						
Temporary contract	-0.125	.157	-0.096	.157	-0.152	.159
Agency contract	-0.068	.152	-0.044	.153	-0.100	.153
Compliance-based HRM[b]			-0.223	.151	-0.209	.151
Gender[c]					-0.256*	.126
Age					0.077	.073
Country of origin[d]						
Europe (other)					-0.357	.527
Outside Europe					0.320	.227
R^2	.003		.015		.053	
R^2 change			.011		.038	
F	0.317		0.941		1.496	

Note. PE-job change ($N = 205$). Type of contract ($N = 262$). Compliance-based HRM ($N = 254$). Gender ($N = 282$). Age ($N = 283$). Country of origin ($N = 284$). *p < .05. **p < .001. [a] Reference = Permanent contract. [b] 0 = Long-term investments, 1 = Compliance-Based HRM. [c] 0 = Male, 1= Female. [d] Reference = CEE countries.

Predictors of PE-Qualifications

In the second regression (presented in Table 5), the concepts were added in the same order as in the first regression, only now to see if they predicted PE-qualifications. The type of contract explained 1.0% and compliance-based HRM another 1.0% of the variance of perceived employability. The final model, in which also the control variables were entered, explained 4.0% of the variance in PE-qualifications and was not significant ($F(7, 182) = 1.20$, $p = .308$). The regression showed that none of the added concepts was a significant predictor of this measure of perceived employability. Because no significant

relationship was found between the type of contract (*B* = -0.05, *p* = .792 and *B* = 0.20, *p* = .316) and perceived compliance-based HRM (*B* = 0.26, *p* = .196) with perceived employability, this regression also found no support for Hypothesis 1 and 2.

Table 5 *Multiple Regression of Predictors of PE-Qualifications*

Predictors PE-qualifications	Block 1		Block 2		Block 3	
	B	*SE*	*B*	*SE*	*B*	*SE*
Constant	3.544**	.146	3.353**	.200	3.274**	.313
Type of contract[a]						
Temporary contract	-0.054	.203	-0.088	.204	-0.029	.207
Agency contract	0.198	.197	0.169	.198	0.233	.200
Compliance-based HRM[b]			0.274	.195	0.256	.197
Gender[c]					0.151	.164
Age					0.001	.095
Country of origin[d]						
Europe (other)					0.387	.688
Outside Europe					-0.535	.296
R^2	.010		.020		.044	
R^2 change			.010		.023	
F	0.957		1.297		1.195	

Note. PE-qualifications (*N* = 200). Type of contract (*N* = 262). Compliance-based HRM (*N* = 254). Gender (*N* = 282). Age (*N* = 283). Country of origin (*N* = 284). *p < .05. **p < .001. [a] Reference = Permanent contract. [b] 0 = Long-term investments, 1 = Compliance-Based HRM. [c] 0 = Male, 1= Female. [d] Reference = CEE countries.

Predictors of PE-Opportunity

The third regression (presented in Table 6) examined the predictors of PE-opportunity. The concepts were added in the same order as in the previous two analyses, beginning with the type of contract, which explained 1.0% of the variance in the measure of perceived employability. The inclusion of compliance-based HRM explained an additional 6.0% of the variance of perceived employability. The final model, in which the control variables were added, explained 9.0% of the variance of perceived employability and was significant (*F*(7, 170) = 2.33, *p* = .027). Only perceived compliance-based HRM was a significant predictor of PE-opportunity (*B* = -0.68, *p* = .001). This is in accordance with one of the predictions of Hypothesis 2, predicting a negative relationship between perceived compliance-based HRM and perceived employability. Also, for this last regression of the predictors of perceived employability, no significant relationship was found between the type of contract and the measure of perceived employability (*B* = -0.02, *p* = .929 and *B* = -0.25, *p* = .233). Therefore, it can be concluded that the results provide no evidence for a direct relationship between the type of contract and perceived employability. With this, Hypothesis 1 has been rejected.

Table 6 *Multiple Regression of Predictors of PE-Opportunity*

Predictors PE-opportunity	Block 1		Block 2		Block 3	
	B	*SE*	*B*	*SE*	*B*	*SE*
Constant	2.479**	.158	2.964**	.210	3.281**	.330
Type of contract[a]						
Temporary contract	-0.019	.219	0.069	.214	0.075	.219
Agency contract	-0.254	.213	-0.180	.208	-0.168	.211
Compliance-based HRM[b]			-0.695*	.205	-0.678*	.208
Gender[c]					0.040	.173
Age					-0.147	.100
Country of origin[d]						
Europe (other)					0.379	.725
Outside Europe					-0.218	.312
R^2	.011		.072		.088	
R^2 change			.061		.016	
F	0.930		4.492*		2.330*	

Note. PE-opportunity (*N* = 185). Type of contract (*N* = 262). Compliance-based HRM (*N* = 254). Gender (*N* = 282). Age (*N* = 283). Country of origin (*N* = 284). *p < .05. **p < .001. [a] Reference = Permanent contract. [b] 0 = Long-term investments, 1 = Compliance-Based HRM. [c] 0 = Male, 1= Female. [d] Reference = CEE countries

Predictors of Perceived Compliance-Based HRM

The results of the fourth regression (presented in Table 7) show that the type of contract explains 2.0%, a non-significant proportion, of the variance in perceived compliance-based HRM ($F(2, 238) = 2.07$, $p = .129$). The type of contract did not appear to be a significant predictor of compliance-based HRM ($B = 0.13$, $p = .059$ and $B = 0.11$, $p = .103$), finding no support for Hypothesis 2.

Table 7 *Linear Regression of Predictors of Perceived Compliance-Based HRM*

Predictors	Compliance-Based HRM[a]	
	B	*SE*
Constant	0.698**	.049
Type of contract[a]		
Temporary contract	0.127	.067
Agency contract	0.107	.065
R^2	.017	
F	2.069	

Note. Compliance-based HRM (*N* = 254). Temporary contract and Agency contract (*N* = 262). **p < .001. *p < .05 [a] 0 = Long-term investments, 1 = Compliance-Based HRM. [b] Reference = Permanent contract.

Perceived Compliance-Based HRM as a Mediator

Hypothesis 2 suggested that perceived compliance-based HRM mediated the relationship between type of contract and perceived employability. Because the previous results only showed a significant relationship between compliance-based HRM and PE-opportunity, assumptions for the expectation of the occurrence of mediation were not met (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Therefore, no further analyses were conducted, and the predictions of Hypothesis 2 were rejected.

Gender as a Moderator

Hypothesis 3 suggested a moderation of gender on the mediation's right path. Because previous analyses results provided no evidence for the hypothesized mediation, a separate moderation analysis was conducted to examine whether gender moderates the relationship between perceived compliance-based HRM and perceived employability. The results of the regressions (presented in Table 8) showed that the concepts explained 6.0% of the variance in PE-job change, 3.0% in PE-qualifications, and 7.0% of the variance in PE-opportunity. Only for the third regression, this was a significant proportion of the variance in the measure of perceived employability ($F(6, 196) = 1.42$, $p = .210$, $F(6, 191) = 0.78$, $p = .584$, $F(6, 176) = 2.18$, $p = .047$). In addition, for all three regressions, the interaction explained no significant additional variance of perceived employability (R^2 change = .02, $F(1, 196) = 2.60$, $p = .108$, R^2 change = .001, $F(1, 191) = 0.19$, $p = .668$, R^2 change = .0002, $F(1, 176) = 0.03$, $p = .854$). Gender was found to be negatively related to PE-job change ($B = -0.65$, $p = .028$). In none of the regressions, the interaction proved to be a significant predictor ($B = 0.53$, $p = .108$, $B = -0.18$, $p = .668$, $B = 0.08$, $p = .854$). It can be concluded that no significant difference between men and women in the relationship between perceived compliance-based HRM and perceived employability is found, thus rejecting Hypothesis 3.

Table 8 *Moderation Analysis: Gender on Perceived Compliance-Based HRM and Perceived Employability*

	PE-job change		PE-qualifications		PE-opportunity	
Predictors	*B*	*SE*	*B*	*SE*	*B*	*SE*
Constant	1.947**	0.296	3.266**	0.348	3.194**	0.369
Compliance-based HRM[a]	-0.515	0.279	0.369	0.301	-0.685*	0.299
Gender[b]	-0.646*	0.293	0.275	0.370	-0.004	0.392
Interaction[c]	0.526	0.326	-0.176	0.409	0.079	0.429
Age[d]	0.079	0.075	0.005	0.101	-0.139	0.122
Country of origin[e]						
Europe (other)	-0.309	0.785	0.329	0.660	0.320	1.477
Outside Europe	0.297	0.271	-0.342	0.287	-0.098	0.316
R^2 (whole model)	.063		.027		.074	
F (whole model)	1.417		0.783		2.177*	
R^2 change (interaction)	.016		.001		.0002	
F (interaction)	2.602		0.185		0.034	

Note. PE-job change ($N = 203$). PE-qualifications ($N = 198$). PE-opportunity ($N = 183$). **p < .001. *p < .05.

[a] 0 = Long-term investments, 1 = Compliance-Based HRM. [b] 0 = Male, 1= Female.

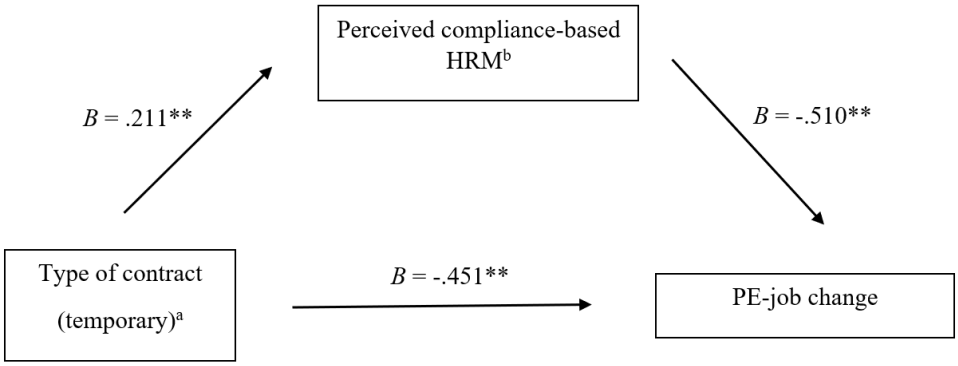
[c] Compliance-based HRM * Gender. [d] Reference = CEE countries.

Results of the General Sample

Because of the non-significant results in the focused sample of migrants in low skilled work, additional analyses were conducted to check the findings' uniqueness against the complete data including migrants in all job levels. For this purpose, different regressions were also performed on the entire sample of migrant workers (N = 777, for Histograms see Appendix C, Figure 10-13). Also in this sample, no significant results were found between type of contract, perceived compliance-based HRM and PE-qualifications and gender did not appear to be a moderator on the relationship between compliance-based HRM and perceived employability. However, a negative direct relationship was found between migrant workers' employment on a temporary contract with PE-job change ($B = -0.45$ $p = <.001$) and between employment

on an agency contract with PE-job change (*B* = -0.90, *p* = <.001) and PE-opportunity (*B* = -0.82, *p* = <.001). In addition, the Sobel test results showed evidence for full mediation of compliance-based HRM on the relationship between employment on a temporary contract and PE-job change (*z* = -3.41, *p* <.001), an indirect relationship between employment on a temporary contract and PE-opportunities through compliance-based HRM (*z* = -3.94, *p* <.001), and partial mediation of compliance-based HRM on the relationship between employment on a temporary contract with PE-job change (*z* = -3.93, *p* = <.001) and PE-opportunity (*z* = -4.82, *p* = <.001). Figure 2-5 conceptually represent these results.

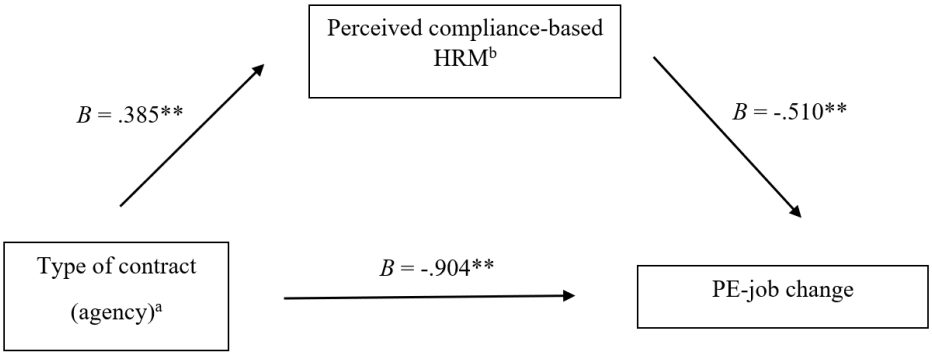
Figure 2 *Mediation Model with the Unstandardized Regression Coefficients: Temporary Contract, PE-Job Change*



[a]Reference = Permanent contract. [b] 0 = Long-term investments, 1 = Compliance-Based HRM.

**p <.001.

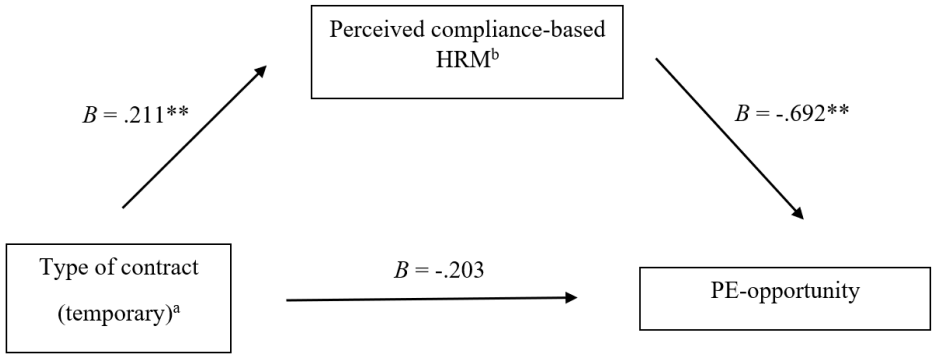
Figure 3 *Mediation Model with the Unstandardized Regression Coefficients: Agency Contract, PE-Job Change*



[a]Reference = Permanent contract. [b] 0 = Long-term investments, 1 = Compliance-Based HRM.

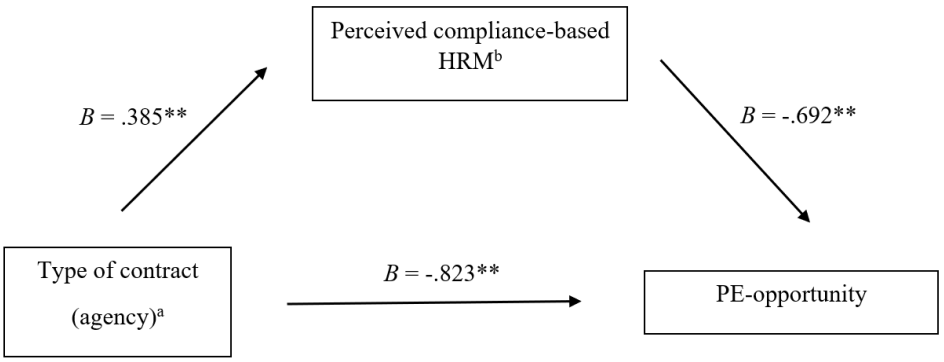
**p <.001.

Figure 4 *Mediation Model with the Unstandardized Regression Coefficients: Temporary Contract, PE-Opportunity*



[a]Reference = Permanent contract. [b] 0 = Long-term investments, 1 = Compliance-Based HRM.
**p <.001.

Figure 5 *Mediation Model with the Unstandardized Regression Coefficients: Agency Contract, PE-Opportunity*



[a]Reference = Permanent contract. [b] 0 = Long-term investments, 1 = Compliance-Based HRM.
**p <.001.

Lastly, the results showed a significant positive relationship between age and PE-job change (*B* = 0.16, *p* = .014) and a significant difference in migrants' scores on PE-job change and PE-opportunities for those from other European countries (*B* = 0.78, *p* = <.001, *B* = 0.36, *p* = .023) and countries outside Europe (*B* = 0.76, *p* = <.001, *B* = 0.34, *p* = .006) compared to migrants from CEE countries. A more detailed overview of the results can be found in Appendix D, Table 11-13. In conclusion, for the complete data including migrants in all job levels, Hypotheses 1 and 2 are supported and Hypothesis 3 is rejected.

Discussion

This study examined a focused sample of migrants in low-skilled work only, and a sample using the complete data with migrants on all job levels, finding interesting differences. The results offer new insights into the relationship between migrant workers' employment conditions and their perceived employability and will now be discussed in more detail, starting with the findings for migrants in low-skilled work.

One of the most notable results of this study is the particularly high scores of migrants in low-skilled work on compliance-based HRM, over three-quarters of respondents did not receive long-term career investments from their employer (see Appendix C, Figure 6). When these results are compared with data from, for example, the general Dutch labour force, Statistics Netherlands shows that in 2015 76.0% of companies offered courses to their employees (Perez & Van Thor, 2017). Although no conclusive comparison is possible, it can at least be stated that migrants in low-skilled work seem to be excluded from this more than average. These findings are consistent with the finding of Forde and MacKenzie's (2009) that migrants in low-skilled work are often approached with hard HRM. Concurrently, these results contrast sharply with migrant workers themselves seeing self-development as an important goal of doing their jobs (Janta et al., 2011). Few opportunities for skill development, make it difficult for these migrants to escape low-skilled work, which is often already characterized by poor employment conditions, little autonomy and support (Busch et al., 2017). In line with COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001), this makes migrants in low-skilled work vulnerable to losing more resources. For example, they also lack opportunities to learn how to manage work stress and learn the host country's language to strengthen their bargaining position (Aanjaagteam Bescherming Arbeidsmigranten, 2020; Busch et al., 2017).

Interestingly, this negative spiral of resource loss is not reflected in migrants' perceived qualifications for career advancement in low-skilled work, which scores were, on average, remarkably high (Appendix C, Figure 8). No significant difference was also found in this based on the type of contract and perceived compliance-based HRM. A possible explanation could be the frequent occurrence of "overeducation" or "skill mismatch" among migrant workers; they are higher educated than the level of work they are currently performing (Battu & Sloane, 2002; Visintin et al., 2015). Although migrant workers have the qualifications for career advancement, this does not seem to be addressed in practice; a true missed opportunity for countries in responding to their market shortages (Cremers & Van den Tillaart, 2022). Therefore, future researchers are encouraged to further investigate the relationship between overeducation and perceived employability among migrant workers. What role do migrant workers' qualifications play in their careers and (how) do organizations anticipate this or not?

Overall, the negative spiral of resource loss is reflected in the results on the other two measure of perceived employability. In contrast to the findings, migrants in low-skilled work relatively perceive a high need for training to seek other employment and perceive low career opportunities in the job (Appendix C, Figures 7 and 9). Moreover, the nonsignificant difference in these scores based on the type of contract shows that even employment on a permanent contract does not seem to provide them with additional resources (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). In addition to existing evidence for low perceived employability of migrants in low-skilled work employed on temporary and agency contracts (e.g., Connell & Burgess, 2006; Forrier et al., 2018), the results of this study show that employment on a permanent contract is not necessarily associated with higher perceived employability.

Regarding compliance-based HRM, for migrants in low-skilled work, no evidence is found for a mediating role between type of contract and perceived employability. However, migrants who perceive compliance-based HRM are found to perceive fewer career opportunities in their job. Notable is that whether receiving compliance-based HRM makes no difference in the perceived need for training to seek other employment. An uneasy conclusion could be drawn here: Receiving more long-term investments still offers migrant no prospect of escaping low-skilled work?

The results of the moderation analysis showed that women did not experience a stronger negative resource loss than men. Hence, unlike previous research (e.g., Paraskevopoulou, 2020), this study finds no evidence of intersectionality occurring with respect to performing low-skilled work, being a migrant and being a woman. One exception is the finding that migrant women in low-skilled work are significantly more likely than men to consider training necessary to seek other employment. Perhaps by taking a study course, against employers' stereotype that women are less career-oriented, they hope to send a signal that they are open to making a career (Heilman, 2012). One explanation may also lie in that the type of women in the sample have probably already transcended gender role stereotypes with their migration, they show combativeness to prove themselves (O'Neil et al., 2016). For future moderation research, the analyses result on the entire sample of migrants that, compared to other countries, migrants from CEE countries perceive the least career opportunities in the job and the greatest need for training to seek other employment, makes it interesting to investigate the moderating role of country of origin in the relationship between employment conditions and perceived employability.

Finally, the exploration of the general sample of migrant workers including workers on all job levels most clearly reflected the expected negative spiral of resource loss occurring when due to employment conditions migrants are offered fewer resources (Hobfoll, 2001). Consistent with the flexible firm model's assumptions (Atkinson, 1984), it was found that compared to employment on a permanent contract, employment on a temporary contract was more often and employment on an agency contract was most often associated with perceived compliance-based HRM. In turn, not perceiving long term investments is related to perceiving fewer career opportunities on the job and a greater need for training to seek other employment. The partial mediation of compliance-based HRM found herein suggests the existence of an additional concept explaining the relationship between employment on an agency contract and perceived employability, not included in this study (Mathieu & Taylor, 2006). Examples of other mediators are level of education (Wittekind et al., 2010) and job security (Vermeulen & Van Druten, 2020). It is of interest for future researchers to gain more insight into these possible other explanatory factors. In addition, combining this research with the current literature on alternative work arrangements (e.g., Spreitzer et al., 2017) provides an opportunity to explore the relationships between more specific and/or new types of contracts (e.g., gig work; Lam & Triandafyllidou, 2022; Newlands, 2022) with perceived compliance-based HRM and employability.

It can be concluded that whether distinguishing between migrants in low- and high-skilled work provides different results for the relationships between their type of contract, perceived compliance-based HRM, and perceived employability. The findings of this study are consistent with those of De Wit et al. (2017), which show that regardless of the type of contract, workers in high-skilled jobs are more likely to attend training than workers in low-skilled jobs. This reflects flexible firm model's assumptions (Atkinson, 1984). Migrants in low-skilled work are seen by employers as too easily replaceable and of insufficient added value to offer long-term investments. This study shows how receiving few resources in their jobs places these migrants in a vulnerable position. A negative spiral of resource loss occurs (Hobfoll, 2001), the severity of which is further underscored by research showing that low perceived employability is associated with, for example, lower job search behaviour, ill well-being, and health (Berntson & Marklund, 2007; McArdle et al., 2007). Given the scarcity of research on migrants in low-skilled work in the current literature (Chang et al., 2022), this study highlights the importance of further investigating this group. More insight is needed into the different factors that determine their perceived employability, whereby it is also important to research the perspectives of HRM on these migrants' career opportunities. For example, future researchers could also incorporate the influence of cultural differences suggested in previous research on career prospects and employability (Guilbert et al., 2018). In addition, a better understanding of the consequences of low perceived employability is needed, with COR theory providing an interesting basis for investigating different health outcomes (Hobfoll, 1989). All this will contribute to a clearer picture of where the challenges are and how the situation of migrants in low-skilled work can be improved in practice.

Limitations

In interpreting the results, important is to note that this study is subject to several limitations. A first limitation lies in the use of subjective data, which may be associated with a tendency to over-report socially desirable responses and under-report undesirable responses, to which measures of perceived employability may be particularly subject (Bassett & Lumsdaine, 2001; Neroorkar, 2022). Additionally, perceived employability can also be influenced by more objective external factors such as the state of the economy and the labour market (Neroorkar, 2022), which this study did not include. Furthermore, the study's cross-sectional design influences the measurement of subjective data, in that it has the limitation that the data is a snapshot and may be different at another point in time (Levin, 2006).

Secondly, the use of secondary data has limited the validity and reliability of the measurement of the concepts of compliance-based HRM and perceived employability because the items were not constructed using existing, tested scales. For example, exceeding the 5% missing values rule on both measures may indicate the occurrence of ambiguities in the question wording used. Existing scales of compliance-based HRM and perceived employability reflect more dimensions of the constructs and measure compliance-based HRM as a continuous variable (using a 5-point Likert scale) (Lepak & Snell, 2002; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007).

Elaborating on the previous limitation, the use of a categorical mediator (compliance-based HRM) led to the choice to perform the mediation regressions with the Sobel test instead of performing bootstrap analysis. Literature criticizes the Sobel test on the assumptions made regarding the sampling distribution of the indirect effect. Compared to bootstrapping, the Sobel test therefore has lower power and more chance of Type I error, which may have affected the validity and certainty of the mediation effects (Hayes, 2009).

Lastly, the restricted number of concepts included in this study constitutes a limitation, given that more effects could influence the conceptual model of this study. For example, following a literature review and based on the assumptions of COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001), Shirmohammadi et al. (2022) show an overview of factors in addition to working conditions that may contribute to migrant workers' experience of resource loss (e.g., demanding job characteristics and poor living conditions) or resource gain (e.g., social support and personal coping strategies). These factors could influence the relationships' strength between the type of contract, compliance-based HRM, and perceived employability and provide more insight into individual differences.

Theoretical and Practical implications

Theoretical Implications

This study complements evidence from previous research (e.g., Newlands, 2022; Paraskevopoulou, 2020) regarding the vulnerable position of migrants in low-skilled work and shows how they are hindered in their career opportunities regardless of their type of contract. In addition, theresearch shows for the first time how, for migrant workers in general, compliance-based HRM acts as a mediating factor in the relationship between the type of contract with the perceived need for training to seek other employment and perceived career opportunities in the job. It also shows that no gender-based discrimination occurs here.

This study reveals how the distinction that the flexible firm model (Atkinson, 1984) suggests in the degree of investment by employers based on workers' type of contract is not reflected among migrants in low-skilled work but can be observed in a more general sample of migrant workers. Lastly, it demonstrates in line with findings by Kerti and Kroon (2020) the applicability of COR theory in explaining the relationship between working conditions and the perceived employability of migrant workers.

Practical Implications

The finding of this study that migrants in low-skilled work generally do not receive investment in their longer-term future is, first and foremost, a wake-up call to HRM to intervene in counteracting this discrimination. In doing so, this study underscores the appeal of previous research to apply a more inclusive approach to HRM (Borghouts-van de Pas & Freese, 2017). In addition, this research highlights the need for policy makers to consider additional legislation to protect migrants in low-skilled work. The finding that migrant workers on agency contracts are the relatively worst off is a call for agencies to invest more in mediation with organizations. The suggestion in this study that the potential of migrant workers is underutilized demonstrates the appeal of taking seriously the practical implications mentioned above. There is more potential for migrant workers to fill current labour market shortages.

Conclusion

This study investigated the extent to which migrant workers' perceived compliance-based HRM mediated the relationship between their type of contract and their perceived employability and the extent to which this relationship was moderated by gender. The findings complement the relatively scarce literature on migrant workers and show how COR theory can explain the relationship between their employment conditions and perceived employability. The results of this study show that migrants in low-skilled work in general, and migrant workers on temporary and agency contracts in particular, receive little investment in their long-term future. Moreover, it found that although migrants in low-skilled work generally feel qualified to advance, they do not seem to be offered that opportunity. This study is a call for organizations and governments to better protect migrant workers who are in a vulnerable position due to their employment in low-skilled work or their employment on temporary and agency contracts. Therein lies the prospect that increased investment will ensure better matching of migrant workers to our market shortages.

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Appendix A: Survey Items

Items Measuring the Concept of Perceived Employability

24. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? *You can indicate whether a statement does not apply to you.*

1 = Completely disagree **2 = Disagree** **3 = Neither disagree or agree** **4 = Agree** **5 = Completely agree**	**Completely disagree**				**Completely agree**	**Don't know /No opinion**	**Not Applicable**
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**Missing value**	**Missing value**
I would like to follow a study course so that I can find another job.							
I have enough qualifications to develop my career.							
My job offers me the opportunity to develop my career.							

Items Measuring Type of Contract

11. Do you have an employment contract? *In this case, we mean a signed agreement containing employment conditions, which has been signed by you as well as your employer.*

Items	**Coded**
Yes, a permanent contract	Dummy
Yes, a temporary contract	Dummy
Yes, an employment agency contract	Dummy
No, I am self-employed	Missing value
No, I have an informal contract	Missing value
Other	Missing value

Items Measuring Compliance-Based HRM

15. Has your employer offered you one of the following study courses since you started your job? *This relates to your current employer and whether you were offered the opportunity. This is not about whether you accepted the opportunity. You can select multiple answers.*

Items	**Coded**
On-the-job guidance by a colleague	1
Safety instructions	1
Practical training at work	1
Re-education, retraining or further training	0
Language courses	0
Internal courses offered by the employer	0
External courses at an external agency	0
E-learning and other digital training possibilities	0
No, I was not offered any study courses'	1
Other, namely…	Missing value
I don't know anymore	Missing value

Appendix B: Results Factor Analysis

Table 9 *Results Factor Analysis Perceived Employability*

Item	Factor 1
I have enough qualifications to develop my career.	.859
I would like to follow a study course so that I can find another job (reverse coded).	-.362
My job offers me the opportunity to develop my career.	.174

Note. Based on these results, it was decided to conduct item-by-item analyses.

Table 10 *Results OBLIMIN Rotated Factor Analysis Compliance-Based HRM*

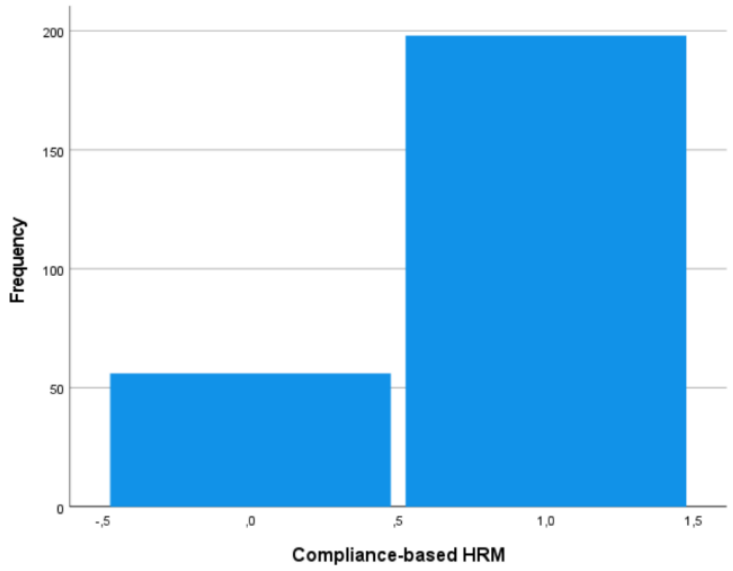
Measure	Component 1	Component 2
On-the-job guidance by a colleague.	.879	
Practical training at work.	.819	
No, I was not offered any study courses.	.750	
Safety instructions.	.705	
Re-education, retraining or further training.		
Internal courses offered by the employer.		.660
Language courses.		.649
External courses at an external agency.		.643
E-learning and other digital training possibilities.		.581

Note. Based on these results it was decided to remove the item: 'Re-education, retraining or further training'.

Appendix C: Histograms

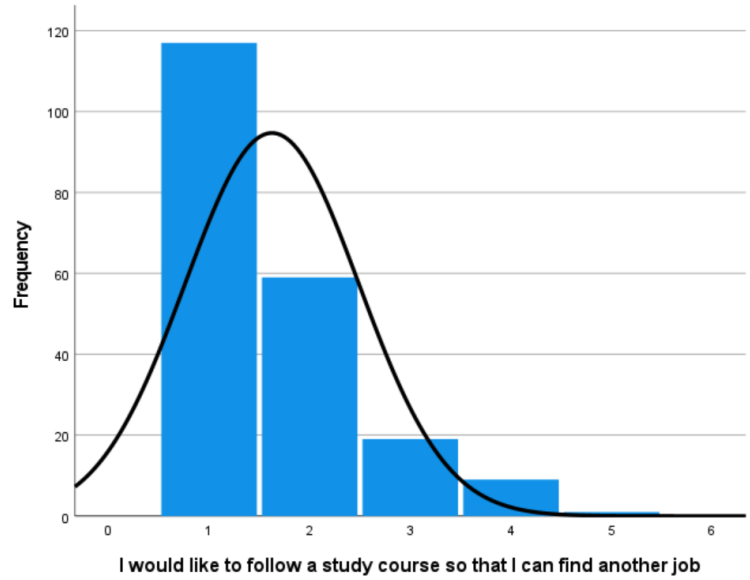
Histograms Focused Sample

Figure 6 *Distribution Compliance-Based HRM*



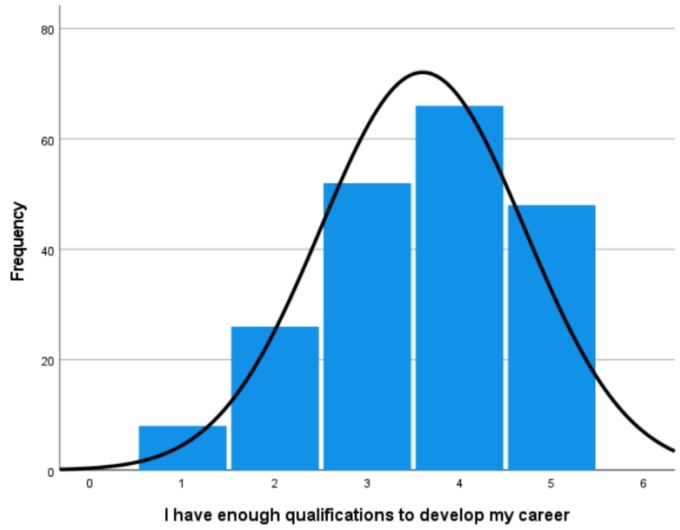
Note. N = 254. Mean = 0.78. Standard deviation = 0.42. 0 = Long-term investments, 1 = Compliance-based HRM.

Figure 7 *Distribution PE-Job Change*



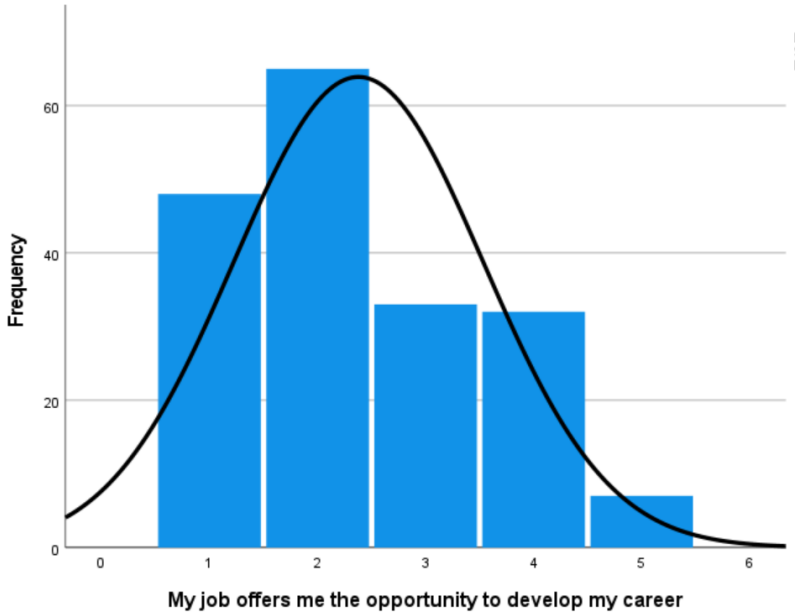
Note. N = 205. Mean = 1.62. Standard deviation = 0.86. 1 = Completely agree, 5 = Completely disagree.

Figure 8 *Distribution PE-Qualifications*



Note. *N* = 200. Mean = 3.6. Standard deviation = 1.11. 1 = Completely disagree, 5 = Completely agree.

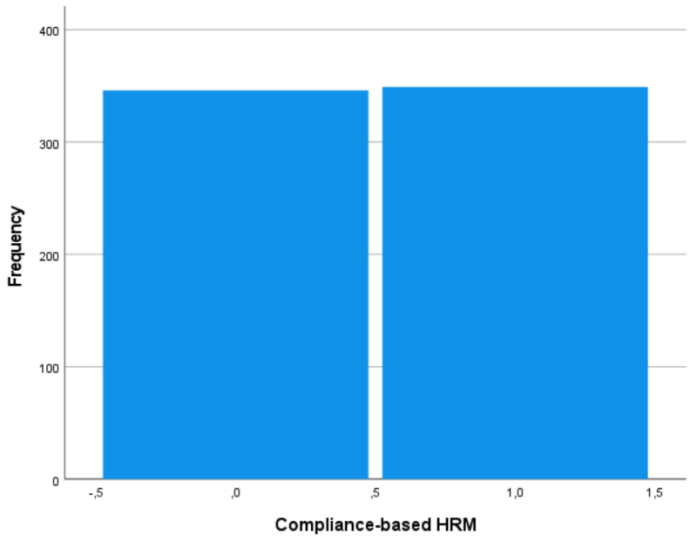
Figure 9 *Distribution PE-Opportunity*



Note. *N* = 185. Mean = 2.38. Standard deviation = 1.16. 1 = Completely disagree, 5 = Completely agree.

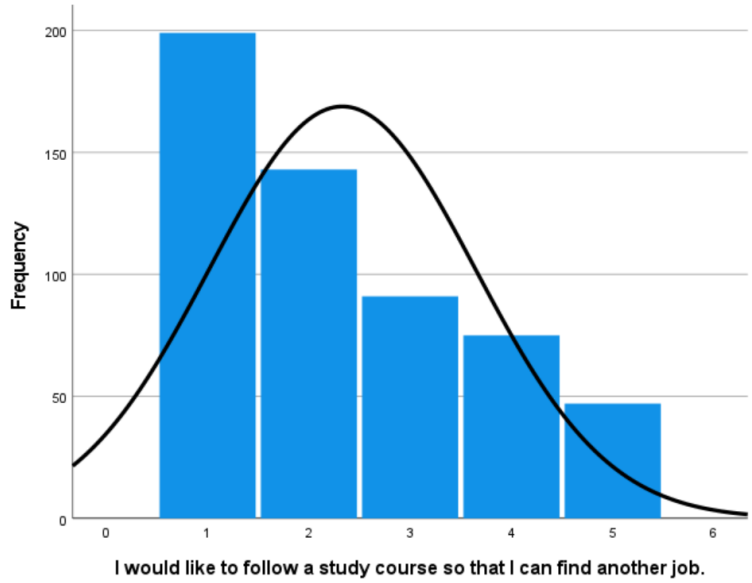
Histograms General Sample

Figure 10 *Distribution Compliance-Based HRM*



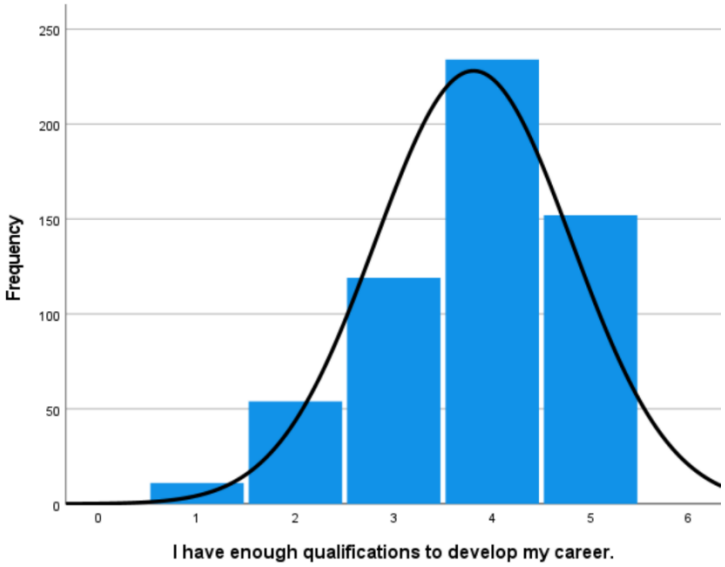
Note. *N* = 695. Mean = 0.5. Standard deviation = 0.5. 0 = Long-term investments, 1 = Compliance-based HRM

Figure 11 *Distribution PE-Job Change*



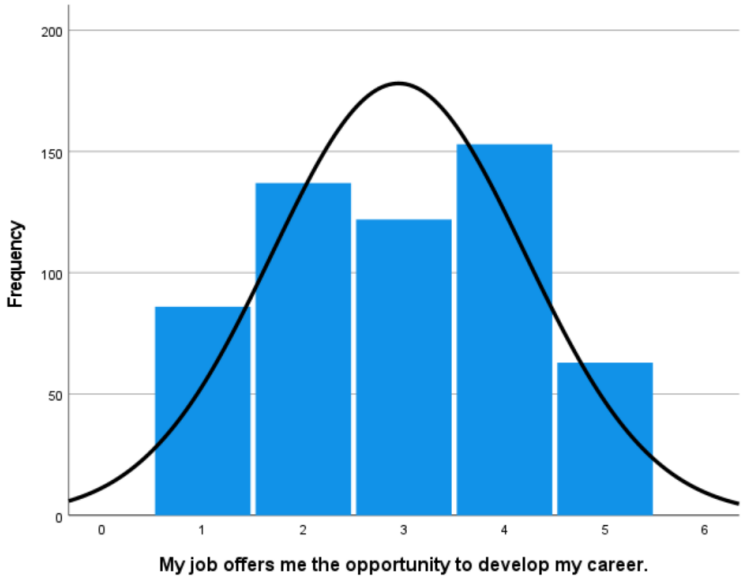
Note. *N* = 555. Mean = 2.33. Standard deviation = 1.31. 1 = Completely agree, 5 = Completely disagree.

Figure 12 *Distribution PE-Qualifications*



Note. $N = 570$. Mean = 3.81. Standard deviation = 1.00. 1 = Completely disagree, 5 = Completely agree.

Figure 13 *Distribution PE-Opportunity*



Note. $N = 561$. Mean = 2.95. Standard deviation = 1.26. 1 = Completely disagree, 5 = Completely agree.

Appendix D: Results Additional Analyses

Table 11 *Multiple Regression of Predictors of PE-Job Change*

Predictors PE-job change	Block 1		Block 2		Block 3	
	B	*SE*	*B*	*SE*	*B*	*SE*
Constant	2.642**	.079	2.902**	.086	2.015**	.205
Type of contract[a]						
Temporary contract	-0.451**	.125	-0.300*	.122	-0.200	.117
Agency contract	-0.904**	.152	-0.629**	.153	-0.347*	.151
Compliance-based HRM[b]			-0.716**	.112	-0.510**	.110
Gender[c]					-0.112	.102
Age					0.159*	.065
Country of origin[d]						
Europe (other)					0.780**	.159
Outside Europe					0.763**	.122
R^2	.068		.136		.228	
R^2 change			.068		.091	
F	19.149**		27.443**		21.794**	

Note. PE-job change (*N* = 555). Type of contract (*N* = 698). Compliance-based HRM (*N* = 695). Gender (*N* = 765). Age (*N* = 774). Country of origin (*N* = 775). *p < .05. **p < .001. [a] Reference = Permanent contract. [b] 0 = Long-term investments, 1 = Compliance-Based HRM. [c] 0 = Male, 1= Female. [d] Reference = CEE countries.

Table 12 *Multiple Regression of Predictors of PE-Opportunity*

Predictors PE-opportunity	Block 1		Block 2		Block 3	
	B	*SE*	*B*	*SE*	*B*	*SE*
Constant	3.162**	.076	3.445**	.082	3.481**	.203
Type of contract[a]						
Temporary contract	-0.203	.120	-0.038	.116	-0.028	.117
Agency contract	-0.823**	.146	-0.523**	.145	-0.426*	.150
Compliance-based HRM[b]			-0.780**	.106	-0.692**	.109
Gender[c]					-0.104	.102
Age					-0.081	.064
Country of origin[d]						
Europe (other)					0.362*	.158
Outside Europe					0.335*	.121
R^2	.057		.145		.163	
R^2 change			.088		.018	
F	15.822**		29.633**		14.524**	

Note. PE-opportunity (*N* = 561). Type of contract (*N* = 698). Compliance-based HRM (*N* = 695). Gender (*N* = 765). Age (*N* = 774). Country of origin (*N* = 775). *p < .05. **p < .001. [a] Reference = Permanent contract. [b] 0 = Long-term investments, 1 = Compliance-Based HRM. [c] 0 = Male, 1= Female. [d] Reference = CEE countries.

Table 13 *Regression: Type of Contract and Compliance-Based HRM*

Predictors	Compliance-Based HRM[a]	
	B	*SE*
Constant	0.363**	.027
Type of contract[a]		
Temporary contract	0.211**	.042
Agency contract	0.385**	.052
R^2	.088	
F	31.108**	

Note. Compliance-based HRM ($N = 695$). Type of contract ($N = 698$). **p < .001. [a] 0 = Long-term investments, 1 = Compliance-Based HRM. [b] Reference = Permanent contract.