
CERTIFICATE OF RESEARCH IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

UNDERSTANDING WORK ENGAGEMENT OF CONTINGENT PROFESSIONALS:

A NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO CONTRACT-BASED MEDICAL STAFF



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About the Practitioner-Researcher



LABOUR MARKET ADVISOR

- Served as industry advisor on the topics of **Agency Work, Contingent Labour Markets, and Labour Standards** to the ILO and WEF.
- Contributed into the publication of several position papers and formation of special action programmes.



International
Labour
Organization



HEALTH & SECURITY EMERGENCY SERVICES

- 14,000 Employees across 90 countries
- Incl. 5,400 Contingent Professionals at any given time
- Highly skilled experts across **Medical** (doctors, nurses, paramedics), **Security** (intelligence, protection), and **Logistics** (austere environment experts).



STAFFING INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

- USD 60m Staffing business in Asia, Middle East & the Levante
- Placed over 2,000 highly skilled, fixed term contractors annually.



World of Work | Shift 2 | NON-TRADITIONAL EMPLOYMENT

US Workforce:

37% of workers in contingent,
'atypical' employment
(Deloitte, 2018)

European Workforce:

14% of workers in contingent,
'atypical' employment
(OECD, 2021)

Asian Workforce:

Very hard to pinpoint the exact number of
contingent workers

20% of workers in Southeast Asia (HCA, 2022)

More generally: Almost **half of companies**
report that contingent workers make up
15% or more of their staffing needs.
(PersolKelly, 2022)

*Non-traditional work arrangements
are a universal and growing
phenomenon*

(McKeown and Cochrane, 2017)

Research Aim & Research Questions

MAIN OBJECTIVE:

To assess and explain how Work Engagement and its Antecedents manifest themselves for non-traditional, skilled, voluntary contract workers.

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

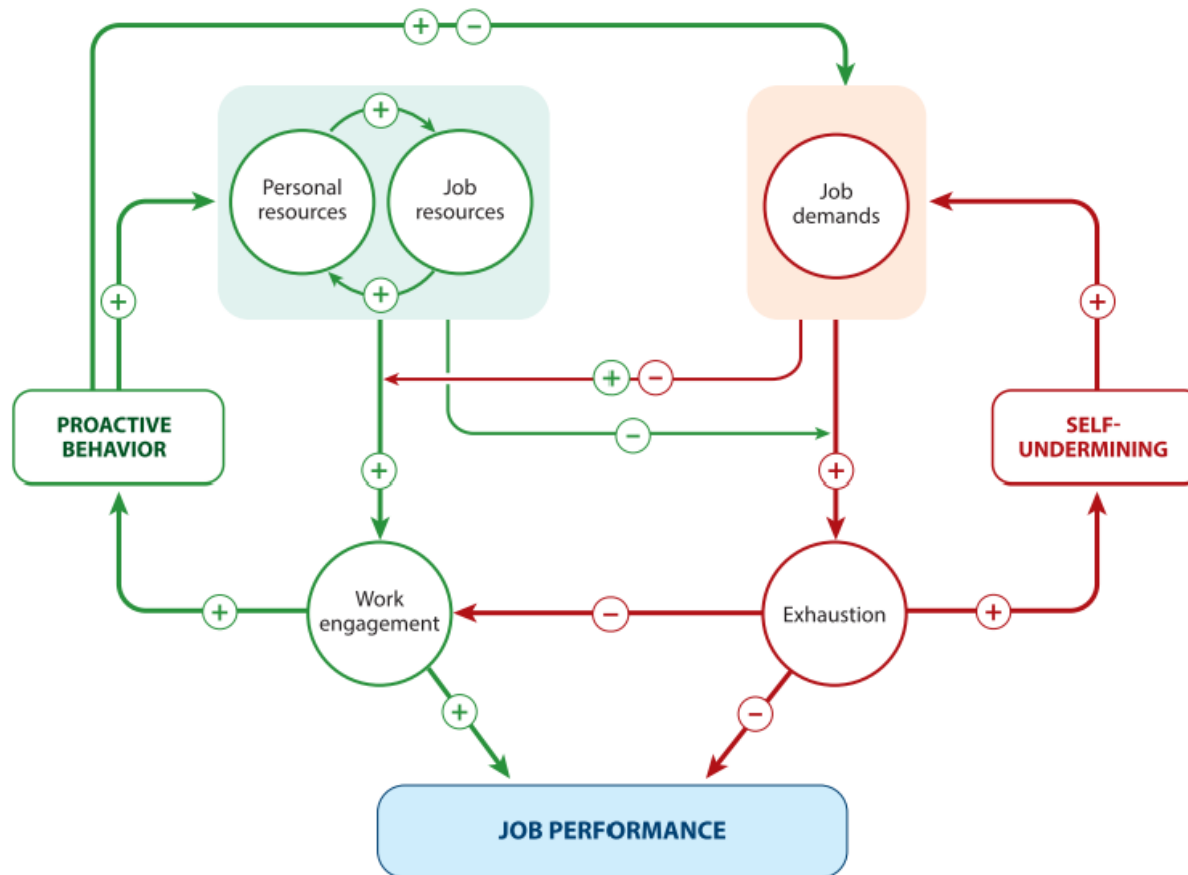
What are the antecedents and mediators of work engagement in the context of skilled, voluntary, fixed-term contractors?



Job-Demands Resource ('JD-R') Model (1/2)

- Developed by Bakker & Demerouti (Bakker et al., 2014; Bakker & Demerouti, 2023)
- Unifying job design theory that integrates various job stress and motivational perspectives, influencing Work Engagement, Exhaustion and – by extension – Job Performance.
- Synthesizes knowledge from various theories of job stress and work motivation, including:
 1. Two-Factor Theory (Hertzberg 1966)
 2. Job Characteristics Theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1976)
 3. Job Demands-Control Model (Karasek, 1979)
 4. Effort-Reward Imbalance Model (Siegrist, 1996)
 5. Conservation-of-Resources Theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018)
- Other models have claimed a limited and fixed set of job characteristics. JD-R theory is flexible and able to integrate a wide variety.

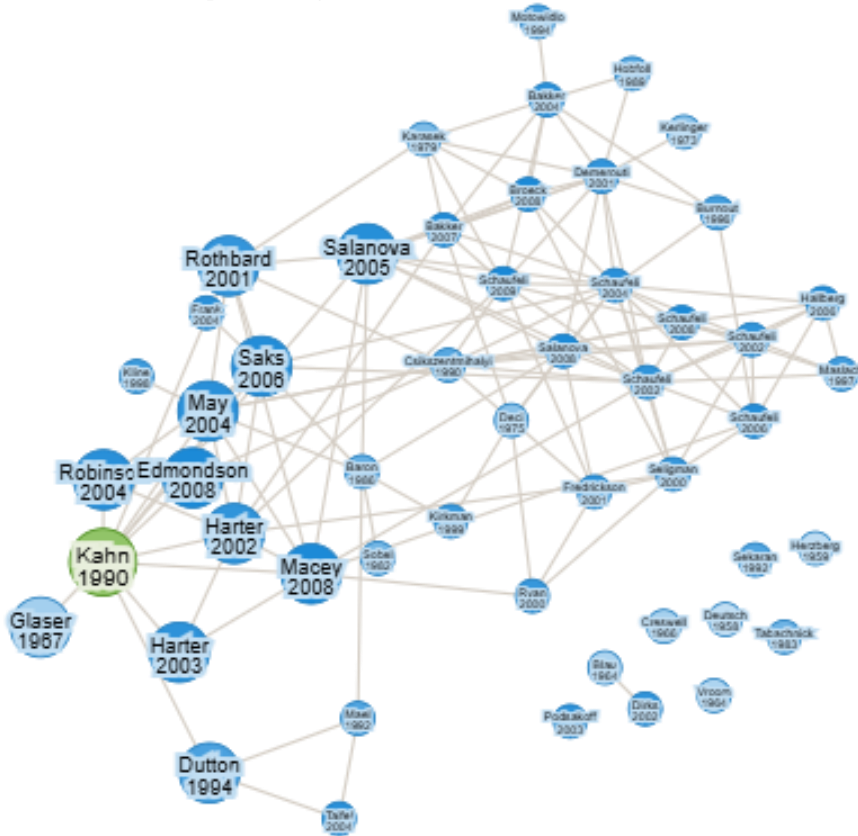
Job-Demands Resource ('JD-R') Model (2/2)



- **Job Demands:**
 - Physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical, cognitive, and/or emotional effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs (Demerouti et al., 2001)
- **Job Resources:**
 - Physical, psychological, social or organizational aspects off the job that have motivating potential, that are functional in achieving work goals, that regulat the impact of job demands, and that stimulate learning and personal growth (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017)
- Job resources weaken or buffer the impact of job demands on strain.
- Personal resources are positive self-evaluations that refer to individuals' sense of their ability to control and impact their environment successfully (Hobfoll et al. 2003).

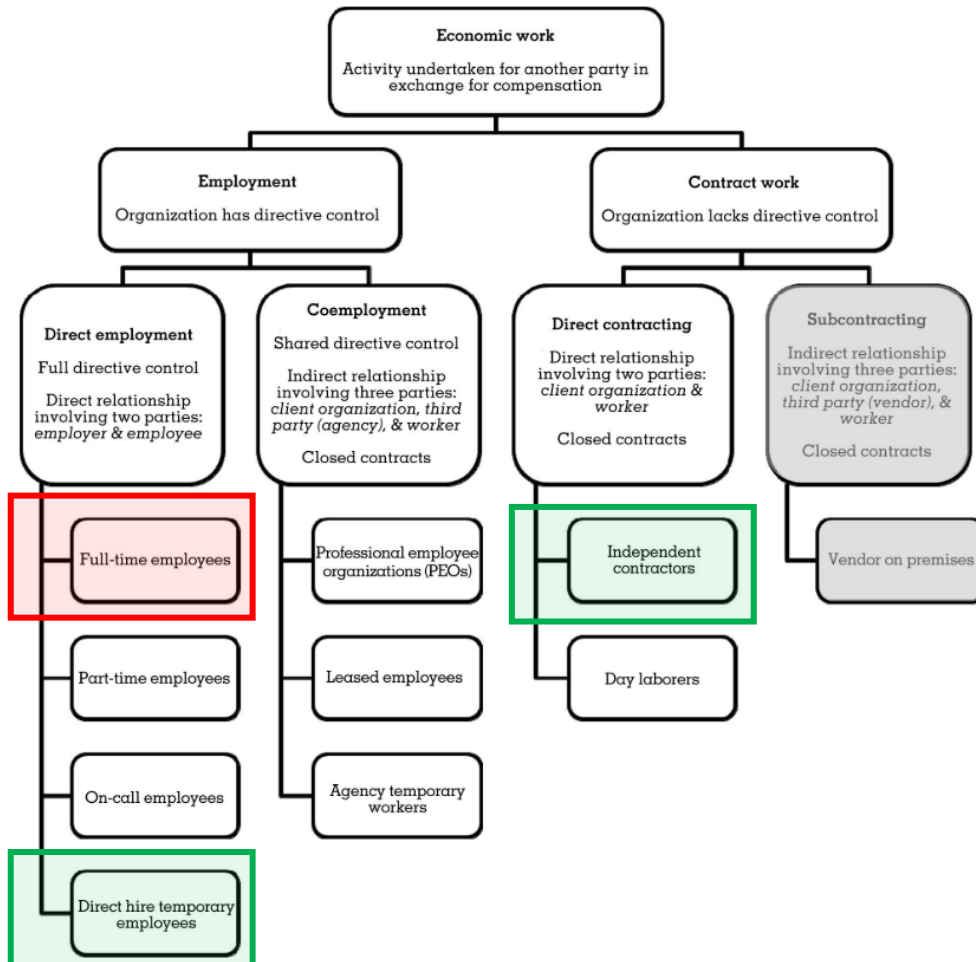
Literature Review - ENGAGEMENT

Literature Heat Map building on Kahn (1990)



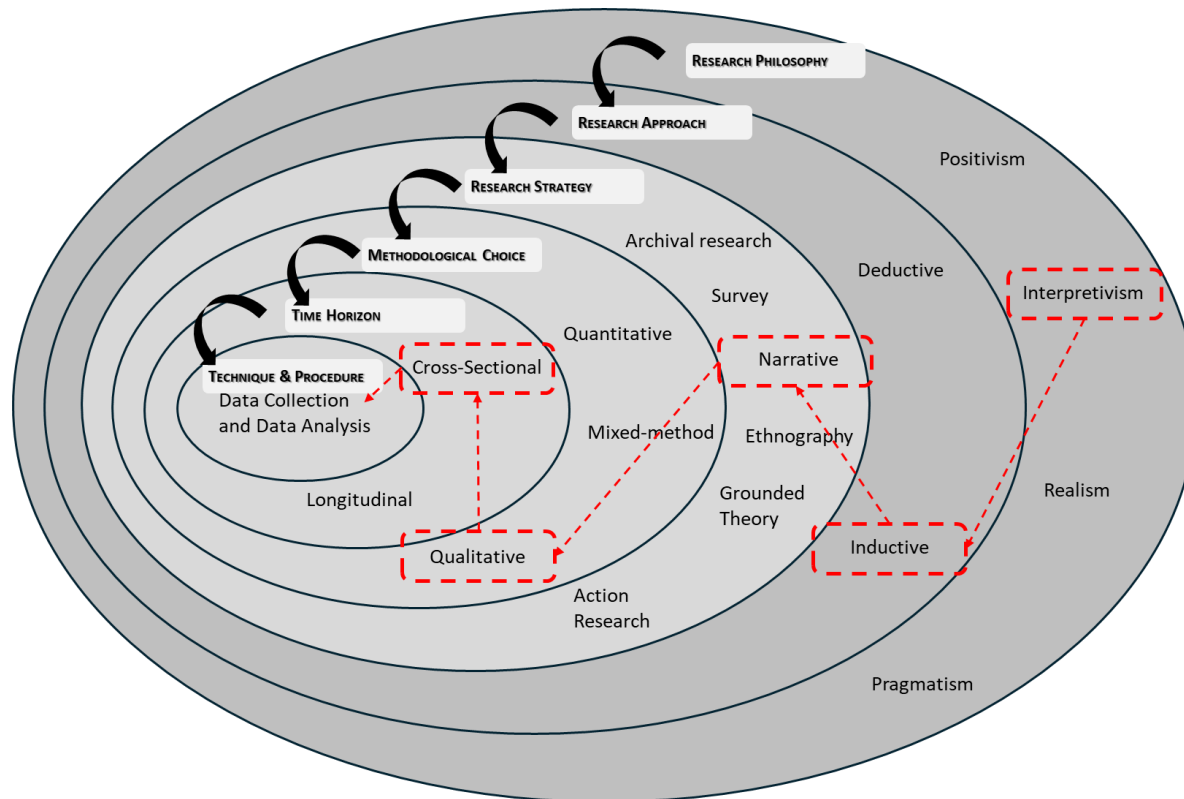
- Kahn (1990)** “[...] *the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances*”
 → Focus: **Investing one’s full and complete self** in the performance of a role. Several measures of employee engagement were developed based on Kahn’s definition of engagement (**May et al, 2004** or **Rich et al, 2010**)
- Most research that focused on work-/job engagement has been using **Schaufeli et al’s (2002) Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)**.
 → Defined as “*positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption*”). Engagement = high level of energy & strong identification with work / Burnout = the opposite. Low level of energy & poor identification with work (**Gonzalez-Roma et al., 2006**)
- Definitions of ‘engagement’ are mostly founded on relatively traditional concepts and perceptions of employment. They draw on theoretical perspectives of **Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964)**, the **Norm of Reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960)** and the **Inducements-Contributions Model (March & Simon, 1958)**.

Literature Review – CONTINGENT WORK



- **Ashford et al (2007)** noted that non-traditional work is a topic **worthy of studying on its own** and an **ideal context for testing and developing theory** about organizations, work, and workers.
- **Capelli & Eldor (2013, 2018)** as well as **Burdreau (2015, 2018)** note how changes in the workplace have not received the attention required in studies of engagement.
- There continues to be an **absence of clear distinctions among these alternative forms of economic work arrangement**, impeding the accumulation of knowledge (**Capelli & Keller, 2013**)
- **Osnowitz (2010)** referred to this lack of clear distinction as “**nebulous concepts like ‘contingent work’**”
- Most studies had hence focused on a **single type of arrangement**, such as *independent contracting* or *agency temp work* (**Ashford et al, 2007** or **Connelly & Gallagher, 2004**)

Research Methodology & Methods



- For too long, quantitative or mixed-method research as the focus of scientific effort and legitimacy.
 - *There continues to be a need for methodological pluralism*
- Narrative Inquiry approach, focusing on retrospection by exploring and understanding lived realities and experiences. (Rosssiter & Clark, 2007)
- Intention is to construct coherent narratives that reconcile lived experiences with existing theoretical models on work engagement.

Data Collection

Elite Interviewing:

- Interview is the main research method.
- Both researcher (by merit of his role) & the research subjects (by merit by their seniority & expertise) are understood as 'elite' (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019).
- This brings specific opportunities and challenges as part of the elite interviewing.

Sampling & Saturation:

- Sample is drawn from a pool of medical professionals in contingent work relationship.
- Based on [A] it being narrative inquiry and [B] it being elite interviews, it is projected to require a smaller (yet sizeable enough) group research subjects to **achieve saturation**.
- Beyond interviews with research subjects themselves, adjacent data (e.g. manager feedback, performance ratings, etc) may be used to triangulate.

Contributions to Research & Practice

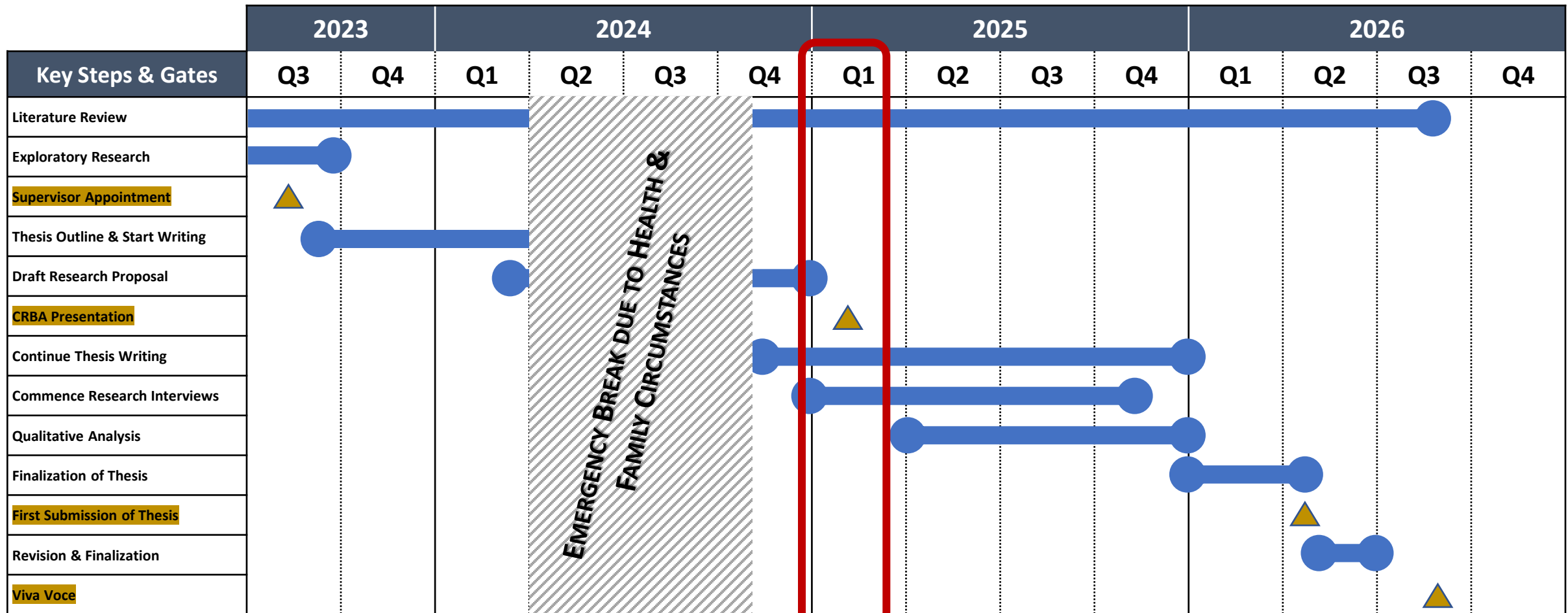
Contribution to ACADEMIA:

- Expand the data on ENGAGEMENT beyond the confines of traditional employment.
- Begin to contrast experiences and expectations of this group of workers against other worker groups to identify similarities and distinct differences.

Contribution to PRACTICE:

- Empower Human Resources / Talent Management functions by helping to equip them with additional tools and vocabulary to better manage this growing part of the workforce.

Work Plan



Possible Risks & Limitations

- Subjectivity & Bias:
 - Narrative inquiry involves interpreting personal stories and experiences.
 - Risk of introducing researcher bias.
 - Since elite research subjects, also risk of introducing social desirability bias.
 - Required to have deep, nuanced understanding of the context in which the narratives are situated.
- Representation & Generalizability:
 - Deeply contextual & individual life stories, with each narrative unique.
 - Difficult to generalize findings to a larger population.
- Ethical Considerations:
 - Confidentiality and anonymity of participants is crucial, must be taken into consideration when deciding how to represent a participant's narrative.
 - Mindfulness when deciding what to include and why to ensure accurate depiction.



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