IrIS AperTO

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TORINO

This is the author's final version of the contribution published as:

Giunchi, M; Chambel, Mj; Ghislieri, C. Contract moderation effects on temporaryagency workers' affective organizational commitment and perceptions of support. PERSONNEL REVIEW. None pp: 22-38. DOI: 10.1108/PR-03-2014-0061

The publisher's version is available at:
http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/10.1108/PR-03-2014-0061

When citing, please refer to the published version.

Link to this full text:
http://hdl.handle.net/2318/156730

Contract moderation effects on temporary agency workers' affective organizational commitment and perceptions of support

Abstract

Purpose – Temporary agency workers (TAWs) have a double employment relationship: one with the agency that hires them with a formal contract, either temporary or permanent; and another with the client organization where they actually perform their work. As the social-exchange theory assumes that temporary agency workers (TAWs) respond to the support they receive from both organizations with affective commitment toward the respective organization. This study proposes that the type of contract with the agency moderates these relationships, specifically that permanent TAWs present a stronger relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and affective organizational commitment (AOC) toward the agency and, to the contrary, that temporary TAWs show a greater relationship between POS and AOC toward the client.

Design/methodology/approach – Our hypotheses were tested with a sample of 522 Portuguese TAWs, of which 265 were temporaries and 257 were permanents. Data were collected with a self-report questionnaire and analyzed with multigroup analysis using the AMOS program.

Findings – We verified that POS from both the employment agency and the client organization were related to the TAWs' affective commitment to each respective organization. Furthermore, the relationship between POS from the employment agency and the affective commitment to this organization was stronger in permanent than in temporary TAWs. However, contrary to our expectations, the contract with the agency did not moderate the relationship with client organizations: temporary and permanent

TAWs showed a similar relationship between POS from this organization and their affective commitment toward it.

Practical implications – These findings show the important organizational role of both the employment agency and the client in supporting their TAWs and attending to the type of contract they have with the employment agency.

Originality/value – This paper contributes to the analysis of the TAWs' double employment relationship and highlights the role of the agency contract in the explanation of these relationships.

Keywords: Temporary Agency Workers, Perceived Organizational Support, Affective Commitment.

Paper type: Research paper

Introduction

There has been a proliferation of research on various "non-standard" work arrangements (Connelly and Gallagher, 2004), including temporary agency work, which has been the fastest growing form of "non-standard" employment in recent years (Lapalme, Simard and Tremblay, 2011). In terms of absolute numbers, CIETT (Confederation of Private Employment Agencies) reports (2013) state that in 2011, there were approximately 46 million temporary agency workers (TAWs), equivalent to 12.4 million full time jobs, which represents an important penetration rate of employment in the world: 1.8% in USA, 1.6% in Europe and 1.5% in Japan. Temporary agency work is a distinct form of work arrangement because the worker is involved in a triangular employment relationship that involves two organizations (Coyle-Shapiro, Morrow and Kessler, 2006; Gallagher and McLean Parks, 2001). He/she is employed by a temporary agency, the company that hires and sends him/her to a client organization, which is the company where he/she performs his/her daily work (George and Chattopadhyay, 2005).

Investigating the double employment relationship in temporary agency workers is an important issue because their triangular employment relationship is characterized as a "multiple agency relationship" (McLean Parks, Kidder, and Gallagher, 1998) that implies that a worker has perceptions about the way both the employment agency and the client organization treat him/her (Benson, 1998; Lapalme et al., 2011; Liden, Wayne, Kraimer, and Sparrowe, 2003). Previous studies have demonstrated the existence of two employment exchange relationships, in which workers developed two foci of perceptions about how organizations care about their contributions and their well-being, namely perceived organizational support (Buch et al., 2010) that is related to the worker's

attitudes toward both organizations. These attitudes are known as a dual affective commitment (Benson, 1998; Coyle-Shapiro and Morrow, 2006; Connelly, Gallagher, and Gilley, 2007; Gallagher and McLean Parks, 2001; Liden et al., 2003; Van Breugel, Van Olffen, and Olie, 2005).

Many studies have analyzed TAWs as a unique category (Benson, 1998; Buch et al., 2010; Van Breugel et al., 2005; Veitch and Cooper-Thomas, 2009). However, other studies have only analyzed TAWs who have fixed-term contracts with the agency (Connelly et al., 2007) or only TAWs who have long-term contracts (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2006). In fact, in different countries such as Portugal, Italy and Spain, TAWs may have a temporary or a permanent contract with an agency and both options are constrained by specific employment regulations (Clauwaert, 2000). Given the economic instability in these countries, agencies prefer the temporary contract because the permanent contract obliges agency to give some compensation to TAWs whether or not they are on an assignment at any given time.

In this study, we focused on these two distinct types of TAWs and relied on the following idea: with a permanent contract, they develop a stronger relationship with the agency than with the client organization. The opposite could be true for TAWs with a temporary contract, in which the contract with the agency would be lower, and therefore, the role of the client organization would be more substantial. We suggest that the two different contracts with the agencies will have a different impact on the double relationship between Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and affective commitment.

Relationship between POS and affective commitment of TAWs

An increasing number of studies have analyzed the employment relationships of

TAWs from the perspective of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which is the most influential conceptual paradigm for understanding workplace behavior (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Social exchange theorists have proposed that employees exchange their affective commitment for the employer's support (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa, 1986; Eisenberger, Fasolo, and Davis-LaMastro, 1990). Specifically, employees who feel supported by their organizations are likely to develop a stronger sense of affective commitment as a result (e.g., Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; Settoon, Bennett, and Liden, 1996; Shore and Wayne, 1993; Wayne, Shore, and Liden, 1997). POS refers to workers' global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). As noted by Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli and Linch (1997), POS is positively related to a variety of work-related outcomes including affective commitment. Affective commitment is the employee's identification with, emotional attachment to and involvement with the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991). Although we expect that POS from the agency and client organization will be based on different types of information, resources, and support, the level of support that is perceived by TAWs from each organization should be related to their affective commitment to each. According to Liden et al. (2003), TAWs who feel supported by both the agency and the client organization reciprocate by showing affective commitment to each organization, albeit for different reasons. A possible reason is the agency provides salary and human resource services. Additionally, it is not uncommon for TAWs to work for consecutive months within the same client organization.

Hypothesis 1a. Perceived organizational support (POS) from the agency is positively related to affective commitment to it.

Hypothesis 1b. Perceived organizational support (POS) from the client organization is positively related to affective commitment to it.

Contract with the agency as a moderator

This research emphasizes the formal contract that TAWs can have with their employment agency. The triangular employment relationship in which TAWs are involved implies a commercial relationship between the agency and the client organization, a contractual relationship between the worker and the agency (which can be permanent or temporary) and an employment relationship between the worker and the client organization, which has a fixed term that depends on the duration of the assignment. The Portuguese legal descriptions of temporary work contracts and open-ended contracts for temporary assignment match the descriptions of *temporary agency work* and *permanent agency work* in the European Directive for Temporary Agency Work 2008/104/EC (Official Journal of the European Union L327/9, 2008). The Portuguese legislation provides two types of contracts between TAW and the agency. One is a *Temporary work contract,* which has a fixed-term that can be defined or undefined under the permitted conditions for contracts for use of temporary work. It cannot exceed the duration of the contract for the use of temporary work between the agency and the client organization. Temporary work contracts cannot exceed 6 months (if they occur during the process of selection to fill a new vacancy), 12 months (in the case of unexpected growth in the organization's workload), or 24 months (in other situations as defined in Articles 180 and 182 of the Portuguese Labor Code). The other type is a

Permanent contract for temporary assignments, which is characterized by the workers being compensated by the agency, even if they are not assigned to a client. If the worker is not assigned, the agency will pay the employees what the "Instruments for Collective Regulation of Work" dictate, which is two thirds of the last salary or two thirds of the national minimum salary. The chosen option should be the one that is most favorable to the employee. Employees can also work directly for the agency if they are between assignments in client organizations. In this particular case, the salary must be appropriate for the job that is being performed but cannot be less than what the employee earned in his/her previous assignment (Article 184 of the Portuguese Labor Code).

As noted by Van Breugel and colleagues (2005), TAWs may become more affectively committed to an agency if it is successful in assisting them in finding suitable employment, helping them with work-related problems and enhancing their career prospects. With a permanent contract, the relationship with the agency will be continuous, and there will be more opportunities for the worker to have steady employment. The relationship of permanent TAWs with the agency is more likely to reduce the sense of job insecurity that temporary workers generally experience. In fact, with a permanent contract, TAWs have more security that the agency will continuously ensure their reassignments in new client organizations. Therefore, in this situation, the agency enhances the employability of TAWs (e.g., their possibility of obtaining and performing a job) that has been considered to be an important need for TAWs and is central in explaining their affective commitment (Chambel and Sobral 2011; De Cuyper and De Witte, 2008). Chambel and Castanheira (2007) reported that employees who seek to build a career with the organization are more likely to seek a permanent relationship,

whereas those with a shorter-term interest are more likely to limit their involvement. For all these reasons, we would expect that the relationship between POS from the agency and affective commitment to the organization would be stronger in permanent TAWs than in temporary TAWs.

In contrast, temporary TAWs are not able to maintain a continuous relationship with the agency or with the client organization. However, studies conducted in various countries have shown that the majority of TAWs want permanent employment (Von Hippel, Mangum, Greenberger, Skoglind, & Heneman, 1997) and only opt for a temporary contract because they have no other alternatives (Amuedo- Dorantes, 2000; DiNatale, 2001; Morris & Vekker, 2001; Lopes and Chambel, 2014; Remery, Van Doorne-Huiskes, & Schippers, 2002). These TAWs' desire to obtain a permanent contract is an important variable to explain their employment relationship with the client organization (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2008) because they react differently to its practices (Chambel, Sobral, Espada & Curral, 2013; De Jong & Shalk, 2010; Espada & Chambel, 2013). In fact, TAWs show positive attitudes toward the client organization, independently of its actions, because they want to increase the likelihood of being a permanent position in the client company (Chambel & Castanheira, 2007).

However, this desire to obtain a permanent contract is stronger for temporary than for permanent TAWs because the latter already have a permanent position that gives them more employment security through reassignments in various client organizations. Furthermore, this desire relates more to the employment relationship with the client organization than with the agency because a permanent contract with an agency occurs in the minority of TAWs, and two-thirds of client organizations use agency work to create

jobs (CIETT, 2013). Therefore, we could postulate that temporary TAWs may show a strong relationship between POS from the client organization and affective commitment to the company because this association would demonstrate that they are good workers that should be directly employed.

Hypothesis 2a. The relationship between POS from the agency and affective commitment to it is stronger in permanent than in temporary TAWs.

Hypothesis 2b. The relationship between POS from the client organization and affective commitment to it is stronger in temporary than in permanent TAWs.

The dual commitment

The fact that TAWs work for the employment agency and the client organization simultaneously makes research on commitment more complex than it is with direct-hire workers (Liden et al., 2003). Some empirical studies of TAWs have supported the Theory of Dual Commitment, which assumes that employees who feel affectively committed to an agency will also feel affectively committed to a client organization (Connelly and Gallagher, 2004; Gallagher and McLean Parks, 2001) and that these two attitudes are mutually related. Some authors have demonstrated a reciprocal relationship between both foci of commitments and an overflow effect from affective commitment to the agency to affective commitment to the client (Connelly et al., 2007; Coley-Shapiro and Morrow, 2006; Lapalme et al., 2011) and from affective commitment to the client to affective commitment to the agency (Connely, Gallagher, and Webster, 2011). As we noted earlier, because the employment relationship with the agency is strongest in permanent TAWs, we might expect a stronger relationship between affective commitment to the agency and affective commitment to the client in permanent than in temporary TAWs. In contrast,

because the employment relationship with the client is stronger in temporary TAWs, we might expect a stronger relationship between affective commitment to the client and affective commitment to the agency in temporary than in permanent TAWs.

Hypothesis 3a. The relationship between affective commitment to the agency and affective commitment to the client is stronger in permanent than in temporary TAWs.

Hypothesis 3b. The relationship between affective commitment to the client and affective commitment to the agency is stronger in temporary than in permanent TAWs.

Method

Procedure and Sample

Data were collected on TAWs from various companies, including employment agencies and clients that were located throughout Portugal, including the island of Madeira. A questionnaire placed on an online platform was disseminated through a link to the various companies to send to workers via email. Respondents answered the questionnaire online and were assured of the anonymity of their responses and of the opportunity to receive feedback. There was no incentive (cash or otherwise) for participating in this project. The questionnaire allowed us to collect responses from 1840 TAWs, which included 1540 TAWs with a temporary contract and 304 TAWs with a permanent contract with the employment agency. We selected 522 TAWs from these two groups using a non-probabilistic sampling method that was based on reasoned choice and considered gender, age, level of education, industrial sector, duration of the relationship with the agency and time spent on a mission to the client organization. The total sample was divided into two groups that consisted of 257 permanent TAWs and 265 temporary

TAWs. The demographic characteristics of the permanent TAWs and temporary TAWs are presented in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Measures

Contract Type. Temporary TAWs were coded as 1 and permanent TAWs as 2.

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) from the agency. The shortened version of the Eisenberger et al. (1986) scale that comprises eight items was used to measure POS from the agency. This scale had been used in a previous study in Portugal (Chambel and Sobral, 2011). An example of an item for POS from the agency is: 'Help is available from (agency name) when I have a problem'. High scores indicate high levels of POS. Cronbach's alpha in this study was .90 for temporary TAWs and .84 for permanent TAWs.

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) from the client. We used the same short version of the Eisenberger et al. (1986) scale to measure POS from the client. The items were identical to the scale used for the agency TAW except that it made reference to the 'name of client organization'. Cronbach's alpha in this study was .86 for temporary TAWs and .87 for permanent TAWs.

Affective commitment to the agency. We assessed TAWs affective commitment to the employment agency using Meyer et al.'s (1993) measure. This tool had been used in a previous study in Portugal (Chambel and Sobral, 2011). The six items were measured using a seven-point scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7).

An example of an item is: 'feel a strong sense of belonging to (agency name)'. High scores indicate high levels of affective commitment. Cronbach's alpha in this study was .87 for temporary TAWs and .90 for permanent TAWs.

Affective commitment to the client. We used the same six-item scale from Meyer et al. (1993) but with a reference to the client organization that currently employed the worker. Cronbach's alpha in this study was .88 for temporary TAWs and .90 for permanent TAWs.

Control variables. We controlled for the duration of the relationship with the agency and the relationship with the client organization because POS and organizational affective commitment are related to the length of tenure (Benson, 1998; Druker and Stanworth, 2004; Van Breugel et al., 2005). The duration of the relationship with the agency and the client organization were both measured as the number of months that a worker had been with an agency and with the client organization.

Statistical Analysis

We used a two-step approach to analyze our results, as proposed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). Structural equation modeling (SEM) and multiple group analysis with the AMOS software package (Arbuckle, 2003) were used, first to test several measurement models through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and then to compare various competing structural models. The Maximum Likelihood Estimation Method and the covariance matrix were used in all analyses. Following established recommendations (Hu and Bentler, 1999), the evaluation of the overall goodness of fit of the models was based on a combination of several fit indices. Models were compared based on Chi-square difference tests and on additional fit indices, specifically the Root Mean Square

Error of Approximation (RMSEA), the Tuckler Lewis Index (TLI), and the Bentler Comparative Fit Index (CFI). For TLI and CFI, values greater than .90 represent a good model fit, and for RMSEA, values less than .07 indicate a good model fit. We initially performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on the full measurement model (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). This model (Four-factor Model) included all observed items loading on their respective latent variables (POS from agency, POS from client, affective commitment to agency and affective commitment to client). We performed multiple group analyses and followed the instructions of Byrne (2010) to test our hypotheses. As recommended, we first tested the structural models separately for the samples of temporary TAWs and permanent TAWs. The model that best fit the data for both samples was then tested in a multigroup analysis that included both samples to inspect invariance across the samples (Baseline Model). The fit of this model was then compared to an alternative model (Full constrained model), in which we constrained all the coefficient paths to be equal in the temporary and permanent TAWs samples. Finally, we performed subsequent tests for invariance to inspect the location of non-invariance. We established an iterative process to assess invariance for each of the structural and coefficient paths separately. A new model in which a particular loading was constrained equally across the samples was fit to the data and was then compared to the original model. If the fit did not deteriorate (e.g., if the chi-square difference was not significant), this constrained loading was included in the next model that included another constrained path. This process was repeated until we reached the final model.

Results

Measurement Models and Descriptive Analysis

The measurement model of temporary TAWs and the measurement model of permanent TAWs were tested separately. Model 1, a four-latent-factor model of temporary TAWs showed an acceptable fit ($\chi2$ [283] = 780.32, $\rho < .001$, CFI = .92, TLI = .91, RMSEA = .08). Model 1, a four-factor model of permanent TAWs, also showed an acceptable fit ($\chi2$ [283] = 689.20, $\rho < .001$, CFI = .93, TLI = .92, RMSEA = .08). This measurement model was subsequently compared for both groups with a one-factor model (Model 2) in which all items had loaded on a single latent variable; with a three-factor model (Model 3) in which both POS items – client organization and agency – loaded on the same latent variable; with another three-factor model (Model 4) in which both commitment items – client organizations and agency – loaded on the same latent variable and with a two-factor model (Model 5) in which both POS items loaded on the same latent variable, and both commitment items loaded on the other latent variable. We found a significant diminution of the fit for both the temporary TAWs and permanent TAWs. Furthermore, the difference between the theoretical model and alternative models was found to be significant in both groups. The CFA allowed us to determine that the theoretical model that had been hypothesized showed the best fit to the data (cf. Table 2).

Insert Table 2 about here

Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations and the correlation matrices that were obtained using SPSS 20.0 separately for temporary TAWs and permanent TAWs. As was expected, POS from the agency and POS from the client in both samples were positively related to both affective commitment to the agency and affective commitment to the client.

Structural Models and Hypotheses testing

As previously noted in the "Method" section, before computing the baseline model, first we tested structural models separately for the samples of temporary TAWs and permanent TAWs, such was recommended by Byrne (2010). The models established separately to temporary TAWs ($\chi2$ [327] = 818.77, ρ < .001, CFI = .92, TLI = .91, RMSEA = .08) and permanent TAWs ($\chi2$ [327] = 737.50, ρ < .001, CFI = .93, TLI = .92, RMSEA = .07) fit the data acceptable. We then developed the baseline structural model ($\chi2$ [654] = 1556.27, ρ < .001, CFI = .93, TLI = .91, RMSEA = .05) for the multi-group comparison between temporary TAWs and permanent TAWs. This baseline structural model fits the data well and served as the baseline value against which all subsequently specified models were compared. Following several other previous studies (e.g. Chambel, Castanheira, & Sobral, 2014; Lee, Lee, Lee, & Park, 2014; Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2012) the baseline structural model and the other subsequent models tested, were compared by the significant differences observed between the $\chi2$ values. According to Byrne (2010), when the difference between the $\chi2$ values (i.e. $\Delta\chi2$) is significant, this means that some paths are different across the groups analyzed. Thus, we tested a Full-constrained model in which we constrained all the coefficient paths to be equal in the temporary and permanent TAWs samples to inspect the invariance across the samples. The Full-constrained model ($\chi2$ [733] = 1730.60, ρ < .001, CFI = .92, TLI = .91, RMSEA = .05) was significantly worse than the baseline model ($\Delta\chi2$ [79] = 174.33, ρ < .001), which means that some paths are different across the groups analyzed. Finally, we performed subsequent iterative tests to inspect the location of invariance across the samples. These

subsequent iterative tests, which led us to achieve a final model, were performed by progressively adding one constrain in a specific path. If from the comparison between the baseline model and this new model result a non-significant difference in the $\chi2$ value, this provides support for the invariance across the two samples in this specific path constrained. Then, we followed in testing the variance in another specific path until we reached a final model. The final model exhibited an acceptable fit ($\chi2$ [672] = 1578.66, ρ < .001, CFI = .92, TLI = .92, RMSEA = .05), non-significantly better than the baseline model ($\Delta\chi2$ [18] = 22.39, ns) (Table 4).

Insert Table 4 about here

The effect of the TAWs' contract with the agency on the relationship between POS and affective commitment was tested through the structuring of the final model shown in Figure 1 ($\chi2$ [672] = 1578.66, p < .001, CFI = .92, TLI = .92, RMSEA = .05). In this model, we considered two control variables that in previous studies were found to be significant in the relationship between POS and affective commitment in TAWs. One control variable was the duration of the relationship with the agency, and the other was the duration of the relationship with the client organization. The only control variable that was found to be significant was the duration of the relationship ("tenure") in the client organization. In temporary TAWs, the tenure at the client organization was related to the POS from the client (β = .19, ρ < .05). In permanent TAWs, the tenure at the client organization was negatively related to the POS from the agency (β = - .28, ρ < .01) and was also related to the affective commitment to the client (β = .21, ρ < .05). We chose to

omit the effects of the control variables in the model to make the representation more clear. As expected, both the POS from agency and POS from the client were positively related to the affective commitment to the respective organizations in both TAW groups (for permanent TAWs: [$\beta = .56$, $\rho < .01$, $\beta = .47$, $\rho < .01$] and for temporary TAWs: [$\beta = .42$, $\rho < .01$, $\beta = .42$, $\rho < .01$]). These findings support Hypothesis1a and Hypothesis1b. We also observed that the positive relationship between POS from the agency and affective commitment to the agency ($\beta = .56$, $\rho < .01$) was significantly stronger for permanent TAWs than it was for temporary TAWs ($\beta = .42$, $\rho < .01$). These results therefore support Hypothesis 2a. Values for a positive relationship between POS from the client and affective commitment to the client were not significantly different in the two groups: (for permanent TAWs: [$\beta = .47$, $\rho < .01$] and for temporary TAWs: [$\beta = .42$, $\rho < .01$]). These results refute Hypothesis 2b. As we hypothesized, we found a significantly stronger relationship between affective commitment to the agency and affective commitment to the client in permanent TAWs ($\beta = .32$, $\rho < .01$) than in temporary TAWs ($\beta = .26$, $\rho < .05$). This finding supports Hypothesis 3a. Furthermore, a significant relationship between affective commitment to the client and affective commitment to the agency was observed for only temporary TAWs ($\beta = .27$, $\rho < .05$). This relationship was not significant for permanent TAWs ($\beta = -. 00$, n.s.). These results support Hypothesis 3b.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Discussion

This study supports the idea that TAWs develop two simultaneous employment relationships because they have a dual commitment in response to the POS they received

from both the agency and the client organization. This study also shows that the contract that TAWs have with the agency moderates only employment with the agency (e.g., permanent TAWs show a stronger relationship between POS from the agency and affective commitment to the agency than temporary TAWs). Consistent with the Theory of Dual Commitment, this research also shows that affective commitment to the agency and affective commitment to the client were mutually related. However, this relationship differed depending on the contract with the agency. The affective commitment to the agency and the affective commitment to the client were mutually related for temporary TAWs, but only the affective commitment to the client was related to the affective commitment to the agency for temporary TAWs.

Consistent with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), we found that TAWs, regardless of the nature of their contract with the agency, are generally motivated to maintain social equilibrium in their employment relationships with both their employment agency and with the client organization. They respond to POS by repaying organizations with their affective commitment (Buch et al., 2010; Veitch and Cooper-Thomas, 2009).

The main objective of the present study was to investigate whether these relationships differ in TAWs with different types of contracts with the agency. Permanent TAWs are more protected and have more opportunities to deal with the agency because the agency is contractually obligated to provide continuous employment opportunities at client organizations or guaranteed employment at the agency itself. Permanent TAWs reciprocated positively with both organizations (Buch et al., 2010). Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) argued that this commitment could be seen as an indicator of the extent

to which employees believe that they are involved in an exchange relationship with the organization. Therefore, TAWs with a permanent contract show a greater bond with the agency because the longer working relationship would provide greater opportunities for exchange and support offered by the agency. A permanent contract additionally implies more frequent opportunities for contact as well as added assurance and can favor, even in an atypical situation, the ability to establish positive relationships with an organization in which they do not actually perform the work activity (George and Chattopadhyay, 2005; Van Breugel et al., 2005). In contrast, the relationship of temporary TAWs with the agency is weaker because the agency is the organization that provides a short-term relationship with an economic exchange that is characterized by limited mutual involvement (Chambel and Castanheira, 2007). In fact, temporary TAWs develop a relationship with the agency that is limited to formal matters and that relationship ends with the completion of their assignment at the client organization.

However, contrary to our expectations, the contract with the agency did not moderate the relationship with client organizations. We found that temporary and permanent TAWs answered similarly about the relationship between their affective commitment and the POS from the client organization. The employment relationship with the organization where they worked daily was not affected by the formal contract with the agency. Although this relationship with the client was only temporary, we found that temporary workers responded with affective commitment to the client organization if they perceived favorable treatment by the organization. Consistent with other studies (for example, Chambel and Sobral, 2012; Liden et al., 2003), we found that it was possible for the client organization to create a mutual investment relationship with temporary workers.

Workers will respond with a positive attitude toward an organization that shows that it values the contribution of TAWs and cares about their well-being. If TAWs conceived themselves as being part of a social exchange with the client organization, they responded reciprocally to the support of this organization with affective commitment (Allen, Shore, and Griffeth, 2003; Shore and Shore, 1995). The present study shows that this positive employment relationship with the client was possible for temporary and permanent TAWs.

Finally, we assumed that because of the double commitment developed by TAWs, prerequisites of a bi-directional overflow effect would occur between affective commitment to the agency and affective commitment to the client. We found that this bi-directionality occurred only in temporary TAWs. As expected, we found that the employment relationship of permanent TAWs with the agency was dominant and that the relationship between affective commitment to the agency and affective commitment to the client was stronger among permanent TAWs than among temporary TAWs. The relationship in the opposite direction was not statistically significant. Permanent TAWs have more employment security, and it is mutually advantageous for workers and the agency if the agency can provide continuous reassignment to different clients. The affective relationship with the client was therefore dependent on the affective relationship with the agency (Connelly et al., 2007; Coyle - Shapiro and Morrow, 2006; Lapalme et al., 2011), but the affective relationship with the agency was not dependent on the affective relationship with the client (Van Breugel et al., 2005). The relationship between both affective relationships was bi-directional among temporary TAWs, for which the affective commitment to the agency spilt over to the affective commitment to the agency,

and the affective relationship to the client spilt over to the affective relationship to the agency. These workers may not consider themselves to be part of either the agency or the client organization, and they are therefore more likely to be committed equally to both organizations, especially with regard to social acceptance (Benson, 1998). They may want a more conventional employment relationship with one of the organizations (i.e., they may want a permanent contract with the agency or to be direct-hired employees of the client). An alternative explanation of the bi-directional relationship observed in temporary TAWs may relate to the perception by these workers that there is only one organization that comprises several parts. They may perceive the agency as being a constituent part of the client and the client as being a part of the agency. This perception is supported by the tenuous relationship that the workers have with both organizations. The affective commitment that is developed to one of the organizations would extend to the affective commitment that is developed to the other one (Lapalme et al., 2011).

Limitations and future studies

We need to acknowledge some limitations of our research. First, this study is cross-sectional, with data gathered at one point in time. This makes it impossible to rule out relationships based on reverse causality. Although we cannot assume that the direction of the relationship goes from POS to affective commitment, there is a strong theoretical framework that supports this direction of causality (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Although we cannot assume a causality of the overflow effect between the two foci of affective commitment, we have verified with our hypotheses that there are prerequisites. Longitudinal studies are needed to assess these causal relationships. Second, the exclusive use of self-reported questionnaires can potentially contaminate the results

because the observed relationships may have been artificially inflated as a result of the respondents' tendencies to respond in a consistent manner. However, self-reported data seemed to be a more appropriate approach because this study evaluated workers' affective commitment to organizations. A third possible limitation is that the research only analyzed the affective form of commitment. However, Coyle-Shapiro and Morrow (2006) assumed that this form of organizational commitment is the most frequently studied and is most closely linked to workers' outcomes. Fourth, our two samples of TAWs were extracted from a larger sample of TAWs through a judgment sampling method that considered various variables. We used this method to obtain two samples that had different contract types but had similar demographics. Our samples therefore cannot be considered representative of the general TAW population. Future studies should seek to enhance the external variability of the research by replicating our study with random sampling of TAWs who are working under various contract conditions.

Conclusions

The present study confirmed that TAWs respond to POS received from organizations with reciprocal affective commitment to them (Benson, 1998; Buch et al., 2010; Connelly et al., 2007; George e Chattopadhyay, 2005; Liden et al., 2003). In permanent TAWs, the relationship with the agency is a reference for their employment relationship, and these workers show a stronger relationship between POS from the agency and affective commitment to the agency than that seen in temporary TAWs. In permanent TAWs, the affective commitment to the agency spills over to the affective commitment to the client but the affective commitment to the client does not relate the affective commitment to the agency. However, the relationship with the client is not affected by the type of TAW

contract with the agency; temporary and permanent TAWs both respond to POS from the client with affective commitment to the client. The first practical implication of these results is that it is important for organizations, whether they are agencies or clients, to support their workers by promoting work situations in which employees are committed to both organizations. Indeed, the more successful both organizations are in promoting favorable work situations, the greater the likelihood that the workers' attitudes toward the agency and the client will be positively related (Coyle -Shapiro and Morrow, 2006). These outcomes have been underlined in the European recommendations of non-discrimination and the obligation to create a positive work context for TAWs (Commission of the European Communities, 2002). Furthermore, this study has revealed evidence to support the management of the double employment relationship of TAWs. The agency and the client organization can benefit by maintaining favorable POS perceptions by their TAWs. In fact, TAWs that have positive experiences with the client may be more likely to confirm their choice of contracting with the agency (Connelly et al., 2007). The client would also be inclined to maintain a commercial relationship with the agency because it supplied committed employees (Van Breugel et al., 2005). The investment by the agency caused permanent contracts with TAWs to strengthen the relationship with the agency but did not interfere with the relationship with the client organization.

References

Allen, D., Shore, L. and Griffeth, R. (2003), "The role of perceived organizational support and supportive human resource practices in the turnover process", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 99-118.

Amuedo-Dorantes, C. (2000), "Work transitions into and out of involuntary temporary employment in a segmented market: Evidence from Spain", *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, Vol. 53 No. 2, pp. 309-325.

Anderson, J. C. and Gerbing, D. W. (1988). "Structural Equation Modeling in Practice: A Review and Recommended Two-Step Approach," *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 103 No. 3, pp. 411-423.

Benson, J. (1998), "Dual commitment: contract workers in Australian manufacturing enterprises", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 35 No. 3, pp. 355-75.

Blau, P.M. (1964), *Exchange and Power in Social Life*, Wiley, New York, NY.

Buch, R., Kuvaas, B. and Dysvik, A. (2010), "Dual support in contract workers' triangular employment relationships", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 77 No. 1, pp. 93-103.

Byrne, B. M. (2010), *Structural equation modeling with AMOS: Basic concepts, applications, and pro-gramming.* New York: Routledge.

Chambel, M. J. and Castanheira, F. (2007), "They don't want to be temporaries: Similarities between temps and core workers", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 28 No. 8, pp. 943-959.

Chambel, M. J., Castanheira, F. and Sobral, F. (*in press*, 2014), "Temporary agency versus permanent workers: A multigroup analysis of human resource management, work engagement and organizational commitment", *Economic and Industrial Democracy*.

Chambel, M. J. and Sobral, F. (2011), "Training is an investment with return in temporary workers: A social exchange perspective", *Career Development*

International, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 161-177.

CIETT, International Confederation of Private Employment Agencies (2013). *The agency work industry around the world.* Brussels: CIETT.

Clauwaert, S. (2000), *Survey of legislation on Temporary Agency Work.* Brussels: ETUI.

Commission of the European Communities (2002), *Adapting to change in work and society: A new Community strategy on health and safety at work 2002–2006,* Brussels.

Connelly, C.E. and Gallagher, D.G. (2004), "Emerging trends in contingent work research", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 30 No. 6, pp. 959-83.

Connelly, C.E., Gallagher, D.G. and Gilley, K.M. (2007), "Organizational and client commitment among contracted employees: a replication and extension with temporary workers", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 70 No. 2, pp. 326-35.

Connelly, C., Gallagher, D. and Webster, J. (2011). "Predicting temporary agency workers' behaviors: Justice, volition, identification, and spillover", *Career Development International*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 178-194.

Coyle-Shapiro, J.A-M. and Kessler, I. (2002), "Contingent and non-contingent working in local government: contrasting psychological contracts", *Public Administration*, Vol. 80 No. 1, pp. 77-101.

Coyle-Shapiro, J. and Morrow, P. (2006), "Organizational and client commitment among contracted employees", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 68 No. 3, pp. 416-31.

Coyle-Shapiro, J.A.M., Morrow, P.C. and Kessler, I. (2006), "Serving two organizations: exploring the employment relationship of contracted employees", *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 45 No. 4, pp. 561-83.

Cropanzano, R. and Mitchell, M. (2005), "Social Exchange Theory: An Interdisciplinary

Review", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 31 No. 6, pp. 874-900.

De Cuyper, N. and De Witte, H. (2008), "Job insecurity and employability among temporary workers: a theoretical approach based on the psychological contract", in Naswall, K., Hellgren, J. and Sverke, M. (Eds), The Individual in the Changing Working Life, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 88-107.

Druker, J. and Stanworth, C. (2004). Mutual expectations: A study of the three-way relationship between employment agencies, their client organizations and white-collar agency "temps". *Industrial Relations Journal*, Vol. 35 No. 1, pp. 58-75.

Eisenberger, R., Fasolo, E M. and Davis-LaMastro, V. (1990). "Effects of perceived organizational support on employee diligence, innovation, and commitment", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 53 No. 1, pp. 51-59.

Eisenberger, R., Cummings, J., Armeli, S. and Lynch, P. (1997), "Perceived organizational Support, Discretionary Treatment, and Job Satisfaction", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 82 No. 5, pp. 812-820.

Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S. and Sowa, D. (1986), "Perceived organizational support", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 71 No. 3, pp. 500-507.

Forde, C. and Slater, G. (2006). "The nature and experience of agency working in Britain - What are the challenges for human resource management?", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 35 No. 2, pp. 141-157.

Gallagher, D. G. and McLean Parks, J. (2001). "I pledge thee my troth *f* contingently: Commitment and the contingent work relationship". *Human Resource Management Review,* Vol. 11 No. 3*,* pp. 181-208.

George, E. and Chattopadhyay, P. (2005), "One foot in each camp: The dual

identification of contract workers", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 50 No. 1, pp. 68-99.

Hu, L. and Bentler, P. M. (1999), "Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives", *Structural Equation Modeling*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 1-55.

Kompier, M., Ybema, J. F., Janssen, J., and Taris, T. (2009), "Employment contracts: Cross-sectional and longitudinal relations with quality of working life, health and well-being", *Journal of Occupational Health,* Vol. 51 No. 3, pp. 193-203.

Lapalme, M.-E., Simard, G. and Tremblay, M. (2011), "The influence of psychological contract breach on temporary workers' commitment and behaviors: a multiple agency perspective", *Journal of Business and Psychology*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 311-324.

Lee, C., Lee, H, Lee, J. and Park, J. (2014), "A multiple group analysis of the training transfer model: exploring the differences between high and low performers in a Korean insurance company", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 25 No. 20, pp. 2837–2857.

Liden, R.C., Wayne, S.J., Kraimer, M.L. and Sparrowe, R.T. (2003), "The dual commitments of contingent workers: an examination of contingents' commitment to the agency and the organization", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 24 No. 5, pp. 609-25.

Lopes, S. and Chambel, M.J. (2014), "Motives for being temporary agency worker: Validity of one measure according to the self-determination theory", *Social Indicators Research,* Vol. 116 No. 1*,* pp. 137-152.

McLean Parks, J., Kidder, D. L. and Gallagher, D. G. (1998). "Fitting square pegs into

round holes: mapping the domain of contingent work arrangements onto the psychological contract", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 19 No.1, 697-730.

Meyer, J. P. and Allen, N. J. (1991). "A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment", *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 61-89.

Morris, M. D. S. and Vekker, A. (2001), "An alternative look at temporary workers, their choices, and the growth in temporary employment", *Journal of Labor Research*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 373-390.

DiNatale, M. (2001), "Characteristics of and preference for alternative work arrangements", *Monthly Management Review*, Vol. 124 No. 5, pp. 28-49.

Remery, C., Van Doorne-Huiskes, J., and Schippers, J. J. (2002), "Labour market exibility in the Netherlands: Looking for winners and losers", *Work, Employment & Society*, Vol. 16 No. 3, pp. 477-496.

Rhoades, L. and Eisenberger, R. (2002), "Perceived organizational support: a review of the literature", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 87 No. 4, pp. 698-714.

Settoon, R. P., Bennett, N., and Liden, R. C. (1996), "Social exchange in organizations: Perceived organizational support, leader-member exchange, and employee reciprocity", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 81 No. 3, pp. 219-227.

Shore, L.M. and Wayne, S.J. (1993). "Commitment and employee behavior: Comparison of affective commitment and continuance commitment with perceived organizational support", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 78 No. 5, pp. 774-780.

Shore, L.M. and Shore, T.H. (1995), "Perceived organizational support and organizational justice", in Cropanzano, R. and Kacmar, K.M. (Eds), *Organizational*

Politics, Justice and Support: Managing Social Climate at Work, Quorum Press, pp. 149-64.

Tims, M., Bakker, A. B. and Derks, D. (2012), "Development and validation of the job crafting scale", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 80 No. 1, pp. 173–186.

Van Breugel, G., Van Olffen, W., and Olie, R. (2005), "Temporary liaisons: The commitment of 'temps' towards their agencies", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 42 No. 3, pp. 539-566.

Van Dyne, L. and Ang, S. (1998), "Organizational citizenship behavior of contingent workers in Singapore", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 41 No. 6, pp. 692-703.

Veitch, R.W.D. and Cooper-Thomas, H.D. (2009), "Tit for tat? Predictors of temporary agency workers' commitments", *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, Vol. 47 No. 3, pp. 318-37.

Von Hippel, C., Mangum, S. L., Greenberger, D. B., Skoglind, J. D. and Heneman, R. L. (1997), "Temporary employment. Can organisations and employees both win?", *Academy of Management Executive,* Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 93-104.

Wayne, S. J., Shore, L. M. and Liden, R. C. (1997). "Perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange: A social exchange perspective", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 40 No. 1, pp. 82-111.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics: permanent TAWs and temporary TAWs

	Permanent TAWs	Temporary TAWs
Sex (% female)	59,9%	54%
Age (Average in years)	28,8	30,7
Education level (% high school graduated)	44,7%	35,1%
Employment sector (% in industry)	23,4%	33,4%
Relationship with the agency (% between 1-2 years)	28,4%	38,5%
Time spent at client organization (% high than 18 months)	33,1%	32,5%

Table 2. Goodness-of-fit of Measurement Models

Models	χ^2	$\Delta\chi^2$	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Permanent Sample					
Model 1	$\chi2\ [283] = 689.20**$		.92	.93	.08
Model 2	$\chi2\ [289] = 2418.05**$	Compare to Model 1 $\Delta\chi2\ [6] = 1728.85**$	.52	.67	.17
Model 3	$\chi2(286) = 1502.57**$	Compare to Model 1 $\Delta\chi2\ [3] = 813.37**$	.75	.78	.13
Model 4	$\chi2(286) = 1177.85**$	Compare to Model 1 $\Delta\chi2\ [3] = 488.65**$	.81	.84	.11
Model 5	$\chi2(288) = 1958.83**$	Compare to Model 1 $\Delta\chi2\ [5] = 1269.63**$	.66	.70	.15
Temporary Sample					
Model 1	$\chi2\ [283] = 780.32**$		.91	.92	.08
Model 2	$\chi2\ [289] = 2301.45**$	Compare to Model 1 $\Delta\chi2\ [6] = 1521.13**$	.62	.66	.16
Model 3	$\chi2(286) = 1396.06**$	Compare to Model 1 $\Delta\chi2\ [3] = 615.74**$	.79	.81	.12
Model 4	$\chi2(286) = 1220.86**$	Compare to Model 1 $\Delta\chi2\ [3] = 440.54**$	.82	.84	.12
Model 5	$\chi2(288) = 1821.83**$	Compare to Model 1 $\Delta\chi2\ [5] = 1041.51**$	.71	.74	.14

**p<0.01

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations for Temporary (below the diagonal) and Permanent (above the diagonal) samples.

	Temporary Sample (N=265)		Permanent Sample (N=257)		1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			*r* for Temporary (below the diagonal) and for Permanent (above the diagonal)			
1. Tenure Ag	3.34	1.65	3.63	1.82		.79**	-.11	-.02	-.06	.04
2. Tenure Cl	3.73	1.98	3.80	1.90	.69**		-.20**	-.08	-.11	.06
3. POS Ag	4.33	1.42	4.18	1.33	-.06	.04		.61**	.61**	.45**
4. POS Cl	4.28	1.49	4.39	1.33	.03	.13*	.71**		.39**	.60**
5. COM Ag	4.06	1.52	3.99	1.58	.06	.08	.61**	.51**		.49**
6. COM Cl	4.55	1.53	4.43	1.49	.08	.16*	.53**	.64**	.64**	

* $p< .05$; ** $p< .01$. Note. Tenure Ag = Tenure in agency; Tenure Cl = Tenure in client; POS Ag = POS by agency; POS Cl = POS by client; COM Ag = Commitment toward agency; COM Cl = Commitment toward client

Table 4: Fit statistics for the samples of Temporary TAWs and Permanent TAWs separately and multiple group analyses with samples combined

Models	N	χ^2	$\Delta\chi^2$	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	90% confidence interval of RMSEA
Temporary TAWs only	265	χ2 (327) = 818.77**	__	.92	.91	.08	[.07 -.08]
Permanent TAWs only	257	χ2 (327) = 737.50**	__	.93	.92	.07	[.06 -.08]
Baseline Model	522	χ2 (654) = 1556.27**	__	.93	.91	.05	[.05 -.06]
Full Constrained Model	522	χ2 (733) = 1730.60**	Compared to Baseline Model $\Delta\chi^2(79) = 174.33$**	.92	.91	.05	[.05 -.05]
Final Model	522	χ2 (672) = 1578.66**	Compared to Baseline Model $\Delta\chi^2(18) = 22.39$, n.s.	.92	.92	.05	[.05 -.05]

Figure 1. The Final Model (Standardized Path Coefficients) for temporary and permanent samples[1]

.42** (.56**)

.26* (.32**)

.27* (-.00, n.s)

.42** (.47**)

POSTT

COMTT

POSCLI

COMCLI
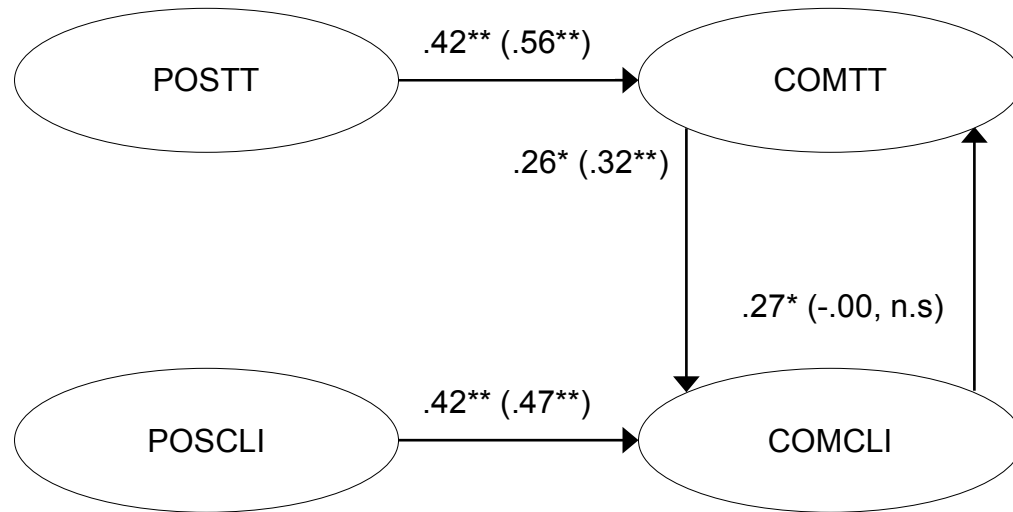
[1]Values within parentheses correspond to results of permanent sample.
*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$. Notes: POSTT = perceived organizational support from the temporary agency; POSCLI = perceived organizational support from the client organization; COMTT = affective commitment toward temporary agency; COMCLI = affective commitment toward client organization.