ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT IN THE TEMPORARY WORKER-AGENCY

CONTEXT: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

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ABSTRACT

Increasingly organisations are relying on Temporary Agency Workers (temps) to improve their responsiveness to a changing business environment, achieve workforce flexibility goals, and as a recruitment strategy. Simultaneously, recruitment agencies face many challenges associated with attracting and retaining quality candidates in a competitive labour market. Commitment theory and organisational commitment (OC) are concepts that have been well examined in the context of traditional employment relationships. However, less is known about OC in the context of temps which is complex, as obligations to the employing agency and the client firm are simultaneously executed. This paper reviews and integrates the literature examining the temporary and contingent workforce, OC, and commitment theory to develop a conceptual model. This model serves as a starting point for identifying and testing theoretically derived hypotheses specific to OC in the temp-agency context. It is anticipated that empirical testing of the model will provide an improved understanding of temp OC thus making an important contribution to theory and practice. The practical implications for agencies may result in spillover benefits for temps and client firms.

Keywords: Human resource management, personnel psychology.

INTRODUCTION

The challenge that lies ahead is the task of determining the extent to which the theoretical underpinnings, which have guided our understanding of employment relationships, can be fully or partially transferred to contingent work arrangements (Gallagher 2002: 127).

For over two decades, many organisations have sought to increase their efficiency and flexibility to be more responsive to turbulent business environments. One strategic response has been to increase organisational workforce flexibility by using contingent workers such as temps. The ability to engage temps via recruitment agencies allows firms to quickly source workers, adjust the size of their workforce, and access specific skills in response to changing business conditions. As noted by Pfeffer (1994), firms using contingent workers or temps to enhance their flexibility may compromise their ability to develop a highly committed and involved workforce, which serves as a vital source of competitive advantage. Empirical evidence has suggested that core workers may be negatively affected by the use of contingent workers in terms of workload (Pearce 1993); lower levels of loyalty and poorer relations with managers (Davis-Blake, Broschak, & George 2003); and lower levels of morale and perceived organisational trust (Chattopadhyay & George 2001). Thus it may be concluded that client firms require, and recruitment agencies must be able to deliver, quality temps on demand.
Moorman and Harland (2002) posited promoting the commitment and high performance of temporary employees as a potential solution to this challenge.

Extensive research has found OC to be an important predictor of desirable employee behaviours leading to positive organisational outcomes. Most of the empirical studies examining OC have assumed an employment model with a traditional or standard employment relationship (Beard & Edwards 1995; Pfeffer & Baron 1988). More recently, Van Breugel, Van Olffen, and Olie (2005) noted that there is still significantly less research focusing on the attachment and OC of workers who have flexible and temporary arrangements with their employer. Further, the concept of OC has not been comprehensively and systematically tested with workers that have contingent arrangements (Gallagher & McLean-Parks 2001; Gallagher & Sverke 2005). The purpose of this paper is to develop a conceptual model for comprehensively examining OC in the temp-agency context and to address the following research questions:

RQ1: What variables relate to temp affective commitment to agency?
RQ2: What variables relate to temp continuance commitment to agency?
RQ3: What variables relate to temp normative commitment to agency?
RQ4: What variables may need to be controlled for in an examination of temp OC?

The literature examining the temporary and contingent workforce, OC, and commitment theory is reviewed to systematically identify variables relevant to the affective, continuance, and normative components of OC (Meyer & Allen 1984, 1991), as well as control variables specific to the temp-agency employment context. This review informs the development of the model (described below) and hypothesised relationships, which serve as a useful starting point for examining temp OC.

TEMPORARY AGENCY WORKERS

In order to increase organisational efficiency and flexibility, many employers have reviewed human resource strategies and the composition of their workforce (Atkinson 1988; Burke & Cooper 2005; Lepak & Snell 1999, 2002). As a result, employers have often realigned the mix of core, standard employees with temporary and contingent workers (Kalleberg, Reynolds, & Marsden 2003; Lautsch 2002; Nollen & Axel 1996; Pfeffer & Baron 1988). The importance to employers of this
ability to ‘mix’ are reflected internationally in the growth trends documented on non-standard, contingent, and temporary work arrangements (Barker & Christensen 1998; Blanpain & Graham 2003; Burgess & Connell 2004a; Felstead & Jewson 1999; Standing 1999).

A closer examination of contingent workers has revealed that they are not a homogenous group. Connelly and Gallagher (2004) provided a useful classification which segmented contingent workers within four broad groupings. These grouping were identified as temps, independent contractors, directly hired temporary or casual workers, and directly hired seasonal workers. It is the first group (temps) that is of particular interest to this research paper. Connelly and Gallagher (2004) indicated that temps are hired on an explicit, or fixed-term, contract through intermediaries or agencies. Temps are involved in a triangular relationship whereby the client firm generally contracts the agency to provide temps for a specified duration. As noted by Gallagher and Sverke (2005), the work is usually conducted at the client firm’s facilities and temps are assigned and paid by agency.

When temps are considered within the wider context of increasing contingent employment in OECD economies, the importance of this arrangement becomes evident. The OECD (2002) reported a growth trend in temporary employment of 10% to 12% (of total employment) over the 1990s, with extremes ranging from 3% in Luxembourg to 33% in Spain. Conservative estimates have suggested that temps comprise between 2% and 4% of the total workforce in OECD economies (Burgess & Connell 2004a), although it is potentially much larger (Campbell, Watson & Buchanan 2004). Further, evidence has been reported that suggests temps have permeated all occupations and industries (Burgess & Connell 2004b; OECD 2002).

Researchers have made some progress testing well defined constructs such as commitment and satisfaction using samples of temps. With regard to contingent workers, the notion of commitment is complex and theoretically challenging (Gallagher 2002; Gallagher & Sverke 2005). In the few studies examining the OC of temps, the focus has predominantly been affective commitment to agency (Liden, Wayne, Kraimer & Sparrowe 2003; Moorman & Harland 2002; Van Breugel et al. 2005). As a result, the other two components of OC proposed by Meyer and colleagues (Meyer & Allen 1984, 1997; Meyer, Allen & Gellatly 1990; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky 2002), namely continuance commitment and normative commitment are largely unexamined.
In relation to foci, empirical studies have examined temp commitment directed towards the agency and client firm separately and simultaneously (see McClurg 1999; Newton 1996; Moorman & Harland 2002). As noted by Gallagher and McLean-Parks (2001), agencies and client firms have been provided with little guidance about how to increase the commitment of temps because many of the factors that have been theoretically and empirically examined are not under their exclusive control.

In an attempt to overcome the complexity of this triangular arrangement, the focus of this research study has been narrowed to the temp-agency employment relationship. This inclusionary criterion has been imposed for three reasons. Firstly, OC theory specifically focuses on the linkages between the employee and employing organisation (Mowday, Porter & Steers 1982). In the context of this study, the employee and employing organisation are clearly the temp and the agency. Secondly, in order for commitment theory to be extended, it is important to examine factors that are within the exclusive control of the agency as employer. This approach is intended to minimise the blurring of boundaries between the temps’ perceptions of the agency with those of the current client firm. Finally, the emphasis on OC to agency accords with Gallagher and Sverke’s (2005) proposition that temp commitment to the client firm is an extremely variable concept particularly as the temp moves from one client firm to another.

**MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS OF ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT**

Commitment theory has provided a framework that has enabled academics to extend current research on commitment to the organisation as well as other relevant foci (Becker 1960; Meyer & Allen 1997; Morrow 1993; Mowday et al. 1982; Salancik 1977; Steers 1977; Weiner 1982). In the past three decades, the concept has grown in popularity in the literatures of industrial psychology and organisational behaviour. Reviews and meta-analyses by Mathieu and Zajac (1990) and Meyer and Allen (1997) have demonstrated the importance of commitment as a predictor of desirable employee behaviours such as attendance, job performance, and organisational citizenship behaviours leading to positive organisational outcomes. Commitment has been, and continues to be, a construct of great interest to academics and practitioners.
Although a traditional distinction has been made between attitudinal commitment and behavioural commitment (Becker 1960; Mowday et al. 1982; Reichers 1985; Salancik 1977; Scholl 1981; Staw 1974), the dimensionality of OC has been the subject of much debate. OC has been conceptualised and measured as a unidimensional construct (Mowday et al. 1982) and a multidimensional construct (Allen & Meyer 1990a; Meyer & Allen 1984, 1991, 1997). After considering the common themes in the various definitions and in order to more fully understand an employee’s relationship with an organisation, Meyer and Allen (1991) proposed the following distinction be made:

Affective commitment refers to the employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation. Employees with a strong affective commitment continue employment with the organisation because they want to do so. Continuance commitment refers to an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organisation. Employees whose primary link to the organisation is based on a continuance commitment remain because they need to do so. Finally, normative commitment reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment. Employees with a high level of normative commitment feel that they ought to remain with the organisation (Meyer & Allen 1991: 67).

As noted by Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), the three-component model of OC proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991) has received considerable attention and become well established in the OC literature. Mitchell, Lee, Sablynski, and Erez (2001) reported that this model is considered to be the most theoretically robust conceptualisation and has been widely used to study OC as a multi-dimensional construct.

THE THREE-COMPONENT MODEL AND TEMPORARY WORKER-AGENCY CONTEXT

The three-component model of OC with its more recent modifications provided a robust platform for the development of the conceptual model, presented in Figure 1. The variables identified in Figure 1 were selected after consideration of the theoretical framework proposed by Meyer and colleagues (1991, 1997, 2001, 2002), OC meta-analyses and reviews (Cohen 1992; Mathieu & Zajac 1990; Meyer et al. 2002), recommendations (Connelly & Gallagher 2004; Gallagher & McLean-Parks 2001; Gallagher & Sverke 2005), and empirical findings in the contingent work literature.

< Insert Figure 1 here >
In the following sections, all of the variables included in Figure 1 are reviewed, to address the four research questions. The correlate variables of temp affective, continuance, and normative commitment are firstly examined, before moving to a discussion of the proposed control variables.

**Correlates of Temp Affective Commitment to Agency**

In order to address Research Question 1, the correlates of temp affective commitment to agency were examined. Meyer and colleagues (1991, 1997, 2001 & 2002) identified eight major categories of variables associated with the three-component model. The relevant categories for affective commitment are personal characteristics, organisational structure characteristics, and work experiences. Seven variables within these categories were included in the model namely, degree of perceived volition, temp-to-consultant ratio, perceived agency support, distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice, and overall job satisfaction.

Volition has been found to be related to affective commitment (Meyer, Bobocel & Allen 1991; Salancik 1977). Meyer et al. (1991) found that employees who had greater freedom to accept their job (more volition) expressed higher affective commitment to the organisation than those with less freedom. In a review of the contingent work literature, Connelly and Gallagher (2004) emphasised the importance of volition or voluntary choice on work-related attitudes and behaviours. In the temp context, the degree of perceived volition refers to the degree of choice the temp has in respect to working as a temp and/or accepting particular work assignments. If an individual is working as a temp because that is the only available option, then this temp is perceived as having less volition than a temp who prefers and chooses this type of work arrangement in preference to alternative arrangements. Empirical findings reported by Ellingson, Gruys and Sackett (1998) and Feldman, Doerpinghaus and Turnley (1994) suggest that individuals who become temps out of necessity have poorer attitudes towards their work than those who voluntarily assume these jobs. It is hypothesised that degree of perceived volition will be positively related to temp affective commitment.

Meyer and Allen (1997) presented evidence that organisational structure characteristics influence affective commitment. Although the evidence is not strong, intuitively, larger organisations are seen as less personable (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). In the temp context, the agency recruitment
consultant is the key contact person for temps and indeed, the consultant may perform supervisory and support roles on behalf of the agency. Henson (1996) and Rogers (1999) demonstrated the importance of temps being good-natured, no trouble and easy to get along with in order to secure future work assignments. Henson (1996) and Rogers (2000) also found many temps remained in regular contact with their agency consultant to retain a presence and increase the likelihood of securing further work assignments. Therefore, in circumstances where the consultants are responsible for managing a large number of temps, they may not be able to devote sufficient time to those individual temps who seek to develop a positive and on-going working relationship. It is proposed that temp-to-consultant ratio will be negatively related to temp affective commitment.

A considerable amount of research has examined the linkages between work experience variables and affective commitment (Meyer & Allen 1991, 1997). Firstly, there has been substantial empirical evidence presented that attests to the consistent, positive relationships between organisational supportiveness and the development of affective commitment. Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) argued that organisations wanting affectively committed employees must demonstrate their own commitment by providing a supportive work environment. Past studies have found strong positive links between employee perceptions of support and affective commitment to the organisation (Eisenberger, Fasolo & Davis-LaMastro 1990; Meyer et al. 2002; Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002). Similar findings are evident in the temp literature (Connelly, Gallagher & Gilley 2003; Liden et al. 2003). Hence, it is hypothesised perceived agency support will be positively related to temp affective commitment.

Scholars have pointed to the many disadvantages associated with this type of work arrangement (eg. Kalleberg, Reskin & Hudson 2000). However, Connelly and Gallagher (2004) noted only a limited amount of research establishes an empirical link between fair treatment/justice and specific attitudinal outcomes. Three dimensions of justice (Greenberg, 1990), in particular distributive, procedural and interactive justice (Bies & Moag 1986; Niehoff & Moorman 1993) are examined.

Firstly, Folger and Cropanzano (1998) suggested distributive justice refers to perceptions of moral or ethical fairness regarding the outcomes or allocations that an individual receives. Distributive justice is judged by referent standards, thus two people with the same outcomes may have
different perceptions of justice if they are not using the same referent (Folger & Cropanzano 1998). Meyer et al. (2002) reported positive correlations between affective commitment and distributive justice. No empirical studies could be located that reported temp perceptions of distributive justice. However, findings reported by Williams (1998) suggest that Australian female temps view the lack of sick pay, superannuation, training and other benefits often associated with permanent employment and low pay levels as being disadvantages. Hipple and Stewart (1996) suggested contingent workers may not have the ‘clout’ to negotiate higher wages. This is supported by Rogers (2000) who presented evidence of temps being deskilled and devalued. As temps are likely to be exposed to multiple referent standards, they may have strong views about the fairness of outcomes. It is proposed that distributive justice will be positively related to temp affective commitment.

A second form of justice, procedural justice has also been shown to be related to organisational commitment (Folger & Konovsky 1989; Konovsky & Cropanzano 1991). Meyer et al. (2002) reported strong, positive correlations between affective commitment and procedural justice. Further, Moorman, Niehoff, and Organ (1993) found a strong positive correlation between procedural justice and affective commitment. Liden et al. (2003) found that their sample of temps reported a positive correlation between agency procedural justice and affective commitment to agency. Hence, it is hypothesised procedural justice will be positively related to temp affective commitment.

Interactive justice refers to the quality of interpersonal treatment received by an individual (Bies & Moag 1986; Greenberg 1990). Folger and Cropanzano (1998) suggested interactional justice be framed as having two components, interpersonal sensitivity (referring to polite and respectful treatment) and explanations or social accounts (explaining or justifying why something unfortunate has occurred). Meyer et al. (2002) reported strong, positive correlations between affective commitment and interactional justice. Gellatly (1996) reported a positive correlation between interactional justice and affective commitment. Rogers (1995) found that some temps experienced being treated like a ‘non-person’ where they were interactionally invisible with the client firm and concluded the temp’s transitory relationship with both the agency and client firm engenders social isolation. These findings reinforced the importance of positive interactions between the temp and agency. It is proposed interactive justice will be positively related to temp affective commitment.
Finally, job satisfaction is one of the more thoroughly investigated topics in the OC literature. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found satisfaction to have consistent positive correlations with OC in a variety of settings, thus job satisfaction is important to assess. Meyer et al. (2002) found overall job satisfaction to be strongly and positively related to affective commitment and concluded that both variables should be considered in efforts to understand and manage employee behaviour. In the temp literature, positive correlations have been reported between job satisfaction and OC to agency (Biggs & Swailes 2005), and between satisfaction with agency treatment/practices and affective commitment (Moorman & Harland 2002). Hence, it is hypothesised overall job satisfaction will be positively related to temp affective commitment.

In line with findings reported in the extant literature, seven correlate variables have been identified for temp affective commitment. In the next section, Research Question 2 is addressed which has a focus on the continuance commitment of temps.

**Correlates of Temp Continuance Commitment to Agency**

In order to address Research Question 2, the correlates of temp continuance commitment were examined. The continuance commitment of employees in both standard and contingent employment relationships has received less research attention than affective commitment. There are two broad categories of correlates for continuance commitment, investments or side bets and alternatives. Three variables within these categories were included in the model namely, transferability of skills, side-bets, and perceived alternative employment opportunities.

Early laboratory and field research findings found job commitment to increase as the number and/or magnitude of investments increase (Farrell & Rusbult 1981; Rusbult & Farrell 1983). Becker (1960) suggested that commitment to a course of action develops as one makes side bets that would be lost if the action was discontinued. Allen and Meyer (1990a) proposed that actions that increase the costs of leaving subsequently increase continuance commitment. Therefore, it may be inferred that the threat of wasting the time and effort spent acquiring non-transferable organisational skills can be perceived as an increase in investment in the organisation. Meyer et al. (2002) reported a strong,
negative correlation between transferability of skills and continuance commitment. It is proposed that
transferability of skills will be negatively related to temp continuance commitment.

Research on the relationship between side-bets and commitment suggested that side-bets have a
weak influence directly on commitment (Cohen & Lowenberg 1990), although past studies have used
the number of children and tenure as special potential side-bets. Whitener and Walz (1993) reported a
positive relationship between side-bets and continuance commitment. In relation to temps, Van
Breugel et al. (2005) found a positive relationship between personal investment/side-bets
(operationalised as perceived dependence on the agency) and continuance commitment to agency.
Hence, it is hypothesised side-bets will be positively related to temp continuance commitment.

Allen and Meyer (1990a) reported a negative correlation between perceived alternative
employment opportunities (described as the extent to which an individual perceives the availability
and suitability of other employment opportunities in another organisation) and affective commitment.
Preliminary laboratory and field research findings also found job commitment to increase as the
attractiveness of alternatives decreases (Farrell & Rusbult 1981; Rusbult & Farrell 1983). Cohen
(1992) revealed a negative, albeit weak, correlation with perceived job alternatives. Mathieu and Zajac
(1990) reported similar findings with perceived job alternatives having a small, negative correlation
with OC. Meyer et al. (2002) also reported a negative correlation between availability of alternatives
and continuance commitment. In the temp literature, McClurg (1999) reported a negative relationship
between job mobility perceptions (operationalised as perceived ease of finding permanent
employment) and commitment to agency. It is proposed that perceived alternative employment
opportunities will be negatively related to temp continuance commitment.

In line with findings reported in the extant literature, three correlate variables have been
identified for temp continuance commitment. In the following section, Research Question 3 is
addressed and normative commitment in the context of temps is investigated.

**Correlates of Temp Normative Commitment to Agency**

In order to address Research Question 3, the correlates of temp normative commitment to
agency were examined. Of the three components, the least is known empirically about the
development of normative commitment (Allen & Meyer 1990a; Meyer & Allen 1997). The correlates of normative commitment fall within the three broad categories of socialisation experiences, organisational investments/norm of reciprocity, and psychological contract. Given the notable lack of attention to normative commitment in the contingent work literature, this section draws heavily from findings reported in the general OC literature and studies examining the psychological contract of contingent workers. The variables presented in the model are perceived socialisation experiences, reciprocity norm acceptance, and perceived psychological contract breach.

Wiener (1982) proposed that normative commitment will be influenced by an individual’s feelings of obligations to remain with the organisation and may result from internalisation of experiences both prior to entry (familial or cultural socialisation) or following entry into the organisation (organisational socialisation). Meyer and Allen (1997) argued that through complex processes involving conditioning and modelling, individuals internalise a belief about the appropriateness of loyalty to the organisation based on what is valued and expected by the family, culture and organisation. It has been proposed that one way in which organisations might build employee commitment is through the socialisation process (Chao, O’Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein & Gardner 1994; Van Maanen & Schein 1979; Wanous, 1992). Empirical investigations have found a positive relationship between perceived socialisation experiences and commitment (Allen & Meyer 1990b; Ashforth & Saks 1996; Baker III & Feldman 1990; Mignerey, Rubin & Gordon 1995). Hence, it is hypothesised perceived socialisation experiences will be positively related to temp normative commitment.

Meyer and Allen (1991) and Scholl (1981) suggested that normative commitment develops from a particular kind of investment that the organisation makes in the employee that seems difficult to reciprocate. As suggested by Van Breugel et al. (2005), in the temp context this kind of investment may include agency provided training, access to training facilities or career support. Gouldner (1960) espoused that given the social norm of reciprocity, employees seek to rectify the imbalance or sense of indebtedness by feeling a sense of obligation or normative commitment towards the organisation. Temps may differ in their reciprocity norm acceptance which underlies the exchange relationship (Coyle-Shapiro 2002), and this may influence the degree to which they strive to balance the
indebtedness through the development of normative commitment. It is proposed that reciprocity norm acceptance will be positively related to temp normative commitment.

The psychological contract (Rousseau 1989; Schein 1980) is presented as an exchange concept that provides a framework for understanding the linkages between the employee and the organisation. It has also been identified as a basis of development for normative commitment (Rousseau 1989, 1995). Unlike more formal contracts, psychological contracts are subjective and may be viewed somewhat differently by the employee and organisation. McFarlane Shore and Tetrick (1994) suggested psychological contracts develop pre-employment and at the time of initial employment. Relational contracts have been found to be more relevant to normative commitment (Meyer & Allen 1997; Rousseau & Wade-Benzoni 1995). Interestingly, McDonald and Makin (2000) found no differences in the psychological contracts of permanent and contingent workers in the same organisation. Further, Guest and Conway (2003) found that their sample of professional and knowledge workers on fixed-term contracts reported positive evaluations of the state of psychological contracts. McDonald and Makin (2000) also reported perceptions of contract violation were considerably lower among temporary workers. Van Dyne and Ang (1998) suggested temps may have a limited psychological contract, in terms of what they feel the agency is obliged to provide for them. Given the mixed findings presented in the available literature, it is intuitively appealing to hypothesise that irrespective of the type of psychological contract, perceived breaches by the agency will be viewed unfavourably by temps. Hence, it is hypothesised perceived psychological contract breach will be negatively related to temp normative commitment.

In line with findings reported in the extant literature, three correlate variables have been identified for temp normative commitment. In the next section, the final Research Question is addressed and 12 variables are identified as control variables.

Control Variables for an Examination of OC in the Temporary Worker-Agency Context

In order to address Research Question 4, variables that may need to be measured and controlled for in an investigation of temp OC are identified. Past studies of OC have tended to treat many personal characteristics (demographic and dispositional variables) as control variables to rule out
alternative explanations for variation in the dependent variables (Allen & Meyer 1990a; Mathieu & Zajac 1990; Mowday et al. 1982). The variables presented in Figure 1 as being potentially relevant were selected due to their covariance with OC in meta-analysis or their specific applicability to the temp-agency context. The variables presented in the model are age, gender, marital status, tenure (agency, work assignment duration, as a temp), work assignment level, hourly rate, work status, preferred work status, education level, and agency registration arrangement. This study integrates the OC and contingent work literature and proposes correlates of affective, continuance and normative commitment specific to the temp-agency context. The next section outlines the research design proposed for evaluating the hypotheses and conceptual model.

Mathieu and Zajac (1990) found correlations between OC and age, gender, education, marital status, position tenure, organisational tenure, salary, and job level. Meyer et al. (2002) reported correlations between age, gender, education, tenure, and the three components of OC. In relation to work status (part-time or full-time work schedule), Mowday et al. (1982) suggested that OC should be heightened for full-time employees who should have greater opportunity to experience the organisation’s values and goals and those working a preferred schedule. However, inconsistent findings have been reported in studies examining work status and OC (Conway & Briner 2002; Krausz, Sagie & Bidermann 2000; Thornsteinson 2003; Van Breugel et al. 2005). In studies of temps, tenure has been adapted to temporary work experience, length of work assignment (Ellingson et al. 1998; McClurg 1999), and tenure with agency (Liden et al. 2003). Further, Van Breugel et al. (2005) included a variable to control for temp exclusive or multiple agency registration.

In line with findings reported in the extant literature, 12 variables have been presented as potential control variables in the model. The effect of these variables in relation to temp OC is not conclusive. Hence, they are considered worthy of measuring to understand their relationships with temp OC and to reduce the possibility of spurious relationships.

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the theoretical perspectives and empirical findings reported in the extensive literature examining the temporary and contingent workforce, OC, and commitment theory
and addressed the four research questions. The perspectives and findings were integrated with the three-component model of OC to develop a framework for examining OC in the unique temp-agency employment context. Hypothesised relationships have been presented between variables and the affective, continuance, and normative components of OC and 12 control variables have been identified. A limitation of this model is that it does not hypothesise mediating or moderating effects. Nevertheless, it is presented as a starting point to reassess the validity of the OC construct in the context of contingent workers, and to reduce an important gap in the literature identified by Gallagher (2002) and Van Breugel et al. (2005). In terms of practical implications, recruitment agencies will benefit by having a basis upon which to evaluate policies and practices within their exclusive control that relate to temp OC. Agencies with access to a pool of committed and quality temps will enhance their capacity to meet the varying workforce requirements demanded by client firms, and strengthen their position in a competitive marketplace.
REFERENCES


Correlates of Affective Commitment
- Degree of perceived volition (+)
- Temp-to-consultant ratio (-)
- Perceived agency support (+)
- Distributive, procedural and interactional justice (+)
- Overall job satisfaction (+)

Correlates of Continuance Commitment
- Transferability of skills (-)
- Side-bets (+)
- Perceived alternative employment opportunities (-)

Correlates of Normative Commitment
- Perceived socialisation experiences (+)
- Reciprocity norm acceptance (+)
- Perceived psychological contract breach (-)

Organisational Commitment to Agency
- Affective Commitment to agency
- Continuance Commitment to agency
- Normative Commitment to agency

Control Variables
Age, gender, marital status, tenure (agency, work assignment duration, as a temp), work assignment level, hourly rate, work status (part-time or full-time), preferred work status, education level, and agency registration arrangement (exclusive or multiple)