

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Dual commitment profiles and job satisfaction among temporary agency workers

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## Abstract

Temporary agency workers (TAWs) are an ever-increasing type of employees which establish a double work relationship with both the agency and the client organization. Within this context, the concept of dual commitment has received considerable attention in the last years. The present contribution integrates dual commitment line of research with the one adopting a person-centered approach to the study of commitment configurations, to investigate commitment profiles on a large sample of TAWs. According to Sinclair et al.'s framework, we aimed to identify TAWs' commitment profiles based on their levels of dual affective commitment (to the agency and to the client organization) and on their general continuance commitment and to investigate differences in job satisfaction among profiles. Latent profile analyses on 7225 TAWs revealed 5 distinct profiles, namely Dually Free Agents, Dually Involved, Dually Allied, (Unilaterally) Client Allied and (Unilaterally) Agency Invested. The Dually Involved profile, followed by the Dually Allied profile, had the highest level of job satisfaction, whereas the Dually Free Agent profile and the (Unilaterally) Agency Invested had the lowest. Furthermore, the (Unilaterally) Client Allied group

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had a higher level of job satisfaction as compared to the (Unilaterally) Agency Invested profile. Implications are discussed.

#### KEYWORDS

agency workers, dual commitment, job satisfaction, latent profile analyses, person-centered approach

## INTRODUCTION

One of the most widely investigated topics in organizational behavior in the last few decades (i.e. Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Morrow, 1993) is organizational commitment, generally defined as a psychological state pertaining to the employee's feelings and beliefs of his/her relationship with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The most established commitment framework is the one proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991) which describes organizational commitment as a multidimensional construct. Even though organizational commitment has been extensively studied, it has been mainly investigated within the standard employee-employer relationship (Biggs & Swailes, 2006; Gallagher & McLean Parks, 2001). Therefore, as noted by several researchers (Connelly et al., 2007; Liden et al., 2003; Van Breugel et al., 2005), theoretical and empirical investigation of employees' commitment in non-standard work arrangements is at an early stage. Specifically, studying organizational commitment among temporary agency workers (TAWs) seems to be more complex because these employees have to deal with two organizations simultaneously, namely the agency and the client organization (i.e. Gallagher & McLean Parks, 2001). Considering this “triangular” employment relationship, previous literature has typically analyzed organizational commitment while referring to the concept of dual commitment (i.e. Liden et al., 2003). Owing to the double relationship that TAWs develop both with the staffing agency who hires them and the client organization they work for, these workers are likely to develop two distinct, although positively related, commitments (e.g. Boswell et al., 2012; Connelly et al., 2007; Liden et al., 2003; McClurg, 1999; Van Breugel et al., 2005; Woldman et al., 2018). However, it is not clear what the added value of dual commitment is and what is its specific contribution to TAWs' job satisfaction.

Another recent and promising research trend applied to the organizational commitment field is the use of a person-centered approach (Meyer & Morin, 2016; Meyer, Stanley, et al., 2013) in place of the widespread variable-centered perspective. This approach allows the identification of different commitment configurations (or profiles) on the basis of the level (i.e. high, moderate, low) of different types of (e.g. affective and continuance) commitment (Sinclair et al., 2005). Commitment profiles have been applied to different targets or *foci* (i.e. Morin, Morizot, et al., 2011) and to different components, using Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model (TCM). Moreover, recent studies have also proposed an integrated multi-target multi-mindset approach that investigates different targets as well as different components of commitment (i.e. Morin et al., 2015). However, to our knowledge commitment profiles related to dual commitment or among TAWs has not been investigated.

All in all, previous dual commitment research has always adopted a variable-centered approach, mostly investigating associations with several antecedents and outcomes. On the other hand, commitment profiles have been studied only within standard work arrangements.

The present contribution integrates these two lines of research, namely TAWs' dual commitment and commitment profiles. Our first aim is to identify profiles of affective dual commitment (to the

agency and to the client organization) and general continuance commitment among a large sample of Italian TAWs. Our second aim is to investigate whether the commitment profiles identified are differentially associated to job satisfaction.

This study contributes to the literature by extending for the first time, Sinclair's framework of commitment configurations (Sinclair et al., 2005) to a large sample of TAWs, who are involved in a double entity (agency-client organization) relationship. Our contribution is also directed to shed light on the empirical value of the identified TAWs' commitment configurations, exploring their relevance in terms of TAWs' job satisfaction.

## TAWS' WORKING CONDITION AND DUAL COMMITMENT

Nowadays, “standard” work arrangements conceived of as full-time, open-ended and performed at the employer's place of work is gradually giving way to “alternative” and flexible work arrangements (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004; Galais & Moser, 2018; Lapalme et al., 2011; World Economic Confederation, 2020). Among these, TAW is the most increasing arrangement, including approximately 54 million workers worldwide (World Economic Confederation, 2020). Unlike other temporary workers who are employed in a two-way relationship, TAWs are distinct because of their specific triangular employment relationship that includes the worker, the agency and the client organization where the work is carried out (Biggs & Swailes, 2006; Kalleberg, 2000). In other words, the agency is the employer, which selects, trains, hires and pays workers' salaries, whereas the client organization is the actual context where the daily work takes place. Indeed, TAWs join the client work environment, where they are assigned tasks and supervised by a manager and where they socialize and cooperate with colleagues. The two entities (agency and client organization) are connected with the employee and provide support and guidance if needed throughout the work assignment.

Employing TAWs allows organizations to increase flexibility to effectively respond to the markets changing demands. Whereas from the organizational perspective TAWs seem to be useful to reduce costs by rapidly providing companies with specialized and short-term workers, concerns have been raised regarding the consequences of this work arrangement for individuals (Beard & Edwards, 1995). Unfortunately, the literature on the comparison between temporary and permanent workers seems to be inconclusive, since temporary workers have been found alternatively less satisfied with their job than permanent employees, more satisfied or even no differences have been found (i.e. Bergman, 2002; Galup et al., 1997; McDonald & Makin, 2000).

Many studies have compared the organizational commitment of temporary workers with that of permanent ones, finding mixed results (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004; Virtanen et al., 2005). Some studies found temporary workers more committed (i.e. Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002; de Gilder, 2003), whereas others found less commitment among temporary workers (i.e. Felfe et al., 2008; Gardner & Jackson, 1996). Other studies have reported no significant differences in commitment levels between temporary and permanent workers (i.e. De Cuyper & De Witte, 2006; Feather & Rauter, 2004; Smith, 1998). These inconsistent results could be attributed to the heterogeneous forms of so-called temporary work (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004; De Cuyper et al., 2009). In this regard, Biggs and Swailes (2006), have narrowed the focus solely on the comparison between TAWs and permanent workers. They found that TAWs had a significantly lower level of organizational commitment as compared to permanent workers.

Moreover, some scholars have questioned the meaning of organizational membership and commitment for TAWs, due to their triangular employment relationship (Galais & Moser, 2009).

First of all, McClurg (1999), in line with the wider assumption on the existence of multiple commitments (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) and different commitment foci (Becker, 1992; Becker et al., 1996), argued that agency workers have a “dual commitment” through which they can be committed to both the employment agency and the third-party employer (i.e. the client organization). In fact, both types of commitment derive respectively from the social exchange relationship maintained by the worker with both the agency and the client organization (i.e. Blau, 1964; Liden et al., 2003) in which TAWs tend to reciprocate resources and support received from exchange partners, by increasing their level of commitment to them (De Witte & Näswall, 2003; Giunchi et al., 2015; Lapalme et al., 2011; Liden et al., 2003). From an empirical point of view, research has generally shown commitment to the agency and commitment to the client organization as moderately to highly correlated, suggesting that they are distinct as well as non-contradictory dimensions, because both the agency and the client organization collaborate, through TAWs, towards the same goal and mutual benefit (Connelly et al., 2007; Liden et al., 2003; McClurg, 1999). Therefore, TAWs' performance directly contributes to the performance of the client organization whilst, indirectly, strengthens the relationship between the agency and the client (Lapalme et al., 2011). Moreover, most studies have referred to the affective form of commitment in approaching the study of TAWs' dual commitment (Connelly et al., 2007; Veitch & Cooper-Thomas, 2009). Owing to the focus on a mutual exchange relationship that has framed previous research, affective commitment seems to be the more reasonable way through which TAWs may reciprocate for the support provided by the agency and the client organization. Further exploring differences in TAWs' levels of affective commitment between agency and client, Benson (1998) reported higher affective commitment to the client rather than to the agency. This may be explained by the increased proximity of the client compared to that of the agency and by the assumption that TAWs would be more prone to experience commitment for their current work assignment rather than their employment arrangement signed with the agency (Benson, 1998). Other studies have suggested that client and agency affective commitments are independent variables and may arise in a similar way on the basis of the level of organizational support perceived respectively by the client and the agency (i.e. Liden et al., 2003; Veitch & Cooper-Thomas, 2009).

From a different point of view, studies have distinguished voluntary from involuntary temporary workers (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004; Connelly et al., 2007). Employees may engage in temporary work for different reasons: on one hand, they may value freedom, variety and flexibility of TAW, and/or the opportunity to learn new skills through different experiences, on the other hand, they may accept it as an intermediate step to a permanent job, or instead, because they do not have an alternative (Felfe et al., 2008). The first employees are likely to be characterized by high affective commitment to the agency, whereas the latter, which would prefer a permanent job, are likely to be characterized by low AC to the agency and high CC to their employment form (Felfe et al., 2008).

## THE CONFIGURAL APPROACH TO ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

In past years, the use of the person-centered approach has flourished in addressing the study of workplace phenomena (Wang & Hanges, 2011; Zyphur, 2009) and particularly organizational commitment, which represents one of the most prolific areas of application (Meyer & Morin, 2016; Meyer, Stanley, et al., 2013).

Whereas the “traditional” variable-centered approach focuses on differences in relationships between variables (Miller & Friesen, 1984), the person-centered (or configural) approach identifies profiles characterized by different levels on a set of variables and based on the shared similarities among

these variables (Muthén & Muthén, 2000; Sinclair et al., 2005). The goal of the person-centered approach is to understand configurations of variables and how they operate within individuals (Meyer et al., 2012). The advantages of using a person-centered approach are mainly associated to the focus on a system of variables taken in combination rather than in isolation, and the detection of complex interactions among a constellation of variables of interest (Meyer & Morin, 2016; Sinclair et al., 2005). Given these benefits, the person-centered approach is considered a complementary perspective to the variable-centered approach, permitting the possibility to further test different aspects of theories. The study of organizational commitment within a person-centered approach (i.e. Meyer & Morin, 2016; Meyer, Stanley, et al., 2013; Sinclair et al., 2005) has found its foundation with Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), who have advanced a general model of commitment profiles, based on the theoretical assumption that employees simultaneously experience different forms of commitment to varying degrees (Meyer & Allen, 1991). On this basis, several studies have used the person-centered approach to analyze profiles of commitment to both to different targets (e.g. organization, workgroup, supervisor, customer, occupation,—Becker & Billings, 1993; Morin, Morizot, et al., 2011; Wombacher & Felfe, 2017) and to different components, using Meyer and Allen's (1991) TCM. Within this context, the majority of studies have simultaneously taken into account two or three forms of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Moreover, recent studies have also proposed an integrated multi-target multi-mindset approach that simultaneously investigates different components of commitment pertaining to two targets, alternately the organization and occupation (Morin et al., 2015; Tsoumbris & Xenikou, 2010) and the organization and supervisor (Meyer et al., 2015).

Despite this, studies on commitment profiles have been mostly empirically driven. Recently, Meyer and Morin (2016) have argued that 27 different profiles may emerge from the various combination of high, low and moderate levels of affective, continuance and normative commitment. Nonetheless, this reframing of past research was done using a descriptive approach whereas a theoretical description of the profiles and psychological mechanisms underlying them was barely outlined by the authors. On the other hand, a simpler and theory-driven framework has been provided by Sinclair et al. (2005). The authors theorized nine hypothetically different commitment profiles derived from all the possible combinations of the crossing of three levels (i.e. high, intermediate, and low) of affective (AC) and continuance (CC) commitment. AC refers to the emotional attachment, involvement and identification with the organization and is facilitated by perceived organizational support and fairness, consideration and personal competence. CC refers to the perceived sacrifice in leaving one's employment status due to the loss of side bets and/or few alternatives available; hence, an increase of this form of commitment depends on the availability of other employment opportunities, skills transferability and cost of leaving one's current job (Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997). The focal point and novelty proposed by Sinclair and colleagues (2005) is that the variety of combination between AC and CC which rely on two different underlining psychological mechanisms. The different combinations of low, moderate and high AC and CC generate nine potential profiles (see Table 1).

Four profiles, specifically the Devoted (strong AC and strong CC), the Allied (moderate AC and moderate CC), the Complacent (moderate AC and weak CC), and the Free Agents (weak AC and moderate CC) were empirically identified by Sinclair et al. (2005). Moreover, the authors found that the Free Agents profile received significantly lower supervisor ratings on performance, lower organizational citizenship behavior but also higher antisocial behavior, as compared to other profiles.

Subsequently, Dello Russo et al. (2013) found a similar profile configuration, with the exception that they found a Trapped group (weak AC and strong CC) instead of the Devoted group identified by Sinclair et al. (2005). Furthermore, Dello Russo and colleagues (2013) reported the lowest level of absenteeism for the Allied profile and the highest job performance ratings for the Complacent profile. More interestingly, significant differences were found in the level of job satisfaction: both Allied and

**TABLE 1** Affective and continuance commitment profile taxonomy

Affective commitment	Continuance commitment		
	High	Intermediate	Low
High	Devoted	Involved	Attached
Intermediate	Invested	Allied	Complacent
Low	Trapped	Free agents	Uncommitted

*Note:* Adapted from Sinclair et al. (2005).

Complacent profiles showed higher job satisfaction as compared to the Trapped profile. This latter result also highlights that profiles with moderate levels of AC (namely Allied and Complacent) may have higher job satisfaction when compared to profiles with low AC (Trapped and Free agents). This finding extends previous results on job satisfaction that have revealed that profiles characterized by a high level of AC (named AC-dominant) show greater job satisfaction (Kabins et al., 2016; Markovits et al., 2007; Meyer, Kam, et al., 2013). In this case, even profiles with similar and moderate levels of AC and CC (namely the Allied group) have higher satisfaction levels than profiles in which CC is higher than AC.

## THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study adopts the configural approach to the study of commitment profiles among a large sample of TAWs, with the aim to extend the theoretical framework identified by Sinclair and colleagues (2005) to the concept of dual commitment. Specifically, we focused on the dual affective bond that these workers may develop with both the agency and the client organization, measuring two different targets of affective commitment (namely AC to the Agency and AC to the Client). On the other hand, with respect to continuance commitment (CC), we focused on a general dimension referring to the instrumental relationship with work and to the perceived cost of losing one's employment, without distinguishing between the membership in the two organizations. This was done because in our view, continuance commitment refers neither to the agency nor to the client, but rather to the entire working condition. In particular, general CC may reflect the willingness or unwillingness of the actual employment status which represents a relevant dimension among temporary workers in particular (Felfe et al., 2008). Moreover, a previous study (Veitch & Cooper-Thomas, 2009) split continuance commitment into two foci (CC to the Agency and CC to the Client) but did not find an association with perceived organizational support from the two entities. Therefore, continuance commitment seems to take shape through comparison with external references rather than through the evaluation of exchanges occurred within the TAW's triangular relationship. Lastly, we picked an overall commitment dimension in order to have more parsimonious profile combinations.

Following the theory-driven framework provided by Sinclair and colleagues (2005) and adopted by Dello Russo and colleagues (2013), we did not include the normative component of commitment (NC). Indeed, a normative mindset, characterized by obligation to the organization, may be more relevant and distinguishable in non-Western countries (Dello Russo et al., 2013; Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010; Wasti, 2005). In addition, NC mainly changes as a function of the strength of AC (Gellatly et al., 2006) and generally shows a moderate to high correlation with AC, confirming that these two dimensions largely overlap (Dello Russo et al., 2013; Meyer et al., 2002).

As suggested by Sinclair and colleagues (2005), we considered three levels for each variable (also including the average level) given the fact that a moderate level of commitment of either type is more likely than the extreme levels.

All in all, this study is in line with the integrated multi-target multi-mindset approach (Morin et al., 2015; Tsoumbris & Xenikou, 2010), aimed to identify profiles of dual AC and CC in a large sample of Italian TAWs. Since dual AC refers to different foci and pertains to separate relational exchanges with the agency and client organization, we expected the emergence of commitment profiles specifically differentiated by their level of AC to the Agency and to the Client, in addition to their level of CC. Since the Allied profile is usually the most common group among the organizational workforce, we expected the emergence of a Dually Allied profile among TAWs, characterized by a moderate level of both AC (to the agency and to the client organization) and CC. Moreover, from a theoretical point of view, a possible prototypical profile among TAWs could be represented by a CC-dominant group with a higher level of CC as compared to both levels of AC (such as the Dually Trapped or alternatively the Dually Invested profiles). We also expected an AC-dominant TAWs' profile, with a lower level of CC as compared to the level of AC with both organizations (namely the Dually Involved or Attached profile): The first profile may represent a group of TAWs by necessity, whereas the latter may represent a group of TAWs by choice. Moreover, we might expect the emergence of a profile unilaterally committed to the client organization (e.g. workers that consider TAW as a stepping stone towards permanent employment). However, since our study was exploratory and the possible number of profile combinations is very high, we did not hypothesize specific profiles, but we formulated the following general hypothesis:

H1: Meaningful and consistent commitment profiles will emerge from the total sample as well as from three randomly divided subsamples.

Secondly, we intend to examine the extent to which these commitment profiles differ in their level of job satisfaction. Previous literature has generally noted the strong relationship of job satisfaction with AC but not with CC (i.e. Meyer et al., 2002). Narrowing the focus to the specific domain of commitment profiles, higher satisfaction is reported for profiles that are characterized by a high level of AC (Markovits et al., 2007; Meyer, Kam, et al., 2013). In particular, when CC is higher than its affective counterpart, employees report more negative work attitudes (i.e. Dello Russo et al., 2013; Meyer & Morin, 2016; Sinclair et al., 2005).

Considering the specific context of temporary work, we hypothesized an additive effect of dual commitment since we expect that profiles where dual commitment, both to the agency and to the client, are higher than CC (AC-dominant) will have the highest level of job satisfaction. Moreover, we expected that profiles where dual AC is lower than CC (CC-dominant) will have the lowest level of job satisfaction. Hence, regarding profiles with similar level (Dual) of AC towards the agency and the client, we formulated the following hypotheses:

H2a: AC-dominant profiles will show the highest level of job satisfaction in comparison to all other profiles.

H2b: CC-dominant profiles will show the lowest level of job satisfaction in comparison to all other profiles.

Finally, we argue that AC to the client may have a higher relevance in terms of job satisfaction than AC to the Agency. This is because the client organization is the place where TAWs carry out their job, and where day to day interactions with supervisors and colleagues occur, whereas they have more limited

contact with the agency. To this end, Lapalme and colleagues (2011) found that only AC to the Client, but not to the Agency, directly influenced the extra-role behaviors of agency workers. Similarly, another study found that AC to the Client predicted job satisfaction, OCB and health, whereas AC to the Agency only predicted satisfaction (Felfe et al., 2005). Hence, even TAWs may be emotionally attached to both the agency and to the client organization, agency stays “in the background” while TAWs carry out their day-to-day work at the client workplace. On the other hand, AC to the client mostly shapes TAWs' work behaviors and attitudes towards their job (Benson, 1998; Connelly & Gallagher, 2004).

Hence, based on this rationale, regarding profiles with different levels (Unilateral) of AC towards the client and the agency, we formulated the following hypothesis:

H3: Profiles in which AC to the Client is higher than AC to the Agency will show higher levels of job satisfaction than profiles in which AC to the Agency is higher than AC to the client.

## METHOD

### Procedure and participants

The present study was conducted in Italy as part of a larger project aimed to evaluate TAWs' working conditions, well-being and satisfaction, in collaboration with the National Observatory for Temporary Work. The majority of temporary work agencies operating within the Italian context were contacted and 17 decided to participate in the project. TAWs were from agencies willing to complete an anonymous online survey. The final sample included 7225 TAWs from all Regions of Italy. Among them, 50.7% were male, the average age was 34.59 years ( $SD = 9.72$ ; 18–65 years), 15.6% had a primary or junior high school diploma, 10% had a professional qualification, 46.7% had a high school diploma, 24.8% had a bachelor's or graduate degree and 2.9% had a post-degree master or PhD. From a professional standpoint, 75.3% had a fixed-term contract, while 24.7% had a permanent contract with the agency. 34.3% had less than 6 months agency tenure, 25.1% from 6 to 12 months, 20.4% from 13 to 24 months and 20.2% had more than 2 years tenure. Furthermore, 14.9% had worked for the client organization less than 1 month, 41.8% from 1 to 6 months and 43.3% more than 6 months. TAWs involved in the present study worked in a variety of organizations including manufacturing, healthcare and information technology. In our sample, the highest percentage of TAWs (21.8%) were skilled workers or craftsmen, 18.6% were white collar workers (i.e. accountant, customer service officer, purchase officer), and 13.7% were unskilled workers. Lower percentages were recorded for IT professionals, highly specialized professions, technicians and operators in the social and healthcare sector. Considering the number of assignments that participants have had, 33.5% of the sample declared that the assignment in which they were involved at the time was the first one, 45.3% the second one, 11.6% the third one, while 9.6% declared four or more assignments.

## Measures

### Organizational commitment

We measured affective and continuance commitment using a shortened 9-item scale adapted from the Italian version (Pierro et al., 1995) of Allen and Meyer's (1990) questionnaire. Participants were



asked to indicate their agreement with each statement on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). The AC subscale comprised 3 pairs of items that were doubled in order to measure affective commitment both to the agency and to the client organization. This strategy is largely used (e.g. Liden et al., 2003) and comprised identical items, except for reference to either 'My agency' or 'The client organization I work for' (e.g. "My agency/The client organization I work for has great personal meaning for me"). The coefficient alpha reliability was .91 for both AC to the agency and AC to the client organization respectively. The CC subscale comprised 3 items referring to the overall work condition (e.g. "I have few alternatives to consider leaving this job."). The coefficient alpha reliability was .75.

## Job satisfaction

Given the specific features of the temporary work carried out by agency workers, job satisfaction was measured by a tailor-made scale in order to get a more fitting measure for the specific working condition of TAWs. Relying on the conceptualization of job satisfaction as an aggregate variable reflecting satisfaction towards different facets of a job (Smith, 1998), and according to the facet-items approach of the measurement of job satisfaction (Lepold et al., 2018), we selected facets relevant for TAWs on the basis of preliminary in-depth interviews with two TAW experts. We developed a 5-item facet-specific job satisfaction scale for TAWs, in which participants were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with each statement on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*completely unsatisfied*) to 7 (*completely satisfied*). The facet-specific items measured are the followings: (1) benefits and bonus, (2) career opportunities, (3) learning and skill development, (4) freedom and free time and (5) professional development. We intentionally excluded among facets some aspects that were only related to one of the two entities (the client organization or the agency), such as the relationship with colleagues and supervisor. The coefficient alpha reliability was .86.

## Control variables

Age (years), educational level (1 = primary or junior high school diploma; 2 = professional qualification; 3 = high school diploma; 4 = bachelor's or graduate degree; 5 = post-degree master or PhD), agency tenure (1 = less than 6 months; 2 = from 6 to 12 months; 3 = from 13 to 24 months; 4 = more than 2 years) and client tenure (1 = less than 1 month; 2 = from 1 to 6 months; 3 = more than 6 months) were considered as continuous variables. Gender (1 = male; 2 = female) and type of contract (1 = fixed-term; 2 = permanent) were considered as dichotomous variables.

## Analyses

In order to address concerns about common method bias (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986), we conducted a preliminary confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to evaluate both the internal and discriminant validity of the 4 scales (AC to the agency, AC to the client, CC, and job satisfaction).

Subsequently, Latent Profile Analyses (LPA; Morin, Maïano, et al., 2011; Muthén, 2003; Nylund et al., 2007) were conducted to extract latent profiles of TAWs based on their levels of dual AC and CC. For these analyses, we used the robust maximum likelihood (MLR) estimator in Mplus 8.2 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012). Following Nylund et al. (2007), we adopted an iterative process progressively

increasing the number of profiles by one until an 8-profile model was reached. In order to avoid the problem of local maxima (i.e. chance to converge on a suboptimal solution), each model was estimated with 3000 random sets of starting values, ensuring the replicability of the best log likelihood value, 100 iterations for these random starts and retaining the 100 best solutions for final stage optimization (Hipp & Bauer, 2006).

In order to determine the optimal number of profiles, we compared models based on the substantive meaning and theoretical conformity of the profiles (Marsh et al., 2009; Muthén, 2003) as well as through the evaluation of multiple fit statistics (Masyn, 2013).

We examined several indices such as the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC; Akaike, 1987), the Consistent Akaike Information Criterion (CAIC; Bozdogan, 1987), the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC; Schwartz, 1978), the Sample-Adjusted Bayesian Information Criterion (SABIC; Sclove, 1987) and the Approximate Weight of Evidence criterion (AWE; Statistical Sciences, 1995). A lower value on all of these criteria suggests a better fitting model. We also tested relative model fit using the Lo et al. (2001) Likelihood Ratio Test (LRT), the adjusted LRT (Lo et al., 2001) and the Bootstrap Likelihood Ratio Test (BLRT; McLachlan & Peel, 2000). BLRT is a parametric LRT test obtained through resampling methods for which we drew 100 bootstrap samples for each model. Both these indices compare a  $k$  profile model against a  $k - 1$  profile model. A significant  $p$ -value indicates that the  $k$  profile model should be preferred and retained with respect to the  $k - 1$  profile model. In addition, entropy, which represents an overall index of model accuracy (Ramaswamy et al., 1993), was taken into account.

For additional information on the method for LPA and on the procedure used for the optimal number of profiles identification, please see Supplementary materials.

Once the best profile solution was selected, we conducted one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) to evaluate the uniqueness of the commitment profiles generated by the LPA. We used profile membership as the independent variable, while AC to the agency, AC to the client and CC were inserted as dependent variables.

Moreover, we tested the replicability of the best profile solution by conducting a double validation process (Breckenridge, 1989). We began by randomly splitting the total sample of participants into three sub-samples, approximately equivalent in number and proportions for the main socio-demographic variables. LPA was replicated in the three subsamples and then compared for agreement using Cohen's kappa. Cohen's kappa indicates the agreement between two different classifications of the same individuals and may be considered a measure of the "invariance" of the solution (see Thompson, 1994).

In order to test our hypotheses regarding profile differences in job satisfaction, we conducted a one-way ANCOVA on the all-sample, using the profile groups as the independent variable and controlling for several socio-demographic variables (namely age, education, contract, agency tenure and client tenure). The ANCOVA was followed by post hoc pairwise comparisons in order to identify specific mean differences among commitment profiles.

## RESULTS

Means, standard deviations and correlations among the study variables are shown in Table 2. The correlation coefficient between AC to the agency and AC to the client was high and positive ( $r = .55$ ) whilst correlations between these and CC was low and negative ( $r = -.06$  and  $-.15$ ). Furthermore, correlations between commitment components and job satisfaction revealed that AC to the agency and AC to the client organization were positively related ( $r = .47$  and  $r = .55$ ) whereas CC was

TABLE 2 Descriptive statistics and correlations

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Agency AC	4.48	1.40										
2. Client AC	4.90	1.42	.55**									
3. CC	4.89	1.52	-.06**	-.15**								
4. Job satisfaction	4.22	1.51	.47**	.55**	-.22**							
5. Gender <sup>a</sup>	1.49	.50	-.01	.02	-.01	.00						
6. Age	34.59	9.73	.13*	.07*	.09*	-.05**	-.04**					
7. Education <sup>b</sup>	2.89	1.04	-.21**	-.07**	-.11**	-.09**	.15**	-.27**				
8. Contract <sup>c</sup>	1.25	.43	.01	.00	-.08*	-.07**	-.06**	.03*	.09**			
9. Agency tenure <sup>d</sup>	2.26	1.13	.01	-.01	.09*	-.17**	.01	.12**	.00	.35**		
10. Client tenure <sup>e</sup>	2.67	1.33	-.02*	.03*	-.05**	-.08**	-.03**	.00	.13**	.45**	.43**	

Note: (N = 7225).

Abbreviations: Agency AC, affective commitment to the agency; CC, continuance commitment; Client AC, affective commitment to the client.

<sup>a</sup>1 = male, 2 = female.

<sup>b</sup>1 = primary or junior high school diploma, 2 = professional qualification, 3 = high school diploma, 4 = bachelor's or graduate degree, 5 = post-degree master or PhD.

<sup>c</sup>1 = fixed-term contract, 2 = permanent contract.

<sup>d</sup>1 = less than 6 months, 2 = from 6 to 12 months, 3 = from 13 to 24 months, 4 = more than 2 years.

<sup>e</sup>1 = less than 1 month, 2 = from 1 to 6 months, 3 = more than 6 months.

\**p* < .05;; \*\**p* < .01.

negatively related ( $r = -.22$ ) with job satisfaction. Furthermore, there were notable correlations of all of the selected socio-demographic variables with both commitment components and job satisfaction with the exception of gender, which showed no significant correlations.

## Confirmatory factor analyses

Results from the CFA revealed a good fit for the hypothesized 4-factor model ( $\chi^2 = 1872.087$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $df = 71$ ; TLI = 0.963; CFI = 0.971; RMSEA = 0.059 [0.057 – 0.062]; SRMR = 0.045). All items loaded significantly on their latent factor and showed high factor loadings, all above .54. Furthermore, alternative models with fewer factors were tested (i.e. mono-factorial solution, commitment as a whole factor, affective commitment to the agency and to the client organization combined), although they all demonstrated worse fit indices than the hypothesized 4-factor model.

## Latent profile analysis

We carried out LPA solutions with up to 8 profiles. The fit indices for the LPA solutions with up to 8 profiles are reported in Table 3. As can be seen, all of the information criteria examined decreased as the number of profiles increased, while the solution with the greatest value in entropy was the 5-profile solution (0.855), revealing that classifications were more accurate for most of the participants in this model. Furthermore, the pattern of change of these indices, the profile numerosity and the average probabilities for individuals to belong to their assigned profile generally provided support for selecting the 5-profile model (for additional information on the statistical procedure for LPA and on the results for optimal number of profiles identification, please see the Supplementary materials\*).

Table 4 reports the raw scores of commitment components and results of ANOVA and post hoc comparisons. As can be seen from post-hoc comparisons, the solution selected demonstrated significant differences among profiles in terms of mean commitment scores. Specifically, profiles significantly differed on all commitment measures.

TABLE 3 Fit results from the latent profile analyses

<i>k</i>	LL	AIC	CAIC	BIC	SABIC	AWE	Entropy	LRT <i>p</i>	Adj LRT <i>p</i>	BLRT <i>p</i>
1	-38,759	77,530	77,577	77,571	77,552	77,643	/	/	/	/
1rescov	-37,343	74,705	74,776	74,767	74,738	74,874	/	/	/	/
2	-37,731	75,481	75,560	75,550	75,518	75,669	0.810	<.001	<.001	<.001
3	-36,921	73,871	73,981	73,967	73,922	74,133	0.781	<.001	<.001	<.001
4	-36,660	73,357	73,498	73,480	73,423	73,694	0.853	<.001	<.001	<.001
5	-36,315	72,675	72,848	72,826	72,756	73,088	0.855	<.001	<.001	<.001
6	-36,174	72,400	72,605	72,579	72,497	72,888	0.747	<.001	<.001	<.001
7	-36,061	72,183	72,419	72,389	72,294	72,746	0.781	<.001	<.001	<.001
8	-35,956	71,981	72,249	72,215	72,107	72,619	0.803	<.001	<.001	<.001

Abbreviations: Adj LRT, adjusted likelihood ratio test; AIC, Akaike information criterion; AWE, approximate weight of evidence criterion; BIC, Bayesian information criterion; BLRT, bootstrap likelihood ratio test; CAIC, consistent Akaike information criterion; *k*, number of latent profiles in the model; LL, log-likelihood value; LRT, likelihood ratio test; SABIC, sample-adjusted Bayesian information criterion.

In order to clarify the interpretation of the 5-profile model, standardized Z-scores of commitment components were plotted (see Figure 1). Addressing the issue of interpreting and labeling the profiles detected by this solution, we determined the low, moderate and high commitment scores analogous to Cohen's (1988), for which .2 SD is a low effect, .5 SD is a moderate effect, and .8 SD is a high effect. Furthermore, we adapted the taxonomy and labels proposed by Sinclair and colleagues (2005; Table 1) and renamed commitment profiles in order to simultaneously describe the levels of dual AC and CC. Profile 1 includes 5.23% of employees ( $n = 378$ ) and is characterized by low scores on both AC to the agency and AC to the client, and a moderate level of continuance commitment. Therefore, this group corresponds to the “Dually Free Agents” profile with an alignment between levels of AC to the agency and to the client. Profile 2 describes 5.72% of the sample ( $n = 413$ ) and comprised individuals with low scores on AC to the agency and moderate levels of both AC to the client and CC. This profile shows a certain gap or misalignment between AC to the agency and AC to the client: following Sinclair's model, considering the former coupled with moderate CC would be a Free Agents profile, whilst considering the latter, an Allied profile. For this reason, and emphasizing the highest AC component, we renamed this profile “(Unilaterally) Client Allied”. Profile 3, comprising 24.87% of the sample ( $n = 1797$ ), included individuals with high scores on both AC to the agency and AC to the client, whereas continuance commitment fell just below the standardized midpoint of the scale. Given the alignment between AC to the agency and AC to the client, this group was renamed “Dually Involved”. Profile 4 describes 4.82% of employees ( $n = 348$ ) and is characterized by a moderate level of AC to the agency, a low level of AC to the client and a moderately high level of continuance commitment. This profile corresponds to the Invested profile considering AC to the agency, and to the Trapped profile considering AC to the client. Hence, emphasizing the highest AC component, we labeled profile 4 as “(Unilaterally) Agency Invested”. Finally, profile 5, which describes the largest part of the sample (59.36%,  $n = 4289$ ), is characterized by a moderate level on all commitment components. This profile, following the taxonomy hypothesized by Sinclair and colleagues (2005), may be labeled “Dually Allied”.

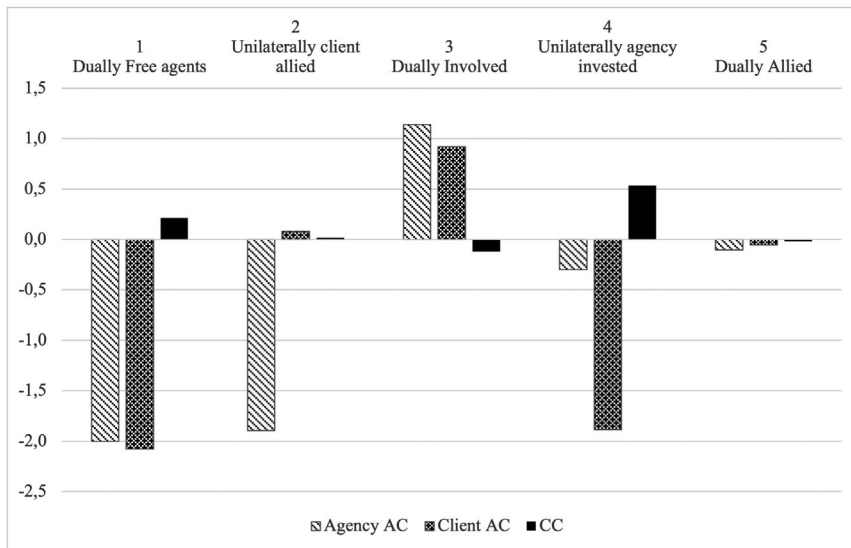
**Double validation process**

Once identified the 5-profile model as the best fitting solution, we collected further evidence regarding the invariance of this solution by randomly splitting the full sample into 3 subsamples. The same percentages for gender, age and education were kept for the subsamples. Then, we conducted 5-profile LPAs for each sub-sample by selecting the same parameters used for that of the total sample.

**TABLE 4** Commitment means and post-hoc comparisons associated with the 5-profile model

	<i>n</i>	Agency AC	Client AC	CC
1	378	1.64	1.92	5.19
2	413	1.77	5.12	4.89
3	1797	6.15	6.26	4.67
4	348	4.07	1.98	5.78
5	4289	4.33	4.81	4.88
Post-hoc comparisons		1 < 2 < 4 < 5 < 3	1, 4 < 5 < 2 < 3	3 < 5, 2 < 1 < 4

*Note:* Post-hoc comparisons indicate which profile means differ significantly at  $p < .05$ .  
 Abbreviations: Agency AC, affective commitment to the Agency; CC, continuance commitment; Client AC, affective commitment to the client.



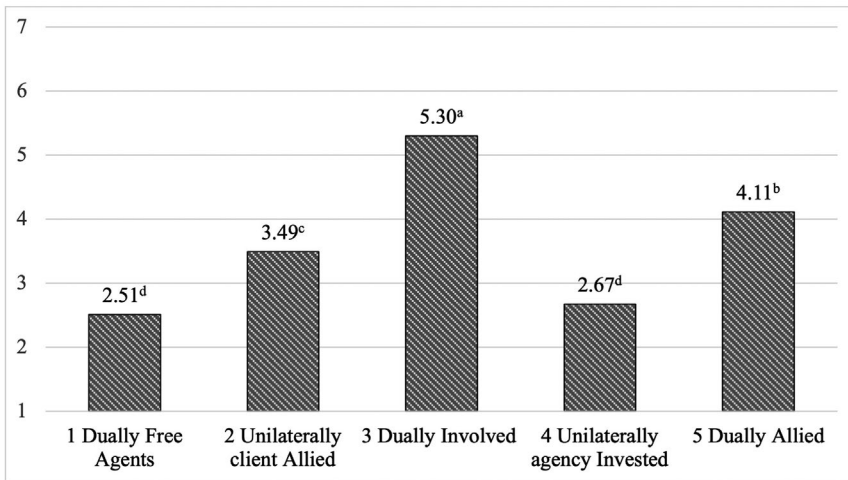
**FIGURE 1** Characteristics of the latent profiles on the indicators. Standardized Z scores are reported to clarify the interpretation

Profile size and commitment means for each subsample are reported in the supplemental materials. In order to ascertain the agreement among subsamples and total sample profile classifications, we compared the three subsamples with the total one using Cohen's kappa and considered a  $k$ -value of at least .60 acceptable (Asendorpf, 2002). Cohen's kappa for the comparison between these subsamples and the full sample was  $k = .93$  for the first subsample,  $k = .98$  for the second subsample, and  $k = .95$  for the third subsample. These values suggest a strong agreement, revealing substantial replicability of the 5-profile solution among samples. This result, together with evidence from the selection of the 5 profiles model as the optimal solution, the differences in commitment components among profiles, and their substantive meaning brought us to consider the first hypothesis substantially confirmed.

## Analyses of covariance

In order to test Hypotheses 2a, 2b and 3, we conducted a univariate ANCOVA. Job satisfaction was included as the dependent variable, profile membership as the independent variable, and a pool of covariates were selected because of their significant correlations with job satisfaction. Accordingly, age, education, contract, agency tenure and client tenure were included as covariates while gender, which showed no significant correlation, was not included in the ANCOVA.

The one-way ANCOVA revealed significant differences among profiles with regard to job satisfaction ( $F(4, 7214) = 642.18, \eta^2 = .26, p < .001$ ). The percentage of variance explained for job satisfaction by the univariate test was 29.2%. In order to identify the between-group differences, post-hoc pairwise comparisons were carried out. Post-hoc comparisons revealed significant differences in mean levels of job satisfaction among all five profiles (see Figure 2). The “Dually Involved” (profile 3) had the highest levels of job satisfaction (5.30), confirming hypothesis 2a, followed by the “Dually Allied” (profile 5, 4.11). The “Dually Free agents” (profile 1) had the lowest levels of job satisfaction (2.51), confirming hypothesis 2b, together with the “(Unilaterally) Agency Invested” (profile 4, 2.67),



**FIGURE 2** Commitment means in job satisfaction and pairwise comparisons for the 5-profile in the total sample. Means with different superscripts are significantly different at  $p$  .05 level in Post-hoc comparisons

which had lower satisfaction levels as compared to the “(Unilaterally) Client Allied” (profile 2, 3.49), thus confirming our hypothesis 3.

## DISCUSSION

The present contribution extends knowledge on TAWs' attitudes towards their job and organizations by adopting a configural approach to the study of different combinations of commitment components. Given the salience of the triangular employment relationship in which TAWs are involved, dual AC (to the agency and to the client) as well as overall CC were taken into account to identify commitment profiles. In doing this, we relied on the taxonomy proposed by Sinclair et al. (2005), further extending it, according to the double bond which characterized TAWs' AC (i.e. Liden et al., 2003).

The results of our study supported all our hypotheses, as described below.

Five commitment profiles emerged in our sample, as well as in three random subsamples of the Italian TAWs, thus confirming our expectations of finding stable and meaningful configurations (*H1 was confirmed*). These were both qualitatively and quantitatively different in terms of the level of the three commitment components. Three out of five profiles were characterized by comparable (but different) levels of AC to the agency and to the client organization, all three with moderate levels of CC. Specifically, as expected and consistent with previous studies, we found the Dually Allied profile (with moderate dual AC), representing about the 60% of the sample. The other two profiles characterized by Dual commitment were the Dually Free Agents profile (with low dual AC) and the Dually Involved profile (with high dual AC). While “Free agents” and “Allied” profiles have already been found in previous studies among permanent workers (Dello Russo et al., 2013; Sinclair et al., 2005), in this study, these profiles take on a different perspective since they include a homogeneous level of affective commitment for the agency and the client organization. The “Dually Involved” profile, which approximately represents the 25% of the TWAs sample, may be a more TAW context-specific profile, since it has not been identified in “standard” contexts. When examining why this profile emerged in this specific context, it is relevant to consider TAWs' motives and volition in being employed with their current work arrangement. For example, Van Breugel and colleagues (2005) highlighted that the

choice for a particular agency increased TAWs' affective commitment. Since dual AC is higher than CC (AC-dominant profile), workers included in the Dually Involved profile are likely to be guided mainly by voluntary rather than involuntary or instrumental motives (i.e. lack of job alternatives). Voluntary motives have been extensively depicted by previous literature as involving for example flexibility, freedom and opportunity to learn provided by temporary employment, as well as a general preference for this type of work arrangement (Chambel & Sobral, 2019; Morris & Vekker, 2001; Tan & Tan, 2002).

The remaining two profiles (the (Unilaterally) Client Allied and the (Unilaterally) Agency Invested), represent a complete novelty within the commitment profiles literature, given that they express a misalignment between AC to the agency and AC to the Client. Indeed the (Unilaterally) Client Allied profile had low Agency AC and moderate Client AC and CC while the (Unilaterally) Agency Invested" profile demonstrated moderate Agency AC, low Client AC and high CC. These findings provide evidence on the hypothesized independence of the commitment experienced by TAWs toward the agency and the client organization. As reported by the social exchange literature, TAWs may establish and maintain different and specific social exchange relationships with each of the organizations with which they are involved and interact (Liden et al., 2003). Furthermore, it is well known that these relationships evolve through parallel but independent processes (Lapalme et al., 2011). This study further investigated the effects of this independence by means of a configural approach which revealed two profiles that substantially differed in their levels of dual AC components, as well as in level of job satisfaction. With respect to this latter point, differences in job satisfaction emerged among commitment profiles. The Dually Involved profile, which has high dual AC and moderate CC, showed the highest level of job satisfaction (*H2a was confirmed*), while the Dually Free Agents profile, with low dual AC and moderate CC, showed the lowest level (*H2b was also confirmed*). However, the lowest level of satisfaction was also showed by another CC-dominant profile, the (Unilaterally) Agency Invested. On the other hand, the "Dually Allied" profile, balanced in terms of Dual AC e CC (all at an intermediate levels), was the second preferable profile in terms of job satisfaction. This finding may be explained by referring to the intrinsic motivation mindset which underlies affective commitment (Markovits et al., 2007) that pushes workers to evaluate their own job and experience more positively. When the profile is AC-Dominant (Dually Involved), intrinsic motivation prevails, and TAWs are the most satisfied with their job. When there is balance between AC and CC (Dually Allied) intrinsic and extrinsic motivations coexist and satisfaction is a bit lower but still high. When CC (extrinsic motivation) prevails (Dually free agents), job satisfaction is low. This result highlights the importance of considering the simultaneous combination of commitment levels within each group, and not only the mean commitment levels.

Considering the two profiles with different levels of dual AC (profiles 2 and 4), the Unilaterally client Allied reported higher job satisfaction than the (Unilaterally) Agency Invested (*Hypothesis 3 is confirmed*). It is reasonable that having a low level of AC towards the client, who are closer to TAWs in their day-to-day activities and relationships, may have a more negative impact than having a low level of AC to the agency. Another element that would hinder job satisfaction for the (Unilaterally) Agency Invested profile is the high level of CC. As already noted, when CC is higher than its affective counterpart, employees report worse levels of several working behaviors and attitudes (i.e. Dello Russo et al., 2013; Meyer & Morin, 2016; Sinclair et al., 2005). On the other hand, employees comprised in the (Unilaterally) client Allied profile may view a temporary contract as a stepping stone towards permanent employment (De Jong et al., 2009; Feather & Rauter, 2004; Hardy & Walker, 2003), thus developing a stronger affective attachment with the client organization as compared to the agency. However, high but also moderate dual AC profiles were more satisfied with their temporary job than both unilateral profiles. This could be consistent with the additive value of dual commitment



and also in line with a positive “spillover effect” from one context to the other (Connelly et al., 2007). However, the present profiles did not allow us to test for the coexistence of high levels of dual AC and high CC, since none of the profiles mirrored these characteristics. Moreover, we did not identify any profile with a low level of CC. It is important to note that the entire sample reported, on average, high CC. This may reflect a ceiling effect, due to the fact that TAWs are generally inclined to focus on transactional elements of their current employment situation (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004; Gallagher & McLean Parks, 2001). Moreover, within a tight labor market, as in most European Countries, temporary work in the majority of cases is not a choice (differently for example from the Netherlands or UK), but rather likely reflects the shortage or absence of employment alternatives (Felfe et al., 2008). Nevertheless, in our study, we found a Dually Involved profile, representing about 25% of the whole sample, in which the (dual) affective link prevails on the instrumental counterpart. Therefore, even if CC is in most cases moderate, profiles significantly differed in terms of mean level of CC, showing that this variable is crucial both for profile identification, as well as in the profile interpretation (in terms of relative dominance of AC or CC).

Another final point of attention concerns the lack of strong relationships of the type of contract that workers have (fixed term or permanent) with the various forms of commitment as well as with job satisfaction. This could be due to the specificity of the Italian TAW sector. Indeed, in Italy a permanent contract with a TAW is not as stable as a permanent contract among standard workers, since it may include periods of non-work in which workers perceive an allowance instead of remuneration. This may have attenuated the differences among fixed-term and permanent agency workers.

All in all, these results are especially relevant considering the large size and heterogeneity of the sample and the fact that it had similar sociodemographic and work characteristics as compared to the entire population of Italian agency workers.

## Limitations and implications for future research

The present contribution has some limitations that could be addressed by future research. First, we used self-report measures for both organizational commitment and job satisfaction. This might be a concern for common method variance, by which parameter estimates may be inflated given that variables were measured through self-report measures (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Nonetheless, CFAs including multiple model tests were carried out in order to ensure that all measures were clearly distinguishable. Furthermore, the profiles derived by LPA were substantially different in terms of both commitment components and job satisfaction, providing partial evidence that common method bias did not significantly affect our data.

Second, we collected cross-sectional data and our findings need to be extended in a longitudinal way. In this regard, our study represents a first attempt to apply commitment profiles (Kam et al., 2016) to dual commitment (Galais & Moser, 2009), however, it lacks in verifying whether profile composition is stable over time. On this point, the latent transition analysis (LTA) (e.g. Nylund et al., 2007) allows to monitor transitions of TAWs from one profile to another and has been previously adopted for commitment profiles identification in standard contexts (i.e. Kam et al., 2016). Future studies should address this aim and also investigate how commitment components may influence one another over time. Considering the “spillover effect” of AC from the agency to the client (Connelly et al., 2007) and vice versa, LTA might verify this effect, highlighting for example TAWs' shifts from a unilateral AC starting profile to more positive and balanced profiles over time.

Furthermore, this study lacks in identifying the variables and processes linking TAW's profiles to antecedents and consequences. For example, studies should try to understand what individual and

organizational characteristics are at the basis of the Dually involved and Dually allied profiles and what factors may predict the Dually Free Agents configuration, which seems to be the highest risk group (together with the (Unilaterally) Agency Invested). Motives also need to be directly measured, in order to ascertain the willingness or unwillingness to become and remain a temporary worker. Whereas variable-centered literature on dual commitment has already identified several antecedents of dual commitment, such as perceived organizational support (i.e. Liden et al., 2003), perceived status similarity (Boswell et al., 2012), psychological contract breach and trust (Lapalme et al., 2011) and organizational justice (Meyer et al., 2013), there is still a lack of knowledge concerning the contribution of these dimensions to the formation of TAW's commitment profiles. This is a crucial challenge for future research in that, using multinomial logistic regression analyses within the LPA (i.e. Meyer et al., 2013) allows for testing predictors of profile belongingness and this feature is important in order to give a clear rationale to commitment profile formation. On the other hand, future research should investigate long-term consequences of cluster belongingness not only in terms of satisfaction, but also in terms of behavioral outcomes, such as performance, OCB, turnover and career.

Another possible issue refers to the specific nature of the satisfaction measure that was used in this research, that possibly may have had an impact on our results. In fact, being specifically focused on the satisfaction with the temporary work, was intended to capture the specificity of this work arrangement. Another possible issue refers to the specific nature of the satisfaction measure that was used in this research, that possibly may have had an impact on our results. In fact, being specifically focused on the satisfaction with the temporary work, was intended to capture facets related to the specificity of this work arrangement. However, the aim was not to balance and nor to differentiate aspects related to the agency from those referred to the client organization, therefore we cannot exclude that our scale might not equally relate with the two organizations. Moreover, this measure may have neglected some important aspects of the construct, such as satisfaction with the work itself and with relationships with colleagues and supervisors. Future studies should compare the differences among dual commitment profiles on different general and multi-faceted measures, including those referred respectively to the agency and to the client organization. Finally, future studies may also consider the possibility to differentiate dual CC, following Veitch & Cooper-Thomas approach (2009) in order to disentangle in instrumental relationship with the agency and the client organization on commitment profiles.

## Practical implications

The findings of this study have important implications for managerial and HR practices toward agency workers. Since commitment profiles have different characteristics and have implications for the level of satisfaction towards the temporary employment, different profiles call for differential interventions. It is worthwhile to monitor the levels of commitment components and to identify which profile TAWs may fall into in order to identify the appropriate intervention on the basis of profile characteristics.

If TAWs are included in the Unilaterally Client Allied or in the Dually Free Agents profiles, it would be important to promote HR practices targeted to promote skills, professional development and employability of TAWs and how they are perceived by TAWs. Fontinha et al. (2012) showed that HR practices, which are perceived as being focused on TAWs' well-being and development, foster AC to the agency which, in turn promote AC to the client. Hence, agencies might consider HR practices as a way to foster TAWs' dual AC. Possible examples may include continuous training, vocational interventions, individualized career paths, and so on. Moreover, as recognized by the literature, the agency is often perceived by TAWs as distant, and with which interactions mainly concern the administrative aspects of the job (Benson, 1998; Lapalme et al., 2011). This may undermine the level of

support perceived by the employee and consequently the affective commitment towards the agency. Hence, the agency would benefit from being more present and becoming a real focal point for the temporary worker. This could be possible by keeping close and continuous contact with the workers during assignments (not only for administrative issues) to monitor and guide the employee during different work experiences. When the number of TAWs working in the same client organization is high, the agency could consider the implementation of an “on site” manager (Consiglio & Moschera, 2001). This role, being a focal point between the agency, the TAWs and the client organization, is in charge of organizing shifts, dealing with emergencies, daily tasks and problems, and may facilitate communication and feedback, strengthening both client and TAWs' satisfaction. The implementation of on-site managers could give TAWs the possibility to directly interact with an agency representative, guaranteeing agency presence and support, and ultimately fostering TAWs' AC to the agency.

On the other hand, some interventions could be addressed to foster AC to the client organization, especially targeted to “Unilaterally Agency Invested” and “Dually Free Agents” profiles. Possible actions to undertake include enhancing TAWs' social resources, such as perceived support from supervisors and colleagues, perceived organizational support, and perceived status similarity with standard workers which is crucial to promote membership and avoid TAWs considering themselves as second-class workers (Boswell et al., 2012).

## CONCLUSIONS

This was the first study exploring a configural approach to the study of dual commitment (to the client organization and to the agency) among a large sample of TAWs, an ever-increasing working population. Five meaningful commitment profiles emerged consistently across three random subsamples: three profiles were characterized by homogeneous (Dual) AC to the client and to the agency (at high, moderate and low levels respectively) and moderate levels of (general) CC. Two profiles presented discordant (Unilateral) AC to the client or to the agency. The 5 configurations differed on their level of job satisfaction. Specifically, when in Dual profiles AC is higher than CC, TAWs' job satisfaction is higher, whereas when CC is higher than AC, job satisfaction is lower. Moreover, among Unilateral profiles, when AC to the client is higher than AC to the agency, workers are more satisfied with their job. These results have implications for interventions targeted to develop workers satisfaction with temporary work.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

## ETHICS STATEMENT

This study was conducted in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration principles for research involving human subjects.

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## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional Supporting Information may be found online in the Supporting Information section.

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