

# CONTINGENT WORK AND ORGANIZATIONAL ATTITUDES IN FAMILY VERSUS NON-FAMILY FIRMS. AN ANALYSIS OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN CAMPANIA REGION<sup>123</sup>

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## Introduction

The adoption of contingent work arrangements has currently become a common practice. The changes in labor market, the increasing flexibility and globalization have shaped the adoption of temporary forms of work arrangements in almost every branch of economic activity and even for traditional long-term positions (Felfe, Schmook, Schyns, & Six, 2008). The present study analyzes the issue of contingent workers' organizational attitudes in the Italian hospitality industry through a comparison between family and nonfamily hotels. An analysis on hospitality industry might be of high relevance because of the traditional adoption of flexible work arrangements in hotels that may become a case of study even for firms of other industries. Existing research has shown that a great amount of hotels, both family and nonfamily, regularly employ contingent or seasonal workers for strategic tasks for customer satisfaction (Johnson & Ashforth, 2008; Thomas, 1995). Among Italian hotels, for instance, there is a general tendency to hire continuously contingent workers for a long period of time, even years, for relevant and strategic positions. To this end, Rousseau (1998) argues that contingent workers might actually be considered as "core" members of these organizations. Nevertheless, the literature on this topic is underdeveloped. For example, there is no wide consensus on the definition of contingent work and scholars use different labels, often interchangeably, to indicate a non-standard employment characterized by discontinuity that typically occurs when a firm must face an increasing and unexpected demand (De Cuyper, Bernhard-Oettel, Berntson, De Witte, & Alarco, 2008;

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Freedman, 1985). The most used definition of contingent work refers to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics that define contingent work as “*any job in which an individual doesn’t have an explicit or implicit contract for long-term employment or one in which the minimum hours worked can vary in a nonsystematic manner*” (Polivka & Nardone, 1989 p.11). Ferrara (2008) provided a further distinction by introducing the concept of ‘duration contingency’ and ‘working-time contingency’. Duration contingency refers to fixed length of the employment relationship (e.g. fixed-term contract, seasonal contract, stage) whereas working-time contingency refers to the limited amount of hours worked (e.g. part-time, job-on-call) (Buonocore, 2010). Duration contingent work is typically different from traditional regular employment, which is performed full-time, will continue indefinitely, and is performed under the employer’s supervision (Connelly & Gallagher, 2004; Kalleberg, 2000). The focus of this research is on employment relations characterized by ‘duration contingency’ mainly based on contracts with a fixed-term end (Ferrara, 2008). This choice derives from two reasons. First, contingent workers employed on seasonal contracts form a large proportion of the total number of workers employed in services industries and, specifically, in the hospitality industry (Krakover, 2000). Second, seasonal workers are rarely identified as the subjects of empirical investigations in the research on contingent work, reflecting a general lack of interest, while many more surveys have been conducted on part-time employment (Buonocore, 2010).

Another limitation of actual research concerns the lack of studies that analyze the issue of contingent workers’ organizational attitudes in the family context. For example, researchers have not adequately addressed the question whether the family’s influence over the business may impact, positively or negatively, on contingent workers’ attitudes and behaviors at work. This is serious concern because there is a compelling evidence that organizational identification, organizational commitment and job satisfaction significantly influence workers’ performance (Gallagher & McLean Parks, 2001; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). In addition, contingent workers’ productivity is crucial for ensuring higher level of firm’s performance (Barnett & Kellermans, 2006). To date, the only studies that analyze the issue of contingent work in family firms focused on the question whether the characteristics of family firms<sup>4</sup> might help or not the adoption of flexible work practices. Nevertheless even on this aspect, results are mixed. Gulbrandsen (2005), argued that family firms could be more likely to adopt flexible work practices in virtue of specific characteristics of family firms such as the presence of the owner-manager, the spontaneous relationships, the trust, and

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<sup>4</sup> Habbershon, Williams and McMillan (2003) coined the term *familiness* to refer to family distinctiveness evidencing the idiosyncratic linkage that exists among family, individuals and business and that contribute to produce a competitive advantage.

the friendly climate, that favored flexible work practices. In particular, the author argued that because flexible work practices require a higher level of trust and loyalty, the characteristics of family firms could foster appropriate conditions for their adoption (Guldbrandsen, 2005). On an opposite line, scholars argued that because family firms are characterized by a paternalistic and patriarchal culture (Kets de Vries, 1993) they could be less likely to adopt flexible work practices. According to the paternalistic perspective, family owners are more hesitant to adopt flexible work practices in order to protect their employees from the negative consequences associated to flexible work arrangements, such as job insecurity and layoffs (Donckles & Frohlich, 1991; Ram & Holliday, 1993; Ward & Mendoza, 1996). According to the patriarchal perspective, family owners are more hesitant to adopt flexible work practices in order to avoid the loss of control and power that automatically derive from the adoption of flexible work practices (Tagiuri & Davis, 1992).

These arguments suggest the need to conduct finer-grained analyses on contingent work in family context investigating more relevant topics for individuals' and firms' performance. In the current paper I attempt to do this by investigating organizational features that might influence contingent workers' organizational attitudes. In particular, the study proposes a comparison between family and nonfamily hotels in order to highlight whether and how the characteristic of the governance of the company affect the magnitude of individuals' attitudes at work. Using data from a survey of Italian contingent workers employed in hotels situated in the Campania region, the study aims at investigating if contingent workers' organizational identification, organizational commitment and job satisfaction significantly vary because of the governance (family versus nonfamily) of the company.

#### *Contingent Workers' Organizational Attitudes in Family Firms*

Contingent workers in family firms often represent nonfamily employees that work side-by-side with the owner and other relatives (Chrisman, Chua, & Litz, 2003). As nonfamily employees, they are involved in the business but not in the family (Mitchell, Morse, & Sharma, 2003). As a consequence, their organizational attitudes at work might be affected by the perception of justice and fairness within the workplace (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006). In family firms, in fact, the boundaries between the family and the business often become blurred (Gersick, Davis, Hampton, & Lansberg, 1997), and this might foster the perception of an environment encouraging bias and favoritism to the detriment of nonfamily members (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006; Kets de Vries, 1993; Lubatkin, Schulze, Ling, & Dino, 2005; Schulze, Lubatkin, & Dino, 2003). This represents a serious concern within family firms since nonfamily employees contribute in a de-

terminant way in the performance of the company over and above family members (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006).

The organizational attitudes included in this research are organizational identification, organizational commitment and job satisfaction. The choice to include these variables stems from several considerations. First, strengthening the commitment and the loyalty of nonfamily employees represents a priority for family business owners (Chua et al., 1999). Second, these variables have been frequently considered in organizational behavior literature as valid indicators of the strength of the relationship between a worker and his or her organization. Finally, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational identification have been found to influence contingent workers' intentional turnover and absenteeism (e.g. not showing up for work, quitting before contract ends), job engagement, work-related behaviors, job performance, insecurity and even well-being (Galais & Moser, 2009; Teo & Waters, 2002). For instance, a higher level of commitment and identification in the organization might help contingent workers to perceive less stress due to their temporary employment condition, also providing psychological persistence to react to frequent changes in the job position.

In the following sections an integrate approach that combine the most used theoretical framework in contingent work literature (i.e. social exchange theory and social comparison theory) with relevant arguments in family business research (i.e. organizational justice and the conflict between family and nonfamily members) will be used to provide adequate rationale for the pattern of hypotheses.

### *Organizational identification*

Organizational identification has been defined as the sense of oneness that an individual has with his or her organization and reflects the extent to which the individual conceives himself or herself and the organization as a shared identity (Ashfort & Mael, 1989). Organizational identification implies a strong psychological attachment that occurs when individuals define themselves by the same attributes as those of the organization (Buonocore, 2010). Simon (1947) and March and Simon (1958) introduced organizational identification for the first time in '50, focusing on its impact the construct of on organizational processes and firm performance. Earlier research did not distinguish the construct of organizational identification from organizational commitment (Ashfort & Mael, 1989). Only in the late '80 other scholars, such as Ashfort and Mael (1989), Dutton, Dukeruch and Harquail (1994) and Mael and Ashforth (1992), started to conduct deeper analyses on this subject founding that even though organizational identification and organizational commitment are two organizational attitudes that apparently overlap (Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, 2006), they are unre-

lated concepts (Meyer, Becker, & Van Dick, 2006). Organizational identification reflects the extent to which an individual conceives the organization as a part of self, whereas organizational commitment reflects an attitude toward the organization and derives from an objective evaluation of job characteristics and inducements received from it.

Much of existing research has shown that organizational identification is mainly influenced by perceived external image (Buonocore, 2010; Dutton et al., 1994). A perceived external image is a constructed employees' image of what outsiders think about the organization and reflects organizational reputation and social opinion. According to Dutton and colleagues (1994), perceived or constructed external image acts as "*a potentially powerful mirror*" (p. 249) on employees' organizational identification. In fact, the more the perceived external image is positive, the more employees' organizational identification is strengthened (Dutton et al., 1994).

Relying on this argument, in the current paper it is hypothesized that contingent workers may result in lower levels of organizational identification in family hotels in comparison with nonfamily hotels. In particular, I assume that organizational identification is stronger among contingent workers in nonfamily hotels because of a more positive external image. Nonfamily hotels often represent international and national brand chains where the reputation and prestige of the organization is more widespread because of extensive press or other media attention (Buonocore, 2010). Family hotels typically operate within local tour operators with a niche of customers. Consequently, even if they have a good reputation, it does not easily cross over regional or national borders. Hence in nonfamily hotels employees are more likely to perceive the external organizational image as more favorable and attractive. Employees believe that outsiders have a positive opinion of their work organization and they feel proud to belong to an organization like that. In fact, if members believe their work organization receives a positive assessment, due to competence, power, prestige or moral worth, their membership gives them the opportunity to see themselves with these positive qualities, strengthening self-esteem and, consequently, organizational identification (Buonocore, 2010). In brief, perceived external image is more likely to trigger ongoing feelings of pride and oneness among contingent workers in nonfamily hotels in comparison with family hotels. Accordingly:

*H1: Contingent workers in nonfamily hotels have higher levels of organizational identification compared to contingent workers in family hotels.*

#### *Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction.*

Organizational commitment represents a sense of belonging that ties employees to their organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Organizational commitment has been conceptualized as a construct composed of three

dimensions: affective, continuance and normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1990). Affective commitment reflects the psychological attachment of an individual toward the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997). This dimension of commitment is attributed to intrinsic factors and it is related to an individual's emotional state. Continuance commitment has been defined as a calculated commitment because it results from the evaluation of potential losses and benefits resulting from leaving the organization such as the recognition of limited employment alternatives in the labour market (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Becker, 1960; Johnson & Chang, 2006). Finally, normative commitment refers to the perceived obligation to remain in the organization. It is mainly based on employees' feeling of gratitude toward the organization for the inducements received in terms of professional growth, training and incentives (Bergman, 2006; Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). In family business research, commitment has been usually treated as a one-dimensional construct primarily conceptualized in terms of affective commitment (Sharma & Irving, 2005). Sharma and Irving (2005) highlighted that there is a feeling of "wanting to" (p.17), it a strong desire to contribute to family firms' cause, underlying the affective commitment of family workers<sup>5</sup>.

Job satisfaction is another organizational attitude frequently analyzed in studies on contingent work as well as on family business (see Connelly & Gallagher, 2004; Lee, 2006). Job satisfaction represents an attitude that an individual shows toward his/her job or particular facets of it; a worker, in fact, can be satisfied of some aspects of his/her job and at the same time be dissatisfied by other aspects (Spector, 1985). Studies on job satisfaction can be classified in two main streams; the first stream focuses on antecedents (e.g. Glick, Douglas, & Gupta, 1986) whereas the second focuses on consequences (e.g. Blegen, 1993). With regard to antecedents, family business literature found that job satisfaction might be influenced by the perception of family cohesion, family adaptability, and conflicts between work and family domain (Lee, 2006). With regard to consequences, job satisfaction has been frequently associated to absenteeism, intentional turnover and performance (e.g. Blegen, 1993; Hom & Kinicki, 2001; Schleicher, Watt, & Greguras, 2004).

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<sup>5</sup> Sharma and Irving (2005) described another form of commitment that usually occurs within family firms that defined *imperative commitment* (p. 18). Imperative commitment refers to a feeling of self-doubt and little self-efficacy experienced by family workers in relation to alternative careers outside the protected environment of the family (Handler, 1989). Workers with high level of imperative commitment are more likely to perceive a sense of "need to" (p.19) and of incapability to work outside the family company that forces them to not look for other employment alternatives (Sharma & Irving, 2005). The rationale underlying imperative commitment is in somehow similar to rationale underlying the construct of continuance commitment since both the constructs are based on a feeling of 'no escape' that force employees to remain with their organization.

Much of family business research on organizational attitudes has attempted to solve the question whether the influence of the family over the business might affect the magnitude of workers' organizational attitudes. Nevertheless the question is still unresolved. Some scholars found that family distinctiveness, such as the leadership of family owner or the familiar and friendly climate enhance the loyalty and commitment of employees (Handler, 1989; Rowden, 2002). Conversely, other scholars found that the influence of the family over the business has detrimental consequences on employees' organizational attitudes because of perception of bias and favoritism toward family members (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006).

In the current research, drawing theoretical arguments from social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), it is hypothesized that contingent workers engage in higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction in nonfamily hotels in comparison with family hotels. In particular, social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) suggests that workers' organizational attitudes are affected by the perception of fairness within the organization with regard to distribution of resources among employees and procedures used to distribute such resources (De Cuyper et al., 2008). Similarly, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) assumes that employees' attitudes at work may depend on the quality of the socio-emotional relationship with their organization that is mostly influenced by the perception of inducements received by employees in terms of career, professional growth, fair treatment, etc. (Moorman, 1991). To this end, research has shown that fairness and perception of equity assume a great relevance in socio-emotional relationship of contingent workers since due to their temporary employment relationships are more likely to perceive asymmetries between contributions provided and inducements received (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000). Relying on these arguments, I hypothesize that in nonfamily hotels contingent workers may perceive higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction in comparison with family hotels because of a more profitable social exchange relationship with their organization characterized from a higher perception of fairness. For example, in nonfamily hotels contingent workers are more likely to be provided with a formalized and clear pathway of human resource practices, including socialization, training, and appraisals procedures, with an increasing perception of fairness of organizational procedures. Research in social justice has widely shown that the perception of fair procedures (i.e. procedural justice) accounts as much, if not more, as distributive justice in the overall perception of fairness (Jost & Kay, 2010). In family hotels, contingent workers are less likely to be provided with a specific and formalized pathway in term of human resource practices thus nurturing the perception of lower procedural justice with detrimental consequences on the quality of socio-emotional relationship with the organi-

zation (Reid & Adams, 2001). In addition, contingent workers' nonfamily status may nurture an ongoing feeling of resentment because of the worst treatment received in comparison with family members. As a consequence, contingent workers in family firms might be less satisfied and less committed toward their organization. Accordingly:

H2: Contingent workers in nonfamily firms have a higher level of organizational commitment than contingent workers in family firms.

H3: Contingent workers in nonfamily firms have a higher level of job satisfaction than contingent workers in family firms.

## Method

### *Sample*

Data were collected during April and June 2007 in 14 high rank hotels (4 stars) with a yearlong productivity cycle situated in Campania Region, Southern Italy. For the purpose of this study, I relied on the definition of family firms provided by Barry (1975) and Handler (1989) that depicts a family firm such as "a firm owned and managed by members of one or more families that represent the dominant coalition of the company and that control the governance". This definition suggests focusing on the governance of the company, and not only on ownership to establish whether or not a company could be classified as a family firm. A telephone inquiry was used to establish whether or not the hotels met these criteria (Astrachan & Kolenko, 1994). The definitive sample was composed of 7 family hotels and 7 nonfamily hotels. Family hotels sub-group included hotels where the family had both the ownership and the governance of the organization; whereas nonfamily hotels subgroup included hotels affiliated with national or international brand chains and not directly managed by the family (also including hotels owned but not-managed by family members).

Data were collected using the traditional paper-and-pencil survey that was filled out by 105 contingent workers in normal working hours. A research assistant helped us with the collection of the data. Questionnaires were hand-delivered to employer (when not possible to front-desk employees after authorization of employer or hotel manager) of each hotel and collected back after two weeks. I followed this procedure to collect data from all employees that had different work shifts and were not present at the moment of questionnaire handling out.

*Tab. 1 - Characteristics of the contingent workers in family and nonfamily firms*

|  | <b>Contingent workers<br/>Family Firms</b> | <b>Contingent workers<br/>Non family Firms</b> |
|--|--|--|
| <b>Age (mean)</b>  | 32,04                                      | 32,95  |
| <b>Gender (% of women)</b>                                   | 34,9%                                      | 57,1   |
| <b>Tenure (years) (mean)</b>                                 | 6,24                                       | 4,94   |
| <b>Types of contract.</b>                                    |  |  |
| <b>i . Fixed-term contract</b>                               | 43,8%                                      | 86,8%  |
| <b>ii. Occasional contract</b>                               | 31,3%                                      | 1,9%   |
| <b>iii. Stage or training</b>                                | 2,1%                                       | 3,8%   |
| <b>iv. Collaboration contract<br/>(co.co.pro.; co.co.co)</b> | -  | 3,8%   |
| <b>v. Other (non specified)</b>                              | 22,9%                                      | 3,7%   |
| <b>N (105)</b>   | 49 (46,7%)                                 | 56 (53,3%)                                     |

To compare contingent workers' organizational attitudes between family and nonfamily hotels, the sample was divided in two subgroups: contingent workers in family hotels and contingent workers in nonfamily hotels. Descriptive statistics for the two subgroups are summarized in table 1. The number of contingent workers is substantially equal in nonfamily (56%) and in family hotels (49%). About the respondents, 46% of contingent workers were women (57,1% for nonfamily hotels; 34,9 for family hotels); average age was 33 (32,04 for family hotels and 32,94 for non family hotels). Education level was medium/low and no significant differences existed across the two subsamples (27% of contingent workers completed primary school, 78% completed secondary school and 10% had a degree). An interesting difference across the subsamples was related to the tenure and type of contingent work contract. Tenure was on average higher for family hotels than nonfamily hotels (6,24 years vs 4,94 years). This data corroborate the thesis arguing that family hotels, especially in the South of Italy, tend to hire continuously the same employees and always with a temporary work arrangement. With regard to contracts, the majority of contingent workers in nonfamily hotels (about 86%) had a fixed-term contract whereas this percentage decreased to 43,8% for family hotels. Interestingly, a higher percentage of contingent workers in family hotels (31,3% vs 1,9%) had an occasional contract such as job on call. These data seem to corroborate the rationale underlying the hypotheses arguing that in nonfamily hotels the pattern of human resource practices, even contractual system, is more defined in comparison with family hotels. To this end, a preliminary interview with hotel employers revealed that use of these non-standard

employees satisfied organizational needs in regard to scheduling and staffing strategies. In particular, contingent workers were engaged in front and back office positions, including receptionist, hotel accountant, chef, guest service assistant, and conference & event assistant, according to specific organizational events that might even include a single wedding ceremony or a crowded holiday.

### *Measurement*

*Organizational identification.* Organizational identification was measured using Mael and Ashforth's (1992) 6-item scale. Sample items include "When somebody criticizes (name of organization), it feels like a personal insult"; "When I talk about (name of organization), I usually say "we" rather than "They". In this study average alpha coefficient of the scale was .71.

*Organizational commitment.* Organizational commitment was measured using Meyer and Allen's (1997) 18-item scale that measures the three dimensions of organizational commitment, affective, normative and continuance commitment. Sample items include "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization" (affective commitment); "If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere I would not feel it was right to leave my organization" (normative commitment); "One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives" (continuance commitment). The alpha coefficient of the scale was .78.

*Job satisfaction.* Job satisfaction was measured using Taylor and Bowers' 7-item scale (1974). Workers were asked to express their level of satisfaction with regard to the content of their work, the relations with supervisor, co-workers, the pay and their career opportunities. Sample items include "How satisfied are you with the persons in your work group?"; "Considering your skills and the effort you put into your work, how satisfied are you with your pay?". Responses were assessed on 5-points scales ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). Higher scores on the composite measures indicate higher level of job satisfaction. Authors reported a threshold for the reliability of the scale that ranges from .67 to .71; the  $\alpha$  alpha coefficient .79 .

*Control variables.* A broad array of demographic variables was included into the model since previous research has demonstrated that attitudes of individuals at work may be affected by demographic factors (Mowday, Porter, & Steels, 1982). Control variables included in the model were age (measured as a continuous variable), gender (male = 0, female = 1), education (primary school = 1; secondary school = 2; degree = 3; specialization course = 4; postgraduate course = 5), tenure (expressed in years), type of contingent contract (fixed-term contract = 1; occasional contract = 2; stage or training contract = 3; collaboration contract = 4; others = 5).

## Results

The primary analysis of correlations showed that the pattern of hypotheses proceeded in the expected directions (see Table 2). On average contingent workers reported higher level of organizational identification, organizational commitment and job satisfaction in nonfamily hotels. In addition, organizational commitment and job satisfaction were negatively correlated to family governance whereas organizational identification was not significantly related to family governance.

*Tab. 2 - Means, standard deviations and correlations*

| Variables                        | Family Hotels |      | Nonfamily Hotels |      | 1                  | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5    | 6     | 7    | 8    | 9      |
|----------------------------------|---------------|------|------------------|------|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|------|------|--------|
|                                  | Mean          | s.d. | Mean             | s.d. |                    |       |       |       |      |       |      |      |        |
| 1. Organizational Identification | 3.01          | .55  | 2.93             | .63  | (.78) <sup>a</sup> | .46** | .10   | .13   | -.40 | .14   | .19* | .03  | .06    |
| 2. Organizational Commitment     | 1.91          | .67  | 2.23             | .66  |                    | (.71) | .47** | .35** | .02  | .30** | -.16 | .08  | -.23*  |
| 3. Job Satisfaction              | 1.46          | .44  | 1.81             | .66  |                    |       | (.79) | .22*  | .11  | .08   | -.18 | .21* | -.28** |
| 4. Age                           | 32.04         | 9.46 | 32.95            | 10.6 |                    |       |       | 1     | -.08 | .66** | -.16 | -.10 | -.04   |
| 5. Gender                        | n.a.          |      | n.a.             |      |                    |       |       |       | 1    | -.22* | .11  | .24* | -.18   |
| 6. Tenure                        | 6.24          | 6.8  | 4.94             | 5.7  |                    |       |       |       |      | 1     | -.16 | .08  | .10    |
| 7. Education                     | 2.82          | 1.59 | 2.26             | 1.4  |                    |       |       |       |      |       | 1    | -.03 | .18    |
| 8. Type of contract              | n.a.          |      | n.a.             |      |                    |       |       |       |      |       |      | 1    | -.22*  |
| 9. Family Governance             | n.a.          |      | n.a.             |      |                    |       |       |       |      |       |      |      | 1      |

<sup>a</sup>Cronbach coefficients are reported in brackets

\* $p < 0,05$

\*\* $p < 0,01$

Descriptive statistics showed that the means of organizational commitment and job satisfaction were higher for contingent workers in nonfamily hotels; whereas the mean value of organizational identification was lightly higher for contingent workers in family hotels. A paired comparison *t* test was used to verify if these differences in the means were statistically significant.

Tab. 3 - Independent sample t test

|                                      | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |      | t-test for Equality of Means |     |               |                 |                       |   |       |
|--------------------------------------|---|------|------------------------------|-----|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|-------|
|                                      | F                                       | Sig. | t                            | df  | Sig. (2-code) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |       |
|                                      |   |      |                              |     |               |                 |                       | Lower                                     | Upper |
| <b>Organizational Commitment</b>     | .991                                    | .322 | -2.461                       | 102 | .016          | -.324           | .132                  | -.585                                     | -.063 |
| <b>Organizational Identification</b> | 1.503                                   | .223 | .650                         | 102 | .517          | .076            | .117                  | -.157                                     | .309  |
| <b>Job Satisfaction</b>              | 3.771                                   | .055 | -3.048                       | 102 | .003          | -.347           | .114                  | -.572                                     | -.121 |

The *t* test revealed that the differences in the means of the calculated variables were statistically significant, with the exception of organizational identification (see Table 3). Data concerning organizational identification were not statistically significant ( $t = 0.650$ ;  $p > .05$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis H1 was not supported since the *t* test indicates that contingent workers in family and nonfamily hotels show on average no differences in their levels of organizational identification. With regard to hypotheses H2 and H3, the *t* test indicates that the levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction means significantly differ across the two groups of workers (mean difference was equal to .324 for organizational commitment and .347 for job satisfaction)<sup>6</sup>. Finally, to support initial findings from *t* test, which predicted a higher level of organizational commitment and job satisfaction for contingent workers in nonfamily hotels, an OSL regression analysis was performed. Regression analysis was performed in two steps

<sup>6</sup>A series of post-hoc analyses were performed to support the strength of these findings. In particular, the post-hoc analyses aimed at investigating if employees' difference in organizational attitudes were due, as hypothesized, to the presence of family/non family governance or to other variables, such as work status. To this end, two further *t* test analyses were performed. In the first one, data collected from both regular and contingent employees were included in the model ( $N = 361$ ). This was possible since a similar questionnaire addressed to regular employees of family and nonfamily hotels was submitted as part of a wider research project lead in University of Naples Parthenope on the theme of contingent work (see for instance Buonocore, 2010; Buonocore, Cozza, Ferrara, Russo, 2010). The analysis revealed that mean values for organizational attitudes were higher in nonfamily hotels than in family hotels and the differences were statistically significant with regard to organizational commitment (mean difference  $-0.135$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and job satisfaction (mean differences  $-0.300$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Results confirmed that mean difference for organizational identification was not statistically significant between family and nonfamily hotels. A second analysis included only data collected from regular employees ( $N = 256$ ). In this case, the findings confirmed that mean values of organizational attitudes were higher for regular employees employed in nonfamily hotels but that the mean difference was statistically significant only for job satisfaction (mean difference  $-0.250$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). To sum up, the results of both main and post-hoc analyses confirmed that the presence of family or nonfamily governance has a significant role in predicting employees' organizational attitudes.

in order to highlight the variation in explained percentage of variance. In the first step the control variables were entered in the model; in the second step the variable of interest, specifically the variable revealing the presence of family governance was added to the model. The governance of the hotel was computed as a dummy variable and it was coded as 0 = nonfamily hotels and 1 = family hotels. The change in  $R^2$  ( $\Delta R^2$ ) indicates how of the explained variance depends upon the type of the firm.

*Tab. 4 - Regression Standardized Coefficients for Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction and Organizational Identification*

|                                     | Organizational Commitment |         | Job Satisfaction |         | Organizational Identification |         |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------|------------------|---------|-------------------------------|---------|
|                                     | Model 1                   | Model 2 | Model 1          | Model 2 | Model 1                       | Model 2 |
| <b>Age</b>                          | .226                      | .168    | .290             | .254    | .030                          | .009    |
| <b>Gender</b>                       | .064                      | .037    | .109             | .060    | -.119                         | -.128   |
| <b>Tenure</b>                       | .128                      | .175    | -.092            | -.054   | .232                          | .263    |
| <b>Education</b>                    | -.076                     | -.048   | -.152            | -.107   | .190                          | .200*   |
| <b>Types of contingent contract</b> | .050                      | -.013   | .019             | -.061   | .057                          | .034    |
| <b>Family Governance</b>            |                           | -.257*  |                  | -.326*  |                               | -.094   |
| <b>F</b>                            | 3.497*                    | 4.376** | .562             | 1.868*  | 1.916                         | 1.703   |
| <b>R<sup>2</sup></b>                | .164                      | .230    | .083             | .137    | .108                          | .116    |
| <b><math>\Delta R^2</math></b>      |                           | .066*   |                  | .055*   |                               | .008    |
| <b>adj R<sup>2</sup></b>            | .117                      | .177    | .031             | .078    | .052                          | .048    |

Note N = 105

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .001$

As shown in Table 4, the hypotheses H2 and H3 were supported by data since the variable indicating the family governance of the hotel was significantly and negatively associated with the variables of interest. Additionally, with the introduction of this variable into model 2, the variance explained by the model increased by 6.6% for organizational commitment and by 5.5% for job satisfaction. The findings reveal a negative correlation between the family governance of the hotel and organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Hence, as predicted, contingent workers show higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction in non-family hotels. Finally, in order to confirm the results of *t test*, a regression

analysis was also performed with organizational identification as criteria. Findings reveal that the family governance of the company did not significantly affected the level of organizational identification.

## **Discussion**

Family business literature on contingent work is at an early-stage and there is a lack of studies that consider the issue of contingent workers' organizational attitudes in the context of small and family firms. This is a contentious issue that deserves more attention from scholars at least for two following reasons. First, the presence of contingent workers in family firms is tremendously increasing. Hence scholars are called to offer their contribution in order to define situational and organizational characteristics that may favor an easy adoption and utilization of flexible work practices. Second, contingent workers have a central role in shaping the level of performance of companies since they are usually hired for strategic job positions (Barnett & Kellermanns, 2006; Rousseau, 1998). Hence, it becomes extremely important for scholars and practitioners to stress out which individual and contextual factors might influence contingent workers' productivity and engagement. To this end, this paper addresses this issue by focusing on contingent workers' organizational attitudes that have been found to significantly influence employees' level of performance as well as their engagement, productive work behaviors and even individual's well being (Galais & Moser, 2009). The results of this study show partial support for the hypothesized model in which contingent workers' organizational attitudes, specifically organizational identification, organizational commitment and job satisfaction, were hypothesized to be more positive in nonfamily firms in comparison with family firms. In particular, the results show support for the hypotheses concerning the higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction among contingent workers when they are employed in nonfamily hotels than in family hotels. Conversely, the findings do not support the hypothesis concerning the organizational identification since contingent workers in family hotels and nonfamily hotels did not report significant differences in terms of organizational identification.

The contribution of these findings is twofold. First, the current study contributes to advance family business research by providing an organizational behavioral perspective in the analysis of contingent work in the family context. In particular, the present study highlights that, if not properly managed, the influence of the family over the business may be detrimental for contingent workers' attitudes. This study might be considered a pilot study in the context of Italian family firms, arguing that working in a family firm might have in some circumstances a dark side (see Lu-

batkin et al., 2005 for a deep understanding of the issue of dark side in family business), especially for contingent workers that due to their short-term relationships and often for their nonfamily status might perceive a low fairness in organizational procedures. Second, the study contributes to advance the research on contingent work by proposing a comparison of organizational attitudes among contingent workers engaged in different organizational settings. Contingent workers' organizational attitudes have been traditionally studied through a comparison between contingent and regular employees, and work status has been mainly considered as cause of differences in organizational attitudes and behavior among the two categories of workers (e.g. Connelly & Gallagher, 2004; De Cuyper et al., 2008; Galup, Saunders, Nelson, & Cerveny, 1997; Kalleberg, 2000; Van Dyne & Ang, 1998). The present study extends the traditional analysis by focusing only on category of contingent workers and showing that differences in organizational attitudes might also depend on characteristics of the company, such as the governance. This is a significant contribution since De Gilder (2003) argued that there is the need to conduct further analysis focused exclusively on the category of contingent workers because contingent workers' organizational attitudes in real organizational contexts tend to be affected from a comparison between inducements or benefits personally received and inducements or benefits received, by other contingent workers employed in different contexts or in different departments.

The following considerations might provide meaningful explanations to the lower levels of organizational attitudes in the context of family firms. First, contingent workers often belong to the category of nonfamily employees since they are part of the business but not of the family (Mitchell et al., 2003). To this end, research has widely shown that the different treatment and fewer inducements provided to nonfamily members nurture a feeling of inequality and frustration with detrimental consequences on individuals' organizational attitudes and performance (Mitchell et al., 2003). Second, family firms are frequently characterized by a lower level of formalization of managerial practices (Reid & Adams, 2001). Hall and Nordqvist (2008) showed that there is a common opinion among scholars that *"professional management and family management are seen as mutually exclusive"* (p.52).

Generally speaking, family firms, especially the small ones, are less bureaucratic organizations where relations are informal and procedures and coordination processes are spontaneous. Indeed, family-owners often argue that human resource or professional practices are not necessary because of familiar climate and spontaneous and straightforward relationships that ensure high levels of employees' loyalty and commitment (Rowden, 2002). Confuting these assumptions, recent research has found that the lack of formal professional practices arise significant concerns on

the fairness and transparency of internal procedures, including appraisals and promotion procedures considered arbitrary and not merit-based (De Kok, Uhlaner, & Thurik, 2006). Nonfamily organizations are more bureaucratic and are more likely to adopt formalized and well-defined procedures. Consequently, contingent workers are more likely to be provided with a specific organizational pathway including socialization, training, career and performance appraisals. This might imply that although contingent workers receive on average less inducements and a worse treatment in comparison with regular employees (Cappelli, 1995; Chew & Chew, 1996; Rousseau, 1997; Sherer, 1996; Van Dyne & Ang, 1998), they might still perceive a higher fairness in the organizational procedures in comparison with family firms. Finally, the lower levels of organizational attitudes among contingent workers in family hotels may also depend upon a common practice in hospitality industry of Campania region. Family hotels in Campania region usually hire the same workers (if possible) for repeated periods of time, even for years, and always with a temporary work arrangement.

The data about tenure confirmed this tendency showing that paradoxically contingent work, even if their temporary work status, have on average a longer tenure. This practice is beneficial to the hotels because they can meet periods of peak of demand with a limited use of resources and short periods of training, since the worker is familiar to organizational culture and hotel procedures (Buonocore, 2010). However, it may be highly detrimental for workers' attitudes since the ongoing status of contingency might nurture a feeling of rage and resentment toward the ownership that is considered responsible to never meet the individual expectation of job security. As a consequence, a collapse of levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction is more likely to occur among contingent workers in family hotels.

To sum up, a fateful convergence of status occurs among contingent workers in the family context that negatively influences their attitudes at work. First, the contingent worker status occurs with the resulting negative consequences in terms of job insecurity and fewer inducements. Second, the nonfamily worker status occurs with the resulting negative consequences in terms of unfair treatment and fewer career opportunities.

Regarding organizational identification, the findings show no differences between contingent workers in family hotels and contingent workers in nonfamily hotels. A possible argument related to the characteristics of the sampled hotels might explain this unexpected finding. The hotels included in the sample are all high rank hotels (4 stars), well known and with positive external ratings on the most used online booking services. Consequently, it has been possible that contingent workers' organizational identification was strengthened in both family and nonfamily sampled ho-

tels in virtue of a more positive external image due to good reputation and an international echo (Dutton et al., 1994).

The results have interesting implications for management. The study has provided theoretical speculations on the importance of fair human resource practices in the context of small family business. In particular, the study argues the need to develop more formal and fairer human resource practices even in the context of small business where they are traditionally underdeveloped. Implementing fair and equal human resource practices may, in fact, provide nonfamily employees a strong sense of psychological ownership toward the organization and the family even reducing the perception of unfair treatment (Corbetta & Salvato, 2004; Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2001). Barnett and Kellermans (2006) found that human resource practices assume a mediating role between the influence of the family over the business and the perception of fairness with implications for overall level of performance. Earlier research has widely emphasized the importance for family and small business to have high committed and well-motivated employees to enhance firms' performance (Barnett & Kellermans, 2006; Chua, Chrisman, & Sharma, 2003).

Management of small and family business is therefore called to important roles. First, employers need to develop a higher awareness of the potential dark sides that for some categories of workers, might derive from working in family business. Second, managers need to acquire a higher knowledge of contextual features that might contribute to enhance organizational attitudes among workers in order to properly intervene on them. To this end, a series of professional tools, such as ongoing internal surveys, might be useful to systematically evaluate the perception of the organizational climate as well as the level of organizational attitudes within the workforce. This is a simple and powerful intervention that was included in the list of top priorities for organizations aimed at becoming learning organizations (Garvin, Edmondson, & Gino, 2008). Finally, employers should address specific managerial interventions to develop professional human resource practices even in the context of small family business.

By developing clear and well-formalized human resource practices such as formal employees' review process, compensation plans, written manual, job description, clear job requirements, and succession plans might represent an appropriate intervention to strength employees' level of organizational commitment and job satisfaction among family and nonfamily employees.

The present study has several limitations. First, the study relies on cross-sectional data and self-report measures. Even though self-reported measures are widely credited for attitudes detection at work, self-assessment judgments might be easily prone to bias and they are not completely reliable since workers are afraid to be identified and judged by the man-

agement (Goffin & Gellatly, 2001). Future studies that include other types of research designs based on longitudinal data collection will establish more firmly the causal relations implied in the present study. Nevertheless, the temporary nature of contingent workers' employment contract may hamper this kind of research design. Another limitation stems from the sample, which is small and drawn on a very specific geographic location, Campania region. Campania region presents some peculiarities in comparison with the rest of the country such as a higher rate of unemployment and a very extensive use of temporary work arrangements that limit the generalizability of the results. It might be, for instance, that a certain level of job insecurity is accepted among southern workers because temporary work arrangements are often conceived as the only chance to get a job. As a consequence, contingent workers' organizational attitudes might result more positive in southern firms in comparison with northern firms because of the feeling of gratitude toward the employer that offered a job opportunity. Future research on other populations in different organizational settings or cultures is needed in order to support the general applicability of the results.

The variables included in the model have been chosen according to the evidence resulting from the most significant literature on these issues; however, variables related to the workers' cultural background (*ethnicity*) have been neglected, whereas many studies pointed out its influence on the attitude to create social network within firms and thus to promote a sense of belonging to the organization and to adopt cooperative behavior (Stamper & Masterson, 2002). I excluded these variables on account of the very low percentage of non-Italians workers in the sample. Nevertheless, the inclusion of these variables may lead to the definition of a more complete model for future research. In addition, the sample included only fixed-term workers without considering different types of temporary arrangements, different job positions or different responsibilities. Future research should concern itself with these classifications in order to deal with more homogeneous groups; moreover, to extend the study to other contexts besides hospitality industry would be useful as well. More accurate indications and more reliable findings could be produced when a further analysis concerns with more homogeneous workers categories, with regard to arrangements, tasks and responsibility levels. Finally, with regard to organizational characteristics, the size of the firm and the generation of the owners should be also considered among the control variables in order to analyze results for these features. Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the existing knowledge of contingent work in family business literature and it may turn out to be useful from a theoretical and managerial point of view. The results have shed light on the importance to carefully consider the introduction of formal and less arbitrary practices in the context of small

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family hotels since the influence of the family over the business whether not appropriately managed it may results in an enhanced perception of unfairness and in decreased attitudes at work.

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## Abstract

The purpose of the research is to compare contingent workers' organizational attitudes in family firms and nonfamily firms. In the current study, I propose and test a model in which contingent workers' organizational identification, organizational commitment and job satisfaction are hypothesized to vary in family and nonfamily firms. The hypotheses were tested among high rank hotels in the Campania region. The empirical findings show that contingent workers in nonfamily hotels have higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction than contingent workers in family hotels. Contingent workers show no differences with regard to organizational identification. Implication for theory and practice are discussed.

## Riassunto

Il presente articolo si propone di affrontare il tema degli atteggiamenti sul lavoro dei lavoratori flessibili all'interno delle imprese familiari. In particolare, lo studio propone un confronto tra gli atteggiamenti sul lavoro dei lavoratori flessibili impiegati rispettivamente in aziende a conduzione familiare ed in aziende non familiari. Gli atteggiamenti sul lavoro esaminati sono l'identificazione con l'organizzazione, il commitment organizzativo e la soddisfazione sul lavoro. Il modello di ricerca ipotizzato assume che gli atteggiamenti sul lavoro da parte dei lavoratori flessibili possano variare a seconda del modello di *governance* dell'azienda, rispettivamente familiare e non familiare. Le ipotesi di ricerca sono state testate in Campania nel settore dell'ospitalità che rappresenta un settore di particolare rilevanza per l'obiettivo della ricerca vista la numerosa presenza di lavoratori stagionali e alberghi a conduzione familiare. I risultati dell'analisi empirica dimostrano che i lavoratori flessibili nelle imprese non familiari riportano più elevati livelli di commitment organizzativo e soddisfazione sul lavoro rispetto alle imprese familiari mentre non sono emerse differenze significative con riguardo all'identificazione organizzativa.

## Jel Classification: M54

**Keywords (Parole chiave):** contingent work; family firms; nonfamily firms; organizational commitment; job satisfaction (lavoro flessibile, imprese familiari, imprese non familiari, commitment organizzativo, soddisfazione sul lavoro).

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