DO PERSONAL VALUES INFLUENCE ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT? A STUDY FROM A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

OS VALORES PESSOAIS INFLUENCIAM O COMPROMETIMENTO ORGANIZACIONAL? UM ESTUDO EM UMA UNIVERSIDADE PÚBLICA

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to analyze the influence of employees' personal values on their organizational commitment in a Brazilian public university. We used the Portuguese version of the Portrait Values Questionnaire – Refined (Schwartz *et al*., 2012) to measure personal values and the Portuguese version of the Managerial Decisions Questionnaire – Global (Peterson; Barreto; Smith, 2016) to measure organizational commitment. The sample consisted of 220 employees, including administrative staff and faculty. Statistical analyses were performed using IBM® SPSS® 20.0 software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Spearman correlation tests (ρ) and multiple linear regressions (stepwise) explored how much of the variability in employees' organizational commitment could be explained by their values. The results showed statistically significant positive correlations between conservation and organizational commitment, and between self-transcendence and organizational commitment. We also identified statistically significant negative correlations between Self-enhancement and organizational commitment. Deepening the results, we found that the personal values of Self-transcendence and Self-enhancement can predict some of the variability of organizational

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commitment, the former positively and the latter negatively. The study concludes that individual values can be a relevant variable in the study of organizational commitment.

Keywords: Personal values. Organizational commitment. Organizational behavior. Correlation study. Prediction study.

RESUMO

O objetivo do presente estudo foi analisar a influência de valores pessoais no comprometimento organizacional de trabalhadores de uma universidade pública brasileira. Para mensuração de valores pessoais, foi adotada a versão em Português do instrumento *Portrait Values Questionnaire – Refined* (Schwartz *et al.*, 2012) e, para mensuração do comprometimento organizacional, foi adotada a versão em Português do instrumento *Managerial Decisions Questionnaire – Global* (Peterson; Barreto; Smith, 2016). A amostra foi composta por 220 trabalhadores, incluindo equipe administrativa e professores. As análises estatísticas foram realizadas com auxílio do *software* IBM® SPSS® 20.0 (*Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*). Executaram-se testes de correlação de Spearman (ρ) e regressões lineares múltiplas (*stepwise*) a fim de explorar o quanto a variabilidade do comprometimento organizacional dos trabalhadores pode ser explicada por seus valores pessoais. Os resultados apontaram correlações estatisticamente significantes positivas entre o valor pessoal da Conservação e o comprometimento organizacional, bem como entre o valor pessoal da Autotranscendência e o comprometimento organizacional. Ademais, identificaram-se correlações estatisticamente significantes negativas entre o valor pessoal da Autopromoção e o comprometimento organizacional. Aprofundando os resultados, identificou-se que os valores pessoais da Autotranscendência e da Autopromoção são capazes de predizer parte da variabilidade do comprometimento organizacional, o primeiro positivamente e o segundo negativamente. O estudo conclui que os valores pessoais podem ser uma variável relevante a ser considerada no estudo do comprometimento organizacional.

Palavras-chave: Valores pessoais. Comprometimento organizacional. Comportamento organizacional. Estudo de correlação. Estudo de predição.

1 INTRODUCTION

Values are goals or criteria that serve as guiding principles for life. They are the ones that, based on moral and ethical concepts, define the form of relationships between people and guide their behavior and attitudes (Porto; Tamayo, 2007). Glazer, Daniel, and Short (2004) state that values are predictors or moderators of processes associated with organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and job performance. The influence of personal values on work outcomes has been substantially investigated (Athayde; Torres; Thomason, 2023; Braz; Athayde, 2023), and, among the various attitudinal and behavioral constructs influenced by values, organizational commitment stands out, that is, the psychological bond that links the individual to the organization, reflecting an identification of the individual with its culture, values, and policies (Meyer; Allen, 1990).

In the study by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979), considered one of the seminal studies concerning the subject, organizational commitment was defined as the acceptance of the organization's values and objectives, associated with the willingness to remain and dedicate oneself to its benefit. Organizational commitment is also defined as a voluntary bond, created when employees consciously choose to devote themselves to and take on responsibility for a target, such as the organization or its specific constituents (Klein; Molloy; Brinsfield, 2012 *apud* Seggewiss *et al.*, 2019).

In this scenario, based on evidence from the literature that indicates that personal values are related to individuals' behaviors and attitudes, the present study was guided by the following question: what is the influence of employees' values on their organizational commitment in a public institution?
The present research aimed to statistically test the influence of employees' values on their organizational commitment in a Brazilian public university chosen for accessibility reasons. We set the following specific objectives: to formulate two hypotheses to be tested empirically regarding the two opposing sets of personal values; to explore and discuss, empirically and theoretically, which personal values present statistically significant correlations with organizational commitment; and to explore the predictive power of employees' values in their organizational commitment.

The relevance of investigating the reality of a public university lies in the fact that most studies on values and organizational commitment focus on the private sector (e.g., Fernandes; Ferreira, 2009; Magalhães, 2013). Therefore, the present research raises reflections on how this relationship can occur in the public sector.

The interest in investigating the relationship between personal values and organizational commitment did not arise randomly but based on evidence in the literature concerning the subject. Studies have pointed out that individuals' psychological profiles, such as personal values, influence human behavior and attitudes. Values guide human actions and attitudes, providing standards for individuals to evaluate and justify their behaviors and attitudes (Leiserowitz; Kates; Parris, 2006). Therefore, people are more likely to present behaviors and attitudes that express their values (Pohling *et al*., 2016; Lonnqvist *et al*., 2013).

The theoretical-empirical gap that this study helps to fill out is the study of the influence of personal values on organizational commitment in the public sector, which has not been explored as much in the literature as the private sector for this topic. Hence, we acknowledge that strong literature evidence already points out the influence of psychological variables on values, attitudes, and behaviors within the organizational scenario, but we attempt to explore how this relationship occurs in a public institution.

Given that organizational commitment can influence many other work outcomes, such as retention, attendance, and performance, there is considerable interest in identifying the conditions that lead to higher levels of commitment.(Seggewiss *et al.*, 2019).

Next, the theoretical background is presented: human values, Schwartz's theory of human values, organizational commitment, and the components of organizational commitment. Subsequently, the methodological procedures used in the research are described in detail, such as the methodological characterization of the research, the data collection instruments, and the data analysis techniques. In the following section, the results are presented and discussed, and finally, the research is concluded with suggestions for further studies.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 BASIC HUMAN VALUES

Basic human values relate to the ethical and moral principles that guide people's lives. Values justify individuals' choices regarding what is good, right, and appropriate (Zanelli; Silva, 2008). For Elizur *et al*. (1991), values serve as standards to decide how to behave. Schwartz *et al*. (2012) consider personal values as principles or beliefs about behaviors or states of existence. Values are trans-situational, transcending specific actions and situations, serve as criteria for selecting or evaluating attitudes and behaviors, and are ordered by importance.

Values are motivational goals that express what a person wants to achieve in life, from the simplest to the most complex. They are criteria organized by individuals according to their degree of importance, which serve as guiding principles for their lives, regardless of the situation (Porto; Tamayo, 2007).

If values are determinants of human attitudes and behaviors, they are also relevant elements in the relationship of individuals with their work (Tamayo et al., 2001), which is why we study them in this research.

Primary studies of human values intensified with Rokeach (1973), who developed a seminal instrument for measuring values known as the Rokeach Values Survey (RVS). Despite its importance, social scientists criticized his work for failing to show how human values are structured. Without this framework, it is impossible to assess the consequences of privileging some values over others. This theoretical gap was a starting point for the development of Schwartz's Theory of Basic Human Values (Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz et al., 2012), which is used in this research as the theoretical basis for the variable personal values. A hierarchy of personal values is fundamental to influencing perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors because most choices pit at least two values against each other. Schwartz's theory satisfactorily represents this hierarchy and is the most widely used theory in the national and international literature for this construct. The following section presents this theory in more detail.

2.2 SCHWARTZ'S THEORY OF BASIC HUMAN VALUES

For Schwartz (2006), personal values are desirable goals that are ranked in order of importance and serve as guiding principles for an individual's life. "The fundamental content that differentiates values from each other is the type of motivational goal they express" (Schwartz, 1996, p. 2).

For Schwartz (2006), personal values are desirable goals that are ranked in order of importance and serve as guiding principles for an individual's life. "The basic content that distinguishes values from one another is the type of motivational goal they express" (Schwartz, 1996, p. 2). In his early studies, Schwartz (1992) identified ten universal values and grouped them into four broad categories: Openness to Change (consisting of the values of self-direction and stimulation), which promotes independence of thought, feeling, and action and addresses receptivity to change. These values conflict with the Conservation category (consisting of the values of conformity, tradition, and security), which requires submissive self-restraint, preservation of traditional practices, and protection of stability.

The third category is Self-transcendence (consisting of the values of universalism and benevolence), which emphasizes acceptance of others as equals and concern for their well-being. These values conflict with Self-enhancement (consisting of the values of power and achievement), which encourages the pursuit of success and dominance over others. Schwartz later refined the ten-value structure to a nineteen-value structure - to provide greater universal explanatory power - which has been tested in more than ten countries (Schwartz et al., 2012). In short, the refined theory of human values (Schwartz et al., 2012) consists of four value categories (motivational types), which are subdivided into 19 values, the concepts of which are shown in Table 1.

Chart 1 - Conceptual definitions of basic human values

Motivational Types	Values	Conceptual definitions in terms of motivational goals
Openness to Change	Self-direction (Thought)	Freedom to cultivate one's own ideas and abilities
	Self-direction (Action)	Freedom to determine one's own actions
	Stimulation	Excitement, novelty, and change
Self-Transcendence	Humility	Recognizing one's insignificance in the larger scheme of things
	Benevolence (Dependability)	Being a reliable and trustworthy member of the ingroup

Motivational Types	Values	Conceptual definitions in terms of motivational goals
	Benevolence (Caring)	Devotion to the welfare of ingroup members
	Universalism (Concern)	Commitment to equality, justice, and protection for all people
	Universalism (Nature)	Preservation of the natural environment
	Universalism (Tolerance)	Acceptance and understanding of those who are different from oneself
Self-Enhancement	Hedonism	Pleasure and sensuous gratification
	Achievement	Success according to social standards
	Power (Dominance)	Power through exercising control over people
	Power (Resources)	Power through control of material and social resources
Conservation	Face	Security and power through maintaining one's public image and avoiding humiliation
	Security (Personal)	Safety in one's immediate environment
	Security (Societal)	Safety and stability in the wider society
	Tradition	Maintaining and preserving cultural, family, or religious traditions
	Conformity (Rules)	Compliance with rules, laws, and formal obligations
	Conformity (Interpersonal)	Avoidance of upsetting or harming other people

Source: Adapted from Schwartz *et al.* (2012).

The influence of values on other behavioral and attitudinal variables has already been confirmed in several studies (e.g., Braz; Athayde, 2023; Athayde; Torres; Thomason, 2023; Athayde; Torres; Thomason, 2022; Ribas, 2010; Bardi; Calogero; Mullen, 2008; Hitlin; Piliavin, 2004; Bardi; Schwartz, 2003; Sagiv, 2002; Schwartz; Bardi, 2001; Tamayo, 1998).

After discussing the concept of personal values, organizational commitment will be detailed hereafter, taken in this research as a dependent variable.

2.3 ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

In recent years, the volume of research on understanding the relationship between individuals and organizations has increased significantly, particularly concerning employee organizational commitment (e.g., Behery, 2023; Wei *et al.*, 2021; Seggewiss *et al.*, 2019). One of the seminal references regarding research in this area was the work of Mowdat, Porter, and Steers (1982), dedicated to analyzing the antecedents of organizational commitment. They conceptualized

organizational commitment as the strength of an individual's identification and involvement with an organization, expressed in: 1) strong belief and acceptance of the organization's values and objectives, 2) desire to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and 3) strong desire to remain a member of the organization.

Allen and Meyer (1990) define organizational commitment as the psychological state that links the individual to the organization. Faria (2007) states that organizational commitment is the spontaneous effort of individuals to overcome problems resulting from their work actions. Workers are willing to carry out the activities proposed to them with responsibility, commitment, and trust, aiming to improve the efficiency and productivity of the organization.

Scholars have studied organizational commitment for years due to its impact on performance, given its relationship with other indicators, such as staff turnover, productivity, job satisfaction, and absenteeism (Khasawneh; Omari; Abu-Tineh, 2012). Hence, organizational commitment is one of the primary indicators of a company's effectiveness (Morin, 2001).

Despite the old history of studies on organizational commitment (e.g., Bastos, 1993; Allen; Meyer, 1990; Mowday *et al.*, 1982; Kanter, 1968; Etzioni, 1961; Gouldner, 1960), there is no consensus on the definition of the construct. The difficulty in obtaining consensus on the conceptualization of organizational commitment also characterizes more recent studies, such as Genari and Macke (2022), Mercury (2015), Menezes and Bastos (2009), and Oliveira *et al.* (2014). Among the most commonly accepted understandings in the literature about organizational commitment is the conception of Allen and Meyer (1990) that organizational commitment is multidimensional, broken down into three components or subtypes which we detail below.

2.4 COMPONENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Among the different conceptual models of organizational commitment, Medeiros *et al.* (2005) state that Allen and Meyer's (1990) three-component model was the most accepted by researchers over time. According to Allen and Meyer (1990), the components of organizational commitment are instrumental commitment, normative commitment, and affective commitment.

First, instrumental commitment, which originated in the studies of Becker (1960), is characterized when employees stay with the company because they need it and believe they have no other employment alternatives. That means workers commit themselves to the organization as an instrument to guarantee employment. Bastos (1993) says that instrumental commitment analyzes the benefits and costs associated with the employee's bond with the organization. Allen and Meyer (1990) state that the lower the number of job opportunities, the greater the feeling of loss and, therefore, the greater the instrumental commitment.

In turn, normative commitment originated in the research by Wiener (1982) and takes place when individuals feel obliged to perform their tasks because it is the right thing to do. Weiner and Vardi (1990, p. 300) state that "committed individuals exhibit certain behaviors not because they calculate that, in performing them, they will obtain personal benefits, but because they believe it is right and moral to do so". Allen and Meyer (1990) say workers who show normative commitment remain in the company because it is morally correct to do so.

At last, affective commitment originated in studies developed by Lyman Porter and takes place when workers identify with the organization and remain in it because of their preferences. In affective commitment, workers feel attached to the organization, a form of identification (Medeiros *et al.*, 2005). Affective commitment emphasizes individuals' emotional nature through the company's goals and values, emphasizing loyalty and the desire to remain and fight for the organization. In short, workers with high affective commitment stay in the company because they want to (Allen; Meyer, 1990).

After decades of study on organizational commitment, the current trend is to interpret it unidimensionally with an affective basis (e.g., Genari; Macke, 2022). The present research, therefore, focuses on affective organizational commitment. Rodrigues *et al.* (2010) state that the worker committed to the company based only on permanence now also includes the concept of identification and positive contribution to the organization.

After discussing the primary constructs of the study – personal values and organizational commitment – the two raised hypotheses are presented below.

2.5 STUDY HYPOTHESES

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Based on the literature review about personal values and organizational commitment, we raised two hypotheses to test empirically, described in Chart 2. For this, we considered the four major categories of personal values: Conservation, Openness to change, Self-transcendence, and Self-enhancement.

Chart 2 – Study hypotheses

Hypothesis	Description
H1	The personal values of Conservation and Self-transcendence will positively correlate with organizational commitment.
H2	The personal values of Openness to change and Self-enhancement will negatively correlate with organizational commitment.

Source: Authors.

According to hypothesis 1 (H1), since the value of Conservation is related to submissive self-restraint and the preservation of traditional practices and stability (Schwartz *et al.*, 2012), it makes sense to expect that workers marked by this value will be the ones who remain and commit to the organization the most, thus guaranteeing their stability and, also, organizational stability. The reasoning is that, once Conservation is characterized by the preservation of traditional practices and stability (Schwartz *et al.*, 2012), these characteristics seem to be compatible with the willingness to remain and dedicate oneself to the organization's benefit (Mowday; Steers; Porter, 1979). Not committing or dedicating to the organization would jeopardize its stability. Moreover, if the value of self-transcendence is manifested by accepting others as equals and caring about their well-being (Schwartz et al., 2012), it makes sense to expect that workers who are characterized by this value will be the ones who see it as the most harmful to their relationship with the organization. That encourages them to remain in the company and identify with it voluntarily (Klein; Molloy; Brinsfield, 2012 *apud* Seggewiss *et al.*, 2019). The reasoning is that, once Self-transcendence implies concern with other people's well-being, not committing nor dedicating to the organization would be harmful to the organization and its members' well-being.

According to Hypothesis 2 (H2), since the value of Openness to change stimulates individuals' independence of thought, feeling, and action, as well as their receptivity to change (Schwartz et al., 2012), it makes sense to expect that employees characterized by this value will be the ones who are least submissive to the norms and values of the organization and will more readily

accept change scenarios such as leaving the organization. The reasoning is that organizational commitment assumes acceptance of the organization's values and objectives (Mowday; Steers; Porter, 1979), and Openness to change presupposes a higher probability of disobeying the organization's values, objectives, and norms. At last, once the value of Self-enhancement encourages individuals to seek success and mastery over others (Schwartz *et al.*, 2012), it also makes sense to expect that individuals marked by this value will be the ones who feel motivated the most to seek their success and dominance within the organization but also outside it. That means that employees characterized by Self-enhancement would theoretically present higher chances of leaving the company in case they feel they cannot reach their success within it.

3 METHOD

3.1 RESEARCH CHARACTERIZATION

As for the nature, the present research is applied, interested in the practical application of the knowledge generated, aimed at solving problems (Barros; Lehfeld, 2014; Gil, 2019). The applied nature of the research is evidenced by the interest in investigating the influence of personal values on organizational commitment and how this knowledge can be helpful in practice, especially in the area of people management, aiming at higher organizational commitment.

Concerning the problem approach, the present research is quantitative, characterized by statistical methods (Gil, 2019), in this case, correlation and regression tests to investigate the influence of personal values on organizational commitment. Regarding the objectives, the present research is descriptive, which, according to Andrade (2017), is the standardized technique of data collection, elaborated mainly through questionnaires. The present study is also exploratory, investigating the relationships between the variables (Cervo; Bervian; Silva, 2007).

As for the technical procedures, the present research is bibliographical, carried out through the primary materials related to the theme, such as books and scientific articles (Lakatos; Marconi, 2003; Gil, 2008; Kauark; Manhães; Medeiros, 2010). The literature review allowed for an in-depth study on the subject, raising hypotheses to be empirically tested and serving as a basis

for discussing the results. The present study is also a case study, which is the in-depth study of one or a few objects, allowing its broad and detailed knowledge (Gil, 2019; Prodanov; Freitas, 2013).

3.2 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

This study sample was comprised of employees from a Brazilian public university, including professors, administrative staff, and outsourced employees. The main campus of the university is located in the capital of Minas Gerais state, and the regional campus analyzed in this study has been located in the north part of the state since 1968 and was chosen due to accessibility reasons. The regional campus has a total of 1,200 enrolled students (10 of them international students); 6 undergraduate courses; 8 graduate courses; 350 full-time, part-time, and vendor-contracted employees; and 20 buildings (including 01 residence hall).

The sampling technique used in this study was non-probabilistic by convenience, according to which the most available individuals were selected to provide the necessary information (Hair *et al.*, 2009). Employees were first invited to participate in the study via email and asked to select a day and time when the questionnaire (paper and pen) could be given to them in person. The official website of the university was used to obtain employees' e-mail addresses.

Considering the total of 19 predictors (personal values), alpha of 5%, and power of 80%, the minimum sample size calculated with the software G*Power 3.1 was 163 cases. Out of the 233 questionnaires answered by the employees, 13 were discarded because they had more than 10% missing values, resulting in 220 valid questionnaires, which fulfilled the minimum sample size calculated previously (163). Missing values in the valid questionnaires left were replaced by the series mean. The questionnaire applied in the research was comprised of two internationally-validated scales, which will be detailed hereafter.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

The Portrait Values Questionnaire Refined (PVQ-R) was adopted to measure the respondents' values. This questionnaire, which has already been tested and validated in many countries (Schwartz *et al*., 2012), including Brazil by Torres, Schwartz, and Nascimento (2016) presents 57 brief descriptions of different people, each with goals, aspirations, or desires implicitly

related to the value in question. The respondents indicate their similarity to the person described on a scale of six points, ranging from 1 = does not look anything like me to 6 = looks a lot like me. With this, it is suggested that the values implicitly presented in the descriptions of the items allow the inference of respondents' values.

To measure organizational commitment, the Managerial Decisions Questionnaire – Global (Mdq1GL) (Peterson; Barreto; Smith, 2016) was adopted, whose Portuguese version addresses, among other variables, the affective component of organizational commitment. Organizational commitment was measured by 08 (eight) items: C1 ("I would be happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization"); C2 ("I like to talk about this organization with people outside it"); C3 ("I really feel like this organization's problems are my own"); C4 ("I think I could just as easily get attached to another organization as I do to this one"); C5 ("I don't feel like 'part of the family' in my organization"); C6 ("I don't feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization"); C7 ("This organization has a lot of personal meaning for me"); and C8 ("I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization").

The reliability or internal consistency of the questionnaire was verified by calculating Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. This coefficient was 0.903. According to Field (2013), Cronbach's Alpha coefficients between 0.81 and 1.0 indicate almost perfect internal consistency.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Statistical analyses were done by using the software IBM® SPSS® Statistics 20.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Following the recommendations of Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), Miles and Shevlin (2001), and Field (2013), the variables were checked for their normal distribution. Then, correlations and stepwise regressions were run to test the influence of personal values on organizational commitment. At last, results were discussed in light of theory and relevant empirical studies.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and analyzes the results, first with descriptive statistics and then with multiple linear regression.

4.1 SAMPLE CHARACTERIZATION

The participants were comprised of a balanced number of male and female employees and a balanced number of managers and non-managers. More details on respondents' sociodemographic characteristics for categorical and interval variables are summarized in Tables 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1 – Respondent's sociodemographic characteristics: categorical variables

Variable		%
Position	Managers	53.6
	Non-managers	46.4
Sex	Male	49.1
	Female	50.9
Education	No college or university	1.4
	Some college or university education	29.5
	Completed undergraduate degree	10
	Some graduate education	7.3
	Completed Master's degree	15.4
	Study towards a second Master's degree or Ph.D.	5.5
	Completed second Master's degree or completed Ph.D.	30.9

Source: Research data

Table 2 – Respondents' sociodemographic characteristics: interval variables

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
Age	37.8	14.3
Number of children living at home	0.4	0.8
Work hours per week	36.8	11.9
Years in the present organization	6.6	6.3
Years in the present department	5.5	5.8
Years in the present position	4.3	4.9

Source: Research data

Concerning personal values, the respondents were characterized by a commitment to equality, justice, and protection for all people (Universalism-Concern: M=5.35; SD=0.69), devotion to the welfare of in-group members (Benevolence-Caring: M=5.34; SD=0.62), and being reliable and trustworthy members of the in-group (Benevolence-Dependability: M=5.10; SD=0.81). These three personal values were the ones with the highest means. As for higher-order personal

values, Conservation and Self-transcendence were those with the highest means. At last, concerning organizational commitment, the items with the highest means were C2 ("I like to talk about this organization with people outside it") (M=5.53; SD=1.55) and C7 ("This organization has a lot of personal meaning for me") (M=5.42; SD=1.75).

4.2 CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PERSONAL VALUES AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Table 3 presents the correlation matrix between personal values and organizational commitment in the study sample, which will be a basis for testing the hypotheses raised previously.

Table 3 – Correlation matrix between personal values and organizational commitment

		Self-transcendence	Self-enhancement	Openness to change	Conservation
C1	Coefficient	.128	-.192**	-.130	.210**
	Sig.	.060	.004	.054	.002
C2	Coefficient	.197**	-.159*	-.038	.078
	Sig.	.003	.018	.573	.250
C3	Coefficient	.196**	-.068	-.084	.048
	Sig.	.004	.326	.220	.482
C4 (R)	Coefficient	-.069	.035	-.030	.034
	Sig.	.312	.609	.660	.619
C5 (R)	Coefficient	-.178**	.183**	.092	-.140*
	Sig.	.008	.007	.176	.038
C6 (R)	Coefficient	-.108	.093	.098	-.084
	Sig.	,110	,172	,148	,218
C7	Coefficient	.101	-.178**	.012	.106
	Sig.	.136	.009	.863	.118
C8 (R)	Coefficient	-.144*	.126	-.052	-.012
	Sig.	.034	.062	.447	.859

Source: Research data.
Note. * = $p<0.05$; ** = $p<0.01$; (R) = Inverted scale in the original questionnaire.

A significant positive correlation (moderate effect) was found between C1 and Conservation (ρ=0.210; p<0.01). This result indicates that workers in the sample characterized by submissive self-restriction, preservation of traditional practices, and protection of stability (Conservation value) are the ones that consider the most that they would be happy to spend the rest of their careers in the organization they work.

A significant negative correlation (weak-moderate effect) was found between C1 and Self-enhancement (ρ=-0.192; p<0.01). This result indicates that workers in the sample characterized by the pursuit of success and dominance over others (Self-enhancement value) are the ones who consider the most that they would not be happy to spend the rest of their careers in the organization they work.

A significant positive correlation (weak-moderate effect) was found between C2 and Self-transcendence (ρ=0.197; p<0.01). This result indicates that workers in the sample characterized by the acceptance of others as equals and concern for their well-being (Self-transcendence value) are the ones who talk the most about the organization they work with people outside it.

Moreover, a significant positive correlation (weak-moderate effect) was found between C3 and Self-transcendence (ρ=0.196; p<0.01). This result indicates that workers in the sample characterized by acceptance of others as equals and concern for their well-being (Self-transcendence value) are the ones who feel the most as if the organization's problems were theirs.

According to hypothesis 1 (H1), the personal values of Conservation and Self-transcendence would positively and significantly correlate with organizational commitment. Therefore, the results confirmed H1 with statistically significant positive correlations identified between Conservation and two items related to organizational commitment (C1 and C5) and between Self-transcendence and four related to organizational commitment (C2, C3, C5, and C8).

Furthermore, according to hypothesis 2 (H2), the personal values of Openness to change and Self-enhancement would negatively and significantly correlate with organizational commitment. Hence, the results partially confirmed H2 with statistically significant negative correlations identified between Self-enhancement and four items related to organizational commitment (C1, C2, C5, and C7). However, no statistically significant correlations were identified between Openness to change and items related to organizational commitment.

The confirmation of hypothesis 1 (H1) is in line with previous studies, such as Tamayo *et al.* (2001), Vandenberghe and Peiró (1999), and Dubinsky *et al.* (1997) which found a positive

correlation between Conservation and affective organizational commitment. According to Meyer and Allen (1997), affective commitment concerns workers' identification with the organization, influenced not only by organizational characteristics but also personal ones.

Workers who value respect for traditions and stability are the ones who establish more lasting connections with organizations. This empirical result corroborates the characterization of affective organizational commitment given by seminal authors on this construct (e.g., Mowday; Steers; Porter, 1979). One of the characteristics of affective organizational commitment is the acceptance of the organization's values, objectives, rules, norms, customs, and traditions. Thus, it makes sense that workers marked by accepting the organization's norms and traditions feel happier to spend the rest of their careers in the organization they work (C1) and feel more like "part of the family" (C5).

Results regarding Self-transcendence (still part of hypothesis 1 – H1) were also in line with previous studies, such as Tamayo *et al*. (2001) who found that organizational commitment positively correlates with Self-transcendence. That means organizational commitment comprises not only conservative motivational goals but also altruistic and benevolent ones. Therefore, organizational commitment correlates with workers' willingness to contribute to the organization's efforts and the well-being of its members, especially the well-being provided by the organization's stability through maintaining its traditions and norms.

Thus, concerning internal factors correlated with affective organizational commitment, a conservative motivation prevails and, additionally, a type of altruism, benevolence, and humility based on close relationships that emphasize equality between people and an interest in their well-being in the work environment. Therefore, workers who are more prone to a bond of involvement (commitment) are those who prioritize the most understanding and support for those close to them.

According to hypothesis 2 (H2), the personal values of Openness to Change and Self-enhancement would negatively correlate with organizational commitment. Results partially confirmed this hypothesis with a negative correlation between Self-enhancement and organizational commitment but not between Openness to Change and organizational commitment. Previous studies, such as Glazer, Daniel, and Short (2004) and Tamayo *et al*. (2001), identified a negative correlation between Openness to Change and organizational

commitment. According to them, workers who enjoy challenges in their professional lives and value change at work are less likely to develop organizational commitment. The present study did not confirm this correlation, which can be justified, among other reasons, because they are studies with samples obtained from culturally different populations in diverse sectors and organizational cultures. Further investigations can confirm, in greater depth, whether cultural factors can influence these correlations.

On the other hand, results showed a negative correlation between Self-enhancement and organizational commitment. This empirical result was opposite to the findings of Tamayo *et al.* (2001) who identified statistically significant positive correlations between Self-enhancement and organizational commitment. They concluded that pursuing social status and prestige and controlling people and resources are relevant characteristics of organizational commitment. According to them, people who experience possibilities of achieving their self-enhancement goals develop, over time, convictions that they must remain faithful to the organization where they work.

In this sense, the present research suggests another possibility of an association between Self-enhancement and organizational commitment. The findings of this study propose that in organizations where workers marked by Self-enhancement are not provided with adequate conditions to exercise control over people and resources nor feel professionally fulfilled are more likely to seek opportunities outside the organization (less organizational commitment) to satisfy their motivational values. Thus, workers in this study who are marked Self-enhancement do not feel happy about the possibility of spending the rest of their careers in the current organization (C1), do not talk about it with people outside it (C2), do not feel like "part of the family" (C5), nor consider that the organization has a lot of personal meaning for them (C7).

4.3 MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSIONS: PREDICTION ANALYSIS

Considering that correlations do not necessarily imply causality and aiming to deepen the analysis, we performed multiple linear regressions (stepwise) to explore which personal values would predict the variability of organizational commitment. Table 4 summarizes the statistically significant predictions found.

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Table 4 – Organizational commitment predicted by employees' values

Items related to organizational commitment	Personal values	Sig	β	t	R^2
C1	Self-enhancement	0.001***	-0.213	-3.218	0.046
C2	Self-transcendence	0.012*	0.170	2.534	0.029
C3	Self-transcendence	0.001**	0.233	3.488	0.055
C4 (R)	*No significant predictions*	-	-	-	-
C5 (R)	Self-enhancement	0.013*	0.167	2.492	0.028
C6 (R)	*No significant predictions*	-	-	-	-
C7	Self-enhancement	0.002**	-0.206	-3.094	0.043
C8 (R)	*No significant predictions*	-	-	-	-

Source: Research data.

Note. *$p<0.05$; ** $p<0.01$; *** $p<0.001$; (R) = Inverted scale in the original questionnaire.

First, based on the results summarized in Table 4, we can infer that low Self-enhancement scores predict 4.6% of how happy the workers sampled would be to spend the rest of their careers in the organization where they work. Second, high Self-transcendence scores predict 2.9% of how much the workers sampled like to talk about the organization where they work with people outside it.

Third, high Self-transcendence scores predict 5.5% of how much the workers sampled feel as if the organization's problems were their own. Fourth, low Self-enhancement scores predict 2.8% of how much the workers sampled feel like "part of the family" in the organization. At last, low Self-enhancement scores predict 4.3% of how much the organization means for the workers sampled. It is relevant to note that although the explanatory power rates are low, they are significant in social sciences because of the complexity of human behavior (Bakker *et al*., 2019).

Regression tests showed that, among employees' possible personal values, Self-enhancement and Self-transcendence are the most relevant ones in influencing organizational commitment. These motivational types comprise a bipolar dimension: Self-enhancement versus Self-transcendence (Schwartz *et al*., 2012), which represents the conflict between the search for power and success and the search for others' well-being.

According to the prediction results, workers marked by Self-enhancement are more likely not to be happy to spend the rest of their careers in the organization, not to feel like a "part of the family" and not to give personal meaning to the organization. According to Schwartz *et al*.

(2012), the motivational type of Self-enhancement includes the values of hedonism, achievement, power (dominance), and power (resources). Thus, more individualistic workers who seek social status and prestige, exercise control over people and resources, and pursue personal success tend to be more detached, indifferent, and less committed to the organization where they work.

The prediction results also showed that workers marked by Self-transcendence are more likely to enjoy talking about the organization with people outside it and to feel as if the organization's problems were theirs. Schwartz *et al*. (2012) state that the motivational type of Self-transcendence includes the values of humility, universalism (in the sense of commitment to society, nature, and other people), and benevolence (dependability and caring). Thus, workers who are more understanding, humble, tolerant, helpful, and concerned with others' well-being tend to be more attached, connected, involved, and committed to the organization where they work.

5 CONCLUSION

The primary objective of the present study was achieved: to analyze the influence of workers' personal values on their organizational commitment in a Brazilian public university. A literature review was carried out on the topics of personal values and organizational commitment, allowing the elaboration of hypotheses to be empirically tested. It was also theoretically explored and discussed which personal values present correlations with organizational commitment.

We believe this study advances the literature on organizational commitment and, more broadly, organizational behavior, as most studies on values and organizational commitment focus on the private sector. Therefore, the present research reflects on how this relationship can occur in the public sector.

The specificities of the public sector need to be acknowledged when reflecting on the study's practical and managerial implications. When the influence of personal values on organizational commitment is investigated in a private company, for instance, the personal values associated with higher levels of commitment may be relevant for recruiting and selecting processes since

identifying candidates with a given value profile through psychological tests might help to select workers with a higher probability of committing to the organization in case they are hired.

On the other hand, when it comes to public organizations, we acknowledge that recruiting and selecting processes are different, based on public contests and public exams. Hence, we believe that the practical and managerial benefits of this study apply more directly to employee's individual development process. Personal values associated with higher levels of organizational commitment may serve as inputs for human resource development strategies that stimulate these values in public employees, increasing their organizational commitment.

Correlation tests showed statistically significant positive correlations between Conservation and organizational commitment and between Self-transcendence and organizational commitment. Results also showed statistically significant negative correlations between Self-enhancement and organizational commitment. Furthermore, regression results showed that Self-transcendence and Self-enhancement predict part of the variability of organizational commitment, the first positively and the second negatively.

The interest in studying the relationship between personal values and organizational commitment lies in the evidence that individuals' psychological profiles influence human attitudes and behaviors. The results obtained reinforce the theory of human values that points out that values correlate to organizational outcomes such as organizational commitment, complementing findings from previous research.

The empirical results present theoretical implications by deepening the discussion about the influence of employees' values on attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, such as organizational commitment. This study suggests employees' internal characteristics that influence their organizational commitment, proposing specific values that could comprise future studies that propose more complete explanatory models of organizational commitment. Furthermore, the empirical results of the present study have practical implications that may be important, for instance, in the area of people management. Measuring the personal values of Self-transcendence and Self-enhancement in recruitment and selection processes suggests job candidates that are more likely to commit to the organization in case they are hired, even though we recognize that organizational commitment is influenced by other internal and external variables such as organizational climate, salary level, job satisfaction, etc.

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The present study focused on using, preferably, reliable statistical methods. However, we recognize that this study could be complemented by a typically qualitative data collection instrument, such as interviews to understand the details related to participants' organizational commitment.

Given the importance of the topic, we recommend, as opportunities for future research, to carry out a similar study with a culturally different sample or in other types of organizations such as private companies. It would also be strategic to carry out future research that investigates personal values together with other internal characteristics, such as personality traits, for example, to verify their influence on organizational commitment.

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