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Do human resources practices influence organizational commitment? Evidence for the Brazilian retail sector

Práticas de recursos humanos influenciam o comprometimento organizacional? Evidências para o setor varejista brasileiro

¿Las prácticas de recursos humanos influyen en el compromiso organizacional? Evidencia para el sector minorista brasileño

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the influence of human resources practices on organizational commitment in its three dimensions. The research was carried out in a supermarket chain that operates in the Brazilian retail sector. Questionnaires were applied with the supermarket employees and the final sample is composed of 521 valid responses. Descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis and structural equation modeling were applied. The results evidenced that affective commitment is influenced by the work conditions, and the practice of competency-based performance appraisal influences continuance commitment, while the compensation and reward practice positively affects the normative commitment. This study contributes to the effectiveness of human resources practices and evidences the consistency of the application of the three-component model of commitment in Brazil.

Keywords: organizational commitment; human resources; practices; retail sector; Brazil.

RESUMO

Este estudo teve como objetivo investigar a influência das práticas de recursos humanos no comprometimento organizacional em suas três dimensões. A pesquisa foi realizada em uma rede de supermercados que atua no setor varejista brasileiro. Os questionários foram aplicados com funcionários do supermercado, compondo uma amostra final de 521 respostas válidas. Foram aplicadas técnicas de estatística descritiva, análise fatorial exploratória e modelagem de equações estruturais. Os resultados evidenciaram que o comprometimento afetivo é influenciado pelas condições de trabalho, e a prática de avaliação de desempenho e competências influencia o comprometimento de continuação, enquanto a prática de remuneração e recompensa afeta positivamente o comprometimento normativo. Este estudo contribui para a efetividade das práticas de recursos humanos e evidencia a consistência da aplicação do modelo tridimensional do comprometimento no Brasil.

Palavras-chave: comprometimento organizacional; recursos humanos; práticas; setor varejista; Brasil.

RESUMEN

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo investigar la influencia de las prácticas de recursos humanos en el compromiso organizacional en sus tres dimensiones. La investigación se llevó a cabo en una cadena de supermercados que opera en el sector minorista brasileño. Los cuestionarios se aplicaron a los empleados del supermercado, componiendo una muestra final de 521 respuestas válidas. Se aplicaron estadísticas descriptivas, análisis factorial exploratorio y técnicas de modelado de ecuaciones estructurales. Los resultados mostraron que el compromiso afectivo está influenciado por las condiciones de trabajo, y la práctica de evaluar el desempeño y las competencias influye en el compromiso de continuación, mientras que la práctica de la remuneración y la recompensa afecta positivamente el compromiso normativo. Este estudio contribuye a la efectividad de las prácticas de recursos humanos y destaca la consistencia de la aplicación del modelo tridimensional de compromiso en Brasil.

Palabras clave: compromiso organizacional; recursos humanos; practicas; sector minorista; Brasil.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Managing people and human skills is a strategic issue for organizations, a very important activity to be limited to just one department of the company. Managing involves using resources not only to solve problems and optimize costs, but also to consider the interests and needs of people. This results in the redirection of the Human Resources (HR) area, becoming more strategic (Pinho & Bastos, 2014).

Tanure, Evans and Pucik (2007) argue that, in the early 1990s, despite the changes in the HR area, most Brazilian companies had a bureaucratic management process that used to replicate practices developed in other economic, political, social and cultural contexts. Also presenting, in some moments, the innovative discourse and with the emphasis on the insertion of the employee in the relations between capital and work. For the authors, the HR area still shows the attachment to the traditional forms of power and domination of organizational structures. Therefore, it is observed that the new paradigms are often limited to the discourse.

Researchers such as Trindade, Trindade and Nogueira (2015), Demo, Fogaça and Costa (2018), Tanure et al. (2007), Tanure, Evans and Caçado (2010) argue that, in practice, it is still a taboo to implement models that are effectively participatory in terms of organizational management and concern about employees' employability. For Tanure et al. (2010), few improvements have been made to the HR area in Brazil. At the same time, the authors indicate the need to introduce new paradigms for the survival of Brazilian companies and point out that managers need to broaden their visions in order to understand the importance of this area. Also, the authors suggest that managers seek the development of the HR area, which means the capacity to innovate, whether developing new practices, new procedures or adapting them to specific cultural contexts. One of the serious problems faced by management in general, particularly by HR, and also by the studies on organizational commitment is the uncritical transfer of practices and models developed in other countries (Lee, Allen & Meyer, 2001; Wasti, 2003).

In this context, innovation is highlighted as one of the essential factors both for the development of HR processes and for improving HR policies and practices. Innovation relates at the same time to research and development and encompasses not only technology, machinery and equipment, but also the notion of incremental changes and improvements in the management process. Brazilian organizations face great challenges regarding innovation and especially in the face of the world scenario that emerged from the process of economic opening that began in the first half of the 1990s. The competition for markets has motivated the search for a world-class competitiveness standard, which requires greater competence in business and management strategies, including HR practices. Tanure et al. (2010) state that in many Brazilian companies HR is limited to the processes of registration and movement of

people, fulfilling a bureaucratic role.

In this sense, the study of organizational commitment has been increasingly emphasized as a propitious bond for competitiveness, guarantee of survival and growth for organizations (Semedo, Coelho & Ribeiro, 2019). Organizational commitment has been widely investigated through the three-component model of Meyer and Allen (1991,1997), which classifies the organizational commitment on the affective, normative and continuance bases. The affective basis emphasizes attachment and identification with organizational goals (Cegarra-Navarro, J. G., Jiménez-Jiménez, D., García-Pérez, A. & Del Giudice, M., 2018). The notion of identification involves strong belief and acceptance of the organization's values, as well as the desire to remain in it. The normative basis is related to the feeling of duty with the objectives and norms of the organization, being the commitment revealed as an obligation to remain in the organization (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). While the commitment explained by the continuance basis indicates that the worker feels rewarded with what is offered by the organization and its exit would imply significant economic, social or psychological sacrifices.

Demo et al. (2018) conducted a review of the Brazilian scientific production on HR policies and practices, from 2010 to 2016, and identified the need to study the relationships between this theme and other variables of organizational behavior. Relating the themes of this area of study, Lima and Rowe (2014) affirm that there is a lack of national works that associate the organizational commitment and the HR, mainly that takes into consideration the different policies and practices of HR. Wright and Kehoe (2009) argue that the studies that bring the analysis of HR practices as antecedents of commitment are important because they identify the specific circumstances that the employees are subjected to, as well as indicate the practices most valued by them. In addition, they enable researchers to examine how HR practices systems combine to influence employee attitudes. For these authors, what is lacking in the literature is a specific examination of the different mindsets of commitment, as defined by Meyer and Herscovitch (2001), and the differentiations related to HR practices. Jesus and Rowe (2015) point out the importance of applying the Scale of Perceived Sacrifices (continuance commitment), relating it to antecedent variables such as HR policies.

Another important point to fill the gaps regarding research on organizational commitment today is the contextualization of the cultural aspects in which the research takes place and the characterization of the aspects that constitute the sample studied. Wasti and Onder (2009) and Wasti (2016) highlight the predominance of research that addresses data based on international reality, especially in North American studies. In Brazil, Lima (2014) presents as a suggestion for future research the use of samples from organizations of different sectors and natures, since different segments can lead to the identification of

different behaviors.

In this sense, the existing knowledge in the predominantly international literature is not sufficient to indicate solutions to empirical problems as specific as those experienced in the Brazilian context, mainly because it is a country marked by regionality issues and socioeconomic differences (Tanure et al., 2007). As an attempt to fill this gap in the national literature, we propose the present study, once it approaches the bond from the affective, normative and continuance mindsets having as antecedents the HR practices.

According to Demo, Neiva, Nunes, and Rozzett (2012), the study of HR practices is important because they are aligned with the goals of the organization and provide the conditions for people to effectively contribute to the achievement of superior results. In this way, this work establishes as a research question: what types of human resources practices contribute to the development of the commitment bond, in its affective, normative and continuance bases? Based on that, this study aimed to investigate the influence of human resources practices on organizational commitment in its three dimensions.

The present paper addresses one of the important challenges for the HR area, which is to gather concrete and detailed information on how HR practices encourage commitment. In addition to this shortcoming, it is emphasized that the scientific production is reduced at the national level, regarding the analysis of models that indicate more precisely the relation of these practices with the specific dimensions of the commitment, based on the three-component model of Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997).

Despite this, Parente and Barki (2014) assess that retail activity in Brazil has been assuming an increasing importance in the modernization of distribution system and the Brazilian economy, accounting for more than 10% of the Brazilian Gross Domestic Product. The authors point out that, in recent years, the retail segment has been going through a transformation process resulted by the consolidation of the sector, which has caused an increasing number of large retailers and increased competition among them, making service quality one of the main aspects of competitive differentiation.

In this context, the studied organization also faces challenges in guaranteeing quality of the provided service, especially when considering the high turnover of its staff. In addition to this, problems such as the low level of professional qualification and absenteeism lead the studied organization to develop HR practices in order to minimize them and, consequently, improve organizational results. According to Pinho and Bastos (2014), the literature has presented, as a consequence of organizational commitment, several human resources objectives desired by organizations, such as low turnover, low absenteeism and performance. However, in the national context, there is still a shortage of scientific production that presents relationship of such practices to the central construct of commitment (Lima & Rowe, 2014).

In this way, the present work is relevant to the field of scientific knowledge on organizational bonds, as well as to managers who work in private organizations characterized by competitiveness and high turnover, especially in the current context of the work context in Brazil. Thus, the empirical data of this research add and contribute to the theoretical discussions that relate the two constructs - organizational commitment and HR practices, especially in the Brazilian context, that still experiences great challenges on the implementation of innovative organizational practices.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Organizational changes guided by flexible management logic have made employer and employee co-responsible for the economic production process. Consequently, the HR area was intigated to develop a new eye on the relationship between capital and labor. This new conception of the working relationship, however, requires changes in HR models and practices. From a predominantly operational role, which was responsible for procedures, norms and rules to manage labor relations, the new HR paradigm required a new posture and participation of the HR area in the definition of organizational objectives, policies and strategies. HR role has focused on maintaining the quality of social relations between employer and employee, considering the new forms of work organization, focusing on competitiveness and profitability, and stimulating empowerment as a commitment strategy (Souza & Souza, 2016).

According to Trindade et al. (2015), HR area has undergone strong changes in recent years, its activities have become more related to business strategy. The authors argue that HR has become a more decentralized area after the popularization of internal consultants and has incorporated new functions such as internal communication and social responsibility, also this area has attracted professionals from different backgrounds and outsourced many of its activities. All these changes have generated gaps, but there is little information about them. For Demo et al. (2018), knowing the variables that affect and are affected by HR policies and practices is fundamental to the improvement of HR and the recognition of its strategic role in organizations.

In addition, for Demo et al. (2012), the study of HR practices is important because they are aligned with the goals of the organization and provide the conditions for people to effectively contribute to the achievement of superior results. The authors state that HR policies and practices are organization's articulated proposals with theoretical and practical constructions focused human relations treatment, aiming at obtaining intended results.

Different studies, both national and international, have addressed in different perspectives and contexts the relationships between organizational commitment and HR policies and practices (Meyer, 2009; Demo et al., 2012;

Jesus & Rowe, 2015; Oliveira & Honório, 2015; Lima, 2014; Demo, Martins & Roure, 2013; Fabi, Lacoursiere & Raymond, 2015; Cao & Hamori, 2016). Demo et al. (2013) argued that HR managers should focus on participatory, communication, recognition and relationship practices in order to involve more employees and improve their affective commitment and satisfaction with leadership and the scope of work. In addition, remuneration and incentive practices will translate into greater continuance and normative commitment, as well as greater satisfaction with salary issues.

Oliveira and Honório (2015) and Lima (2014) found greater positive and significant correlations of Training Development and Education [TD&E] practice with the affective basis of commitment. The studies undertaken by Jesus and Rowe (2015) have confirmed that the three dimensions of organizational commitment are significantly influenced by the perception of HR practices "Involvement" and "Rewards" being this relationship totally mediated by the perception of justice.

As for TD&E practice, Pandey, Bhattacharyya and Kaur (2012) affirm that such programs are generally favorable to the development of commitment, although this is not the main purpose. Marescaux, De Winne and Sels (2012) argue that positive impact can be intensified when individuals realize that their abilities can be harnessed by these programs and that new skills can be developed.

For Souza and Souza (2016), the development and management of remuneration systems can be instruments of both motivation and dissatisfaction. Above all, the design of its architecture can harm the environment and, consequently, the organizational dynamics. The facts studied by the authors show that successful remuneration systems are mainly based on the ability to design and manage rewards capable of reconciling organizational and individual demands. That is, such systems require alignment with the values, history, strategies and architecture defined for the realization of the organizational vision. Their failure to comply has hampered the performance of a significant number of organizations.

Based on the empirical data found in the literature, relating these two constructs - organizational commitment and HR practices - as well as in the gaps still evidenced regarding the information about more precise models that demonstrate predictive relationships between HR practices that foster the bond of commitment is that the following hypothesis was proposed in this study:

Hypothesis: different human resource practices have distinct influence on organizational commitment, establishing different relationships with each of its bases - affective, normative and continuance.

In the current scenario of Brazilian work, retail trade is an important segment, being one of the largest sources of formal work. The retail structure is strongly determined by the local context, the characteristics vary according to the economic, social and institutional conditions of the market in which retail operates, and one of the challenges in this

sector is the lack of qualified labor, in which training and retention policies emerge as relevant managerial practices (Barki, Botelho, Parente & Juracy 2013) due to the high rate of turnover in the sector (Pinho, Jeunon & Duarte, 2016). Thus, investigating the predictive power of HR practices on organizational commitment, considering the context of workers belonging to a supermarket chain in northeastern Brazil, will contribute to organizational management and the theoretical field. The present study explores the multidimensional model, expanding theoretical knowledge about the scope of the commitment phenomenon in that sector and about HR management actions that can promote the permanence of the worker in the organization.

In order to explore a sample related to a sector of competitive organizations and important in providing service to society, a private company was chosen, consisting of a fourteen-store supermarket chain, based in Fortaleza, State of Ceará, Brazil. According to Parente and Barki (2014), a supermarket is a retail operation that seeks to meet customers' purchasing demands, mediating the relationship between industries and final consumers by offering a wide variety of products in various categories of consumption (beverages, personal hygiene, fruit and vegetable, grocery, bazaar and non-food, meat, poultry and fish, cleaning, cold cuts and dairy, bakery, etc.). For the author, the retail supermarket is characterized by self-service, a sales format that happens through the exposure of the product, in which the customer seeks what he wants to buy, without the intermediary of sellers.

Because its business is directly linked to the supply of mass consumer products, the growth of the organization studied is closely linked to the increase in the consumption power of the population, which in turn varies according to factors such as unemployment, income, confidence in the economy, etc. In this way, the HR practices explored in this study were analyzed seeking compatibility with those practiced in the organization of the sample studied.

3 METHOD

This section presents the methodological course developed to enable the operationalization of this research. This is a cross-sectional study, which was conducted through a survey. This is a quantitative research, since statistical procedures were used (Creswell, 2014) and, regarding the objective, it is descriptive and exploratory (Gray, 2017; Collis & Hussey, 2005).

3.1 Sample and Data Collection

The empirical investigation was carried out in a supermarket chain that has been operating in the retail sector for 28 years. The company has fourteen stores over the state and head office in Fortaleza, capital of the State of Ceará. Of the fourteen stores in the supermarket chain, ten are located in the capital and metropolitan region, and the other four stores are located in the interior of the state, in the cities of Sobral (two stores), Iguatu and Juazeiro do Norte.

The sampling of the research was probabilistic of the simple random type, since all the elements of the population had the same probability to belong to the sample. Thus, the research covered the Brazilian supermarket chain described above.

Data collection was performed through the application of questionnaires, which were applied to the employees of all units of the supermarket chain. The questionnaires were applied in loco, in the months of November and December of 2016. Firstly, authorization was requested from the administration of the supermarket chain

for the application of the questionnaires; after the authorization for the application, managers from the head office contacted the other stores, communicating the application of the questionnaires; finally, one of the authors of this work was responsible for collecting data from the stores. Altogether, 640 questionnaires were applied, of which 521 were validated. The main reasons that led to the exclusion of the 119 questionnaires were incomplete answers and erasures. The numbers of validated questionnaires per store are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Distribution of questionnaires applied by store

Location	Store	Number of Employees	Valid Questionnaires	Valid Questionnaires (%)
Head Office	Head Office	118	36	30.51%
	Parangaba	113	32	28.32%
Capital and Metropolitan Region Stores	Solon Pinheiro	110	41	37.27%
	Barra do Ceará	138	36	26.09%
	North Shopping	123	45	36.59%
	Messejana	141	35	24.82%
	Luciano Carneiro	101	33	32.67%
	Cidade 2000	139	50	35.97%
	Pinto Madeira	63	15	23.81%
	Rodolfo Teófilo	83	47	56.63%
	Maracanaú	106	56	52.83%
Stores in the Interior of the State	Sobral (2 stores)	141	29	20.57%
	Juazeiro do Norte	125	19	15.20%
	Iguatu	128	47	36.72%
Total		1.629	521	31.98%

Source: research data.

3.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire developed for this research is composed of three parts. The first part consists of 8 items that were used to characterize the respondents' profile. The second part is a 20-item, 6-point Likert scale, that measures the organizational commitment, which was elaborated based on scales proposed by Meyer et al. (1993), Powell and Meyer (2004) and Jesus and Rowe (2017), divided into three components: (i) affective commitment; (ii) normative commitment; and (iii) continuance commitment.

It is important to note that in more recent national studies (Bastos, Pinho, Aguiar & Menezes, 2011; Abreu, Cunha & Rebouças, 2013; Pinho & Bastos, 2014; Jesus & Rowe, 2017), measures have been presented and they indicate the construct's validity as being three-dimensional and being legitimate the permanence of the normative and continuance dimensions for a multidimensional approach. According to Pinho and Bastos (2014), some previous validations (Medeiros & Enders, 1998; Bandeira, Marques & Veiga, 2000) also pointed out the presence of the three dimensions, but signaled difficulties in obtaining a good statistical adjustment for the model analyzed. Medeiros and Enders (1998) signaled some difficulties in understanding items on the scale due to the translation into Portuguese, such as the item that refers to loyalty and the item that compares desire and need.

On the other hand, in most recent national studies (Pinho & Bastos, 2014; Jesus & Rowe, 2017), better statistical reliability indexes were presented for each dimension. Also, Lima and Rowe (2019) suggest that the three-component model of Meyer and Allen (1991) is still prevalent in national and international research on commitment. Based on that, in the present study, we decided to use items for the affective and normative dimensions already validated and analyzed in new samples by Pinho and Bastos (2014), as well as the items proposed by Powell and Meyer (2004) validated by Jesus and Rowe (2017) for the continuance dimension.

Finally, the third part is a 40-item, 6-point Likert scale, that measures the respondents' perceptions regarding HR policies and practices, based on the scale proposed by Demo et al. (2012), divided into six HR practices: (i) recruitment and selection [R&S]; (ii) involvement [INV]; (iii) training, development and education [TD&E]; (iv) work conditions [WC]; (v) competency-based performance appraisal [CBPA]; and (vi) compensation and rewards [C&R].

3.3 Analysis Procedures

Initially, we used descriptive statistics to analyze the data related to the respondents' profile. Then, the reliability of the scales was verified through Cronbach's alpha, which, according to Hair Jr., William, Babin & Anderson (2010),

should have coefficient higher than 0.6 to be considered suitable for the following analyzes. Techniques of Exploratory Factor Analysis [EFA], Confirmatory Factor Analysis [CFA] and Structural Equations Modeling [SEM] were applied to test of the research hypothesis.

In order to verify the grouping of the items of the scales according to the authors' proposals, EFA was used, where the values of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin [KMO], Bartlett sphericity test and explained variance by factor were observed. Hutcheson and Sofroniou (1999) argue that when interpreting KMO indices, it should be noted that values below 0.5 are considered unacceptable; values between 0.5 and 0.7 are acceptable but considered low; values between 0.7 and 0.8 are considered good; between 0.8 and 0.9 are considered optimal; and those above 0.9 are considered excellent. In addition, the commonalities and the factorial loads were verified, those must be greater than 0.5 (Hair Jr. et al., 2010).

From the literature review, the structural model was proposed, using SEM. The measurement model and the structural model were determined, with the respective relationships between the constructs, representing the hypothesis to be tested. As Marôco (2010) points out, SEM is a technique which the purpose is to test the validity of theoretical models that define hypothetical relations of

causality between variables, ideal for applications in social sciences.

As regards the quality of the measures used to measure the latent variables, Pilati and Laros (2007) consider that the researcher must submit the measurements to the CFA, using SEM, in order to test the quality of the measures through the adequacy indexes of the measurement model, among other indicators.

For the analysis, the software Statistical Package for Social Sciences [SPSS], version 22.0, and Analysis of Moment Structures [AMOS] were used.

4 RESULTS

This section analyzes the results obtained in this research and is structured as follows: (i) respondents' profile; (ii) data reliability – Cronbach's alpha; (iii) scale validation – EFA; and (iv) hypothesis testing – CFA and SEM.

4.1 Respondents' Profile

For the respondents' profile, we sought to verify information such as: gender; age; income; schooling; and time that works in the company. Tables 2 and 3 provide information about the profile of the research participants.

Table 2

Respondents' profile in relation to gender, age and income

Category		Number of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	288	55.28%
	Female	233	44.72%
	Total	521	100%
Age	16 to 25 years old	191	36.66%
	26 to 35 years old	231	44.34%
	36 years old and over	99	19.00%
	Total	521	100%
Income	Until R\$ 880.00	36	6.91%
	From R\$ 880.01 to R\$ 1,760.00	429	82.34%
	From R\$ 1,760.01 to R\$ 3,520.00	49	9.41 %
	R\$ 3,520.01 or more	7	1.34%
	Total	521	100%

Source: research data.

Table 3

Respondents' profile in relation to schooling and time that works in the company

Category		Number of Respondents	Percentage
Schooling	Incomplete High School	60	11.52%
	Complete High School	322	61.80%
	Incomplete College/University Degree	89	17.08%
	Complete College/University Degree	40	7.68%
	Postgraduate Studies	10	1.92%
	Total	521	100%
Time that Works in the Company	Until 1 year	137	26.30%
	Above 1 and up to 2 years	128	24.57%
	Above 2 and up to 3 years	53	10.17%
	Above 3 and up to 4 years	45	8.64%
	Above 4 and up to 5 years	42	8.06%
	Above 5 and up to 6 years	35	6.72%
	Above 6 years	81	15.55%
	Total	521	100%

Source: research data.

Regarding the gender of respondents, it was observed that the majority is male (55.28%). Regarding the

age group, it is observed that most of the individuals are concentrated in the range between 26 and 35 years old

(44.34%), followed by the group that corresponds to individuals from 16 to 25 years old (36.66%) and of the group of respondents who are above 36 years old (19.00%), respectively. In addition, it was observed that the vast

It was also observed that 60 (11.52%) of the respondents did not complete high school, while 322 (61.80%) have completed high school; 89 (17.08%) have incomplete college/university degree; 40 (7.68%) have finished college/university degree; and 10 (1.92%) are postgraduate students. As for the time that works in the company, 137 (26.30%) employees have worked in the company for 1 year or less, while 81 (15.55%) have been in the company for more than 6 years.

majority of employees (82.34%) have income between R\$ 880.00 and R\$ 1,760.00, that is, they receive between 1 and 2 minimum wages (amounts referring to the minimum salary in force in 2016, in Brazil).

4.2 Data Reliability

Before starting the multivariate analysis, through the factorial analysis and the structural equations modeling, the Cronbach's alpha was applied in order to verify the data reliability. Thus, we verified the reliability of the items grouped in 9 dimensions: 3 of them related to organizational commitment and 6 related to HR practices, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Data reliability per dimension

Construct	Dimensions	Description	α Cronbach
Organizational Commitment	Dimension 1	Affective Commitment	0.738
	Dimension 2	Normative Commitment	0.750
	Dimension 3	Continuance Commitment	0.730
HR Practices	Dimension 4	Recruitment & Selection	0.684
	Dimension 5	Involvement	0.872
	Dimension 6	Training, Development & Education	0.838
	Dimension 7	Work Conditions	0.689
	Dimension 8	Competency-Based Performance Appraisal	0.884
	Dimension 9	Compensation & Rewards	0.774

Source: research data.

4.3 Validation and Confirmation of Item Grouping by Dimension (Factor Analysis)

Firstly, EFA was carried out, where the commonalities and factorial loads of the scale items were verified. Items with values less than 0.5 were excluded. After these procedures, it was observed that of the 20 items of the organizational commitment scale, 11 remained, which presented commonalities and factorial loads higher than 0.5, as suggested by Hair Jr. et al. (2010).

A new EFA was carried out in order to confirm the grouping of the items of the constructs studied. Regarding

the organizational commitment scale, for the 11 items related to the construct, the KMO test and the Bartlett sphericity test were performed, in which KMO was equal to 0.839 and Bartlett's test presented significance level lower than the 1%, indicating adequate level of correlation between items to perform the EFA. The results presented three components that obeyed the Kaiser criterion of eigenvalues greater than 1, which explain 60.634% of the variance for this construct. Table 5 presents such data generated from these analyzes.

Table 5

Components extracted for the organizational commitment scale

Items	Components		
	1	2	3
Normative Commitment [NC]			
1. I would not leave this company now because I have a moral obligation to people here.	0.72	0.10	0.15
2. I would feel guilty if I left this company now.	0.79	0.14	0.16
3. Even if it was to advantage to me, I feel it would not be right to leave this company now.	0.66	0.25	0.27
4. I feel indebted to this company.	0.69	0.10	0.12
Continuance Commitment [CC]			
1. Leaving this company now would require considerable personal sacrifice.	0.01	0.55	0.44
2. I think I would have few job alternatives if I left this company.	0.12	0.73	-0.17
3. Even if I wanted to, it would be very difficult for me to leave this company now.	0.20	0.77	0.23
4. Many things in my life would be complicated if I decided to leave this company now.	0.24	0.79	0.11
Affective Commitment [AC]			
1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this company.	0.35	0.16	0.68
2. This company has a strong personal significance to me.	0.17	0.08	0.79
3. I really feel the problems of this company as if they were mine.	0.18	0.00	0.79

Source: research data.

Based on Table 5, it is observed that component 1 includes the items related to normative commitment; component 2 groups the items related to continuance commitment; and component 3 to affective commitment. Thus, it is possible to affirm that the dimensions proposed

by Meyer et al. (1993) and Powell and Meyer (2004) for the organizational commitment were confirmed.

Table 6 presents the factorial analysis of the 25 items allocated in the six components generated from these analyses.

Table 6

Components extracted for the HR practices scale

Items	Components					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Involvement [INV]						
1. In the company where I work, the employees and their managers enjoy the constant exchange of information for the good performance of the functions.	0.69	0.29	0.11	0.22	0.20	0.14
2. In the company where I work, there is a climate of understanding and trust of the bosses in relation to their collaborators.	0.78	0.23	0.21	0.11	0.14	0.18
3. In the company where I work, there is a climate of trust and cooperation among co-workers.	0.77	0.05	0.19	0.17	0.07	0.07
4. The company where I work privileges the autonomy in the accomplishment of the tasks and taking of decisions.	0.71	0.28	0.15	0.14	0.09	0.15
5. In the company where I work, there is coherence between managerial discourse and practice.	0.59	0.31	0.10	0.20	0.26	0.20
Competency-Based Performance Appraisal [CBPA]						
1. The company where I work performs performance evaluations and competencies periodically.	0.19	0.67	0.12	0.23	0.14	0.24
2. In the company where I work, the evaluation of performance and skills subsidizes decisions about promotions and salary increases.	0.16	0.60	0.39	0.26	0.14	0.14
3. In the company where I work, the evaluation of performance and skills subsidizes the development of a plan for the development of employees.	0.24	0.68	0.22	0.26	0.15	0.19
4. In the company where I work, the criteria and results of performance evaluation and competencies are discussed with employees.	0.27	0.79	0.22	0.09	0.13	0.11
5. In the company where I work, the criteria and results of performance evaluation and competencies are disclosed to employees.	0.22	0.80	0.16	0.10	0.12	0.06
Compensation & Rewards [C&R]						
1. The company where I work offers me remuneration compatible with those offered in the market (public or private) for my job.	0.12	0.16	0.79	0.02	0.18	0.16
2. The company where I work offers me remuneration compatible with my skills and training / schooling.	0.15	0.23	0.77	0.05	0.12	0.19
3. In the company where I work, I receive incentives (ex: commissioned promotions / functions, bonuses / prizes / bonuses, etc.).	0.27	0.19	0.55	0.42	-0.02	0.07
4. In the company where I work, my pay is influenced by my results.	0.19	0.19	0.63	0.26	0.01	-0.10
Training, Development & Education [TD&E]						
1. The company where I work helps me to develop the skills necessary for the good performance of my duties (eg training, participation in congresses, etc.).	0.33	0.32	0.12	0.58	0.21	0.23
2. The company where I work invests in my development and education, providing my personal and professional growth in a broad way (example: full or partial sponsorship of graduations, postgraduate courses, language courses, etc.).	0.10	0.12	0.25	0.72	0.08	0.24
3. I can apply in my work the knowledge and behaviors learned in the trainings / events that I participate in.	0.30	0.26	0.09	0.63	0.21	0.14
4. The company where I work stimulates the learning and the production of knowledge.	0.42	0.29	0.12	0.57	0.25	0.28
Recruitment & Selection [R&S]						
1. The selection tests of the company where I work are conducted by skilled and impartial people.	0.21	0.09	0.11	0.00	0.61	0.35
2. The company where I work is used of various selection instruments (ex: interviews, tests, etc.).	0.10	0.12	0.08	0.03	0.66	0.27
3. The company where I work discloses to the candidates information about the stages and criteria of the selection process.	0.20	0.08	0.08	0.18	0.77	-0.11
4. The company where I work communicates the candidates their performance at the end of the selection process.	0.02	0.33	0.06	0.33	0.59	-0.11
Work Conditions [WC]						
1. The company where I work offers me basic benefits (eg health plan, transportation assistance, food aid, etc.).	0.05	0.07	0.07	0.16	0.01	0.67
2. In the company where I work, there are actions and programs for accident prevention and coping with incidents.	0.20	0.19	0.14	0.22	0.08	0.69
3. The company where I work worries about the safety of its employees, controlling the access of strangers in the company.	0.30	0.21	0.04	0.08	0.19	0.67

Source: research data.

For the scale of HR practices, we proceeded in the same way as for the scale of organizational commitment. EFA was performed, which allowed that the commonalities and factorial loads were verified. Items with values less than 0.5 were excluded. After these procedures, it was observed that of the 40 items of the HR practices scale, 25 were left, which presented commonalities and factorial loads higher than 0.5, as suggested by Hair Jr. et al. (2010).

For the 25 items related to the HR practices, a new EFA was performed, in which KMO was equal to 0.926 and the Bartlett test presented significance level lower than the 1%, indicating adequate level of correlation between items to perform the EFA. The results indicate that the components obey the Kaiser criterion of eigenvalues greater than 1, which explains 65,121% of the variance for this construct.

4.4 Structural Equations Model

The latent variables present in the final model presented in Table 8 and Figure 1 are related to two different

constructs, namely: (i) organizational commitment; and (ii) HR practices. The latent variables that make up the first construct are: continuance commitment [CC]; affective commitment [AC]; normative commitment [NC]. While the latent variables that make up the construct HR practices are: compensation and rewards [C&R]; competency-based performance appraisal [CBPA]; work conditions [WC]; recruitment and selection [R&S]; involvement [INV]; and training, development and education [TD&E].

Regarding the final structural model, the adjustment indexes presented chi-square = 1143.2; Degrees of Freedom [DF] = 553; $\chi^2/df = 2.067$; and RMSEA = 0.045, the other indexes (CFI, GFI and AGFI) presented values close to 0.9. Hair Jr. et al. (2010) consider that the appropriate values for model adjustment are: RMSEA less than 0.08; χ^2/df less than 5.00; and values close to 0.9 for the other indices. In this way, the model presented satisfactory values that proved the fit of the final structural model as evidenced in Table 7.

Table 7

Adjustment indexes for the proposed model

Adjustment Measures	Adequate Level	Level Found - Final Model
DF	-	553
Chi-square and p-value	(<i>p-value</i> < 0.000)	1143.2 (<i>p-value</i> = 0.000)
X ² /df	≤ 5	2.067
GFI	> 0.90	0.896
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.045
AGFI	> 0.90	0.875
CFI	> 0.90	0.931

Source: research data.

After verifying the adjustment of the final structural model, the estimated coefficients for the causal relationships between the latent variables were evaluated. Thus, it was possible to verify the influence of HR practices

on the three dimensions of organizational commitment, as evidenced in Table 8. Firstly, EFA was carried out, where the commonalities and factor.

Table 8

Estimated standard coefficients for the structural model

Proposed Relationship	Standardized Coefficient	p-value
Compensation and rewards → Continuance Commitment	0.009	0.932
Competency-based performance appraisal → Continuance Commitment	0.335	0.003***
Work Conditions → Continuance Commitment	-0.140	0.125
Recruitment and Selection → Continuance Commitment	0.087	0.406
Involvement → Continuance Commitment	0.089	0.319
Training, Development & Education → Continuance Commitment	-0.011	0.928
Compensation and rewards → Affective Commitment	0.155	0.118
Competency-based performance appraisal → Affective Commitment	0.042	0.692
Work Conditions → Affective Commitment	0.145	0.089*
Recruitment and selection → Affective Commitment	0.115	0.243
Involvement → Affective Commitment	0.084	0.317
Training, Development & Education → Affective Commitment	0.145	0.199
Compensation and rewards → Normative Commitment	0.204	0.053*
Competency-based performance appraisal → Normative Commitment	0.017	0.880
Work Conditions → Normative Commitment	0.043	0.628
Recruitment and selectio → Normative Commitment	0.159	0.127
Involvement → Normative Commitment	0.060	0.500
Training, Development & Education → Normative Commitment	0.115	0.332

Source: research data.

Note: (**) significant at the 1% level, (*) significant at the 5% level, (*) significant at the 10% level.

Figure 1 presents the final structural model, evidencing the relationships between the latent variables addressed in this study. The black arrows indicate that there is statistical significance in the relationship between the latent variables, the gray arrows indicate that there is no statistical significance.

is statistical significance in the relationship between the latent variables, the gray arrows indicate that there is no statistical significance.

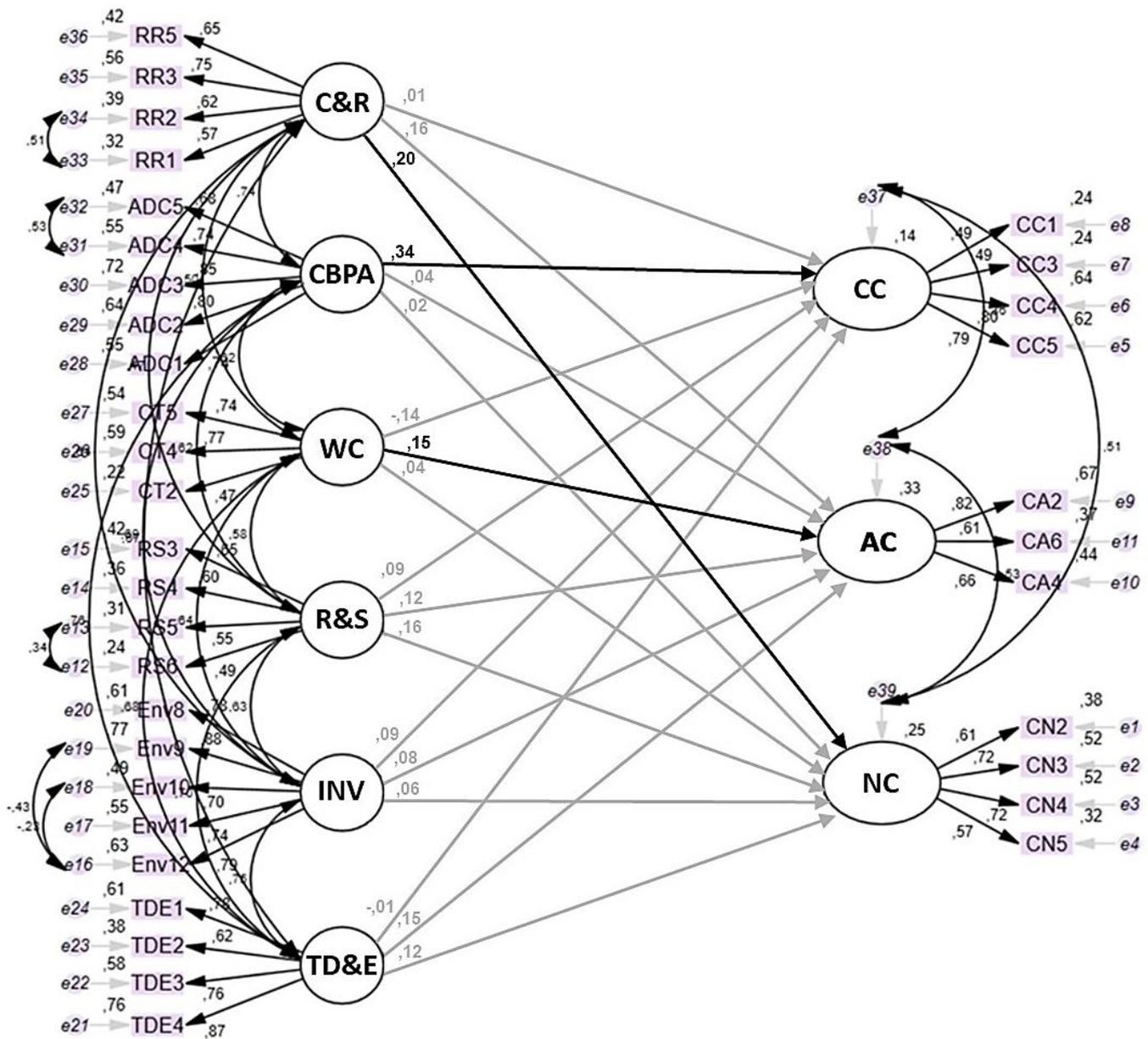


Figure 1. Adjusted Structural Equations Model (Final Structural Model). Source: research data.

From the Final Structural Model, it was possible to verify the hypothesis of influence of the HR practices on the organizational commitment. Among the investigated practices, C&R, CBPA and WC were highlighted. In relation to the affective dimension of the organizational commitment, it was observed that the WC practice positively influences this dimension of commitment (coef. 0.15; p-value < 10%). On the other hand, the latent variable CBPA has a positive effect on Continuance Commitment (coef. 0.34; p-value < 1%), influencing this basis of commitment. Also, the practice of C&R positively affects the Normative Commitment (coef. 0.20; p-value < 10%), indicating the influence of this practice on this dimension of the commitment. The structural model led to the confirmation of the proposed hypothesis, since each dimension of the

organizational commitment is influenced by different HR practices.

4.5 Discussion

Based on the results, we verified that the continuance commitment is influenced by the practice of CBPA. Demo, Fogaça, Nunes, Edrei and Francischeto (2011) highlight CBPA as an important practice to foster promotions, career planning and worker development decisions, making workers "instrumentally" committed to the organization due to the need to honor their financial and social obligations.

Some other studies present that continuance basis of commitment is influenced by other HR practices, such as C&R. Meyer and Allen (1991) indicate that C&R strengthens the bonds, reward systems and structured careers,

revealing higher levels of continuance commitment. Demo et al. (2013) and Jesus and Rowe (2015) also found significant relationships between C&R practice and continuance commitment, indicating that greater investments in rewards policies potentialize the employee's perception of costs and financial benefits, encouraging the permanence in the organization.

Normative commitment was influenced by the practice of C&R. This finding is in line with what was verified by Meyer and Parfyonova (2010) when addressing the double meaning of this base as the notion of indebtedness and moral duty, revealing that the permanence in the organization is related to the sense of moral obligation. On the other hand, according to Meyer and Allen (1991), TD&E programs can influence normative commitment. For the authors, investments made by the organization for the professional training of employees can develop a sense of obligation (Meyer, 2009).

In addition, for Meyer and Parfyonova (2010), normative and continuance commitment are sensitive to social expectations and norms, especially in cultures where social interdependence is very salient. The need to know the expectations in these cultures simultaneously increases the sense of obligation to the organization and the perceived social costs associated with leaving the organization. The authors further add that normative commitment is an important motivational force that must be experienced as a sense of moral duty to entail and elicit more powerful effects and benefits for employees and employers.

Furthermore, the findings of the present study pointed out that the practice of WC (actions aimed at worker safety, as well as offering benefits, health, quality of life, technology) is an antecedent of affective commitment. This indicates that, for the sample studied here (characterized by low schooling, high turnover, young workers and short period working in the company), work conditions are relevant to develop the type of commitment most wanted by managers and researchers - affective commitment.

Also, in the literature, the studies of Demo et al. (2013), Lima (2014) and Jesus and Rowe (2015) state that the more employees perceive practices of professional recognition, relationship and interaction of people in the organization, and participation in the conduction of decision-making processes, the more they will be affectively committed to the company. However, this was not verified in this study.

In the study by Jawaad, Amir, Bashir and Hasan (2019), conducted in the telecommunications sector in Pakistan, the authors found that the practices of R&S, TD&E, C&R, CBPA and WC positively influenced organizational commitment, assessed from the perspective of the affective basis. This finding has similarities with our study as it also verifies the influence of WC practice, however, in context evaluated by Jawaad et al. (2019), affective commitment seems to be more sensitive to different HR practices. In addition, the studies of Oliveira and Honório (2015) and Lima (2014) found greater positive

relationship between TD&E practice and affective commitment.

In this sense, Meyer and Smith (2000) argue that HR plays a key role in establishing the bond between the individual and the organization and, based on the implementation of HR practices, managers can achieve commitment in their different bases, simultaneously or sequentially. In this context, the authors emphasize that TD&E practices, for example, can lead to affective commitment, which leads to normative and continuance commitment, being the normative a benefit and the continuance an asset, since the individual that are instrumentally committed to the organization tends to remain in it, and the company will count on a qualified employee that has been trained through HR programs.

5 FINAL REMARKS

This study aimed to investigate the influence of human resources practices on organizational commitment in its three dimensions. In this way, for the context of Brazilian retail sector, it was found that three practices influenced organizational commitment. Particularly, the practice CBPA presented to have influence on continuance commitment, WC on affective commitment and C&R on normative commitment. Thus, in the structural equations modeling, the employees' perception of CBPA actions positively and significantly impacts the continuance commitment, while affective commitment presented to be significantly impacted by the perception of WC practices and normative commitment by the practice of C&R. In this way, the hypothesis developed for this study was confirmed, once the results revealed that different HR practices had different influence on organizational commitment, establishing different relationships with each of its bases - affective, normative and continuation.

The findings involving normative commitment indicated that the notion of moral obligation is influenced by the practice of C&R, which corroborates the notion proposed by Meyer and Parfyonova (2010) in addressing the double meaning of this basis as the notion of indebtedness and moral duty. For the authors, the rule of social norms in the development of normative and continuance bases are more strongly related in countries outside of North America, in general, are the countries that present high index of collectivism and distance of the power. The data indicated that, in the sample studied, the perception of C&R promote the sense of exchange and moral duty to remain in the organization.

The results found here corroborate the findings of Pinho and Bastos (2014) when investigating workers from the retail sector and public employees. For the authors, it is possible to affirm that it is better and healthier to think that the worker can decide on the remaining of his course of action - to stay in the organization - because he has an affective relationship with it and for having financial obligations that he must honor due to his desires, plans and

projects for life and family, but not only because he must survive.

Regarding the context of the employers' organization investigated here, it is important to note that the HR practices that prevailed in the company were historically structured in a model aimed at better execution of the operation, with generic actions and applied homogeneously in all its subsidiaries. This indicated an orientation focused on the internal operation of the organization and little in the external context of the market. This fact corroborates the idea that, in many Brazilian companies, HR is restricted to the processes of registration and movement of employees, fulfilling a bureaucratic role in the business (Tanure et al., 2010).

Also, we observed that the HR area in the company studied is characterized as a centrally structured HR, counting with a cadre of experts by type of practice. This reality indicates a structure of little innovation and it has already been perceived by its leaders as an aspect that needs changes and updates. This context reinforces, once again, the ideas of Tanure et al. (2010) when the authors argue that Brazilian organizations face major challenges regarding innovation and the development of new HR practices and procedures.

In this way, the focus of the company is more strongly on the exponential growth of the mass consumption market, the company directed its efforts to optimize the operation in a way to give sustainability to the expansion of the supermarket chain, opening new stores. Also, we observed that the socialization process is an action that receives considerable attention within the area of HR and seems to foster positive expectations for the candidate just joining the organization. It was also observed that the sample studied is characterized by low schooling, young people and income up to two minimum wages, such characteristics seem to favor the bond through practices as CBPA, WC and C&R.

Thus, this study contributes to the area by providing empirical data that demonstrate the predictive power of HR practices on the three dimensions of the organizational commitment and by providing information related to the retail sector, which is marked by the high competitiveness and turnover of workers. Still, the profile of the participants of this research is still little investigated in the national literature.

In addition, the findings of this research contribute both to the effectiveness of HR policies and to the improvement of the construct commitment. In addition, they corroborate broader scientific conclusions, as more evidence of validity for the three-component model and for the studies that deal with the characterization and stage of development of organizational and people management in Brazil.

5.1 Managerial Implications

Based on the findings regarding the reality of the investigated company, it was possible to outline some managerial implications. To managers who seek more

committed employees through the affective basis, that is, individuals who relate to the company through an emotional bond developed from the employee-organization identification, this affective bond can be achieved through consolidation and execution of HR practices focused on working conditions, offering basic benefits such as health insurance and transportation assistance, as well as accident prevention programs and focusing on safety, indicating that employees who feel the company is taking care of them tend to strengthen their affective bond with the organization. In general, a way for the company to achieve this bond is by promoting a healthy, safe and individual-centered environment.

Regarding the effectiveness of the continuance commitment, which is usually associated with the financial benefits and the costs of leaving the organization, managers must invest in performance and competency assessment practices. This recommendation is supported by the results of this research, which suggest that the development of the bond through the continuance commitment might occur through a transparent and democratic competency assessment process, leading the individual to the perception that career promotions and development in the organization tend to occur based on the merit of the work, considering both technical and operational parameters.

From the perspective of normative commitment, it was observed that this bond is enhanced by the practice of compensation and rewards. Considering that normative commitment is established by a perception of moral obligation and by the feeling of debt to the company, it is understood that, in the context investigated, this debt is characterized by the remuneration and incentives received, which suggests that these gains are perceived by employees as something that transcends the company's obligations. Thus, in similar work contexts, normative commitment might be achieved through a solid remuneration policy, focusing on the employee's skills and results.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research

One of the limitations of this study is that it encompassed only one supermarket chain, it could be expanded to organizations from different segments of the retail sector. We suggest that future studies explore the influence of HR practices on the commitment in different organizations (i.e. public and private sectors) that develop different HR models and apply diverse and innovative practices with their staff. On the other hand, this research presents more consistent and robust data, since they were analyzed through more sophisticated statistical techniques.

According to Demo et al (2018), there is much to explore in the studies involving the theme and other constructs in the area of organizational behavior. The authors emphasize the urgency of new studies on HR practices, since some policies, despite their strategic nature for organizations, are still little investigated, such as recruitment and selection and evaluation of performance

and competencies. Studies relating this theme to other variables of organizational behavior are necessary. Jiang (2016) points out that there are few studies that relate HR practices with different constructs, particularly the commitment.

The deepening of the analysis of HR practices such as CBPA, C&R and WC based on qualitative methods may promote further analysis as well as studies exploring other samples from the retail sector to enable comparative analysis between HR constructs and commitment. Thus, we also suggest that future research investigate new models and new relationships between HR practices and other variables providing analysis based on existing theories or proposing theoretical reconstructions.

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