

Sociodemographic and occupational profiles of organizational commitment in federal universities

Perfis de comprometimento organizacional em universidades federais: Características sociodemográficas e ocupacionais

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Abstract

Purpose: Based on the three-dimensional model of Meyer and Allen (1991), this study outlined organizational commitment profiles (OCP) for public service workers working at two federal universities, as well as sociodemographic and occupational characteristics associated with these profiles.

Originality/value: OCP emerged as part of the Brazilian research scenario on organizational commitment (OC), as well as discussions that approached the implications of such profiles, in the public sector and public higher education institutions (HEIs).

Design/methodology/approach: The research methodology included quantitative, descriptive, and field-based approaches. In the study, 470 respondents worked in administrative areas of two federal universities in Northeast Brazil in three occupational categories: technical servants, managers, and outsourced workers. The techniques used were exploratory factor analysis and latent profile analysis.

Findings: As a basis for modeling the factorial structure of the OC scale (affective, normative, and continuance dimensions), four OCP were identified: uncommitted, affective-continuance commitment, moderate, and affectively committed. The uncommitted were primarily men and workers with less job tenure. The majority of the affective-continuance commitment and affectively committed were occupied by technical public servants and outsourced workers, while managers concentrated on the affective-continuance commitments.

Keywords: organizational commitment profiles, federal universities, public sector, survey, quantitative research

Resumo

Objetivo: Esta pesquisa objetivou delinear os perfis de comprometimento organizacional (PCO) de diferentes trabalhadores do serviço público, em duas universidades federais, tomando como base o modelo tridimensional de Meyer e Allen (1991), e discutir características socio-demográficas e ocupacionais associadas a tais perfis.

Originalidade/valor: Os resultados permitiram a emergência de novos PCO no cenário de pesquisa brasileiro sobre comprometimento organizacional (CO), assim como discussões que abordam as implicações de tais perfis, considerando o cenário do setor público e das instituições de ensino superior (IES) públicas.

Design/metodologia/abordagem: Trata-se de uma pesquisa quantitativa, descritiva e de campo. O campo de pesquisa foi constituído por 470 respondentes de três categorias ocupacionais distintas: servidores técnicos, gestores e terceirizados, atuantes em áreas administrativas de duas universidades federais do Nordeste. Utilizaram-se as seguintes técnicas: análise fatorial exploratória e análise de perfis latentes.

Resultados: Considerando a estrutura fatorial da escala de CO (dimensões afetiva, normativa e de continuação), foram delineados quatro PCO: descomprometidos; comprometidos de combinação afetivo-continuação; moderados; e comprometidos afetivamente. Os trabalhadores com menor tempo de serviço e do gênero masculino predominaram entre os descomprometidos. Os servidores técnicos e os terceirizados predominaram entre os comprometidos de combinação afetivo-continuação e os comprometidos afetivamente, enquanto os gestores concentraram-se entre os comprometidos de combinação afetivo-continuação.

Palavras-chave: perfis de comprometimento organizacional, universidades federais, setor público, *survey*, pesquisa quantitativa

INTRODUCTION

In addition to their complexity, public organizations have a great deal of social significance, involving both positive and negative aspects. Stability, schedule flexibility, workload reduction, the significance of the organization in the life of the servant, and interest in devoted efforts to the organization are considered positive. Conversely, characteristics such as inadequate infrastructure, excessive bureaucracy, rigid personnel policies, lack of emphasis on servant performance, excess hierarchical levels, and reduced servant autonomy may be considered negative (Campos et al., 2009; Ferreira & Neiva, 2018; Rocha & Ceretta, 2014; Botelho & Paiva, 2011; Leone et al., 2012).

As well it is perceived as a duality of values (organizational and individual), which can be conflicting in the context of the public sector (Santos et al., 2018). As a means of reconciling these values, it is relevant for the implementation of management models within the public sector. In this context, the study of Avelino et al. (2017) highlights challenges associated with the implementation of more modern management models in public organizations, for example, difficulties in managing competencies. Similarly, the meaning of work for public servants differs from that of private entrepreneurs since it focuses on providing a public service to users (Tannuri & Pérez-Nebra, 2018). Thus, to successfully implement these management models and reconcile the interests of the worker and the organization, it is essential to consider how the individual is related to the organization, emphasizing the importance of taking organizational commitment (OC) into consideration.

In addition to public organizations, there are also public higher education institutions (HEIs), which play a fundamental role in society by enabling the training of professionals and researchers. Factors of political, cultural, economic, and institutional nature influence these institutions, as well as tensions of a purely administrative nature. Further, distances are given to the structure and dynamics of a company, and their objectives cannot always be translated or delimited precisely (Ribeiro, 2017). The workers in these institutions can be categorized into different occupational categories with different hiring regimes, such as servants and outsourced workers. However, there are servants that do not hold management positions as well as those who do.

In order to meet the demands and challenges facing public organizations, especially public HEIs, we strive for efficacy, efficiency, and effectiveness, while also considering the welfare of the workers inserted in such

contexts. OC has been associated with or relevant to a variety of positive organizational outcomes (Carvalho-Freitas et al., 2013; Traldi & Demo, 2012; Cappi & Araujo, 2015). According to Meyer and Allen (1991), the aforementioned construct includes three dimensions: affective (desire), normative (moral duty), and continuance (later changes and necessity). A version of this model has been used to develop organizational commitment profiles, which are combinations of the three dimensions considered, producing a set of mindsets related to different organizational behaviors (Meyer et al., 2012). Affective dimensions are related to the achievement of organizational objectives, loyalty, and the desire to be part of the organization and are frequently associated with extra effort. The normative dimension, in turn, may involve morality within the organization, a sense of division within the organization, or a strong sense of responsibility for the organization. Moreover, as part of the evaluation, both financial and psychosocial costs associated with the possibility of leaving the organization will be considered (Weiner & Vardi, 1980; Mowday et al., 1979; Becker, 1960).

According to Lizote et al. (2017), OC in the public sector is related to its own challenges in the field, such as improving service delivery and efficiency in the performance of activities in society. As a matter of fact, despite the relevance of this subject, there is no established tradition of studies in this field, nor dialogue constraints between Brazilian and English-language productions, in spite of the increase in studies between 2010 and 2015 (Oliveira & Rowe, 2018; Pinho et al., 2020). In Brazil, there are relatively few studies examining OCP.

Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following question:

- In what ways can the delineation of OCP facilitate the understanding of public service workers?

Thus, the objective of this study was to establish three-dimensional profiles of OC for public service workers working at two federal universities using Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-dimensional model and discuss socio-demographic and occupational characteristics that are associated with these profiles.

As such, the purpose of this study was to contribute to the translation of these gaps into the Brazilian scenario: the study of OC in the public sector and the investigation of OCP. OCP are still primarily produced in international production in countries such as Canada, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Turkey, the United States, and Germany (Stanley et al., 2013; Meyer et al., 2012, 2015, 2018; Kam et al., 2016; Russo et al., 2012). Only a few studies

have been conducted in the Brazilian context using a profile approach (Pinho et al., 2022; Barbosa, 2019; Sabino & Lopes, 2013; Bastos, 2000; Bastos & Borges-Andrade, 2002; Bandeira et al., 2000). Also, this study aims to contribute to the lack of understanding of how OCP are formed among workers that are currently not employed by the public sector, which is relevant to managers because it is necessary to understand how it occurs when these workers are linked together. The research also attempts to encourage various management actions within the universities that are being examined, such as the adaptation of management models, leadership styles, and people management practices.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

The concept of OC has been extensively studied in Brazil as well as in several other countries and is one of the most studied organizational bonds. Research on this construct began approximately in the late 1970s, and its various definitions led to the notion of a stabilizing force, which involves a course of action on the part of the worker. According to Mowday et al. (1979), engagement was considered in a monodimensional manner, with a predominant affective or attitudinal perspective. Meyer and Allen (1991) then proposed a three-dimensional model for the study of OC that enabled the construction of a scale of understanding commitment considering three dimensions: affective, normative, and calculative, the most widely used model in the literature (Meyer et al., 1993).

It is important to note that Meyer and Allen (1991) emphasize that the three dimensions of the model are differentiated based on the psychological nature of each. The first dimension, affective, is understood as “desire”, with its origin in the studies of Mowday et al. (1979). This dimension involves a sense of belonging to the organization and a sense of non-passive loyalty and pride, resulting in the following characteristics: “(a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization’s goals and values; (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (c) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization” (Mowday et al., 1979, p. 226).

In contrast, the normative dimension is characterized by the sense that there is a moral division or obligation to the organization. A lot of pressure can be exerted on the worker in order to make them feel that they have a moral duty toward the organization. The normative dimension focuses on

these normative pressure and the influence of organizational culture, not on the process of adhering to organizational norms and values. Internalized moral pressure can occur during the period of initial socialization in the organization, and it can be intensified throughout the worker's tenure in the institution through socialization and training. The concept of normative commitment involves three important characteristics: sacrifice by the worker for the organization; perseverance in their duties, which must be associated with rewards or retributions; and a singular concern with regard to the organization (Weiner & Vardi, 1980).

The continuance dimension considers the contributions of Becker (1960), who deals with the side-bets theory, that is, elements invested by the worker in the relationship with the organization. This dimension assumes that the worker evaluates the costs associated with their possible exit from the organization, as well as the magnitude and number of investments made to be there. A limitation of options outside the organization may also be a part of the continuance dimension, and this could be due to the labor market situation, their own training and experience, or other limiting factors related to possible professional outplacement.

Organizational commitment profiles

An approach centered on variables has traditionally been used to study OC. According to this approach, each dimension of commitment is considered in terms of its effect on individual performance. Conversely, the person-centered approach examines the interactions between the three dimensions of commitment and the effects of such interactions. Meyer and Parfyonova (2010) pioneered the use of this approach.

Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) define OC as a force that binds the individual to a particular course of action, and they note that commitment can also be viewed through different mindsets, each having different implications for the individual's behavior. Meyer (2009) furthers the discussion by defining OC as a mental characteristic that determines how a situation is perceived and interpreted. An individual's mental characteristics are referred to as a mindset and can be categorized according to their affective, normative, or continuance characteristics. The OCP approach (Meyer et al., 2012) extends beyond such mindsets, understanding that there can be various combinations among them. In order to create a mindset, a psychological state must exist to motivate the individual to take a particular course of action (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001).

OCP can be understood, therefore, as a way of investigating the construct in which several levels are taken into consideration, not limited to the affective, normative, and continuance dimensions, as shown in Table 1 and as indicated by Meyer et al. (2012).

Table 1

Organizational commitment profiles identified in the literature

1. All high bases/dimensions elevated
2. All moderate bases/dimensions elevated
3. All low bases/dimensions elevated
4. Affective bases/dimensions dominance
5. Normative bases/dimensions dominance
6. Continuance bases/dimensions dominance
7. Affective and normative bases/dimensions of dominance
8. Affective and continuance bases/dimensions dominance
9. Normative and continuance bases/dimensions dominance

Source: Adapted from Meyer et al. (2012, p. 4).

In addition to the survey conducted by Meyer et al. (2012), Kabins et al. (2016) conducted a meta-analysis on the topic, as well as studies are reported in countries such as Canada, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Turkey, the United States, and Germany (Stanley et al., 2013; Meyer et al., 2012, 2013, 2015, 2018; Kam et al., 2016; Russo et al., 2012; Kyle et al., 2005; Sinclair et al., 2005; Wasti, 2005).

Most recently, Barbosa (2019) conducted a study with commitment profiles in the private sector whose results showed four clusters. In cluster 1, the normative commitment was low and affective, and continuance levels were moderate, whereas, in cluster 2, the continuance base was low, and affective and normative levels were moderate. In cluster 3, the affective dimension was low, the continuance and normative dimensions were moderate, and all three bases were moderate in cluster 4. As a result of her research findings, Feitosa (2019) showed that Brazilian organizations have combinations of profiles (affective-normative/continuance-affective).

Based on a meta-analysis, Kabins et al. (2016) observed the following when analyzing the background of two profiles of commitment: perceived

reliability of management (Kam et al., 2016); perceived support from the organization and supervisor (Meyer et al., 2015); gender, age, team, training, empowerment, performance, job insecurity, collectivism, and individualism (Meyer et al., 2018), job satisfaction, and performance (Russo et al., 2012).

As well as commitment profiles, job satisfaction was also examined but not as an antecedent (Meyer et al., 2018), turnover (Meyer et al., 2015; Somers, 2010; Stanley et al., 2013), work-related stress, intention to leave, and departure from the workplace (Meyer et al., 2018; Somers, 2010; Xu & Payne, 2018), absenteeism (Russo et al., 2012; Somers, 2010), congruence between the values of the organization and the workers (Somers, 2010), and citizenship behavior (Wombacher & Felfe, 2017).

Lastly, the following variables may be used in further analyses of commitment profiles: age, gender, organization size, positive affect, and negative affect (Kabins et al., 2016).

According to Kam et al. (2016), commitment profiles have shown to be stable over time, which makes this approach relevant to research. The results of Meyer et al. (2018), which analyzed commitment profiles at two different times (before and after an economic crisis), are consistent with evidence that the construct is stable, as found by Xu and Payne (2018) when investigating commitment profiles of United States' Army officers over a certain period.

Organizational commitment in the public sector

Associated with several constructs in the field of organizational studies, the commitment is investigated both in the public sector and in the initiative private. In spite of this, it is evident that research in the public sector takes on different contours due to the characteristics of these organizations. In public organizations, affective commitment is significant and is correlated with factors such as employee importance and interest in contributing to the organization. According to Campos et al. (2009), affective commitment is the predominant type of commitment in such organizations.

According to Rocha and Honório (2015), there is predominance of affective commitment among public servants in a federal university. A number of specific elements that characterize each component of the identified commitment were also contributed by the authors. The affective dimension encompassed aspects such as personal satisfaction, dedication, the meaning of work in the employee's life, motivation, participation and involvement in

planning activities, and opportunities to solve problems. Aspects such as loyalty, gratitude, and adherence to organizational norms and values dominated the normative dimension. It is significant to note that stability, tranquility, and freedom/autonomy were among the characteristics that stood out in the continuance dimension. In a public organization, Oliveira and Honório (2020) also reported predominance of affective commitment.

Other studies indicate that the normative dimension is also present in the public sector. Vespasiano and Mendes (2017) examined the commitment of technical-administrative public servants of a federal university. The results indicated predominance of normative commitment, primarily associated with the obligation to stay due to organizational norms and values.

In addition to the predominant influence of affective commitment and studies that explore the normative dimension, we also observed data from some studies demonstrating a significant degree of continuance commitment, indicating that the public servant evaluated the potential exit costs associated with the possible exit from the public organization, a cost which may be associated with a guarantee of stability as well as access to other benefits characteristic of the public sector (Rocha & Ceretta, 2014). Unlike most research on commitment, La Falce et al. (2017) employed a longitudinal approach to investigate the construct in a public higher education institution, demonstrating a decline in commitment over time.

Based on the theoretical framework presented, particularly the previous international (Stanley et al., 2013; Meyer et al., 2012, 2013, 2015, 2018; Kam et al., 2016; Russo et al., 2012; Kyle et al., 2005; Sinclair et al., 2005; Wasti, 2005) and Brazilian (Bastos, 2000; Bastos & Borges-Andrade, 2002; Bandeira et al., 2000) studies, the following hypothesis was formulated:

- H_1 : The sample studied in this research contains a variety of commitment profiles.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study was quantitative, descriptive, and field-based. Two federal universities were chosen based on their accessibility in Northeast Brazil. There were 371 respondents from one of the universities and 99 from the other. In terms of institutional profile, one of the universities has seven campuses, while the other has nine. Both organizations have a similar organizational structure. Data collection took place from December 2019 to March 2020 approximately.

In the study, the sample consisted of workers from three distinct occupational categories: technical servers, managers, and outsourced administrative workers. Ten *campi* of the two universities surveyed were represented in different municipalities of the respective states in which they are located. The outsourced employees were included in order to explore the perceptions of different actors in the same organizational context. The positions held by the respondents and their sectors followed a heterogeneous distribution in terms of ethical procedures, the research adhered to Brazilian legislation, protecting the confidentiality of the respondents and using informed consent for the study. In addition, one of the universities' Ethics Committee approved the proposal. This study is part of a larger research project involving OC and other constructs.

The sample was considered adequate based on the requirements for factor analysis and number of items (Beavers et al., 2019; Damásio, 2012; Hair et al., 2009).

The survey instrument was composed of 1. ten questions to investigate sociodemographic and occupational data and 2. a scale of OC, adapted from the scale proposed by Pinho (2009), which assesses the affective, normative, and continuance dimensions, and is a six-point Likert scale, with 19 items ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

The sociodemographic and occupational data of the sample were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Cronbach's alpha was used to verify the reliability of the scale. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted in order to verify that the items on the same scale were grouped together, using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) test and Bartlett's test of sphericity, as well as the variance explained by the factor. Finally, for the delineation of the OCP, the latent profiles were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences and the Mplus softwares.

RESULTS

Sample profile

The sample consisted of 470 workers from two public federal universities, with a mean age of 39 years, mostly female (58.03%), single (44.30%) or married (41.50%), with children (52.60%), two dependents on average, with income between BRL 2,000.00 and BRL 5,000.00 (34.00%) or between BRL 5,000.00 and BRL 8,000.00 (30.60%). Most of them worked 40 hours a week (70.20%), and the average job tenure was nine years and six months.

Among the 470 respondents, 301 were technical servants, 65 were management servants, and 104 were outsourced.

In terms of characterization of the sample, the majority of public servants held positions of assistant in administration and higher levels. Sectors of the assignment included pro-rectory, libraries, academic units, city halls, institutional communication sectors, university restaurants, and university residences. The majority of outsourced employees were administrative assistants, followed by executive secretaries. The sectors to which the outsourced employees were assigned were similar to those of public employees. Outsourced employees were included in the research because they operate in the same sectors as the servants, which provided perceptions from different actors of the same organizational environment. As for managers, division directors predominated, followed by department directors.

Data reliability

A corrected item-total correlation was performed to verify the homogeneity of the scale used. The amplitude of the correlation values ranged from 0.40 to 0.71, meeting the cut-off point established by the literature, which indicates that all correlations should be above 0.30 ($r_{i.t} < 0.30$) (Pasquali, 2009). Based on these results, it is possible to conclude that the items of the OC scale are homogeneous.

A factor analysis of the data matrix was performed using the KMO test and Bartlett's test of sphericity, whose results were satisfactory ($\chi^2 [171] = 6,277.15$; $p < 0.001$; $KMO = 0.91$), thus allowing factor analysis to be performed (Pasquali, 2009).

Grouping of the items

An exploratory factor analysis was performed in order to determine the factor structure of the OC scale, using the method of extraction by principal components, without rotation, and with a fixed number of factors. The Kaiser, Cattell (scree-plot), and Horn (parallel analysis) criteria were used to determine the number of factors. In the first criterion, there are three factors, which can also be seen in the Cattell criterion, which is further corroborated by the Hull criterion, since the fourth factor of the Hull criterion (1.21) is greater than the fourth factor of the Kaiser criterion (0.80).

Following the previous results, exploratory factor analysis was performed using the principal component method, oblique rotation, and the

number of factors fixed at three, as indicated by the criteria previously described. The minimum factor load for belonging to a factor was $|0.40|$.

From the factor analysis, the following Cronbach's alpha results were obtained: for the affective dimension = 0.90; for the normative dimension = 0.91; and for the continuance dimension = 0.90.

Factor 1 included the items from the affective dimension of OC, such as "I feel proud telling people that I am part of the organization I work for", "I feel that there is a strong affective bond between my organization and me", "I feel the goals of my organization as if they were my own", and "This organization has an immense personal meaning for me".

Factor 2 integrated the items from the normative dimension, such as "Even if it would be to my advantage, I feel it would not be right to leave my organization now", "I would feel guilty if I left my organization now", and "I would not leave my organization now because I have a moral obligation to the people here".

Factor 3 integrated the items from the continuance dimension, such as "Many things in my life would get complicated if I decided to leave this organization now", "I do not leave this organization because of the losses that would harm me", "I think I would have few job alternatives if I left this organization", and "For me, the costs of leaving this organization would outweigh the benefits".

Although the item "Even if I wanted to, it would be very difficult for me to leave this organization now" had a minimum factorial load for allocation to factor 2, it was decided to follow the original factorial structure (Pinho, 2009) and keep this item as belonging to factor 3 because the factorial load was above $|0.30|$ (acceptable characteristic for the type of rotation applied), taking as reference the Cronbach's alpha values of 0.90, considered satisfactory.

Analysis of latent organizational commitment profiles

Using the "maximum likelihood estimator", a latent profile analysis (LPA) was conducted to identify the OCP. An initial estimate of two profiles was made based on the three factors of the OC scale. For subsequent comparisons, this number was successively increased (Mäkikangas et al., 2018; Nylund et al., 2007; Vermunt & Magidson, 2002). The procedure was performed using the MPlus software.

The models were evaluated according to some criteria pointed out in the literature, such as the Akaike information criterion (AIC), the Bayesian

information criterion (BIC), the sample-adjusted Bayesian information criterion (SABIC), the Lo-Mendell-Rubin test (LRT), the bootstrapped likelihood ratio test (BLRT), and the number of members in each profile. Low AIC, BIC, and SABIC values indicate a better model fit. Significant values ($p < 0.05$) of LRT and BLRT point to the selection of the most complex model (Muthén & Asparouhov, 2012).

Table 2 shows the distribution of the indicators for six profiles.

Table 2

Distribution of the fit indicators as a function of the models

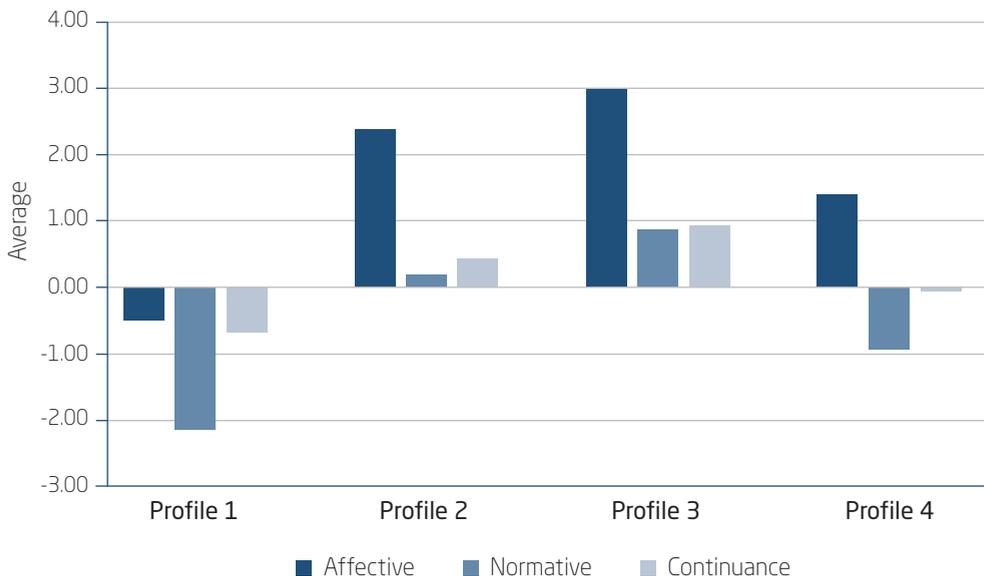
Models	AIC	BIC	SABIC	p LRT	p BLRT
Two profiles	7,371.64	7,413.17	7,381.43	< 0.0001	< 0.0001
Three profiles	7,310.25	7,368.39	7,323.95	< 0.0001	< 0.0001
Four profiles	7,135.32	7,210.06	7,152.94	0.31	< 0.0001
Five profiles	6,264.14	6,355.50	6,285.67	0.58	< 0.0001
Six profiles	6,255.29	6,363.26	6,280.74	0.08	< 0.0001

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

As a result of the estimation of the models, six profiles were generated, but the results indicated that the model with four profiles was the most appropriate, given that the p values for the LRT starting from this model begin to be non-significant, suggesting that the less complex models should be prioritized.

Figure 1 shows the four latent profiles generated after the analyses, in addition to the characteristics associated with the predominance of three dimensions of commitment: affective, normative, and continuance. In order to facilitate the understanding of this figure, the distribution has been reorganized.

Figure 1
Outlined organizational commitment profiles



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Table 3 shows the distribution of occupational categories according to profiles.

Table 3
Distribution of occupational categories according to the organizational commitment profiles

Profile	Technical (n = 301)		Managers (n = 65)		Outsourced (n = 104)	
	f	Valid %	f	Valid %	F	Valid %
Profile 1	65	21.59	5	7.69	13	12.50
Profile 2	102	33.89	38	58.46	45	43.27
Profile 3	22	7.31	5	7.69	12	11.54
Profile 4	112	37.21	17	26.15	34	32.69

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

According to Table 3, technical employees and outsourced employees are mainly profiles 2 (committed affective-continuance combination) and 4 (affectively committed), while managers are mainly profile 2 (committed affective-continuance combination). When considering the three categories of study, it is important to note the differences between them. Technical employees and managers are very similar in terms of their contractual relationship and greater stability, but they differ in terms of autonomy and influence within the university. Furthermore, outsourced workers have a more fragile contractual relationship, with less access to labor rights. They also share a dual relationship, with the university (where they perform their activities) and the contracting company (Chambel, 2012), assuming a dual relationship.

The distribution of the profiles illustrated in Figure 1 reveals that profile 1 has a low commitment level across all three dimensions, which allows it to be classified as “uncommitted”. It is evident that profile 2 has high levels of affective commitment and low levels of normative and continuance commitment, the latter with slightly higher levels than normative commitment, enabling it to be referred to as “affective-continuance combination commitment”. In contrast, profile 3 reveals a high level of affective commitment and moderate levels of normative and continuance commitment, which enables it to be classified as “moderate”. Alternatively, profile 4 is characterized by a positive level of affective commitment, along with negative indices for normative and continuance commitments, which allowed us to consider it “affectively committed”.

Meyer et al. (2012, 2013) reported that studies using the profiles approach found between five and nine profiles. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that the authors considered only international studies, none of which were conducted in the Brazilian context. However, this result is in line with that of Barbosa (2019), who, in a study conducted in a private organization context, also obtained four commitment profiles. None of the profiles found by the author had extremely low scores in the three dimensions of commitment, in contrast to the results of this study.

Regarding the characterization of the profiles, other studies conducted in the international scenario found a similar profile in profile 1 (uncommitted) (Meyer & Morin, 2016; Meyer et al., 2018; Wombacher & Felfe, 2017). The studies were conducted in both public and private organizations, with workers at different levels of the organizational hierarchy. According to some studies conducted in the Brazilian context, profile 1 has been identified through research on different focuses of commitment (Bastos, 2000;

Bastos & Borges-Andrade, 2002; Bandeira et al., 2000). In the present study, this profile is the third largest in terms of quantity ($n = 83$), with the majority of its members being men (50.60%), with a college degree (83.12%), single (51.81%), having no dependents (51.82%), with an income mainly between BRL 2,000.00 and BRL 5,000.00 (48.19%), having a weekly workload of 40 hours (79.52%), with a mean age of 36.61 years and a mean job tenure of 7.44 years.

Several international studies, including those by Meyer and Morin (2016), Somers (2010), and Russo et al. (2012) also included profile 2 (combination of affective-continuance commitments). These studies were conducted in a variety of organizations, with private enterprises, mainly hospitals and product delivery companies. This profile is the largest in quantitative terms ($n = 185$), primarily composed of women (58.38%) who have completed higher education (81.62%), are married (49.19%), have dependents (57.84%), have diverse income levels and weekly workloads of 40 hours (68.65%), have an average age of 40.09 years and an average job tenure of 10.41 years.

Studies conducted in the international context have identified profile 3 (moderate), including Kam et al. (2016), Stanley et al. (2013), and Meyer et al. (2012, 2015). A variety of hierarchical levels were represented in these studies, which were conducted with workers in both public and private organizations. This profile has the fewest members ($n = 39$) in the current study and is primarily composed of women (75.00%) with a college degree (77.78%), married (52.78%), with dependents (55.56%), varying levels of income, weekly workload of 40 hours (63.89%), an average age of 42.08 years and an average job tenure of 11.11 years.

As a final point, profile 4 (affectively committed) was found in studies conducted in other countries (Meyer et al., 2018; Kam et al., 2016; Somers, 2010) in a variety of organizations, public and private. As far as quantitative terms are concerned, this profile is the second largest ($n = 163$). Additionally, the sample is composed mostly of women (60.12%), with complete higher education (76.07%), who are single (48.47%), without children (52.92%), with diverse incomes, with a weekly workload of 40 hours (70.55%), an average age of 38.49 years, and an average job tenure of 9.36 years.

DISCUSSION

An exploratory factor analysis revealed a three-factor structure of commitment, which enabled latent profiles to be analyzed. Research on

engagement, including research on engagement in the public sector, has largely ignored the profiles identified in this study.

An interesting result was the emergence of the “uncommitted” profile, which differed from the other profiles mainly regarding gender and job tenure. It is evident from this profile that the dimensions of commitment have negative indices, demonstrating a lack of commitment to the organization where the work is being performed, which is a less valuable means of bonding.

When it comes to gender, profiles 2, 3, and 4 have a larger proportion of women than men, while profile 1 (uncommitted) has an equal gender balance, with a male predominance. Those results are consistent with Silva and Honório (2011), who, while conducting research in private organizations, identified five groups with varying commitment profiles, of which women were the most committed, whereas, in the male sample, it was evident that a specific uncommitted group was formed for the three dimensions of commitment.

The results of a study conducted by Andrade (2018) in a public HEI also indicated a predominance of commitment among women. In addition to being a very interesting result, this may also be explained by the fact that women are increasingly occupying management positions in the public sector as well as in the labor market in general. There is a noticeable trend in Brazilian universities that several management positions (such as dean and pro-rector) are now being held by women, facilitating greater participation in organizational decision-making. Moreover, other factors can be considered to explain the greater commitment of women in the work context, including the desire to acquire knowledge and grow professionally, the pursuit of personal goals, and the appreciation of interpersonal relationships, which have also been explored in other studies investigating the relationship between commitment and gender (Macedo et al., 2021; Tanrikulu, 2017; Magalhães & Macambira, 2013).

Likewise, profile 1 (uncommitted) showed less job tenure among its members than the other profiles. It is consistent with the findings of Tamayo et al. (2001), which reported that those who were more committed served longer. In addition to the personal and professional investment, the construction of a positive organizational bond is also influenced by a network of relationships that contribute to important affective aspects. Additionally, in the case of servants, job tenure is also associated with salary and career advantages, which are related to the continuation dimension of commitment.

Furthermore, it was very important to delineate profiles that went beyond simple descriptions of each dimension of commitment. In the present study, it was interesting to identify profile 2 (combined affective-continuance commitment), for example, which was characterized by both affective and continuance characteristics. Additionally, profile 3 (moderate) allowed us to visualize a composition with more balanced indices of the three dimensions of commitment. In contrast, the last profile (affectively committed) was distinguished by its sole focus on the effect. When using the profile approach, such differentiations are very useful for research in the area of commitment.

In accordance with the proportional distribution of the three occupational categories, technical and outsourced employees belong to profiles 2 (combined affective-continuance commitment) and 4 (affectively committed). It is a fascinating result when considering the differences between the two categories, especially with regard to the contractual regime and the labor conditions. While there is a clear link between outsourced employees and the institution at which they work (in this case, universities), the result may suggest that outsourced employees also have a strong relationship with the organization at which they work.

In order to formulate a possible explanation for this result, it would be necessary to consider three factors. First, this is mainly due to the fact that the outsourced employees work in administrative rather than operational fields, allowing them to have a closer relationship with different managers as well as achieve sectoral goals and objectives. The second point refers to the solid network of relationships and interaction among technical employees and their supervisors, as well as the low turnover rates of these employees in the studied organizations. Lastly, there is the pride associated with working at a public organization with high relevance and social impact, possessing social representations of positive characters, such as success, overcoming, and achievements. Moreover, the outsourced employee assumes a dual relationship with both the contracting company and the company where they perform their services (Chambel, 2012). The results may indicate a lower level of affective commitment among these outsourced workers compared to those employed in technical and managerial positions.

Despite this, managers tended to focus more on profile 2 (affective-continuance commitment), which could indicate that they commit more effectively while still maintaining a certain degree of continuity. These results are consistent with the idea that holding a gratified function is positively correlated with commitment, reported by Ramos and Teixeira (2017), as well as the results obtained by Farias and Gueiros (2015), who found that servers with gratified functions in a federal university showed higher rates

of affective commitment than those without gratified functions. Managers tend to be more involved in several activities of the teams for which they are responsible, in addition to being closer to more comprehensive and strategic decisions. In the sample studied, these factors may have contributed to significant indices of the affective dimension. In contrast, the continuance dimension may relate to the increased remuneration of these managers as a result of their managerial position.

While the occupational categories differed from each other, the effective predominance of the identified profiles was evident, which is consistent with the findings of Campos et al. (2009), who claim that affective commitment is the predominant dimension of public sector organizations. Moreover, considering the specific context of federal universities, the results that indicate the predominance of affective commitment are consistent with those of Farias and Gueiros (2015), who found that affective commitment is predominant in federal university servants.

Furthermore, the results were found to strengthen the relevance of investigating OCP (Meyer et al., 2012), since it allows for more detailed analyses of workers' bonding with the organization, as well as the possibility of observing and verifying differences and nuances based on certain sociodemographic and occupational characteristics. A better understanding of the attachment of different workers from the public service to the organizations at which they work, particularly at two federal universities, could be gained by examining the different dimensions of OC – affective, normative, and continuance (Weiner & Vardi, 1980; Mowday et al., 1979; Becker, 1960) – articulated in different profiles.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Based on Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-dimensional model, this study examined the OCP of different public service workers from two federal universities, in addition to discussing sociodemographic and occupational characteristics associated with these profiles.

Initially, the analysis demonstrated that the commitment scale was structured in three dimensions, thereby achieving the expected result of outlining OCP. Four distinct profiles were identified: uncommitted, a combination of affective-continuance commitment, moderate commitment, and affectively committed. Each profile has distinct characteristics related to its three dimensions of commitment and its sociodemographic and occupational characteristics.

A discussion was also possible regarding some of the latter data, especially those related to gender and job tenure. Additionally, a discussion was conducted regarding the distribution of occupational categories in relation to the outlined profiles. When using the results of the study, it was possible to picture the public servants' commitment, linking it to aspects of the literature, such as the social significance of the organization and the motivation to devote effort to it (Ferreira & Neiva, 2018). It was also possible to verify that outsourced employees had levels of commitment similar to those of public servants, which may be related to their relationship with the industry and a stronger bond with the organization where they work (in this case, the university) rather than the contracting company (Chambel, 2012), the meaning of the organization (pride of working at a federal university), and a low turnover rate.

This study contributed to the development of new validity evidence for the three-dimensional commitment model, the delineation of commitment profiles in the public sector and discussion of such profiles, as well as some sociodemographic data related to occupational category, gender, and job tenure, along with discussions of the implications of such results for the public sector. These results, related to commitment, can support a variety of management actions in the research universities regarding the adaptation of management models, leadership styles, and personnel management practices.

Research limitations included the quantitative limitation of the sample, which led to fewer representative profiles than in other studies, as well as the fact that the study was conducted only at two universities. In addition, it was difficult to access managers and outsourced employees. Ideally, future studies should examine commitment profiles in other Brazilian organizations and include antecedent and consequential variables to develop models that demonstrate a better understanding of the organization as a whole. Future studies may examine the relationship between the profiles surveyed and the remuneration of the workers, given the importance of analyzing this variable in the public sector.

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