

## Performance, Satisfaction and Intention to Remain in Organizations: Individual to Contextual Predictors

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### Abstract

The growing importance of human capital to the success of organizations has increased the efforts to learn what companies can do to attract and retain employees capable of helping them succeed. This paper investigated what individual, organizational and contextual variables predicted competent performance, job satisfaction, and intention to remain in the organization. Participants were 262 Brazilian professionals, who answered a survey online containing measures to assess individual (sociodemographic data, personality, and moral forces), organizational (labor data, contractual, constituent, calculative and behavioral forces), and contextual aspects (perceptions about the labor market, perceived employment opportunities, and normative forces). Their mean age was 35.4 years ( $SD = 8.74$ ) and 63% were men. Three independent hierarchical linear regression analyses were conducted. Results indicate that: individual aspects were the best predictors of competent performance; organizational variables only predicted Job satisfaction, and that individual, organizational, and contextual variables predicted intention to remain. We conclude that, although different variables predict performance, satisfaction and retention of professionals, the calculative force predicts these three variables. We recommend, therefore, that evidence-based management enable clear career dialogues between employees and organizational representatives, in order to retain valuable professionals and promote satisfactory experiences in organizations.

**Keywords:** Competent performance, job satisfaction, job performance, turnover intention.

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## Desempenho, Satisfação e Intenção de Permanecer nas Organizações: Preditores Individuais a Contextuais

### Resumo

A crescente importância do capital humano para o sucesso das organizações tem aumentado os esforços para entender o que empresas podem fazer para atrair e reter funcionários capazes de ajudá-las a alcançar sucesso. Este artigo investigou quais variáveis individuais, organizacionais e contextuais eram preditoras de desempenho competente, satisfação no trabalho e intenção de permanecer na organização. Participaram do estudo 262 profissionais brasileiros, que responderam um questionário on-line contendo medidas para avaliar variáveis individuais (dados sociodemográficos, de personalidade, e forças morais), organizacionais (dados laborais, forças contratuais, constituintes, calculativas e comportamentais), e contextuais (percepção do mercado e de empregabilidade, e forças normativas). Os participantes tinham, em média, 35,4 anos de idade ( $DP=8,74$ ), e 63% eram homens. Realizaram-se três análises independentes de regressão linear hierárquica. Os resultados indicaram que: aspectos individuais foram melhores preditores de desempenho competente; apenas variáveis organizacionais predisseram a satisfação no trabalho; variáveis individuais, organizacionais e contextuais predisseram a intenção de permanecer na empresa. Conclui-se que, embora diferentes variáveis predigam o desempenho, a satisfação e a retenção dos profissionais, a força calculativa prediz essas três variáveis. Assim, recomenda-se que uma gestão baseada em evidências promova diálogos claros sobre carreira a fim de reter profissionais valiosos e promover experiências satisfatórias nas organizações.

**Palavras-chave:** Desenvolvimento competente, satisfação no trabalho, desempenho no trabalho, intenção de *turnover*.

## Desempeño, Satisfacción e Intención de Permanecer en las Organizaciones: Desde Predictores Individuales a Contextuales

### Resumen

La importancia del capital humano para el éxito es responsable de aumentar los esfuerzos para entender cómo atraer y retener a empleados capaces de contribuir al éxito organizacional. Este artículo investiga qué variables individuales, organizacionales y contextuales predicen el desempeño competente, la satisfacción laboral y la intención de mantenerse en la organización. Participaron 262 profesionales, que respondieron un cuestionario online para evaluar variables individuales (datos sociodemográficos, de personalidad, y fuerzas morales), organizacionales (datos laborales, fuerzas contractuales, constituyentes, calculativas y comportamentales), y contextuales (percepción del mercado, de la empleabilidad, y fuerzas normativas). El promedio fue 35,4 años ( $DE=8.74$ ), enseñanza media completa, y el 63% eran hombres. Fueron ejecutadas tres análisis independientes de regresión lineal jerárquica. Los resultados indican que: los aspectos individuales fueron los mejores predictores de desempeño competente; sólo las variables organizacionales predicen la satisfacción en el trabajo; las variables individuales, organizacionales y contextuales predijeron la intención de permanecer en la empresa. Se concluye que, aunque diferentes variables predigan desempeño, satisfacción y retención de los profesionales, la fuerza calculativa predice esas tres variables. Así, se recomienda que una gestión basada en evidencias promueva diálogos claros sobre la carrera para retener a profesionales valiosos y promover experiencias satisfactorias en las organizaciones.

**Palabras clave:** Desempeño competente, satisfacción en el trabajo, desempeño en el trabajo, intención de rotación.

Around year 2000, Positive Organizational Psychology (POP) emerged proposing that scientists and professionals should focus on positive aspects of job experiences (Luthans, 2002). However, only recently organizations have shifted their focus from traditional structures – that rely strongly on management control and economic principles related to cost reduction, efficiency and cash flow – to the management of human capital (Donaldson & Dollwet, 2013). In such context, managers identify the key to innovation, organizational performance and competitiveness in their employees, and therefore, for their business success. As a result, researchers like Bakker and Shaufelli (2008) have asked: What can companies do to attract and retain talented, creative, committed employees, able to help organizations to succeed? What are the working conditions that inspire professionals to join in organizations, commit to them, deliver results that exceed expectations, and remain in them despite of faced difficulties?

The aforementioned question suggests a literature gap - that scholars who study turnover and attachment to organizations have been trying to solve for more than one hundred years of research (Hom, Lee, Shaw, & Hausknecht, 2017) -, as well as remits to the three pillars that support positive psychology (Donaldson & Ko, 2010; Peterson & Byron, 2008). The first refers to individual strengths and virtues, such as creativity, talent, and performance. The second pillar refers to positive emotions, such as satisfaction or well-being at work. The third pillar concerns positive institutions, and its principle is the promotion of the first two pillars, making easier the flourishing of individuals (Donaldson & Ko, 2010; Peterson & Byron, 2008). Based on these three pillars, POP is defined as the scientific examination of positive experiences and individual characteristics, and their applicability to the working environment, with the purpose of explaining and predicting optimal individual and organizational performance, amplifying and enhancing psychosocial well-being, the quality of work and of organizational life (Donaldson & Ko, 2010; Salanova, Llorens, & Martinez, 2016). By doing this, it has the potential to affect, at the

same time, individuals, organizations and the contexts of which they are part.

This research aims at contributing to the theoretical and empirical debate on promotion of positive environments and institutions. Therefore, its main goal is to analyze possible predictors of the intention to remain in the organization and of job satisfaction – variables that represent the pillar of positive emotions – as well as competent performance – which fall into the pillar of individual strengths and virtues. Its secondary goal is to identify whether there are, and which are common predictors of target variables. At the end, we will point out how our results can be applied to organizational contexts in order approximate the fields of study of employee turnover and positive psychology, by indicating retention factors capable of also promoting more effective environments, the flourishing, and the well-being of workers.

The intention to remain in or to leave an organization is considered the best predictor of voluntary employee retention or turnover behavior (Hom et al., 2017). Literature indicates that intangible costs of voluntary turnover behaviors are high for individuals and teams, who need to reorganize and adapt to new working realities. The same applies to tangible costs to recruit, hire and train a single worker, which can range from 90% to 200% of annual salary allocated to the position (Allen, Bryant, & Vardaman, 2010). Considering this impact for organizations and professionals, it is natural to see increasing efforts to predict and promote the intention to remain and such behavior in professionals.

The interest in this subject is so large that, not only scholars, but also companies, like the LinkedIn (social network for professionals) do annual investigations on talent turnover rates. The results of the study published in 2018, with data referring to 10,000 professionals who switched jobs in 2017, for instance, showed that the main reason for job change, cited by 45% of the sample, was the concern about the lack of opportunities for advancement. The second and third reasons were, respectively, the dissatisfaction with the leadership of senior management (41%) and

with the work environment / culture (36%). The search for more challenging work was the fourth most cited reason (36%; Booz, 2018). These results suggest that when professionals realize that the opportunity to develop and show their talent in the organization where they work is unclear, and when they are not satisfied with it, they tend to be more likely to turnover.

Among several studies carried out with the purpose of surveying such intent and behavior, a specific one, performed by Maertz and Griffeth (2004), presented a conceptual framework, which explains, in a quite comprehensive, but rather parsimonious manner, why employees decide to leave or to stay in organizations. According to the authors, eight categories or motivational forces guide decisions like that. More specifically, events, memories and other cognitions would trigger conscious decisions about the organizational affiliation.

These decisions involve a cognitive process of self-asking and answering the following questions associated to motivational forces: (1) How do I feel working here? (2) What are the chances to achieve my goals in this organization in the future? (3) Do I have any obligation towards this organization if I decide to stay in it? (4) What would I lose if I left the organization? (5) Do I have better alternatives than working here? (6) What my family members and friends expect me to do? (7) Is moving to another company the right thing to do? and (8) How strong are my bonds with people in this organization? To Maertz and Griffeth (2004), questions number 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8 refer to how the individual perceives the organization (organizational forces), questions 5 and 6 refer to how they perceive the context of which they are part outside the organization (contextual forces) and the question number 7 refers to the individual's values regarding job mobility (individual forces).

Most studies on employee turnover and retention consider only the organizational and contextual background to predict these phenomena, and leave a gap in literature with regard to individual variables (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2001). This idea is supported by Samad and Saufi (2017), who argue that the literature on

voluntary employee turnover evolved from the investigation of retention determinants – with an organizational focus – to a combination of organizational, non-organizational, economical, and environmental factors.

Samad and Saufi (2017) also point that among the variables that were most explored in traditional studies are job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance, job searching and job opportunities. More contemporary studies, however, have begun to extend the retention model by investigating variables, such as work life balance, human resource management practices, organizational reputation and prestige. With regard to professionals with superior performance, Aguinis, Gottfredson, and Joo (2012) emphasize that interesting and challenging working activities, as well as differentiated salaries are causes of commitment and intention to remain in the organization.

Although included in the surveys on turnover and retention, the job satisfaction has unleashed its own line of research. Frequently, this variable is referred to as affectivity at the workplace or affective attachment of the individual with his/her job (Siqueira & Gomide, 2004). Studies on job satisfaction have shown some of its predicting variables: Organizational culture (Belias & Koustelios, 2014); perceptions of justice, support, reciprocity (Miao, Sun, Hou, & Li, 2012); and affective attachment to the organization (Siqueira & Gomide, 2004). Besides being an indicator of the well-being of employees, the job satisfaction has been associated to a competent performance (Bitmiş & Ergeneli, 2013), and withholding of professionals (Griffeth et al., 2001; Li, Lee, Mitchel, Hom, & Griffeth, 2016; Oliveira, 2014).

Researches on job satisfaction grounded on positive psychology highlight the importance of this variable for the promotion of positive organizational outcomes. They also stress the significance of this variable in promoting opportunities so that employees have their basic needs met at work, thus keeping or increasing their happiness. Examples of this are the positive relationships between employee satisfaction

and results across business units, including customer satisfaction, productivity, profit, and withholding of employees (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). Research shows that job satisfaction and embeddedness more strongly influence the intent to leave and job search behavior for individuals who are enthusiastic stayers (want to stay and can stay in the organization) and leavers (want to leave and can leave the organization) than for reluctant stayers (want to leave but feel they must stay), and leavers (want to stay but feel they must leave; Li et al., 2016).

The performance consists of knowledge and skills required to perform a specific job activity in the present, and the wisdom to succeed in the organization in the future (Bitmiş & Ergeneli, 2013). Some studies have showed positive relationships between job satisfaction and performance (Cerasoli, Nicklin, & Ford, 2014; Donaldson & Ko, 2010; Griffeth & Hom, 2001). Furthermore, in practical situations, as well as in literature, one of the longest-running debates is that of the “happy-productive worker”, or the belief that a satisfied worker will be also a good performer (Carpini, Parker, & Griffin, 2017). However, the nature and direction of the relationship between satisfaction and performance are not clear for scholars (Bitmiş & Ergeneli, 2013).

A meta-analysis of the relationship among such variables showed that the uncorrected average correlation between job satisfaction and performance was  $r = .18$ , and may reach  $r = .30$  when corrected, or to be even higher when it is about working with complex activities (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). The results of a study, which surveyed 88 Brazilian operational employees, suggest that individuals who have access to information about their performance have higher levels of job satisfaction (Souza & Beuren, 2018). Other studies suggest that this relationship may not be direct and that other variables may moderate it, such as psychological capital and trust on the management of the professional (Bitmiş & Ergeneli, 2013).

As with the job satisfaction, there have been several attempts to characterize and identify the background of competent performance.

However, this is not a phenomenon with consensual definitions (Meyers, van Woerkom, & Dries, 2013; Oliveira, Natividade, & Gomes, 2013). Despite theoretical and empirical attempts, a gap in defining objectively and measurably competent performance has made difficult to identify individuals able to issue it (Oliveira et al., 2013). Even though, one can find extensive literature on high-performance, high talent, high potential, etc. This is because finding individuals with the best deliveries is a goal of organizations, especially in the current “war for talents” context (Oliveira et al., 2013).

Among the publications on this subject, there is a trend towards the investigation of the individual performance background, focusing on features such as reasoning, personality, perception of leadership styles, participation in decision-making, job involvement, creativity and commitment (Coelho, 2009). Although this trend reflects a view that there are innate characteristics that would lead to better performance (Meyers et al., 2013), some researchers suggest that acquired or developed characteristics and contextual aspects would also result in competent performances (Meyers et al., 2013; Oliveira et al., 2013; Rodrigues & Rebelo, 2013). Examples of these characteristics are leadership skills, performance, knowledge and values (Oliveira et al., 2013).

One can notice that three target variables of this study – performance, satisfaction, and intention to remain – are related to each other, although the nature of their relationship is not clear or consensually defined by previous research. In addition to that, considering that Positive Psychology is the science that investigates well-being – which may be measured in relation to positive emotion, engagement, meaning, positive relationships and accomplishment – (Donaldson, Dollwet, & Rao, 2015), it is clear that identifying the antecedents of these variables is of interest for POP and other HR practitioners. Thus, we believe that the significance of the present research lies on the following facts: (1) it is an empirical paper, (2) which points out results that are significant to practices associated to selection, management and retention of

professionals in organizations. According to Donaldson and Ko (2010), only 34% of papers on POP, published between 2001 and 2009, result from empirical studies. A literature review on positive psychology, which analyzed studies produced from 2009 to 2013, indicated that 35% of the empirical investigations used samples of adults (Donaldson et al., 2015). Mills, Fleck, and Kozikowski (2013) add that despite the fact that positive psychological principles have become increasingly prevalent in the workplace, the field still lacks a comprehensive and practice-based overview of POP. This shows that, regardless of the effort to find evidences that confirm or refute theoretical statements in positive psychology, it remains being a field under development and, as such, it lacks empirical studies to establish itself as a solid discipline.

## Method

### Participants

Two hundred sixty-two Brazilian professionals, mean age 35.4 ( $SD = 8.74$ ;  $Min = 20$  years, and  $Max = 66$  years) participated in this study, 63% being men. They were mostly from the South of Brazil, 76.3%; 19.5% were from the Southeast; 1.5%, from Northeast; 1.1%, from North; 0.8%, from Midwest; and 0.8% were not at Brazil. Participants had finished at least the high school, of which 15.3% had incomplete undergraduate level; and 73.4% had a higher education level. They occupied different positions in organizations encompassing the following segments: 51.1% worked for manufacturing industries, 41.8% worked for services industry; 5.78% in trade; and the remaining 1.32% did not inform their area of expertise.

### Instruments

We used a self-applicable online questionnaire made available on the Internet. In addition to socio-demographic questions and questions associated to the professional lives of the respondents, the questionnaire also included psychometric scales to assess three target variables: competent performance, job satisfaction, and intention to remain in the organization. We

also used instruments to assess possible correlated variables, which configured individual, organizational and contextual aspects.

Most of the scales used in this study compose the Turnover and Attachment Motives Survey (TAMS). This instrument was proposed by Maertz and Griffeth (2004) and validated for use with Brazilian professionals by Oliveira, Beria, and Gomes (2016). It aimed to be, at the same time, the most comprehensive and parsimonious, measure of turnover and attachment motives and there is evidence of its suitability for understanding and managing turnover intention and its antecedents among employees (Oliveira et al., 2016). Next, we provide detailed information on the scales.

### Target Variables.

**Competent performance.** We used the Talent in Organizations Scale (Oliveira et al., 2013). This scale measures three dimensions associated to performance in organizations. In this paper, we used only the sub-scale related to the quality of work developed in organizations ( $\alpha = .84$ ). Such dimension is about the perception of performance of working activities with excellence, high quality of the developed work, or its final product. Eight items presented as statements make up the subscale, and the participants answer, on a five-point scale, about how much these items characterize them properly.

**Job Satisfaction.** The Affective Force scale of the Inventory of Motivations to Remain in and to Leave Organizations used (TAMS; Maertz & Boyar, 2012) was adapted to Brazil by Oliveira, et al. (2016). This scale assesses the perception of satisfaction of being part of the organization, and the feeling of being a member of it. The scale consists of five items presented as statements, and the participants answered how much they agreed with them ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

**Intention to remain.** We used an adaptation of Lambert's & Hogan's scale (2008), adapted to Brazil by Oliveira (2014), which evaluates the intent to leave or to remain in the organization in a near future. The instrument consists of four affirmations, which participants answer, based on

a five-point scale ( $\alpha = .89$ ). High scores evidence high levels of intent to leave the organization. Therefore, in this study, we reversed the scores to compute the intention to remain.

### Correlate Variables.

#### *Individual aspects.*

Socio-demographic questions were used, such as age, gender, marital status (single or married/common-law marriage), if the participant had children (yes or no) as well as the scales described hereinafter.

*Reduced Five Personality Factors Measure* (Hauck, Machado, Teixeira, & Bandeira, 2010). It assesses personality traits according to the template of five major factors: Extraversion, Socialization, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism and Openness. The instrument is made up of 25 items, five for each factor, presented as adjectives, and the participants answer how much they characterize them properly, on a five-point scale ( $\alpha = .61$  to  $\alpha = .83$ ).

*Moral Force* (Maertz & Boyar, 2012). The scale adapted to Brazil by Oliveira et al. (2016) assesses attitudes regarding staying in a single organization throughout life. It has two dimensions: one that measures the attitude pro turnover, with five items, named Withdrawal (Brazilian's version,  $\alpha = .74$ ), and another pro-attachment approach, with four items, named Attachment (Brazilian's version,  $\alpha = .80$ ). Items are affirmations and participants indicate how much they agree with them, on a five-point scale.

#### *Organizational Aspects.*

We asked questions about professional life, such as current salary (in Reais), number of hours worked per week, number of pay raises in the last three years, number of promotions received in the last three years. In addition, the following scales, all of them proposed by Maertz and Boyar (2012) and adapted to Brazil by Oliveira et al. (2016), were applied (reliability information and number of items presented below refer to the Brazilian version of the instrument).

*Contractual Force.* Measures two dimensions of an assessment of the psychological contract with the organization. One dimension

measures the need to repay the organization for compliance with the psychological contract, with four items, named Obligation ( $\alpha = .89$ ). The other is about the perception of the psychological contract breach by the organization, with three items, named Violation ( $\alpha = .79$ ). The items are statements and the participants needed to answer how much they agreed with them, on a five-point scale.

*Constituent Force – Coworkers.* It assesses a review of the relationships established with coworkers in the organization. It is made up of three dimensions (two in the Brazilian version of the instrument). The Affective + Continuance dimension measures the degree to which professionals like, or have affinity with their coworkers, as well as the extent to which relationships established with coworkers can bring personal benefits. It contains seven items and consists ( $\alpha = .74$ ). The Normative dimension relates to an expectation not to disappoint coworkers, and is made up of four items ( $\alpha = .71$ ). Items are affirmations, and the participants needed to answer how much they agree with them, on a five-point scale.

*Constituent Force – Supervisor.* This scale is very similar to the above-described Constituent Force – Coworkers, except for the fact that it assesses the relationships established with supervisors. Dimensions and numbers of items are identical to Constituent - Coworkers, the internal consistency coefficients were: Affective + Continuance,  $\alpha = .91$ ; Normative,  $\alpha = .66$ .

*Calculative Force.* It assesses the extent to which professionals realize being possible achieving their career goals and life values, taking into account their current organizations and prospecting the future ( $\alpha = .90$ ). The measurement consists of six items under a statement format, and the participants needed to answer how much they agreed with them, on a five-point scale.

*Behavioral Force.* It measures an assessment of costs arising from a possible leave from the organization. The instrument assesses three dimensions. One relates to the perception of tangible losses arising from a leave from the organization, such as wage reductions, loss of

benefits, etc., which is named Tangible Costs and is made up by six items ( $\alpha = .66$ ). The second one relates to psychological losses, such as losing friends within the company, named Psychological Costs, and consists of five items ( $\alpha = .64$ ); and the third dimension regards the realization of personal efforts to be made in order to leave the organization, is made up of four items and is named Inertia ( $\alpha = .76$ ). Items are affirmations, and the participants needed to answer how much they agreed with them, on a five-point scale.

### *Contextual Aspects.*

We applied a question about how the participant perceived the opportunities at the job market: If he/she received, a job offer considered interesting in terms of compensation or position in the last 12 months (yes or no). In addition to this question, we used the following instruments:

*Employment Opportunity Index* – EOI (Morse, Weinhardt, Griffeth, & Oliveira, 2014). It assesses perceptions about mobility options in the job market. It consists of five dimensions: (1) Ease of Movement approaches the number of mobility alternatives (three items;  $\alpha = .76$ ); (2) Desirability of Movement evaluates the judgment about the quality of alternatives (three items;  $\alpha = .85$ ); (3) Crystallization of Alternatives concerns the perception of concrete offers that enable mobility (two items;  $\alpha = .82$ ); (4) Networking is related to the perception of access to contacts able to make easier finding mobility opportunities (three items;  $\alpha = .76$ ); (5) Mobility is a dimension on the perception of the ease to perform spatial displacements to take a new job (three items;  $\alpha = .73$ ). The items are affirmations, and the participants needed to answer how much they agreed with them, on a five-point scale.

*Normative Force* (Maertz & Boyar, 2012; Oliveira et al., 2016). It accesses two dimensions on perceptions of relatives' and friend's attitudes towards a possible leave from the organization. One dimension concerns the participant's family attitude, with five items, named Family ( $\alpha = .81$ ); and the other is related to the attitude of friends, with five items, named Friends ( $\alpha = .80$ ). The

participants had to indicate how much they agree with each of the statements, on a five-point scale.

### *Procedures of Data Collection*

Participants who were part of the social networking of the research team were recruited by personal emails, and invitations were made available on social and working networks for other potential participants. The invitations included a brief description of the study, information about the researchers and a link to the questionnaire available on an Internet address. The questionnaire's first page presented the Term of Informed Consent. Participants who consented expressed their agreement on the first page, and were redirected to other parts of the questionnaire. The time needed to finish completing the questionnaire was of about 30 minutes.

The participants included in the sample were older than 18 years, were currently employed, worked for at least one year in the same organization, and agreed to the Term of Informed Consent. The participants who did not conclude the questionnaire were excluded from the sample. This research was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines for research with human beings. It was approved by the Ethics Committee for Research with human beings of the Psychology Institute of Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, under the protocol n. 21665.

### *Procedures of Data Analysis*

At first, we calculated the mean and standard deviations of the study variables. Then, the Pearson correlations among Competent performance, Job satisfaction, Intention to remain and the other variables were investigated in order to select the ones to be included in predictive models. Due to the large number of variables investigated, those which showed significant correlations with Competent performance, Job satisfaction, and Intention to Remain were included as predictors in their hierarchical multiple regression analysis, enter method. The variables were included in the model in three steps, the first one included the variables related to individual aspects of the participants,



the second one, those related to organizational aspects, and the third one included those with a broader social context. The hierarchical analysis was performed in order to characterize the importance of individual, organizational and contextual aspects as a set of explanatory variables of the target constructs. To conduct the analysis, all of the data missing (2.19% of the unanswered questions) were substituted by the mean of series.

## Results

Initially, we calculated the means, standard deviation and correlations coefficients among targets and Individual, Organizational and Contextual variables, which are showed in Table 1.

For Competent Performance, the following personal variables showed significant positive correlations: Age, Agreeableness, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Openness to experience; while the variables coefficients Neuroticism, and having children had negative coefficients. The following organizational variables showed positive correlations Constituent Coworkers Force – Affective, Calculative Force, having had at least one promotion in the past three years. The following contextual variables showed positive correlations: EOI – Networking, EOI – Desirability Movement, EOI – Crystallization of Alternatives.

For Job Satisfaction, the following personal variables showed significant positive correlations: Conscientiousness, Moral Force – Attachment, and being married; and the following had negative coefficients: Neuroticism, Moral Force – Withdrawal, having children. The following organizational variables showed positive correlations: Salary, Contractual Force – Obligations, Constituent Coworkers Force – Affective, Constituent Supervisor Force – Continuance, Constituent Supervisor Force – Affective, Calculative Force, Behavioral Force – Inertia, Behavioral Force – Psychological Costs; and the following, had negative coefficient: Contractual Force – Violation. The following contextual variables showed positive correlations EOI – Ease Movement, EOI - Mobility; and the

following, had negative coefficients: Normative Force – Family, Normative Force – Friends, EOI – Desirability Movement, EOI – Crystallization of Alternatives.

For Intention to Remain, the following personal variables showed significant negative correlations: Neuroticism and Moral Force – Withdrawal. The following organizational variables showed positive correlations: Salary, Contractual Force – Obligations, Constituent Coworkers Force – Affective, Constituent Supervisor Force – Continuance, Constituent Supervisor Force – Affective, Calculative Force, Behavioral Force – Inertia, Behavioral Force - Psychological Costs.

Having had at least one promotion and more than three salary increases in the past three years. The following had a negative coefficient: Contractual Force – Violation. The following contextual variable showed positive correlation: having received interesting job offers in the past year; and the following negative coefficient Normative Force – Family, Normative Force – Friends, EOI – Desirability Movement, EOI – Crystallization of Alternatives.

## *Hierarchical Linear Regressions*

Tables 2 to 4 show, respectively, the hierarchical linear regression analysis of predictors of Competent Performance, Job Satisfaction and Intention to Remain in the Organization. It is noteworthy that in the Competent performance predictive model, as shown in Table 2, the individual aspects were those that contributed most to explain the variance of the phenomenon (21%), which suggests that performance is mainly associated with individual characteristics, more specifically, personality traits. It is important to stress, however, that even though most contextual aspects did not add much to the explained variance (2%), calculative forces did contribute positively. This variable refers to the perceptions individuals have about their chances for achieving personal goals and fulfilling their own values in one organization, which suggests that seeing a clear future ahead in the organization might contribute to performance.

**Table 1**  
**Means, Standard-Deviation and Correlations among Targets and Individual, Organizational and Contextual Variables**

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Correlations		
				1	2	3
1- Competent performance	262	3.75	0.64	--		
2- Job Satisfaction	257	3.86	0.95	.07	--	
3- Intention to remain	262	3.23	1.30	-.12	<b>.58**</b>	--
<b>Individual Variables</b>						
Age	262	35.4	8.75	.16**	.12	.09
Agreeableness	251	4.05	0.57	.23**	.09	.03
Extraversion	251	3.73	0.77	.20**	.08	-.07
Neuroticism	251	2.29	0.73	-.22**	-.26**	-.21**
Conscientiousness	251	4.32	0.47	<b>.33**</b>	.16*	.06
Openness to experience	251	3.16	0.73	.27**	-.002	-.11
Moral Force - Attachment	259	2.94	0.82	.06	.16**	.09
Moral Force - Withdrawal	259	2.90	0.75	.09	-.23**	<b>-.30**</b>
Gender (male)	262	63.0%		-.11	-.10	-.01
Marital status (married)	262	70.2%		.11	.16**	.05
Have children (yes)	262	43.1%		-.15*	-.13*	-.08
<b>Organizational Variables</b>						
Salary (BRL)	236	5537.9	3353.6	.09	.25**	.28**
Working hours per week	223	45.6	8.64	.03	.02	.03
Contractual Force - Obligation	257	3.03	0.96	.08	<b>.60**</b>	<b>.46**</b>
Contractual Force - Violation	257	2.47	1.19	.01	<b>-.35**</b>	<b>-.38**</b>
Constituent Coworkers Force - Affective	257	4.04	0.69	.18**	.27**	.13*
Constituent Coworkers Force - Continuance	257	2.91	0.77	.02	.09	.10
Constituent Coworkers Force - Normative	257	2.31	0.77	.06	-.07	-.10
Constituent Supervisor Force - Continuance	257	2.85	1.10	.03	<b>.41**</b>	.28**
Constituent Supervisor Force - Normative	257	2.58	0.85	.08	.09	-.10
Constituent Supervisor Force - Affective	257	3.61	0.98	.04	<b>.48**</b>	.28**
Calculative Force	259	3.38	1.07	.16**	<b>.63**</b>	<b>.59**</b>
Behavioral Force - Tangible Costs	259	2.63	0.84	.07	.08	.09
Behavioral Force - Inertia	259	3.06	0.99	-.04	.19**	.26**
Behavioral Force - Psychological Costs	259	3.68	0.79	.10	<b>.56**</b>	<b>.43**</b>
At least one promotion in the past three years (yes)	262	55.7%		.09*	.05	.18**
More than three raises in the past three years (yes)†	262	16.8%		.06	.08	.14*

Contextual Variables

Normative Force - Family	257	2.62	1.06	.07	-.13 *	-.26 **
Normative Force - Friends	257	2.30	0.99	.10	<b>-.43**</b>	<b>-.57**</b>
EOI - Networking	257	3.78	0.86	.26**	.09	.01
EOI - Ease of Movement	257	3.66	0.83	.09	.18**	.09
EOI - Desirability of Movement	257	3.25	0.91	.22**	-.14*	<b>-.30 **</b>
EOI - Crystallization of Alternatives	257	2.25	1.16	.13*	-.14*	-.29**
EOI - Mobility	257	3.68	1.11	.04	.13*	.01
Interesting job offers in the past year (yes)	262	66.8%		-.11	.06	.18**

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ . Pearson's coefficients equal or greater than .30 are in boldface. † We used that criterion because the Brazilian Labor Law determines the need of at least one raise per year.

**Table 2**  
**Hierarchical Linear Regression Analysis of Predictors of Competent Performance**

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$
<b>Individual Variables</b>			
Age	.07	.10	.10
Agreeableness	.06	.06	.05
Extraversion	.12*	.14*	.12*
Neuroticism	-.11	-.07	-.07
Conscientiousness	.25***	.24***	.24***
Openness to experience	.20**	.20**	.16**
Have children (yes=1; no=0)	-.02	.002	.002
<b>Organizational Variables</b>			
Constituent Coworkers Force - Affective		.04	.01
Calculative Force		.12*	.13*
Promotions in the past three years		.09	.07
<b>Contextual Variables</b>			
EOI - Networking			.06
EOI - Desirability of Movement			.07
EOI - Crystallization of Alternatives			.05
$R^2$	.21	.23	.25
$F$	9.60***	7.66***	6.34***
$\Delta R^2$	.21	.02	.01
$\Delta F$	9.60***	2.68*	0.68

Note. \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Method Enter. Missing data were substituted by series mean.  $N = 262$ .

As shown in Table 3, which presents the results of the Job Satisfaction model, the organizational aspects were those that added more explained variance (47%). In addition, the

results show that none of the contextual variables was significant in the model. This suggests that only aspects over which the organization has a direct influence will contribute to individuals' satisfaction with their labor experience.

**Table 3**  
**Hierarchical Linear Regression Analysis of Predictors of Job Satisfaction**

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	
	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$	
<b>Individual Variables</b>				
Neuroticism	-.22	-.07	-.05	
Realization	.09	.04	.04	
Moral Attachment Force	.11	-.02	.02	
Moral Withdrawal Force	-.17**	-.06	-.02	
Marital status (married=1; single=0)	.11	.05	.06	
Have children (yes=1; no=0)	-.03	-.04	-.05	
<b>Organizational Variables</b>				
Salary		.01	-.02	
Contractual Force - Obligation		.27***	.25***	
Contractual Force - Violation		-.04	-.01	
Constituent Coworkers Force - Affective		.04	.04	
Constituent Supervisor Force - Continuance		-.08	-.08	
Constituent Supervisor Force - Affective		.23**	.24**	
Calculative Force		.29***	.24***	
Behavioral Force - Inertia		-.02	-.03	
Behavioral Force - Psychological Costs		.24***	.23***	
<b>Contextual Variables</b>				
Normative Force - Family			.002	
Normative Force - Friends			-.10	
EOI - Ease of Movement			.05	
EOI - Desirability of Movement			-.05	
EOI - Crystallization of Alternatives			-.04	
EOI - Mobility			.03	
	$R^2$	.15	.62	.63
	$F$	7.40***	26.4***	19.7***
	$\Delta R^2$	.15	.47	.01
	$\Delta F$	7.40***	33.5***	1.67

Note. \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . Method Enter. Missing data were substituted by series mean.  $N = 262$ .

In the Intention to remain model, shown in Table 4, variables representing the three aspects investigated (individual, organizational, and contextual) were significant in the model. The organizational variables were the ones explaining the higher rate of variance (35%). These results suggest that the intention to

remain with or to leave an organization are more complex than the other two target variables investigated. In addition, the results of the three regression analyses combined make it clear that only one of the aspects investigated contributed to explain the variation in all the target variables: the calculative force.

**Table 4**  
**Hierarchical Linear Regression Analysis of Predictors of Intention to Remain**

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$
<b>Individual Variables</b>			
Neuroticism	-.18**	-.07	-.04
Moral Force – Withdrawal	-.28***	-.20***	-.13**
<b>Organizational Variables</b>			
Salary		.06	.05
Contractual Force – Obligation		.05	.05
Contractual Force – Violation		-.16**	-.09
Constituent Coworkers – Affective		-.004	.04
Constituent Supervisor - Continuance		-.06	-.05
Constituent Supervisor – Affective		.03	.02
Calculative Force		.38***	.33***
Behavioral Force – Inertia		.10	.04
Behavioral Force - Psychological Costs		.10	.09
Promotions in the past three years (yes=1; no=0)		.07	.06
More than three pay raises in the past three years (yes=1; no=0)		.01	.01
<b>Contextual variables</b>			
Normative Force – Family			-.03
Normative Force – Friends			-.21**
EOI - Desirability of Movement			-.10
EOI - Crystallization of Alternatives			-.10
Interesting job offer in the past year (yes=1; no=0)			.02
$R^2$	.12	.47	.55
$F$	17.9***	16.9***	16.5***
$\Delta R^2$	.12	.35	.08
$\Delta F$	17.9***	14.8***	8.73***

Note. \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ . Method Enter. Missing data were substituted by series mean.  $N = 262$ .

## Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to investigate predictors of three variables of interest, both of POP and professionals working in career management within an organizational context. Those variables were competent performance, job satisfaction and intention to remain in the organization. Then, we sought to identify whether there would be, and what would be common predictors for these three target variables.

For competent performance, we found four significant variables, which explained 25% of the variance. They were extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and calculative force – the perception that it is possible to achieve career goals and values when one remains in the organization. The fact that personality variables were those that most contributed to the competent performance explanation is consistent with the results observed in Brazilian and international studies (e.g. Coelho & Borges-Andrade, 2011).

Generally, studies on the subject identify as individual aspects of a performance background, to the detriment of contextual and organizational performances, suggesting the existence of innate components associated with performance (Meyers et al., 2013; Rodrigues & Rebelo, 2013). This is in agreement with the positive psychology publications that assign the conditions for a person presenting the best performance possible to him/her to individual forces (Luthans, 2002). These strengths are usually understood as personality traits and thus innate, but can be developed to some extent (Meyers et al., 2013; Salanova et al., 2016).

It is suggested, based on the results that organizations interested in attracting and retaining employees, who have competent performance, should take into account individual features from early stages of their recruitment processes. The review of 9.299 articles conducted by Carpini et al. (2017) showed that characteristics such as Personality, Conscientiousness, Age, Gender and Cognitive ability, for example have correlations with job performance. This measure

could help human resources professionals to find candidates able to contribute more effectively to the organization business.

Another action that can generate positive results for the organization is to identify and invest in strengths of employees, who have already joined the organization (Oliveira et al., 2013). As well as presenting them with challenges that fit their strengths (Cerasoli et al., 2014), because by doing this, professionals are required to maintain a positive adjustment under challenging circumstances, which helps them to improve their strengths and, under pressure, to maintain performance and results (Salanova et al., 2016). According to literature, this measure could promote better performances both for individuals and for organizations (Cerasoli et al., 2014; Luthans, 2002; Salanova et al., 2016)

It should be noted that the calculative force was the only organizational aspect that contributed to the variation of competent performance. It is possible that professionals, who realize that they have good chances of achieving their life and career goals in one organization, assign greater meaning to work experience, and thus perform better (Cerasoli et al., 2014). This idea is in consonance with the results obtained in the report by LinkedIn. It pointed that the main reason for changing jobs in the year 2017 was “the concern about the lack of opportunities for advancement”, followed by the “desire for more challenging job” (Booz, 2018). It is possible that foreseeing an interesting and challenging future ahead motivates professionals to perform better, in order to achieve their goals.

In addition, according to Peterson and Seligman (2004), all individuals have strengths, and pursuing those strengths would be accompanied by positive feelings such as renovation, high energy, intrinsic motivation, authenticity and self-fulfillment. As pointed by Salanova et al., (2016), workers who not only fulfill their duties, but also “go the extra mile”, show increased performance. Therefore, use and mastering of strengths could explain the contribution of calculative force as a predictor of competent performance.

Similarly to what happened with performance, in general, contextual factors were not significant to explain the variation in job satisfaction. The same has happened to the individual variables. Thus, a variance of 63% in this variable was explained by only four organizational variables - indicating the importance of human resources practices and organizational policies in promoting an optimal experience for individuals and the organizations (Salanova et al., 2016). More specifically, our results show that professionals, who are happy with the organization, usually like their supervisors and the relationship they have with them, and evaluate that there are important psychological costs that might arise when they leave their jobs.

In this regard, researches indicate that organizational aspects, such as the relationship with the supervisor and their ability to influence the environment, affect job satisfaction (Belias & Koustelios, 2014). In line with this, the research conducted by LinkedIn, showed that some of the biggest reasons for leaving a job involved dissatisfaction with leadership (41%) and with the work environment (36%; Booz, 2018).

These results allow emphasizing the importance of realizing that it is possible to achieve career goals in the organization (Calculative force), as well as that the psychological contract with the organization is being fulfilled (Contractual force-obligation). They also suggest that organizations could contribute to the satisfaction of its employees keeping promises made, and avoiding making promises that cannot be kept (Maertz & Boyar, 2012). Likewise, being clear about their professionals' expectations regarding their careers in the organization (Abattiello et al., 2018), and keeping an open communication about the possibilities and limitations related to their development, would increase their chances of remaining at the job (Booz, 2018; Oliveira, 2014). Both measures would lead to higher levels of satisfaction with their jobs and with the organization (Abattiello et al., 2018; Booz, 2018; Maertz & Boyar, 2012).

The job satisfaction explanation solely by organizational variables is against what is observed in international literature, which tends to investigate primarily the individual background of this variable. However, for some authors, despite the strength of this trend, it is also important to investigate the organizational background, since it allows us establishing connections with results that are directly significant to most businesses (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Van De Voorde, Paauwe, & Van Veldhoven, 2012). Thus, the fact that satisfaction is explained exclusively by organizational backgrounds suggests that it will be more easily monitored and influenced by the organization than, for instance, the competent performance.

A survey conducted by Deloitte (a multinational professional services network) with over 11.000 human resources and business leaders about the trends for Human Capital for 2018 showed results that are consistent with ours. They reveal that employees, in different companies, demand that organizations expand their benefits to include programs for physical, mental, financial and spiritual health. Meanwhile, most of the participating companies (59%) are not working on the subject at all, or only offer very basic programs (Abattiello et al., 2018), showing little attention to general aspects related to the satisfaction and well-being of their employees. Caring for those aspects is important, as pointed by Salanova et al. (2016), because they mediate the relationship between the perceptions that workers have of their organizational social context and performance.

The results of our research also indicated that 55% from the variance in intention to remain in the organization are explained by individual, organizational and contextual variables. More specifically, to remain in the organization, it is necessary that professionals deem an often change of employers as a negative aspect for their careers. Furthermore, they need to be encouraged and supported by friends to remain, and think it is possible to achieve their career values and goals in the future within the

organization they work for. This is in line with the findings of Maertz and Boyar (2012).

Studies propose that moral forces are based on relatively steady values about the turnover behavior, which would make difficult to increase the moral pro-permanence forces in professionals already employed by the organization (Maertz & Boyar, 2012). Additionally, there is evidence that professionals that think it is positive for their careers to change employers frequently (pro-turnover) experienced a greater number of jobs in less time, when compared to those who consider such as a negative behavior (Hom et al., 2017; Oliveira, 2014). With regard to the contribution of friends to change the intention to remain in the company, the literature suggests that the significance lies on the impact that individual career decisions have on the relationships with friends (Maertz & Griffeth, 2004).

Finally, the only variable that contributed to the variation in competent performance, job satisfaction, and in the intention to remain, was the calculative force. This force may be strengthened whenever the organization and the employee establish a clear communication on how his/her career will develop, list explicit and achievable criteria for this advance, and create other development opportunities for employees to achieve their future goals. Such measures require more commitment of Human Resources departments, since this is about a developmental approach, where management must know the “next step” of each individual in the organization, and discuss his/her possibilities regularly (Maertz & Boyar, 2012).

It is important to signal that this is in consonance with different studies. The aforementioned research conducted by Deloitte, for example, showed that one of the top five human capital trends for 2018 is proposing to employee’s new pathways, from careers to experiences (Abattiello et al., 2018). The research also showed that most companies are not yet fully addressing these issues. This is in line with academic research, which affirms that careers have become more global, and are changing at an increased pace, leading to the restructuring of

organizations and to a significant impact on the context in which careers are enacted (Baruch & Szűcs, 2015).

Therefore, both scientists and practitioners highlight that the contemporary challenge for human resources professionals, as well as for career counselors is, not promoting a steady progression along the organization’s hierarchy. Instead, it is being in charge of a shift to a model that empowers individuals to acquire new experiences, develop themselves and be more responsible for their own career construction (Abattiello et al., 2018). In doing so, it is important to enable dialogues about the mutual expectations of individuals and organizations about perspectives for career - both professional and personal -, and performance, in order to increase the chances of retaining the most valuable employees and promoting optimal experiences for all parts.

### Final Considerations

The results obtained in the present study contribute to research and professional practice in the areas of positive organizational psychology and human resource management by presenting findings capable of supporting evidence based practice. However, it is important to point out some of its limitations. The first concerns the fact that participants were selected by convenience. Although 45% of the professionals invited to participate in the study have answered the online questionnaire, this is not a representative sample of the Brazilian population, which indicates the need for further studies to ascertain the stability and seek to generalize the results. Still, it is a study, which used exclusively self-response quantitative instruments because of the nature of the problem being investigated. Relevant information to the investigation of the reasons for retention, satisfaction and performance improvement in organizations could be obtained through in-depth interviews by future studies.

Despite these limitations, results suggest that organizations committed to promoting a competent performance, to improve the levels



of job satisfaction and to retain professionals, should pay more attention to people. Improving the performance of professionals requires identifying and encouraging their strengths (Salanova et al., 2016). On the other hand, in order to retain professionals and to keep them happy at work organizations, the latter should promote a positive work environment and communicate clearly what is expected from professionals, and what they can expect to achieve within the organization. These aspects, and not contextual factors, are more likely to help organizations to achieve their goals, improve their performance and become more competitive. To the extent that managers have this information, they can use it to develop interventions or policies able to influence individual decision-making, and promote actions at an organizational level (Allen et al., 2010).

### Authors' Contributions

Substantial contribution in the concept and design of the study: Manoela Ziebell de Oliveira and Jean Carlos Natividade

Contribution to data collection: Manoela Ziebell de Oliveira

Contribution to data analysis and interpretation: Manoela Ziebell de Oliveira and Jean Carlos Natividade

Contribution to manuscript preparation: Manoela Ziebell de Oliveira, Jean Carlos Natividade, Nathalia Mambrini Sandoval Barbosa and Rodrigo Soares de Assis

Contribution to critical revision, adding intellectual content: Manoela Ziebell de Oliveira, Jean Carlos Natividade, Nathalia Mambrini Sandoval Barbosa and Rodrigo Soares de Assis.

### Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest related to the publication of this manuscript.

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