Research Article

The Organisational Ties in the Perception of the Management: Commitment, Entrenchment and Consent

Os Vínculos Organizacionais na Percepção de Gestores: Comprometimento, Entrincheiramento e Consentimento

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ABSTRACT

Objective: this study aimed to analyse the perception of the ties of commitment, entrenchment and consent of the worker with the organisation, exploring their distinctive factors and their meaning for the management. **Method:** a qualitative research was carried out with the management of companies of the retailing sector located in shopping malls. The data was gathered through ten semi-structured interviews and analysed using the content analysis technique. **Results:** this empirical work indicates that the managers' perceptions not only confirm the conceptual limitation of the commitment models to their affective basis, they also reveal the prominence of other organisational ties like entrenchment and consent. The data reinforce that these ties show different notions, which also operate in different attitudes of the individual at work. **Conclusion:** these findings allow to understand the possible contextual influences on managing the different organisational ties, as well as their outcomes and impact on the performance of the individual at work.

Keywords: organizational ties; commitment; entrenchment; consent.

JEL Code: D23, J53, L8.

RESUMO

Objetivo: o objetivo deste estudo foi analisar a percepção sobre os vínculos de comprometimento, entrincheiramento e consentimento do trabalhador com a organização, explorando seus fatores distintivos e seus significados para gestores. **Método:** a pesquisa de abordagem qualitativa foi realizada com gestores de empresas do setor varejista, localizadas em *shopping centers*. Os dados foram coletados por meio da realização de dez entrevistas semiestruturadas e analisados com base na técnica de análise de conteúdo. **Resultados:** este trabalho empírico aponta que as percepções dos gestores não só sustentam a delimitação conceitual dos modelos de comprometimento à sua base afetiva, mas também revelaram a saliência diferencial de outros vínculos organizacionais, como o entrincheiramento e o consentimento. Os dados reforçam que os vínculos apresentam noções diferentes, que se operacionalizam em atitudes também distintas do indivíduo no trabalho. **Conclusão:** esses achados permitem compreender os possíveis influenciadores contextuais sobre o gerenciamento dos diferentes vínculos organizacionais, bem como seus resultados e impactos no desempenho do indivíduo no trabalho.

Palavras-chave: vínculos organizacionais; comprometimento; entrincheiramento; consentimento.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the 1960s commitment represents a core construct in the field of organisational behaviour studies and kept this prominence to present days (Wasti et al., 2016). The prevalence of binding standards of behaviour has been associated with desirable and positive worker behaviours (Pinho, Bastos, & Rowe, 2015a). Despite the dynamic nature aspect of labour relations in the 21st century, organisations need a committed labour force and most of the people want to commit themselves to something (Klein, 2016).

At the organisational level, a committed labour force is associated to higher levels of performance, profit and customer satisfaction (Cameron, Bright, & Caza, 2004; Harter, Schmidt, Asplund, Killham, & Agrawal, 2010; Heavey, Holwerda, & Hausknecht, 2013). Concerning the personal benefits coming from commitment, Gao-Urhahn, Biemann and Jaros (2016) noted that the workers with higher commitment will probably obtain higher levels of remuneration.

The spectrum of studies on commitment includes conceptual and measuring aspects that, despite the ground covered by the studies, in the national and international contexts, they reveal the scope for a research agenda that is still far from being fully explored. The imprecision that involves organisational commitment is mostly related to the excessive widening of its conceptual and dimensional range (Rodrigues, Bastos, & Moscon, 2019).

The various concepts that define commitment have the notion of the psychological state that characterise the relation of the individual with the organisation in common (Bastos, 1993). However, this definition carries conceptual problems and unclear limits (Balsan, Bastos, Fossa, Lima, Lopes, & Costa, 2015). The increased scrutiny of the theoretical lens upon the relationships between the individual and the organisation, intensified by the debate about the dimensional nature of the commitment, made possible the discovery of other types of ties, separated from the commitment.

The introduction of entrenchment and consent ties in the field of studies on organisational behaviour, brought up in the works by Rodrigues (2009) and Silva (2009), sustains that the notion of being or not being committed is insufficient to characterise the worker-organisation link. According to Balsan, Lopes, Alvez, Vizzotto and Costa (2016), the development of these new constructs opens a line of research focused on the difference of the organisational ties, as during his/her life the individual develops different relationships with people, groups and organisations.

As commitment is a particular type of psychological tie, Klein, Molloy and Brinsfield (2012) acknowledge that other ties are important and, in specific contexts, can be more appropriate and in line with the organisation's goals. In this way, the authors sustain the need of jobs oriented toward the understanding of other types of psychological links, ideally, to comprehend and predict which types are more desirable in given contexts.

Despite the explanatory potential of the affective commitment model (Bastos & Aguiar, 2015; Klein & Park, 2016; Rodrigues et al., 2019) and the improvement coming from the entrenchment (Rodrigues, 2009; Rodrigues & Bastos, 2012) and consent constructs (Silva, 2009; Silva & Bastos, 2010), few studies investigated the managerial perspective as these ties have similarities and differences with previous and subsequent correlations. Departing from these gaps, this study intends to cover ground in the theoretical field and empirically by researching on the retailing sector, specifically in the shopping malls, reaching a large number of organisations, this allows understanding how different ties are formed and relate in the contexts of the investigated organisations.

Thereby, we hope that organisational ties may influence the individual's behaviour at work and that this relationship may intensify depending on the combinations of the forms of their ties. Given the above, this study aims to analyse the perception of the worker's ties of commitment, entrenchment and consent towards the organisation, exploring their distinctive factors and their meaning for the management.

Theoretical and practical implications appear within this scope. Using theoretical implications, this study reports consistent empirical evidence to outline the concept of organisational commitment, minimising the conceptual redundancy and empirical problems pointed out by studies supported by the three-component model (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Besides that, in exploring the perception of the distinctive nature of the various organisational ties by the Brazilian management, we emphasize the importance of not losing sight of the care needed to apply global conceptual models, given what Wasti et al. (2016) explain as cultural influences that can alter significantly concepts and measurements of work binding.

As for practical implications, this study provides information that can help to develop organisational strategies aimed to process the management of the ties. Therefore, understanding how the combination of the standards of the ties produces desirable and

positive worker's behaviour; it is possible to identify appropriate and aligned standards with goals and behaviours that prioritise the organisational challenges. Finally, by researching companies in the retailing sector, this study introduces new evidence that contributes to a clearer understanding of this sector's working context, emphasizing the multiplicity of organisational realities, which characterise the various enterprises that belong to a shopping mall.

Organisational ties: commitment, entrenchment and consent

Organisational commitment is often defined as the individual's link, tie or attachment with the organisation (Maia, Bastos, & Solinger, 2016). The early studies on this subject were consolidated by Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982), the pioneers in introducing the concept, as well as the first measurement of organisational commitment in the literature. For these authors, the commitment represents the strong relationship between individual and organisation, operating through the effort of the worker on behalf of the organisation, in believing and accepting the organisational values and aims and the desire to stay.

In the three-component model proposed by Meyer and Allen (1991), commitment is defined starting from the three bases that explain the individual-organisation link. The affective base represents the desire of the individual who wants to stay in the organisation through an effective attachment feeling, which highlights the emotional nature of the link between the person and the organisation (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The normative base represents binding by obligation, in which the individual feels morally obliged to stay (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The instrumental base represents the awareness of the costs, in which the individual considers his/her specific investments in the organisation and has no alternatives to leave for another place, characterising the continuance or instrumental organisational tie (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

From the introduction and wide acceptance of the three-component model of Meyer and Allen (1991), commitment was studied under a variety of focuses, bases and theoretical approaches, in an attempt to better explain its development, its antecedents and consequences, being one of the most explored themes in the literature on organisational behaviour (Pinho, Bastos, & Rowe, 2015b). Although this is a predominant model in national and international studies, the three-component structure falls short from a consensus among researchers, especially regarding the instrumental and normative bases (Balsan et al., 2015).

In the debate on commitment dimensionality (Allen, 2016; Klein & Park, 2016) and the emerging discussion on how multiple commitments consolidate and coexist (Rossenberg et al., 2018), in different organisational contexts (Wasti et al., 2016), arises the proposition that the tie of affective nature strongly differs from instrumental and normative ties. Along this line of thinking, the studies of Rodrigues (2009) and Silva (2009) question whether the notion of commitment suits the permanence of the individual for necessity or obligation. Thus, the need of treating them as phenomena that cannot be called commitment comes to the surface, generating new constructs, the entrenchment (Rodrigues, 2009; Rodrigues & Bastos, 2012) and the consent (Silva, 2009; Silva & Bastos, 2010).

To explore the complexity of the phenomenon, this paper uses commitment as a tie of affective nature, as this base is conceptually less controversial (Rodrigues et al., 2019) and strongly associated with desirable behaviour at work (Pinho et al., 2015a). Nevertheless, we argue that the continuative and normative should be investigated as separate phenomena from commitment, where they are called respectively entrenchment and consent.

Entrenchment is initially discussed in career studies, introduced to differentiate commitment with the career progression from the attitude of the individual to stay in the same workplace, due to investments made, emotional costs, change of job and limited perception on alternatives outside the professional context (Carson & Bedeian, 1994). In the organisational context, entrenchment is defined as the tendency of the individual to remain in the organisation due to the investments and costs associated with leaving and the perceived lack of alternatives in the labour market. The entrenched individual feels prisoner as he/she cannot see alternatives to support his/her needs and expectations (Rodrigues, 2009; Rodrigues & Bastos, 2012).

Rodrigues (2009) proposes an adaptation of the concept of career's entrenchment for the context of the organisations, it rests on the research on instrumental commitment and the theory of side bets by Becker (1960). The side bets correspond to the lateral exchanges between individual and organisation, which lead the worker to try to behave in a determined manner due to the costs associated with leaving (Becker, 1960). The dimension of entrenchment developed from the understanding of the reasons through which a worker feels detained by the organisation: adjustments to social position and impersonal bureaucratic arrangements - stemming from Becker's side bets theory (1960) – and limited alternatives adjustments to social position and

impersonal bureaucratic arrangements - stemming from Becker's side bets theory (Rodrigues, 2009).

The adjustment to the social position dimension represent the need of the individual to preserve the adaptations made to fit into the organisation, like training, time to get to know the organisation's processes and job attributions, network of relationships and other aspects that contributed to his/her adaptation and recognition in the organisation (Rodrigues & Bastos, 2012). Furthermore, Rodrigues and Bastos (2015) add that this dimension represents the investments of the individual and organisation for the necessary conditions for a good performance of specific activities and the position occupied by the worker.

The dimension of the impersonal bureaucratic arrangements is defined by the stability and financial gains that the worker would lose in leaving the company, like holidays, paid holidays, profit sharing, variable remuneration, medical and dental insurance, private pension, retirement schemes and more (Rodrigues & Bastos, 2012). Rodrigues (2009) highlights that the outward rewards or material paybacks provided by the organisation, which the individual does not risk losing, develop feelings of stability and protection that will underlie the entrenchment.

The limitations posed by the alternative dimension are characterised by the perception of the individual about shortages in the labour market, he/she foresees market restrictions or believes that his/her professional profile would not be accepted in another organisation (Rodrigues & Bastos, 2012). The perception that alternatives are of scarce or non-existing represents a decisive factor that makes the individual feel detained within the organisation. According to Rodrigues and Bastos (2012), this notion crosses all the dimensions of organisational entrenchment, with an inward perception of limitation. The limitations of an alternative dimension also carry outward perceptions of limitation, related to the analysis of the options available on the job market.

The organisational consent finds its theoretical pillars in the literature of social psychology and sociology, characterized by the individual-organisation ties, established upon a perspective that, discarding affective elements, emphasizes the relationships of control and authority that lead workers to obey or fulfil their subordinated roles (Pinho et al., 2015a). The tie of organisational consent presupposes that the worker agrees with the organisational demands, fully complies with the orders and is not responsible for any consequences,

mainly negative, that may result from his/her actions (Silva & Bastos, 2010).

Organisational consent is therefore intended by Silva and Bastos (2015) as the tendency to obey to the company's demands, defined by the management, believing that complying the orders is due to the relationships of power and authority configured between subordinate and superior, as well as the idea that the management knows what should be done. In this concept, Silva and Bastos (2015) restrict consent to the notion of blind obedience, excluding the notion of the inner acceptance by the employee, initially treated as the dimension of consent (Silva, 2009; Silva & Bastos, 2010). Conversely, in Silva and Bastos' perspective (2015), the tie of consent is conceived as the automatic fulfilment of the orders, without evaluating of it and without an understanding of its meaning

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This paper is characterised as research of exploratory nature, employing a qualitative approach. Private organisations of the retailing sector, based in the shopping malls of Santa Maria, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil took place in this research. The choice of this field of research was caused by the multiple organisational realities that characterise the diversified types of enterprises that are part of a shopping mall. The research relied on the participation of the enterprises of the four shopping malls in town, which complied with the required criteria. The characteristics that the organisations share are: (a) belonging to the retailing sector; (b) having their activities in the participant shopping malls; (c) having a working group of at least four employees; (d) consent to participate to this study.

The selection of the interviewed managers was operationalized from the results of the preliminary phase of the research, where a questionnaire on organisational ties and commitment (Bastos & Aguiar, 2015), entrenchment (Rodrigues & Bastos, 2015) and consent (Silva & Bastos, 2015), was applied on a sample of 260 workers. After obtaining the results, the managers with the highest levels of organisational ties were selected, these were calculated through the average results of their group of employees through the three constructs – commitment, entrenchment and consent.

Following Strauss and Corbin's guidance (2008), the criterion for the number of interviews was the saturation of the categories that emerged from the data. Ten interviews with the managers of the companies were carried out in line with the above

presupposition. The variety among the companies of the shopping malls intended to catch an ample overview of the field, avoiding the risk that the peculiarities of each organisational context would stand out in the results, according to the source triangulation criterion proposed by Paiva, Leão and Mello (2011), which provides higher validation and reliability to the qualitative research.

The guidelines of the interview were structured into four parts. In the first stage, they investigated aspects for the mapping of the interviewees personal and occupational profile. The second stage explored the perception of the managers regarding the characteristics of a good worker for the organisation. The third stage presented 30 files, elaborated by Pinho (2009), containing phrases that represented notions and characteristics of commitment, entrenchment and consent, ten for each organisational tie. Once the files were available, the interviewee was led to choose ten employees to represent the paradigm of good worker. Finally, the files of the third stage were organised in three sets, according to the ties that they represented. After introducing the sets of phrases, the interviewee was questioned how he/she would call the worker with those characteristics.

The interviews were recorded and then transcribed; the average duration was one hour. The stages of the interview conduction are specified in the results below. The interviewees' reports were analysed using the content analysis technique, based on Bardin (2011), in three phases: pre-analysis, analytic description and inferential interpretation. In pre-analysis, corresponding to the process of organisational analysis (Bardin, 2011), the interviews were transcribed and read and the lines of speech

were allocated within each proposition, which was assigned to a corresponding topic. In this phase, the transcripts were sent to each interviewee to validate the content of their interview, only then they became part of the final narrative.

The material was explored in the phase of analytic description, with the analytic description carried out with word count analysis units (Bardin, 2011). Thus, supported by the NVIVO computer program, the primary data from the transcribed interviews were selected and grouped into two key categories: (a) background of the ties; (b) consequences of the ties. The main categories of analysis were defined beforehand; however, other possibilities were left open to be included in the interview reports.

The third phase by Bardin (2011), is the inferential interpretation, which seeks to generate inferences about the text and the interpretations of the results. Conversely, we interpreted the meaning of every interview, in comparison with the listed categories and the established proposition. In this stage, the interview transcriptions were compared to each other and with the theory.

ANALYSIS OF THE OUTCOMES AND DISCUSSION

To guarantee confidentiality and anonymity, the managers will be mentioned here as G1 for Manager 1, G2 Manager 2 and so on until G10, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Characterization of the studied subjects.

Manager	Age	Gender	Schooling	Years in the company	Years in the position	Number of subordinates
G1	55 years	Male	High School	24 years	14 years	17
G2	42 years	Female	University graduation	5 years	1 year	5
G3	28 years	Female	Under graduation	3 years	2 years	11
G4	46 years	Male	University graduation	8 years	6 years	13
G5	38 years	Female	University graduation	9 years	9 years	20
G6	54 years	Male	University graduation	20 years	15 years	19
G7	34 years	Female	University graduation	4 years	2 years	8
G8	37 years	Female	University graduation	7 years	3 years	8
G9	35 years	Female	High School	14 years	4 years	12
G10	21 years	Male	High School	3 years	2 years	6

Note. Profile descriptions of the 10 managers of the companies that presented the highest levels of organisational ties, selected for the interviews. Source: Prepared by the authors.

Analysing the information of Table 1, we can see that the age of the interviewees ranges from 21 to 55 years old, 6 are females and 4 males. For the schooling, we can see that 6 managers have university graduation, most of them in the areas of management and business. Concerning the time spent serving the company, this varies from 4 to 24 years, however, the time in the position varies from 1 to 15 years. The number of professional subordinates under the supervision of the manager varies from 5 to 20 employees.

Below, are the characteristics identified by the interviewed managers to conceptualise a good worker. The details of these data are based on the characteristics that were exposed by the research subjects themselves. The answers were classified by structuring them in three sub-categories of the analysis: the first focuses on the characteristics and attitudes of a good worker; the second approaches the values that this worker shares; finally, the performance of this worker. Figure 1 shows the notions given by the manager to conceptualise a good worker.
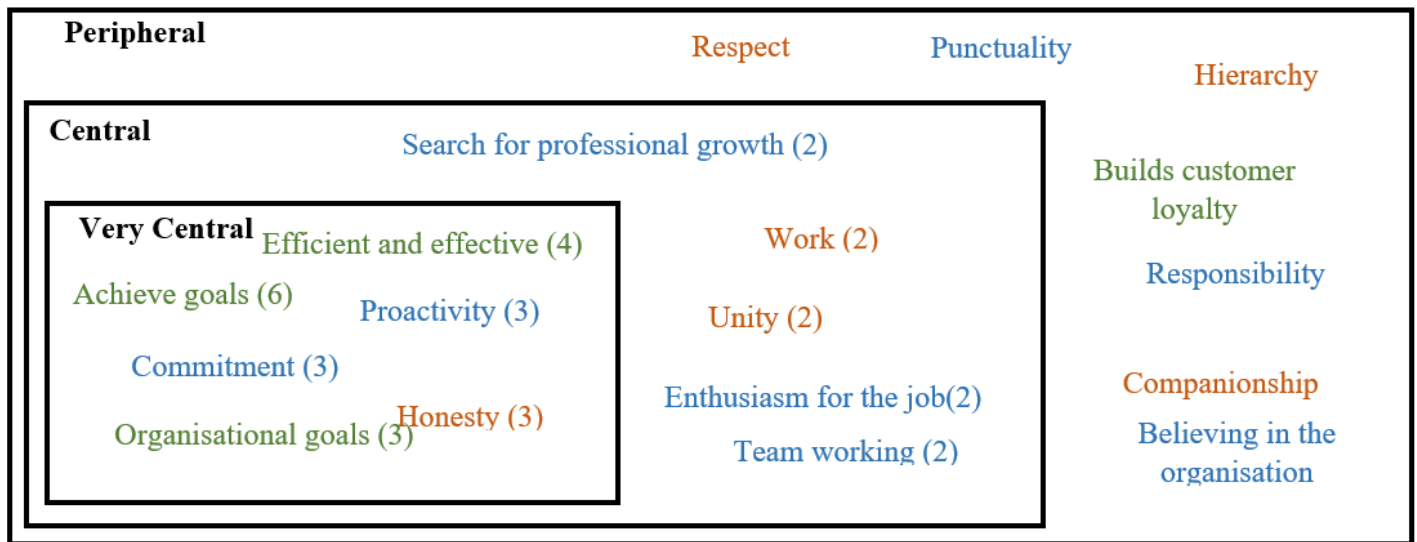

Figure 1. Respondents' perceptions on the notion of good worker.
Characteristics and attitudes (blue); Performance (green); Values (orange). Source: Prepared by the authors.

In analysing the information shown on Figure 1, we can see that the sub-category characteristics and attitudes had 8 mentions as a definition of a good worker. Notably, the highest number of references was recorded by proactivity (3) and commitment (3). Furthermore, two citations stand out about the search for professional growth, teamworking and enthusiasm for the job. Finally, the items punctuality, believing in the organisation and responsibility obtained one mention each.

Based on these findings, for the managers interviewed, the good worker, besides being committed, shows proactive attitudes in facing the work situations experienced in the organisation, expressed by worrying with the results and objectives of the organisation, through behaviours such as attendance and punctuality, troubleshooting initiatives and care for the organisation.

Remarkably, the notion of a good worker comes close to the concept of commitment, corroborating other studies that explored organisational commitment from the perception of the organisational actors (Pinho, 2009; Pinho et al., 2015a). The outcomes of these studies showed that the commitment is attached to the notions of engagement, dedication, zeal for the working sector, caring for the growth, caring for the image, personal and professional growth. The testimonies of five managers reveal this positive sense of the concept of good worker:

"Commitment is the right word ... I think that commitment is fundamental. Today, the good worker is committed with what he does, beside his enthusiasm, he must be likeable and punctual as well, these small characteristics make the good professional." (Interviewee G1)

"I think that a person must be happy with what he is doing, believing in the company he is working for and viewing growth. And, when I talk about growth; I do not just mean changing position ... growth is knowing that today you did a little better than yesterday, in everything." (Interviewee G5)

"A good co-worker goes after what he wants, with a clear picture of what he is looking for ... he is the one who runs after, has initiative, does not depend on someone saying, 'do this or that'. He must have his own initiative to go after what he wants." (Interviewee G7)

"A person with a good coexistence with the peers, a person who comes here with the desire to join in with the group, strive for the results, for whom coexistence is light, a quiet person." (Interviewee G8)

It is noteworthy that the speeches of managers reveal that the concept of good worker encompasses items that relate to the ties of commitment to different focuses - organisation, work and workgroup - and the contents mentioned did not aggregate aspects of the constructs of entrenchment and organisational consent. This finding corroborates Pinho (2009), who researched in three organisations of different nature (private, federal and municipal), and did not identify the presence of notions of ties of entrenchment and consent in the conceptualisation of good worker. This author also observed that the committed worker was seen as someone who enjoys working in the organisation and believes in organisational goals and values.

Concerning the category of values expressed by the good worker, honesty (3) had the highest quoting, followed by unity (2), work (2), hierarchy (1), respect (1) and companionship (1). From this, the importance of value goals is emphasized, as exemplified by the interviewees:

"Honesty is essential within the company. You must be honest in everything, honest in the character, honest with your team, honest in your opinions, honest with your costumers. Honesty is essential in here." (Interviewee G3)

"The main value in our business and for the people who deal with us is honesty. The person must have my trust, the group's trust, the costumer's trust, after all we deal with the values of the company and the values of the costumer. I think that honesty is the main step in our business." (Interviewee G6)

"Respect is a good thing, so is coexistence, I think that essentially is a question of respect, if you are respected you have everything. And, this is companionship, it is a lot of teamwork because here there is no room for individualism, you must work in a team, I think that this is it." (Interviewee G7)

The sub-category performance gathered the quotations that showed the type of result/performance reached by the worker. Achieving goals (6) was the most quoted item by the interviewees, followed by efficiency and efficacy (4). Furthermore, we see quotations on performance directed to the global achievement of organisational goals (3) and building customers' loyalty (1).

It was identified that the statements about performance were concentrated in the area classified as fundamental to define a good worker. This result demonstrates the importance attached to performance associated with both the development of work tasks and organisational objectives. The statements of the managers that point to these perspectives are:

"I expect 50% in dedication to sale, I expect 50% in dedication within the company, it is not just going downstairs attend the customer and sell." (Interviewee G2)

"The good performance is that co-worker who can effectively reach our goal, because it is very difficult ... then in on the daily basis, the way we are today, with the present crisis, the good co-worker is the one who can achieve the goals. You have several tools over here, it is your decision whether to use them or not." (Interviewee G7)

"For us, an important indicator of performance is gaining the customers' loyalty. If the employee gains the customer's loyalty; it certainly means that he is doing right, this is a good performance." (Interviewee G9)

"It is a performance that contributes for the overall performance of the company, of the store, of the colleagues and management." (Interviewee G10)

Noticeably, there was a reference to the technical aspects, such as the achievement of goals, and more general aspects of work performance, such as the achievement of the organisation's objectives. However, in the manager's perception, the technical questions stood out, especially the achievement of the selling goals. Pinho (2009) too identified that

the private organisation values focusing on the customer as the core point in evaluating the worker.

Given these perceptions, in the first instance, the individual's good working performance is linked to the achievement of sales goals and, secondly, the broader issues that concern supporting the organisation in meeting the company goals emerge. Therefore, it can be said that the good worker, in the managers' perception, shows some characteristics of the affective tie, which produce behaviours such as proactivity, initiative, commitment to the company's goals; the worker shares values that show concern for the community, search for success and respect for norms and rules; achieves good

sales levels, showing also concern for the macro-organisational goals.

In the second moment, aiming to explore in greater depth the concept of a good worker, the managers received thirty cards filled with ten characteristics of committed individuals, ten characteristics of entrenched individuals and ten characteristics of consenting individuals as detailed in the methodological procedures. Each interviewee selected ten cards, which in his/her perception, represented the characteristics of the good worker. Figure 2 shows the most selected characteristics and their order of frequency.
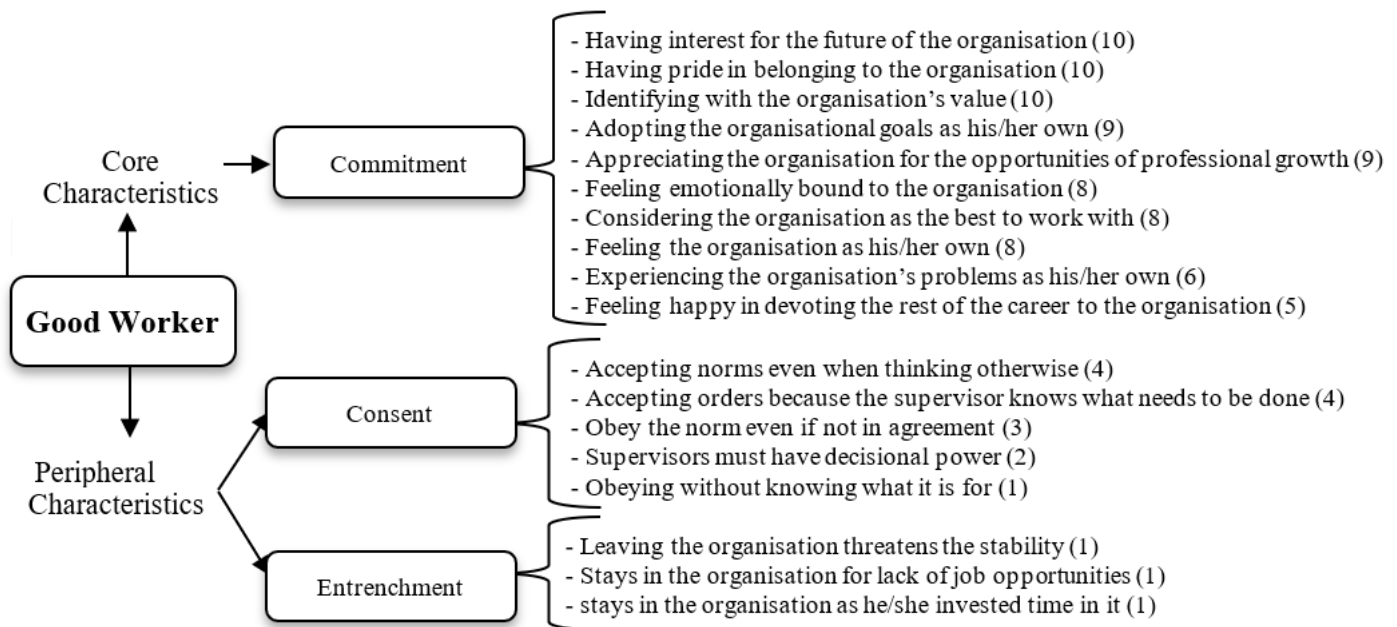

Figure 2. Characteristics of ties that represent the good worker.

Notions of organisational ties selected by the interviewees to define the good worker. The interviewees could select 10 among 30 given notions (10 for each organisational bond). Source: Prepared by the authors.

As viewable on Figure 2, 18 characteristics were quoted out of the thirty available. The concept of the good worker expressed by these managers is predominantly defined by notions that integrate the organisational commitment.

The sentences that express interest for the future of the organisation, pride for belonging and identification with the values, were the items that stood out as fundamental to define the good worker. The core ideas to define the good worker is constituted by contents that cause organisational commitment;

it is possible to point out that the interest for the future of the organisation, the pride of belonging and identification with organisational values were mentioned by all managers. These ideas represent the positive feelings for the organisation, they describe the good worker as an individual who establishes a predominantly affective tie. These perceptions corroborate the research by Pinho, Bastos and Rowe (2015b), whose idea of a committed worker in the perception of the managers unites mostly contents of affective notions.

The notions of organisational consent were also mentioned by the interviewees, however, with a lower degree of relevance. The ideas that accepting norms even when thinking otherwise (4) and accepting norms because the supervisor knows what to do (4), were the most quoted items. Furthermore, other items surfaced, they referred to obeying norms even without agreeing (3), the notion that the supervisor must have decisional power (2) and that the worker must obey even without knowing the reason of these actions (1).

The theoretical dimensions associated with the construct of entrenchment were quoted to describe the good worker; nevertheless, they were perceived as less important for this definition, with just one mention each. The quotations referred to the ideas that leaving the organisation threatens the stability of the employee, the permanence of the individual in the organisation occurs because of the scarcity of job opportunities in the market or staying in the organisation for having already invested much time in it.

In this manner, the peripheral contents quoted by the managers related with the notions of consenting ties, directed toward the perception of blind obedience, which represent the automatic fulfilment of the orders, without assessing them, to the point of indicating that even without understanding the meaning of the task, the worker fulfils it (Silva & Bastos, 2010). A similar result was obtained by Pinho (2009). For this author, in the private sector organisations, the presence of a boss who can hire or fire workers may be the factor that explains the adhesion to the tie of obedience. Therefore, not fulfilling norms and regulations threatens the employment tie of the worker, as it can

be perceived as a lack of interest and negligence of the worker.

Considering these outcomes, we note that the tie developed by a good worker is characterised by an affective nature, with some references to the normative bonds. Therefore, the good worker essentially aggregates notions that point to the affective tie, in which the expectations related to the organisation are bravely positive and require a constructive involvement (Pinho et al., 2015b).

The investigation of the concept of a good worker and the characteristics of the organisational ties of commitment, entrenchment and consent, representing a good worker, allowed a deeper understanding of the perceptions of the interviewees. Thus, the definitions given by managers to describe the different organisational ties are introduced below.

To verify the three concepts of organisational ties, we used the strategy of handing thirty cards with characteristics that represented the core ideas of each construct, i.e. ten cards for each type of tie, arranged in three columns of phrases, that is: commitment, entrenchment and consent. The interviewees were challenged, on the basis of the cards' interpretation, to state who was the worker who had that set of characteristics, asking which denomination to give to the worker who carried those characteristics. Figure 3 shows how the answers were arranged.
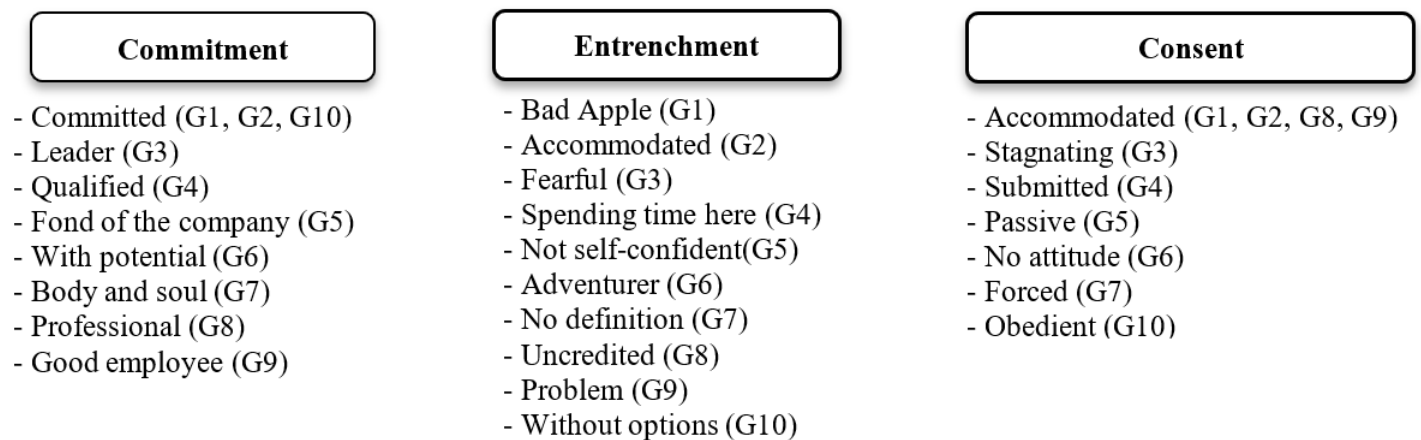
Commitment

- Committed (G1, G2, G10)
- Leader (G3)
- Qualified (G4)
- Fond of the company (G5)
- With potential (G6)
- Body and soul (G7)
- Professional (G8)
- Good employee (G9)

Entrenchment

- Bad Apple (G1)
- Accommodated (G2)
- Fearful (G3)
- Spending time here (G4)
- Not self-confident (G5)
- Adventurer (G6)
- No definition (G7)
- Uncredited (G8)
- Problem (G9)
- Without options (G10)

Consent

- Accommodated (G1, G2, G8, G9)
- Stagnating (G3)
- Submitted (G4)
- Passive (G5)
- No attitude (G6)
- Forced (G7)
- Obedient (G10)

Figure 3. Denominations of the organisational ties by the managers.
Answers given by the interviewees to define the worker who showed the set of conceptual notions of commitment, entrenchment and consent. Source: prepared by the authors.

Evidently, the managers reported each construct in significantly variable forms. The profile of commitment was quoted as a tie related to bravely positive aspects, desirable both for the individual and company. In the words of the interviewees:

"The employee who wears the team's jersey, conscientious, wilful worker, wants the company to grow, and wants to grow with it, a company that gives no scope for the growth of a good employee does not exists, the employees must understand that if the company grows they grow as well." (Interviewee G2)

"A leader, who will probably grow, will have a future in the company, because when you wear the team's jersey and you give the best, you feel the company as yours, you become a leader." (Interviewee G3)

"It is a co-worker who gives body and soul, because you assume all the problems of the organisation as they were yours, he assumes and tries his best, you identify with everything happening in the company, the problems and the good things, this is a co-worker very dedicated to the company." (Interviewee G7)

Unlike the perceptions on the set of ideas that define commitment, the interviewees showed agreement towards the negative meaning carried by the entrenchment. The definitions listed recall perspectives of insecurity, fear, accommodation and low performance. These negative perspectives stand out in the following statements:

"A bad apple. I think that staying in a company just to stay there without a goal or without wishing to stay, shows that this employee won't last long with us." (Interviewee G1)

"A fearful person. An unhappy person who stays on … it would be fearful, or better, an accommodated person, the right adjective would be accommodate for that person." (Interviewee G3)

"This person is spending time with me here, for different reasons, but this is not what makes a difference in the company. He may be spending time here with me because he thinks that there are no opportunities out there, these people are in the company but they are not giving their best here." (Interviewee G4)

As with entrenchment, the notion of consent revealed meanings resting at the opposite side of commitment, the prevailing ideas do not favour either the growth of the individual or the companies. The interviewees' statements reveal these negative ideas associated with consent:

"For me this worker thinks that it does not matter, it does not matter if it closes, it does not matter selling, it does not matter with or without a goal to reach … he does not make a difference in the company." (Interviewee G2)

"This person will not grow. Clearly, there are rules to follow, but you do not need to be a burdened donkey also because questions often bring us good ideas." (Interviewee G3)

"He is considered the employee that organisations must have, a handy man for the daily use, who is close to the comfort zone, he will do what he is told, but do not expect much from him." (Interviewee G6)

"This one has been here ages, he will retire for his convenience, he may be dissatisfied but will not change, he will stay until retirement or he is fired. I think he stays in the job just for accommodation." (Interviewee G7)

The definitions of the managers attributed to the notions of organisational ties strengthen the evidence that the three constructs relate to empirically different theoretical phenomena. The findings confirm those of recent studies (Bastos & Aguiar, 2015; Rodrigues & Bastos, 2012; Silva & Bastos, 2010), which limit commitment to its affective side, associating it to the feeling of pride, commitment to the organisation, engagement and motivation of the worker.

Pinho, Bastos and Rowe (2015a) found that the notions of entrenchment and consent shows opposite meaning to those found in commitment, corroborating our findings. For these authors, the items related to accommodation, insecurity, fear of changes, struggle to survive are more representative that the notion of being entrenched. The notion of obedience showed subordination and submission, lack of critical analysis, accommodation, dissatisfaction and doing the activities in a mechanical form (Pinho et al., 2015a).

The findings allow us to affirm that the ties show distinct antecedent and subsequent factors, corroborating the most recent theoretical perspectives (Bastos & Aguiar, 2015; Pinho et al., 2015b; Rodrigues & Bastos, 2015; Rodrigues et al., 2019; Silva & Bastos,

2015). In strengthening the evidence that they are different ties, with equally distinct antecedents and consequences, we sustain the need to understand how multiple ties configure and work in an integrated form, i.e., how the multiples commitments are substituted, conflictual, complementary and work in synergy with other ties (Rossenberg et al., 2018). The evidence found strengthens the outlining of the concept of organisational commitment within its affective base, overcoming the three-component model by Meyer and Allen (1991).

Finally, starting from the definitions given by the interviewee, the manager was asked to assess his/her working group to identify the quantitative distribution of workers among the commitment, entrenchment and consent links. The evaluations of managers are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Evaluation of the working group by the managers.

| Manager | Team of professionals led by managers | | | | Self-perception |
	Nº Employee	Committed	Entrenched	Consenting	
G1	17	17	-	-	Committed
G2	5	4	-	1	Committed
G3	11	2	-	9	Committed
G4	13	8	3	2	Committed
G5	20	14	2	4	Committed
G6	19	12	4	3	Committed
G7	8	7	-	1	Committed
G8	8	6	1	1	Committed
G9	12	10	-	2	Committed
G10	6	4	1	1	Committed
Total	**119**	**84**	**11**	**24**	**Committed**

Note. Evaluation by interviewees on the quantitative distribution of their working groups in committed, entrenched and consenting. Source: prepared by the authors.

Notably, the managers believe that their working groups are mostly composed by committed individuals. The outcomes show that nine out of the ten managers pointed out at least one employee with notions of organisational consent. On the other hand, entrenchment did not stand this much out, however, it was reported by five managers.

Another remarkable finding reveals that two managers pointed out that the three types of ties can develop simultaneously, i.e., an individual showing a committed notion can equally be entrenched and/or consenting or vice-versa. This finding is explained in the statement of interviewees G2 and G10:

> "Nowadays, I have no fully committed employees ... say, I see the three characteristics in nearly everyone, some show more one over the other, but possess the characteristics of the three profiles ... I have one employee who, for immaturity or for being on the first job, sits on the fence, it can be perceived

that she will accommodate unless you urge her." (Interviewee G2)

> "Let us say, there is not a seller who has just the characteristic of one of the profiles, they mix many characteristics. In reality, these characteristics exist in all workers, arranged in different forms." (Interviewee G10)

The perceptions of the managers converge on the idea that the individual can show forms of organisational ties that set with commitment, entrenchment and consent simultaneously, without excluding each other. It can be perceived that the workers experience all ties in different degrees, in other words, different ties co-exist in the same worker, in different levels and forms.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering that the aim of this study was to analyse the perception of the ties of commitment, entrenchment and consent of the worker with the organisation, exploring its distinctive factors and the meaning for the managers, we can put forward some considerations.

The concepts assigned by managers to name each type of tie indicate that commitment has an active sense, while, a pejorative sense associates to being entrenched, and a passive one for being consenting. These findings reinforce that the ties present different notions, which also operate in different attitudes of the individual at work. Also, notions of ties were identified not only with the organisation but also with career, workgroups and leadership. The results converge on the idea that the individual can show forms of organisational ties that set commitment, entrenchment and consent simultaneously, without excluding each other.

The perceptions of the managers do not only sustain the conceptual limitation of commitment models to their affective basis, but they also revealed the prominent difference of the other organisational ties, such as entrenchment and consent. Thus, this paper fulfils the role of introducing empirical evidence to support the efforts for a greater delimitation of the concept of commitment. By exploring the managers' perceptions about the notions of organisational ties, this research brings important contributions to the conceptual delimitation of commitment and its characteristics with the new types of ties that have emerged in the literature.

Interviewees were found to give less onus to the notions of stability when the employee achieves high levels of job performance. Based on these findings, it can be sustained that the notion of permanence enclosed in the definition of organisational ties is considered a consequence rather than a condition to develop the organisational ties. Thus, the results indicate that organisations are less concerned with why employees stay, since active contributions are more welcomed than the passive permanence of the worker.

The concept of commitment, as defined by Bastos and Aguiar (2015), seems to cover notions that differ from the concepts of entrenchment and consent. The analysis of the notion of good worker showed that the managers expect emotionally involved, engaged workers who reveal commitment towards the organisation. Although, on the other side, the managers' discourse reveals that the characteristics of the consenting ties may be necessary and in line with the goals of the organisation in some given contexts. The managers also expect the working groups to fulfil norms and orders, elements of the obedience tie. This result sustains new readings on the ties of entrenchment and consent, despite them not being associated with the proactive behaviours of the worker, they can be considered necessary and desirable ties in some given organisational contexts.

For future research, we suggest to carry out studies with a longitudinal approach that would allow accompanying both the establishment and the maintenance of the individual's ties with the organisation. To progress in this field of knowledge, we recommend studies on the different forms of ties, combining distinct levels of commitment, entrenchment and consent, relating them with policies and human resources practices aimed to a deeper understanding of the management process of these ties.

At the end of this research, we believe that important scientific contributions for the Management area were obtained, especially in what has to do with the themes in the field of organisational behaviour. Theoretically, it contributes to increase the number of investigations on the ties on organisational entrenchment and consent, which were recently introduced in the literature from the advances of the knowledge about commitment. The completion of this research in a context made of multiple organisations, in this case retailing companies active in shopping malls, allowed the analysis of the specificities of the context and the observation of the patterns that were repeated in more than one participating organisation. Finally, this study cannot deny its limits, notably, it addresses behavioural aspects, which are subjective and complex and that cross-sectional data were used in this study.

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