



Tesis Doctoral

COMPROMISO ORGANIZACIONAL Y COMPROMISO CON EL LÍDER: ANÁLISIS DE LA INFLUENCIA DE LA CONCIENCIA EMOCIONAL DE LOS EMPLEADOS

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Esta tesis cuenta con la autorización de la directora y codirector de la misma y de la Comisión Académica del programa. Dichas autorizaciones constan en el Servicio de la Escuela Internacional de Doctorado de la Universidad de Extremadura.

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ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND COMMITMENT TO THE LEADER: AN ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF EMPLOYEES' EMOTIONAL AWARENESS

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Glossary of abbreviations

Affective Events Theory.....	AET
Affective Organizational Commitment.....	AOC
Affective Commitment to the Leader.....	ACL
Average Variance Extracted.....	AVE
Comparative Fit Index.....	CFI
Confirmatory Factor Analysis.....	CFA
Continuance Organizational Commitment.....	COC
Construct Reliability.....	CR
Determination Coefficient.....	R ²
Employees' Emotional Awareness.....	EEA
Goodness of Fit Index.....	GFI
Human Resources.....	HR
Journal Citation Reports.....	JCR
Normative Organizational Commitment.....	NOC
Organizational Commitment.....	OC
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation.....	RMSEA
Self-control when facing criticism.....	SFC
Social Enhance Theory.....	SET
Statistical Package for Social Sciences.....	SPSS
Three-Component Model.....	TCM
Understanding Self-emotions.....	USE

Understanding Others' Emotions.....UOE

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Resumen

Antecedentes y justificación: En el panorama empresarial contemporáneo, las empresas se enfrentan a cambios dinámicos y desafíos complejos que subrayan el imperativo del compromiso en el entorno laboral como una prioridad estratégica para la gestión (Fuller y Kerr, 2022; Klotz y Bolino, 2022). La investigación ha destacado la influencia sustancial del compromiso en múltiples aspectos, como el fomento de comportamientos prosociales, dinámicas de trabajo innovadoras, la mejora del bienestar de los empleados, el aumento de la productividad y el impulso en los niveles de innovación (Beer *et al.*, 2015; Stanley y Meyer, 2016; Lapointe y Vandenberghe, 2017; Flinchbaugh *et al.*, 2019; Bak, 2020). En consecuencia, se puede argumentar de forma convincente que los resultados positivos derivados del compromiso de los empleados repercuten en la sostenibilidad de una organización. Así, el compromiso desempeña un papel fundamental en el refuerzo de la competitividad, facilitando la realización, e incluso la superación, de las aspiraciones de la misma.

En las últimas décadas se ha prestado una mayor atención a la investigación y comprensión del compromiso debido a sus consecuencias positivas para la organización y los empleados. Este interés ha cobrado mayor impulso recientemente debido a los cambios transformadores observados en las relaciones laborales, que han reconfigurado la forma en la que los empleados se alinean con su puesto de trabajo (Morrow, 2011; Hansen y Leuty, 2012; Heaphy *et al.*, 2018). El compromiso sigue siendo pertinente en el presente, ya que la naturaleza y los espacios de trabajo continúan evolucionando. El auge de fenómenos socioprofesionales como "The great resignation" y "Quiet Quitting", junto con la proliferación del trabajo a distancia y los modelos flexibles, han acentuado la importancia crítica de comprender el compromiso en el entorno laboral. El entorno laboral ha experimentado profundos cambios, influídos por innumerables factores, incluyendo las aspiraciones de los empleados y las expectativas de las nuevas generaciones respecto a sus carreras profesionales (van Rossenberg *et al.*, 2018).

En este contexto, la gestión eficaz del compromiso plantea retos notables, especialmente en el ámbito del diseño de políticas de recursos humanos que representen un impacto significativo (Beer *et al.*, 2015). La complejidad actual en la gestión del compromiso se deriva no sólo de los diferentes paradigmas, sino también de la necesidad de identificar y entender los diversos

focos de compromiso que coexisten en el entorno laboral (Klein, 2013; Meyer *et al.*, 2015; Becker, 2016; Klein *et al.*, 2020; van Rossenberg *et al.*, 2022).

El compromiso lleva implícita la dedicación y lealtad que los empleados mantienen hacia su organización y los objetivos de ésta. El compromiso se puede caracterizar como el vínculo psicológico de un individuo con un foco específico, que conduce a comportamientos relativamente consistentes, y que se substancia en tres dimensiones distintas: i) afectiva, que implica un compromiso emocional con el foco, ii) normativa, que abarca un sentido de obligación o deber moral con relación a ese foco, y iii) continuidad, asociado a los costes vinculados al cambio o a una ausencia de alternativas (Meyer y Allen, 1991; Meyer y Herscovitch, 2001; Meyer y Parfyonova, 2010).

Si bien el compromiso con la organización ha sido ampliamente investigado, han surgido otros focos, como el compromiso con los líderes, el compromiso con la carrera profesional, el compromiso con los colegas, entre otros (Klein *et al.*, 2020; van Rossenberg *et al.*, 2022). El discurso académico ha propuesto estudios exploratorios que abarcan la identificación de antecedentes, distintos focos de compromiso, causalidad, efectos, evolución temporal, direccionalidad y perfiles, todo ello al servicio de mejorar la comprensión del compromiso y los fenómenos conductuales asociados (Bergman *et al.*, 2013; Meyer *et al.*, 2015; Eisenberger *et al.*, 2019; Klein *et al.*, 2020; van Rossenberg *et al.*, 2022). Este tipo de investigación, notablemente escasa pero profundamente pertinente, posee el potencial de apuntalar la formulación de políticas y prácticas de RRHH eficaces.

Cabe destacar el estudio reciente de van Rossenberg *et al.* (2022), que examinando la investigación relacionada con el compromiso entre 2009 y 2020 identificó sólo tres estudios en revistas científicas de alto impacto centrados en el compromiso hacia supervisores o líderes. Además, solo un 8% de los estudios de compromiso adoptaron la consideración de dos o más focos de compromiso distintos, centrandose mayoritariamente en la unidimensionalidad afectiva. De acuerdo con este estudio, los estudios multinivel son escasos, por lo que consideramos que investigar el impacto del compromiso de los líderes en el compromiso de los empleados puede ser un contributo significativo.

Tal y como ya ha sido referido, una línea de investigación defendida por varios académicos se dedica a los antecedentes del compromiso. Diferentes investigadores han postulado que determinados rasgos personales pueden actuar como precursores del compromiso, sirviendo de catalizadores (Mayer y Allen, 1997; Klein *et al.*, 2012).

Dado el vínculo inherente entre el proceso de compromiso y la evaluación perceptual de un individuo, junto con el creciente interés en comprender la influencia de las emociones en el entorno laboral (Yip y Côté, 2013; Côté, 2014; Rimé, 2015), se hace evidente el imperativo de explorar el grado en que la conciencia emocional de los empleados puede servir de base para el compromiso.

En esta tesis, los estudios realizados se han llevado a cabo el área del Comportamiento Organizacional, más específicamente dentro de la Teoría del Aprendizaje social (Bandura, 1977, 1986), que enfatiza el papel del aprendizaje observacional y los procesos cognitivos en la formación del comportamiento humano (Ambrose *et al.*, 2013; Xie *et al.*, 2019; Wo *et al.*, 2019) y la Teoría de Eventos Afectivos que escudriña la influencia de los encuentros emocionales en las actitudes de los individuos, la conducta y los resultados relacionados con el trabajo dentro del entorno laboral (Weiss y Cropanzano, 1996, 1999).

La fusión de estas tres investigaciones aporta información sustancial sobre los mecanismos que subyacen tanto al compromiso de los empleados con la organizacional como con el líder, bien como el papel de la conciencia emocional de los empleados en ese proceso, con el respaldo de varios enfoques teóricos, metodológicos y contribuciones empíricas.

Objetivo general: El objetivo general de esta tesis doctoral es investigar la dinámica y la direccionalidad entre dos focos diferentes de compromiso en el entorno laboral (organización y líder), y explorar simultáneamente en qué medida la conciencia emocional de los empleados puede considerarse un antecedente del compromiso.

Método y resultados: La tesis se estructura en torno a tres artículos distintos, cada uno de los cuales emplea diversos enfoques metodológicos para abordar progresivamente los objetivos específicos de investigación.

El artículo I profundiza en la relación entre la conciencia emocional de los empleados y su compromiso con dos focos distintos: el líder y la organización. El estudio también evalúa el posible papel mediador del compromiso afectivo con el líder en este contexto. Utilizando el modelo de ecuaciones estructurales y LISREL, el estudio examina la multidimensionalidad del compromiso organizativo (afectivo, normativo y de continuidad), las dimensiones de la conciencia emocional (comprensión de las emociones propias, autocontrol ante las críticas y comprensión de las emociones ajenas) y el compromiso afectivo con el líder.

Además, se emplea la prueba “Z” de Mackinon para medir la mediación del compromiso afectivo con el líder. Esta investigación inicial sugiere que la conciencia emocional de los empleados influye significativamente en el compromiso tanto con el líder como en el compromiso organizacional. El estudio también revela la naturaleza contingente de estas relaciones en función de la presencia o ausencia de compromiso afectivo con el líder. En particular, el estudio identifica un papel mediador del compromiso afectivo con el líder, alterando el vínculo entre las dimensiones de la conciencia emocional y el compromiso organizativo.

El artículo II pretende determinar el modelo con mayor poder explicativo e impacto causal en el proceso de compromiso de los empleados. Para ello, compara dos modelos distintos para analizar la relación entre los dos focos de compromiso, identificando así la dirección causal entre el compromiso organizativo y el compromiso afectivo con el líder. Estos modelos se establecen en un primer modelo propuesto (Modelo Final 1), en que el compromiso afectivo con el líder influye en el compromiso organizativo, y el segundo modelo (Modelo Final 2), en el que el compromiso organizativo influye en el compromiso afectivo con el líder. Cabe destacar que la conciencia emocional de los empleados se introduce como variable independiente en este estudio de modelización. Empleando un marco multidimensional que abarca las dimensiones afectiva, normativa y de continuidad del compromiso organizativo, así como la dimensión afectiva del compromiso con el líder, el estudio utiliza modelos de ecuaciones estructurales y LISREL para probar sus hipótesis. Los resultados subrayan que el Modelo Final 1 tiene una influencia explicativa más significativa en el proceso de compromiso en comparación con el Modelo Final 2. Este modelo hace hincapié en las relaciones estructurales más pronunciadas entre la conciencia emocional de los empleados, el compromiso

afectivo con el líder y el compromiso organizativo. Estos resultados reiteran el papel fundamental de los líderes a la hora de influir en el compromiso de los empleados. En resumen, el Modelo Final 1 revela que el compromiso afectivo con el líder influye significativamente en el compromiso organizativo afectivo y normativo, y que un mayor compromiso afectivo con el líder se correlaciona con un menor compromiso organizativo de continuidad. Por el contrario, el Modelo Final 2 revela que el compromiso organizativo influye en el compromiso afectivo con el líder, especialmente en lo que respecta a las dimensiones afectivas de ambos focos.

El artículo III trata de dilucidar hasta qué punto el compromiso organizativo afectivo de un líder influye en el compromiso afectivo de los empleados, tanto con el líder, como con la organización. Este estudio multinivel emplea el modelo de ecuaciones estructurales y LISREL para explorar la influencia del compromiso afectivo del líder en el compromiso afectivo de los empleados con ambos focos, a la vez que examina el papel de la conciencia emocional de los empleados. Los resultados demuestran una correlación positiva entre el compromiso organizativo afectivo del líder y el compromiso afectivo de los empleados con el líder. Esto sugiere que a medida que los empleados perciben un fuerte compromiso organizativo por parte de su líder, su conexión emocional con éste se intensifica. Además, la investigación subraya una influencia significativa del compromiso organizativo afectivo del líder en el compromiso organizativo de naturaleza afectiva de los empleados. Esto implica que percibir un alto nivel de compromiso afectivo a la organización por parte del líder afecta significativamente al compromiso afectivo de los empleados tanto con el líder como con la organización.

Conclusiones generales: En el Artículo I, los resultados proponen una influencia significativa de la conciencia emocional de los empleados, en particular su comprensión de las emociones propias, el autocontrol ante las críticas y la comprensión de las emociones de los demás, en el proceso de compromiso tanto hacia el líder como hacia la organización. Estos resultados sugieren que, en línea con el modelo de Meyer y Allen (1997), la conciencia emocional de los empleados podría servir como antecedente lejano del compromiso, representando un rasgo personal del individuo. Además, el estudio revela el papel mediador desempeñado por el compromiso afectivo con el líder. Esta mediación provoca una transformación positiva en la relación entre las dimensiones de la conciencia emocional y el compromiso organizativo. En particular, surge un descubrimiento único: la relación inversa entre el vínculo afectivo con el

líder y el compromiso organizativo de continuidad. En el ámbito de la interacción entre los dos focos de compromiso, el artículo destaca la correlación positiva entre el compromiso afectivo con el líder y el compromiso organizativo tanto afectivo como normativo. Por el contrario, se observa una correlación negativa con el compromiso organizativo de continuidad. Este estudio destaca que la presencia de un compromiso afectivo con otro foco tiende a disminuir la inclinación hacia el compromiso de continuidad.

En el artículo II, los resultados adquiridos refuerzan el papel fundamental de los líderes en la configuración del proceso de compromiso de los empleados. Esta afirmación se deriva de la observación de que el compromiso afectivo con el líder inherentemente engendra una conexión relativamente sólida que impulsa compromiso afectivo y normativo de los empleados de la organización. Además, los resultados indican que una mayor madurez emocional influye positivamente en el compromiso afectivo con el líder, afectando así el compromiso organizacional de los empleados. El Modelo Final 1 demuestra una influencia explicativa más pronunciada en el proceso de compromiso, revelando relaciones estructurales intensificadas entre la conciencia emocional de los empleados y su compromiso afectivo con el líder, que posteriormente impacta el compromiso organizacional. Esto subraya el papel de la conciencia emocional como precursor del compromiso y pone de relieve la dinámica recíproca e influyente entre las dimensiones afectivas de estos focos de compromiso. También cabe señalar el valor de la correlación entre las dimensiones normativa y afectiva del compromiso organizacional. Estos hallazgos se alinean con las afirmaciones de varios autores que abogan por una reevaluación del modelo de compromiso, sugiriendo la existencia potencial de un marco bidimensional del compromiso (Meyer y Allen, 1997; Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Meyer y Parfyonova, 2010).

En el contexto del artículo III, las conclusiones del estudio subrayan la considerable influencia que ejercen los líderes sobre el compromiso de los empleados en el entorno laboral. Con base en los resultados los líderes son responsables no sólo de alimentar el compromiso afectivo organizacional de los empleados, sino también de ejercer un impacto sustancial en el compromiso afectivo de los empleados consigo mismos. Cuando los empleados perciben que un líder muestra entusiasmo y una perspectiva positiva hacia su trabajo, esto influye sustancialmente en sus actitudes y comportamientos. Esta influencia les motiva a emular

comportamientos similares en consonancia con el compromiso del líder. Los efectos de un líder comprometido trascienden la superficie, fomentando un sentido de dedicación y propósito entre los empleados. Este compromiso compartido se extiende entonces a los objetivos y valores de la organización. A la luz de esto, el estudio destaca al líder como un foco potencialmente crítico de compromiso en el entorno laboral y una fuente significativa de influencia sobre otros focos de compromiso dentro de la organización. Los resultados señalan adicionalmente, que las organizaciones siguen siendo un foco fundamental de compromiso, que puede nutrirse y fortalecerse mediante el compromiso afectivo de los empleados en relación con el líder, y del compromiso afectivo del líder con la organización.

Palabras-Clave: compromiso organizacional; compromiso con el líder; conciencia emocional de los empleados

Abstract

Background: In the contemporary corporate landscape, companies deal permanently with changes and complex challenges that underscore workplace commitment as a strategic priority for management (Fuller and Kerr, 2022; Klotz and Bolino, 2022). Research has shed light on commitment's substantial influence across multiple aspects, including fostering pro-social behaviors, innovative work dynamics, enhancing employee well-being, elevating performance, and driving innovation levels (Beer *et al.*, 2015; Stanley and Meyer, 2016; Lapointe and Vandenberghe, 2017; Flinchbaugh *et al.*, 2019; Bak, 2020). Consequently, a compelling argument can be made that the positive outcomes stemming from employees' commitment reverberate through an organization's sustainability. Thus, commitment plays a pivotal role in bolstering competitiveness, facilitating the realization, and even the surpassing, of organizational aspirations.

The past few decades have witnessed heightened attention towards exploring and comprehending commitment, due to the positive outcomes it brings to the organization and employees. Commitment studies remain pertinent in the present as the nature of work and workspaces continues to evolve. The surge of socio-professional phenomena like "The Great Resignation" and "Quiet Quitting," along with the proliferation of remote work and flexible models, has accentuated the critical importance of understanding workplace commitment. The work environment has undergone profound shifts, influenced by many factors, including the evolving aspirations of employees and the expectations of emerging generations towards their professional trajectories (van Rossenberg *et al.*, 2018).

In this context, the effective management of commitment poses remarkable challenges, particularly in the realm of designing human resource policies with meaningful impact (Beer *et al.*, 2015). The present complexity in commitment administration stems not only from the different paradigms but also from the need to unravel the diverse commitment foci coexisting within the workplace (Klein, 2013; Meyer *et al.*, 2015; Becker, 2016; Klein *et al.*, 2020; van Rossenberg *et al.*, 2022).

Workplace commitment encompasses the degree of dedication and loyalty that employees hold towards their organization and its objectives. Commitment can be characterized as an individual's psychological bond with a specific focus, leading to relatively consistent behaviours, supported by three distinct dimensions: i) affective, involving emotional engagement with the focus, ii) normative, encompassing a sense of moral obligation or duty towards the focus, and iii) continuance, associated with the costs linked to change or the absence of alternatives (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001; Meyer and Parfyonova, 2010).

While commitment to the organization has been extensively investigated, other foci have surfaced, including commitment to the leaders, career commitment, and commitment to colleagues, among others (Klein *et al.*, 2020; van Rossenberg *et al.*, 2022). Scholarly discourse has proposed exploratory studies encompassing the identification of antecedents, distinct commitment foci, causality, effects, temporal evolution, directionality, and profiles, all in service of enhancing the comprehension of commitment and the associated behavioural phenomena (Bergman *et al.*, 2013; Meyer *et al.*, 2015; Eisenberger *et al.*, 2019; Klein *et al.*, 2020; van Rossenberg *et al.*, 2022). Notably scarce yet profoundly pertinent, this form of research possesses the potential to underpin the formulation of efficacious HR policies and practices.

A noteworthy observation emerges from a recent study by van Rossenberg *et al.* (2022), which scrutinizing commitment-related research spanning 2009 to 2020 identified only a few studies in high-impact scientific journals concentrated on commitment towards supervisors or leaders. Moreover, a mere 8% of commitment studies embraced the consideration of two or more distinct commitment foci, mainly focusing on its unidimensionality (affective). According to this study, multilevel studies are scarce, so we consider that investigating the impact of leaders' commitment on employees' commitment to the leaders and organization can be particularly contributive.

As previously referred, a line of research advocated by various scholars pertains to the antecedents of commitment. Different researchers have posited that specific personal traits can act as precursors to commitment, serving as catalysts for its emergence (Mayer and Allen, 1997;

Klein *et al.*, 2012). Given the inherent link between the commitment process and an individual's perceptual assessment, coupled with the growing interest in comprehending the influence of emotions in the workplace (Yip and Côté, 2013; Côté, 2014; Rimé, 2015), the imperative of exploring the degree to which employees' emotional awareness can serve as an underpinning for commitment becomes apparent.

The present set of studies draws under Organizational Behaviour, more specifically on the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986), which emphasizes the role of observational learning and cognitive processes in shaping human behaviour (Ambrose *et al.*, 2013; Xie *et al.*, 2019; Wo *et al.*, 2019) and Affective Events Theory which scrutinizes the influence of emotional encounters on individuals' attitudes, conduct, and job-related outcomes within the workplace (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996, 1999).

The merger of these three investigations provides substantial information on the mechanisms underlying both the employees' commitment to the organization and the leader, as well as the role of the employees' emotional awareness in that process, through the endorsement of a spectrum of theoretical views, various methodological approaches, and empirical contributions.

Main Goal: The overarching aim of this doctoral thesis is to investigate the dynamic and directionality between two different foci of commitment in the workplace (organization and leader), and simultaneously explore to what extent employees' emotional awareness can be considered an antecedent of commitment influencing the employee's commitment.

Methodology and Results: The thesis is structured around three distinct articles, each employing varying methodological approaches to progressively address the specific research objectives outlined.

Article I delves into the relationship between employees' emotional awareness and their commitment to two distinct foci - the leader and the organization. The study also evaluates the potential mediating role of affective commitment to the leader in this context. Utilizing structural equation modelling and LISREL, the study examines the multidimensionality of organizational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance), emotional awareness

dimensions (self-emotion understanding, self-control when facing criticism, and understanding others' emotions), and affective commitment to the leader.

Additionally, Mackinon's "Z" Test is employed to gauge the mediation by affective commitment to the leader. This initial investigation suggests that employees' emotional awareness significantly influences both leader and organizational commitment. The study also reveals the contingent nature of these relationships based on the presence or absence of affective commitment to the leader. Notably, the study identifies a mediating role of affective commitment to the leader, altering the link between emotional awareness dimensions and organizational commitment.

Article II aims to ascertain the model with the highest explanatory influence and consequential impact on the commitment process of employees. It achieves this by comparing two distinct models to analyse the relationship between the two commitment foci, thereby identifying the causal direction between organizational commitment and affective commitment to the leader. These models include the first proposed model (Final Model 1), wherein affective commitment to the leader influences organizational commitment, and the second model (Final Model 2), wherein organizational commitment influences affective commitment to the leader. Notably, employees' emotional awareness is introduced as an independent variable in this modelling study. Employing a multidimensional framework encompassing affective, normative, and continuance dimensions of organizational commitment as well as the affective dimension of commitment to the leader, the study utilizes structural equation modelling and LISREL to test its hypotheses. The findings underscore that Final Model 1 exerts a more significant explicative influence on the commitment process compared to Final Model 2. This model emphasizes more pronounced structural relationships between employees' emotional awareness, affective commitment to the leader, and organizational commitment. These results reiterate the pivotal role of leaders in influencing employee commitment. In sum, Final Model 1 reveals that affective commitment to the leader significantly influences affective and normative organizational commitment, and a stronger affective commitment to the leader correlates with reduced continuance of organizational commitment. Conversely, Final Model 2 reveals that organizational commitment influences affective commitment to the leader, particularly concerning the affective dimensions of both foci.

Article III endeavours to elucidate the extent to which a leader's affective organizational commitment impacts employees' affective commitment to both the leader and the organization. This multilevel study employs structural equation modelling and LISREL to explore the influence of leader affective commitment on employees' affective commitment to both focal points, while also examining the role of employees' emotional awareness. The findings demonstrate a positive correlation between a leader's affective organizational commitment and employees' affective commitment to the leader. This suggests that as employees perceive a strong affective organizational commitment from their leader, their emotional connection to the leader intensifies. Furthermore, the research underscores a significant influence of leaders' affective organizational commitment on employees' overall affective organizational commitment. This implies that perceiving a high level of affective organizational commitment from the leader significantly affects employees' affective commitment to both the leader and the organization.

General Conclusions:

In Article I, the findings propose a significant influence of employees' emotional awareness, particularly their understanding of self-emotions, self-control when facing criticism, and understanding others' emotions, on the commitment process toward both the leader and the organization. These outcomes suggest that, in line with Meyer and Allen's (1997) model, employees' emotional awareness could serve as a distant antecedent of commitment, representing a personal trait of the individual. Additionally, the study unveils a mediating role played by affective commitment to the leader. This mediation causes a transformation in the relationship between emotional awareness dimensions and organizational commitment. Notably, a unique discovery emerges: the inverse relationship between the affective bond with the leader and the continuance organizational commitment. In the realm of the interplay between the two commitment foci, the article emphasizes the positive correlation between affective commitment to the leader and both affective and normative organizational commitment. Conversely, a negative correlation is observed with the continuance

organizational commitment. This study highlights that the presence of an affective commitment to another focus tends to lessen the inclination toward continuance commitment.

In Article II, the results acquired bolster the pivotal role of leaders in shaping the employee commitment process. This assertion stems from the observation affective commitment to the leader inherently engenders a relatively robust connection that propels employees' affective and normative organizational commitment. Furthermore, the results indicate that higher emotional maturity positively influences affective commitment to the leader, consequently affecting employees' organizational commitment. The Final Model 1 demonstrates a more pronounced explanatory influence on the commitment process, revealing heightened structural relationships between employees' emotional awareness and their affective commitment to the leader, which subsequently impacts organizational commitment. This underscores the role of emotional awareness as a precursor to commitment and highlights the reciprocal and influential dynamics between the affective dimensions of these commitment foci. Notably, the correlation value between the normative and affective dimensions of organizational commitment can also be underscored. These findings align with the assertions of several authors who advocate for a reevaluation of the commitment model, suggesting the potential existence of a two-dimensional framework (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Meyer and Parfyonova, 2010).

In the context of Article III, the study's findings underscore the considerable influence wielded by leaders over employee commitment within the workplace. Leaders are responsible for not only nurturing employees' affective commitment to themselves but also exerting a substantial impact on employees' affective organizational commitment. When employees perceive a leader displaying enthusiasm and a positive perspective toward their work, it substantially shapes their attitudes and behaviours. This influence motivates them to emulate similar behaviours in alignment with the leader's commitment. The effects of a committed leader transcend the surface, fostering a sense of dedication and purpose among employees. This shared commitment then extends to the organization's objectives and values. In light of this, the study highlights the leader as a potentially critical focus of commitment within the workplace and a significant source of influence on other commitment foci within the organization. The results highlight that organizations remain a fundamental focus of commitment, which can be

nourished and strengthened by the employee's affective commitment to the leader and the affective commitment of the leader to the organization.

Keywords: organizational commitment; commitment to the leader; employees' emotional awareness

Chapter 1 - Introduction, objectives and structure

1.1 Introduction: context of research

The strategic relevance for research on commitment: a business and academic perspective

In recent years, businesses have navigated a competitive landscape fraught with considerable management challenges. Within this context, the pivotal role of organizational human capital in propelling innovation levels, enhancing competitiveness, and thereby ensuring company sustainability has been emphasized (Beer *et al.*, 2015; Markoulli *et al.*, 2017; Klein *et al.*, 2020; Murray and Holmes, 2021; Ha and Lee, 2022).

Contemporary companies are currently grappling with a swiftly shifting and demanding environment. Noteworthy socio-professional phenomena like "The Great Resignation" and "Quiet Quitting" underscore the imperative of prioritizing workplace commitment for effective management strategies (Fuller and Kerr, 2022; Klotz and Bolino, 2022).

The significance of commitment within organizations has grown exponentially. The strategic emphasis on workplace commitment is linked to its beneficial impact on employees, manifested through improved organizational outcomes (Meyer, 2009; Beer *et al.*, 2015; Markoulli *et al.*, 2017; Culibrk *et al.*, 2018; Klein *et al.*, 2020; Lee *et al.*, 2020). A wealth of studies suggests that commitment positively influences employee motivation, fostering heightened performance and innovation, while simultaneously reducing detrimental turnover and absenteeism rates that can undermine business success (Battistelli *et al.*, 2013; Xerri and Brunetto, 2013; Meyer, 2016; Lapointe and Vandenberghe, 2017; Zhang *et al.*, 2018; Bak, 2020).

These investigations also unveil the affirmative impact of commitment on employee well-being, fostering prosocial behaviors and nurturing a people-centric organizational culture. Thus, the promotion of commitment within the workplace contributes to organizational sustainability (Murray and Holmes, 2021). Consequently, it can be postulated that the advantages stemming from employees' commitment exert a far-reaching influence on a company's competitiveness, facilitating the attainment, and possibly even the surpassing, of organizational objectives.

In light of this context, there has been a burgeoning interest in and an imperative need for in-depth studies to enhance comprehension of commitment. This imperative has been particularly pronounced in the wake of evolving work relationships and their influence on contemporary employee commitment dynamics (Morrow, 2011; Hansen and Leuty, 2012; Heaphy *et al.*, 2018). The evolution of socioeconomic landscapes and workplaces, fueled by factors such as shifting employee expectations and the emergence of new generations, contributes to the ongoing relevance of commitment research (van Rossenberg *et al.*, 2018). As work continues to evolve, powered by trends like remote work, flexible agreements, and evolving employee expectations, understanding workplace commitment remains paramount for sustaining organizational success.

Given this dynamic backdrop, human resources managers face complex challenges. These challenges center on the necessity of strategic commitment policies and practices aligned with business strategies and organizational culture. However, challenges persist due to the concept of commitment remains abstract and the coexistence of numerous commitment foci in the workplace (Strack *et al.*, 2010; Becker *et al.*, 2018). In this context, empirical contributions become essential to enable human resources management to develop effective measures for employee commitment (Strack *et al.*, 2010; Beer *et al.*, 2015; Klein *et al.*, 2020). This research imperative aligns with a trajectory of commitment research (Becker *et al.*, 2009; Meyer, 2016; Klein *et al.*, 2020).

A recent study by van Rossenberg *et al.* (2022), examining commitment research from 2009 to 2020, revealed a scarcity of studies focusing on commitment to supervisors or leaders in high-impact scientific journals. Moreover, only 8% of commitment studies considered multiple commitment foci and mainly focused on the affective dimension. Remarkably absent are multilevel studies investigating the interplay between employees' commitment to their leaders and their organizational commitment.

Hence, there is an evident research imperative to explore different commitment foci and dissect their relationships, ultimately enhancing our understanding of their influence on employee commitment (Walton, 1985; Becker, 2016; Meyer *et al.*, 2016; Klein *et al.*, 2020; van Rossenberg *et al.*, 2022). Although relatively scarce, this type of research carries high

relevance. By shedding light on the interrelationships of diverse commitment foci, it provides invaluable insights into commitment management within organizations, aiding the comprehension of how these foci interact, shaping the commitment of employees, and ultimately steering their commitment levels.

The coexistence of multiple foci of commitment in the workplace

Commitment can be characterized as a distinct bond towards a specific target, resulting in consistent patterns of behavior (Beer *et al.*, 2015; Meyer and Allen, 1997; Meyer, 2009). One of the widely recognized conceptualizations of commitment is Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model (TCM), which elucidates the process of commitment by explaining the reasons and pathways employees undertake when committing. This model, extensively examined in various studies, comprises the affective, normative, and continuance dimensions. Within the realm of organizational commitment, the affective dimension involves individuals fostering an emotional bond with the organization, driven by their affinity and identification with it. The normative dimension, on the other hand, encompasses a sense of moral obligation and indebtedness to the organization. Meanwhile, the continuance dimension hinges on instrumental factors, such as material or financial aspects, which in turn create costs linked to potential changes (Becker, 1960; Allen and Meyer, 1996; Meyer and Allen, 1997; Powell and Meyer, 2004; Klein *et al.*, 2009).

The multidimensional nature of commitment has spurred considerable debate. In the view of Klein *et al.* (2012), commitment within the workplace acts as a psychological state that molds attitudes, leaning towards the notion of unidimensionality in commitment. A multitude of studies have consistently underscored the strength of the affective component, as it encapsulates the emotional attachment and identification individuals feel towards their organization. This renders it a pivotal determinant of their intent to remain within the company (Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Loi *et al.*, 2012; Klein *et al.*, 2020).

The contemporary challenge in managing commitment is not solely rooted in the shift of paradigms related to emerging generations but is also compounded by the necessity to gain a deeper comprehension of the multitude of commitment foci coexisting within the workplace.

Although organizational commitment has been a central focus of research in recent times, investigations indicate that employee commitment to the organization has shown relative stability over the past three decades. This observation underscores the potential ascendance of other commitment foci in terms of relevance (Meyer *et al.*, 2015; Meyer, 2016; van Rossenberg *et al.*, 2018, 2022; Eisenberger *et al.*, 2019; Klein *et al.*, 2020). The consensus about the existence of multiple foci of commitment within the workplace persists, with many scholars asserting that employees' commitment foci are dynamic. These may encompass professions, careers, organizations, leaders, colleagues, and more (Meyer *et al.*, 2015; Becker *et al.*, 2018; Klein *et al.*, 2020). In this complex environment, viewing commitment as an integrated phenomenon becomes challenging, thus posing a barrier to the effective implementation of strategic policies and practices (Becker *et al.*, 2018; Klein *et al.*, 2020)

Organizational Commitment and Commitment to the Leader

While organizational commitment has been widely scrutinized, the same cannot be said for commitment to a leader, which remains an area that warrants comprehensive exploration (Meyer *et al.*, 2015; Becker, 2016; Klein *et al.*, 2020; van Rossenberg *et al.*, 2022). Leaders assume a pivotal role in driving organizational transformations, day-to-day management, and team dynamics. As active and continuous agents, leaders wield a direct impact on employees' organizational experiences (Bycio *et al.*, 1995; Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Eisenberger *et al.*, 2010).

Despite leadership style's potential influence on employees' organizational commitment being noted in studies (Bass *et al.*, 2006; Zheng *et al.*, 2015; Benevene *et al.*, 2018; Zhang *et al.*, 2018; Bak, 2020), commitment to a leader has only recently emerged as a subject of exploration. The subject remains relatively unexplored both conceptually and empirically (Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe, 2003; Becker *et al.*, 2009; Meyer, 2009; Strauss *et al.*, 2009; Meyer *et al.*, 2015; Klein *et al.*, 2020; van Rossenberg *et al.*, 2022). In the context of the complex interplay of multiple commitment foci within the workplace, organizational commitment's multidimensional nature seems to contrast with the tendency for commitment to a leader to lean towards a more unidimensional construct, wherein the affective dimension maintains prominence while the normative and continuance dimensions exhibit strong correlations (Klein *et al.*, 2014; Meyer *et al.*, 2015).

Recent years have witnessed a growing interest in understanding commitment to a leader, considering its potential to influence both organizational transformations and daily operational dynamics, affecting employees' experiences (Jin and McDonald, 2017; Lapointe and Vandenberghe, 2017; Benevene *et al.*, 2018; Bak, 2020). This underscores the implicit influence of leadership, both in motivating and operational aspects. Eisenberger *et al.* (2010) found that employees' commitment to a leader spills over to influence their commitment to the organization, perceiving the leader as a representative figure of the organization.

The substantial impact of leaders within organizations is evident across hierarchical levels, from direct supervisors to top management, highlighting their role in shaping employee behavior (Stinglhamber *et al.*, 2015; Ahmad *et al.*, 2019; Khaola and Rambe, 2020). The multifaceted role of leaders in daily management, fostering organizational changes, and shaping culture underscore their significance in endorsing expected values and behaviors (Saeed *et al.*, 2022). Ethical leadership, in particular, is highlighted as a force that influences knowledge sharing, supporting a culture of continuous improvement. This underscores the role of leaders in nurturing commitment foci within organizations, aligning employees' professional commitment with overarching objectives.

With the leader serving as a common denominator across organizations, their influence on employees' commitment and experiences can be profound (Avolio *et al.*, 2004; Herman *et al.*, 2018; Sudibjo and Prameswari, 2021). The empirical research conducted by Loi *et al.* (2012) has shown that leaders' affective commitment positively influences employees' organizational commitment, impacting both extra-role behaviors and task performance. Supported by Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986), it is expected that individuals acquire behaviors through observation and cognitive processes, finding motivation in the observed consequences.

In summary, investigating commitment to a leader has become a pressing concern, with their impact resonating in organizational transformations and everyday operations. The influence of leaders spans motivational and operational domains, shaping attitudes, behaviors, and commitment foci.

Emotional awareness as an antecedent of employees' organizational commitment and commitment to the leader

Emotions interweave with daily work life, encompassing a range from enthusiasm and joy to stress and apathy (Rimé, 2015; Smith *et al.*, 2018). These emotional states are influenced by multifarious factors, including personal experiences, job satisfaction, work relationships, and organizational culture. Their impact on employee performance is profound, with positive emotions like enthusiasm and happiness catalyzing creativity, problem-solving prowess, and motivation, while negative emotions such as anger and anxiety can impede productivity, decision-making, and overall job performance (Yip and Côté, 2013; Côté, 2014; Rimé, 2015; Smith *et al.*, 2018).

Recent models posit that commitment is shaped by antecedent variables, influencing commitment processes in alignment with distinct commitment foci. Several models suggest that personal traits can serve as triggers for commitment, encompassing proximal influences (e.g., task nature, relationships, and organizational status) and distal influences (e.g., personal characteristics, management practices, organizational climate, and culture) (Mayer and Allen, 1997; Klein *et al.*, 2012). In this complex scenario, commitment manifests as a psychological state rooted in perceptual assessments. The intricacies of these assessments influence individuals' behavioral inclinations toward one or more commitment foci (Meyer and Allen, 1997). The process of employee commitment involves the analysis of extrinsic factors like organizational values, work environment, job characteristics, and intrinsic characteristics (Meyer and Allen, 1997). The emotional response of individuals closely intertwines with their awareness and interpretation of experienced events. This emotional awareness empowers individuals to better comprehend emotional dynamics, thereby steering their actions and thoughts (Smith and Lane, 2015; Panksepp *et al.*, 2017; Smith *et al.*, 2018).

Central to this discourse are three variables measuring emotional awareness: understanding self-emotions, self-control when facing criticism, and understanding others' emotions, drawn from Rego and Fernandes' (2005) model adapted from Mayer and Salovey's (1997) emotional intelligence framework.

Understanding self-emotions pertains to an individual's ability to grasp and manage their own emotions effectively, it involves interpreting one's emotions and the corresponding event, enabling constructive emotional regulation. It is expected that this process leads to heightened awareness regarding aspects of empathy and identification, fostering affective, normative, and continuance organizational commitment.

Self-control when facing criticism involves regulating emotions and managing feedback or criticism constructively, it implies the ability to recognize and manage emotions when subjected to critique. This facet cultivates constructive interpretation of feedback, guiding employees toward self-improvement and alignment with objectives.

Understanding others' emotions denotes the capacity to decipher others' emotions during interactions, it allow individuals to adapt their behavior and communication to the context and interlocutor. Enhanced interaction quality promotes positive relationships with stakeholders, bolstering affective bonds and a sense of commitment to the organization.

The interpretation of emotions involves assessing the situation and creating representations or relying on previous experiences. This cognitive process evaluates factors such as novelty, relevance, congruence with objectives, control, and alignment with norms (Brosch and Sander, 2013; Smith *et al.*, 2018). Enhanced emotional awareness contributes to constructive leader-member exchanges, aiding individuals in navigating challenges and experiences more satisfactorily.

Emotional awareness aids in handling feedback effectively, wherein self-control when facing criticism envisions feedback as integral to development and goal alignment. This construct may foster an affective commitment to the leader, with feedback perceived as a guide for personal growth. Positive emotional experiences foster commitment by empowering individuals to communicate their needs and seek growth opportunities. Contentment in roles strengthens organizational commitment as employees align their professional experiences with their emotional well-being. Moreover, organizational climate deeply influences employees' perceptions and emotional awareness, impacting their commitment and relationships within the workplace (Rimé, 2015; Smith *et al.*, 2018). Emotional awareness enables employees to

connect with colleagues and leaders emotionally, nurturing camaraderie, trust, and support. Recognized and valued employees are more likely to form stronger commitments to the organization and its leadership. Thus, employees' emotional awareness is anticipated to positively influence affective commitment to both leaders and the organization.

Theoretical framework: Organizational Behaviour and workplace commitment

Organizational behavior delves into the dynamics of interactions among individuals, groups, and structures within an organization, exerting mutual influences on behaviors. Workplace commitment, on the other hand, encompasses the extent of employees' dedication and allegiance to their organization and its objectives. Integrating these two realms offers a valuable avenue for unraveling the mechanics underlying leader-employee organizational commitment through a comprehensive exploration of theoretical frameworks and empirical insights. This synthesis, grounded in a theoretical backdrop that embraces both the Social Learning Theory and the Affective Events Theory, holds promise in shedding light on the dynamics between leaders and employees, their commitments, and the influences they wield.

The Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986), also known as the Social Cognitive Theory, underscores the power of observational learning and cognitive processes in shaping human conduct. This perspective emphasizes that individuals acquire knowledge by observing others' actions and through cognitive processes like encoding, retaining, and replicating learned behaviors. Aligned with the Social Learning Theory's principles this set of studies aims to explore the impact of leaders as a focus of commitment, and the influence of leaders' organizational commitment on employees. This vantage point accentuates leaders' pivotal role in influencing employees' commitment levels and underscores the role of leaders as channels for commitment-building processes.

In tandem with this theoretical foundation, the research integrates the lens of the Affective Events Theory (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996), a framework that scrutinizes the influence of emotional experiences on attitudes, behaviors, and work-related outcomes. This theory posits that workplace events or situations can trigger emotional responses that subsequently resound through an individual's work life, shaping their overall demeanour and approach to work-related

matters. Grounded in these premises, this set of studies homes in on leaders' affective organizational commitment as a catalyst for influencing employees' commitment towards both their leader and the organization. This theoretical stance underscores the profound impact of emotional dimensions within the leader-employee relationship and emphasizes the critical role of affective experiences in shaping commitment dynamics.

Moreover, this set of studies acknowledges the importance of employees' emotional awareness concerning their commitment to both leaders and the organization. This recognition accentuates the interplay between emotional self-awareness and commitment levels, emphasizing how individuals' recognition and management of their emotions can shape their relationships and commitments within the workplace. In sum, the confluence of these theoretical perspectives offers a rich and comprehensive framework for scrutinizing the basis of leader-employee commitment interactions.

1.2 Objectives and justification of the thesis

This thesis is based on the development of commitment studies, drawing suggestions from diverse authors. This set of studies considers a wide range of suggestions, namely approaches that reconcile different foci of commitment, particularly the organization and the leader, the directionalities between them, exploring the multidimensionality of commitment, and including antecedent variables.

While this thesis follows a trajectory suggested by academic scholarship, it aligns seamlessly with one of the main strategic priorities of organizations globally. Committing and retaining employees in the modern workplace has presented profound challenges, leading to substantial competitiveness losses for organizations worldwide. Noteworthy socio-professional phenomena, such as the "Great Resignation," characterized by a mass exodus of over 50 million employees within a short span, and "Quiet Quitting," denoting employees who remain but offer minimal effort, have posed difficult obstacles to organizational management. These phenomena have engendered significant economic losses and a decline in competitiveness.

In this context, the presented series of studies aims to provide valuable insights that can be translated into practical applications, particularly within management, more specifically for human resources management.

To accomplish this set of objectives, the following specific aims were delineated:

- To ascertain the extent to which employees' emotional awareness, encompassing understanding self-emotions, self-control when facing criticism, and understanding others' emotions, act as antecedents of both organizational and leader commitment. This analysis seeks to unveil antecedent relationships that can serve as a foundation for organizational measures to bolster employee commitment to both the organization and its leaders.
- To examine the extent to which commitment to the leader plays a mediating role in the relationship between emotional awareness and organizational commitment. This exploration intends to illuminate the degree of impact that leader commitment has on the processes of employee commitment.
- To determine which of the two commitment foci, organization or leader, holds greater influence over the employee commitment process. This investigation seeks to establish whether the organizational context remains a dominant focal point for commitment or if leaders wield greater significance in fostering employee commitment processes.
- To deepen the analysis of structural relationships, taking into consideration the multidimensional nature of organizational commitment and the affective unidimensionality of leader commitment. Additionally, this analysis delves into relationships involving the affective unidimensionality of each focus. The goal is to identify which dimensions are strategically pivotal within the commitment process and contribute academic insights to the ongoing discourse regarding the dimensionality of commitment across different foci.
- To further probe the dynamics of commitment's influence across hierarchical levels, specifically the relationship between affective commitment to the leader and affective commitment to the organization. This exploration aims to elucidate whether perceptions of

leader commitment levels impact employee commitment processes, thereby elucidating the dominance of one focus over another.

The culmination of results and conclusions stemming from the aforementioned specific aims provides a foundation for crafting strategies to manage commitment in the workplace. Furthermore, these findings contribute to the academic landscape by advancing our understanding of commitment as a phenomenon, unveiling predictive relationships and dynamics that can inform the formulation and implementation of organizational policies and interventions aimed at elevating employee commitment levels.

The decision to study commitment is rooted in the recognition that workplace commitment bears inherent positive outcomes, benefiting both employees and organizations, thus fostering a mutually beneficial context. Ultimately, this thesis endeavours to enhance the comprehension of commitment as a multidimensional construct, identifying anticipatory relationships and dynamics that can underpin the development of organizational strategies fostering heightened levels of employee commitment.

1.3 Compendium structure

This doctoral thesis adheres to the structure of a compendium of articles, comprising two articles that have been published, and one in revision, in journals indexed within the Journal Citation Reports (JCR). Together, these articles encompass the outcomes of the research conducted throughout this doctoral tenure. Within this section, the precise correspondence between the individual publications and the established objectives is detailed, underscoring the inherent consistency between these articles and the broader research journey.

1. The first publication (article I) that forms the present compendium is entitled "Employees' emotional awareness as an antecedent of organizational commitment - The mediating role of affective commitment to the Leader", and was published in the journal *Frontiers in Psychology*,

indexed in the 1st quartile (Q1) of the Journal Citation Reports index (JCR-2023), with an impact factor of 4.232 and with a position of 34/147 in the category of Psychology.

The presented article underscores the significance of comprehending and effectively managing workplace commitment as a pivotal factor for bolstering organizational sustainability and achieving heightened performance levels. The article accentuates the hurdles organizations encounter when navigating commitment management, particularly within the backdrop of evolving work dynamics and the imperative to gain deeper insights into the coexisting multiple foci of commitment within the workplace. While organizational commitment has been extensively explored, other concurrent foci and their interrelationships remain largely unexplored.

While the focus on commitment to the organization has been the most extensive, the interplay and directionalities with other commitment foci within the workplace remain a novel terrain. Extensive research attests to the relative stability of organizational commitment, yet the influence of alternative commitment foci on employees' organizational commitment necessitates thorough examination. Notably, the role of leaders in the workplace holds paramount importance due to their substantial impact on employees. Consequently, it is reasonable to anticipate a significant influence on the commitment processes of employees.

This study seeks to enrich the existing body of knowledge by investigating the nexus between emotional awareness—an antecedent of commitment to the leader—and organizational commitment. Simultaneously, the study aims to delve into the potential mediation role of affective commitment to the leader. The study's focus is of particular import, as it pertains to its distinctive approach, employing structural relations analysis, which accounts for the multidimensionality of organizational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance). Likewise, the analysis encompasses emotional awareness factors such as understanding self-emotions, self-control when facing criticism, and understanding others' emotions. This approach enhances the interpretation of the relationships and dynamics among these dimensions, offering nuanced insights into how emotional awareness serves as an antecedent, impacting the diverse dimensions of both organizational commitment and affective commitment to the leader. By uncovering the factors that shape commitment and the complex

interplay among different commitment foci, this study holds the potential to furnish valuable insights that organizations can harness to formulate strategies aimed at improving employee commitment and, consequently, enhancing overall organizational outcomes.

A pivotal revelation of this study resides in the significant and positive correlations established between emotional awareness and all dimensions of organizational commitment, including affective, normative, and continuance dimensions. This crucial finding underscores the role of individual emotional awareness in fostering commitment to the organization.

Notably, the investigation uncovered the mediating impact of affective commitment to the leader within the overarching relationship between emotional awareness and the broader spectrum of organizational commitment. This distinctive insight elucidates the intermediary role of the emotional bond forged with immediate leadership in translating emotional awareness into an augmented commitment to the organizational entity. The study underscores the pivotal role of individuals' understanding and management of their own emotions. Such aptitude exhibits a robust positive influence across all dimensions of organizational commitment, signaling the integral part played by intrapersonal emotional competence in fostering commitment. Notably, the comprehension of others' emotions within the organizational sphere is revealed as a positive influencer of affective organizational commitment. This observation indicates the significance of empathy and social awareness in nurturing emotional connections within the organizational ecosystem. Intriguingly, a pertinent finding emerges, depicting the negative correlation between the exercise of self-control when confronted with criticism and continuance organizational commitment. This counterintuitive association suggests that individuals proficient in managing criticism may demonstrate diminished reliance on the continuance aspect of their commitment.

2. The second publication (article II) comprising this current thesis is entitled "Dual Commitment to Leader and Organisation: Alternative Models Based on the Employees' Emotional Awareness." and was published in the journal Sustainability, more specifically in the Special Issue "Sustainable Employee Management". The Journal is indexed in the 2nd quartile (Q2) of the Journal Citation Reports index (JCR-2023), with an impact factor of 7.196 and with a position 48/127 in the Section of Environmental Studies - Sustainable Management.

This article delves into the concept of dual commitment, examining the simultaneous commitment employees have towards both a leader and an organization. The article also investigates the pivotal role that employees' emotional awareness plays within this dynamic. The study conducts a comparative analysis of two different models that elucidate the relationship between these two foci of commitment: one focusing on the leader and the other on the organization.

The first proposed model posits that affective commitment to a leader significantly influences organizational commitment. Conversely, the second model posits that organizational commitment has an influence on affective commitment to the leader. The study adopts a multidimensional perspective, incorporating affective, normative, and continuance dimensions of organizational commitment, and the affective dimension of commitment to the leader.

In essence, this research seeks to examine and contrast these two competing models, striving to ascertain which possesses superior explanatory prowess. Moreover, the study endeavours to unravel the interplay between these dual commitments and their potential implications for employees' commitment process.

The study yields several noteworthy findings, foremost among them being that the first model (referred to as Final Model 1) exhibits stronger structural relationships, exerting a more pronounced influence on employees' commitment process compared to the second model (Final Model 2). This suggests that affective commitment to the leader wields a more potent impact on employees' organizational commitment.

The research discloses that affective commitment to the leader carries a positive influence on both affective and normative organizational commitment. This underscores that employees' commitment to the leader propels their commitment to the organization, underpinned by emotional and moral considerations. However, a discernible trend emerges wherein heightened affective commitment to the leader corresponds to diminished continuance commitment, indicative of a reduced emphasis on financial or pragmatic factors.

Furthermore, the correlation between employees' emotional awareness and organizational commitment manifests more robustly when stimulated by the affective commitment to the leader. This implies that comprehending one's own emotions and exercising self-control when confronted with criticism engenders a positive correlation with affective commitment to the leader.

In summation, this study augments our comprehension of commitment and its behavioral manifestations, particularly in the realm of affective commitment to the leader and organizational commitment encompassing affective, normative, and continuance dimensions, aligned with the specific objectives of this set of studies. These outcomes foster a heightened comprehension of the directionality among these different foci within the workplace, thereby enhancing clarity and promoting a deeper understanding of commitment.

3. The third and last publication (article III), which closes the compendium of articles, is entitled " Connecting leaders and employees´ affective commitment: a multilevel analysis " and was published in the Leadership & Organization Development Journal, indexed in the 2nd quartile (Q2) of the Journal Citation Reports index (JCR-2023), with an impact factor of 3.923 and a position 103/227 in the Management category.

This article is driven by the objective of delving into the ways leaders wield influence over employees' affective commitment, both towards the leaders themselves and the larger organization. Employing a multilevel approach, this study is particularly concerned with the role that employees' emotional awareness plays in shaping this complex process. Consequently, the current research seeks to achieve two specific goals: firstly, to gauge the extent to which a leader's affective organizational commitment impacts the employee's affective commitment to the leader, and secondly, to measure how a leader's affective organizational commitment shapes the employee's affective commitment to the organization. In tandem with these pursuits, the study also seeks to explore the role of employees' emotional awareness in shaping the employees' affective commitment, to the leader and the organization.

Significantly, this study narrows its focus to the affective dimension of both commitment targets, recognizing that previous research and various authors underline the heightened relevance of the affective aspect in employees' commitment processes.

By contemplating multiple targets of commitment and employing a multilevel methodology, this study contributes significantly to the comprehension of commitment dynamics. It bridges existing gaps within the literature and unveils the mechanisms and precursors of the commitment process.

It is worth highlighting that affective commitment to a leader emerges as a potent driver within employees' commitment processes, outshining the influence of organizational commitment. This heightened impact extends not only to affective organizational commitment but also resonates positively.

Furthermore, the study accentuates a pivotal revelation: the robust association between employees' emotional awareness and affective organizational commitment, particularly when this linkage is galvanized by affective commitment to the leader. The ability to comprehend one's own emotions and exercise self-control, especially in the face of criticism, emerges as a compelling antecedent of commitment to the leader.

A notable aspect of this research lies in its pioneering approach—a comprehensive examination of multiple commitment targets and the application of a multilevel methodology to examine commitment dynamics. This innovative stance directly addresses gaps that linger in the current body of knowledge, thereby fostering a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of commitment within the realm of the workplace. Such discernments, in turn, hold the potential to substantially inform the design and implementation of HR policies and practices.

Chapter 2 - Doctoral Thesis Publications

Article I

Santana-Martins M, Nascimento J.L. and Sánchez-Hernández M.I. (2022). Employees' emotional awareness as an antecedent of organizational commitment—The mediating role of affective commitment to the leader. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13:945304. Doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.945304

Article II

Santana-Martins, M.; Sanchez-Hernandez, M.I.; Nascimento, J.L. (2022). Dual Commitment to Leader and Organization: Alternative Models Based on the Employees' Emotional Awareness. *Sustainability*, 14, 9421. Doi: 10.3390/su14159421

Article III

Santana-Martins, M.; Sanchez-Hernandez, M.I.; Nascimento, J.L.; Stinglhamber, F. (2024). Connecting leaders and employees' affective commitment: a multilevel analysis. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*. Doi: 10.1108/LODJ-09-2023-0502

2.1 Article I

Authors: Marisa Santana-Martins, José Luís Nascimento, Maria Isabel Sánchez-Hernández.

Title: Employees' emotional awareness as an antecedent of organizational commitment - The mediating role of affective commitment to the leader.

Reference: Doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.945304.

Journal: Frontiers in Psychology.

Editorial: Frontiers.

Publication Date: July 2022.

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Abstract: Commitment has been perceived as a strategic topic in organizations due to its positive effect on retaining talent, increasing performance, or boosting employees' innovative behavior. However, there are many foci of commitment in the workplace, which has represented a challenge to human resources management, who need implement measures to improve the employee's commitment. Recent research has suggested a need to conduct studies about commitment, namely antecedents and the relationship between different foci, to understand the dynamic and directionality between them. Hence, the purpose of this work is to analyze how employees' emotional awareness relates with two foci of commitment (the leader and the organization), also assessing the mediating role of affective commitment to the leader. The study uses structural equation modeling and Lisrel to test the hypotheses considering the multidimensionality of organizational commitment (affective; normative; and continuance), employees' emotional awareness (understanding self-emotions; self-control when facing criticism; and understanding others' emotions), and the affective commitment to the leader, under the scope of Social Exchange Theory. The Mackinon's Z Test was used to assess the mediation role of affective commitment to the leader. The sample is composed for 403 employees from two multinational companies. The results provide empirical evidence about the mediating role of affective commitment to the leader in the relationship between employees'

emotional awareness and organizational commitment, and the employees' emotional awareness as an antecedent of commitment. The implications for theory and practice are discussed.



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Employees' emotional awareness as an antecedent of organizational commitment—The mediating role of affective commitment to the leader

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Commitment has been perceived as a strategic topic in organizations due to its positive effect on retaining talent, increasing performance, or boosting employees' innovative behavior. However there are many foci of commitment in the workplace, which has represented a challenge to human resources management, who need implement measures to improve the employee's commitment. Recent research has suggested a need to conduct studies about commitment, namely antecedents and the relationship between different foci, to understand the dynamic and directionality between them. Hence, the purpose of this work is to analyze how employees' emotional awareness relates with two foci of commitment (the leader and the organization), also assessing the mediating role of affective commitment to the leader. The study uses structural equation modeling and Lisrel to test the hypotheses considering the multidimensionality of organizational commitment (affective; normative; and continuance), employees emotional awareness (understanding self-emotions; self-control when facing criticism; and understanding others' emotions), and the affective commitment to the leader, under the scope of Social Exchange Theory. The Mackinon's Z Test was used to assess the mediation role of affective commitment to the leader. The sample is composed for 403 employees from two multinational companies. The results provide empirical evidence about the mediating role of affective commitment to the leader in the relationship between employees' emotional awareness and organizational commitment, and the employees' emotional awareness as an antecedent of commitment. The implications for theory and practice are discussed.

KEYWORDS

organizational commitment, commitment to the leader, employees' emotional awareness, dual commitment, workplace commitments

Introduction

Commitment has been increasingly considered a significant topic for organizations. Strategic interest in workplace commitment is related to the positive effects that it can have on employees, which are reflected in better organizational outcomes (Meyer, 2009; Beer et al., 2015; Markoulli et al., 2017; Culibrk et al., 2018; Klein et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2020).

Several studies have suggested a positive influence of commitment on employees' motivational levels, which leads to increased levels of performance and innovation, while turnover and absenteeism rates that can harm business results also decrease (Battistelli et al., 2013; Xerri and Brunetto, 2013; Meyer, 2016; Lapointe and Vandenberghe, 2017; Zhang et al., 2018; Bak, 2020). The studies also reveal that the positive effects of commitment are also observed at the level of employees' wellbeing, where increased prosocial behaviors in the organization lead to people-oriented organizational culture.

It can be said that the development of commitment measures in the workplace helps organizational sustainability (Murray and Holmes, 2021).

This interest and the need to undertake studies that enable a better understanding of commitment have come under attention over the last few decades. However, this need has intensified considerably in light of the changes we have witnessed regarding work relationships and how this influences how employees currently commit themselves to their workplace (Morrow, 2011; Hansen and Leuty, 2012; Heaphy et al., 2018).

This context has posed challenges to managing commitment, especially with regard to planning human resource policies that have an effective impact (Beer et al., 2015). The current difficulty in managing commitment stems not only from the change in paradigms associated with the new generations, but also from the need to better understand the multiplicity of foci for commitment that co-exist in the workplace.

Organizational commitment has been a target which has come under much study in recent years. However, research suggests that the strength of employee commitment to the organization has remained relatively stable over the last three decades. This, underline the probability of other foci of commitment gaining more relevance, such as commitment to the leader, colleagues, among others (Meyer et al., 2015; Meyer, 2016; van Rossenberg et al., 2018, 2022; Eisenberger et al., 2019; Klein et al., 2020).

Studies on commitment to the leader, whether conceptual or empirical, are relatively recent and remain scarce, despite this being a factor with a crucial effect on promoting and implementing organizational transformations, as it has a direct impact on employees (Jin and McDonald, 2017; Lapointe and Vandenberghe, 2017; Benevene et al., 2018; Bak, 2020). The role of leadership has a significant impact on organizational culture, promoting the expected values and behaviors. According with Saeed et al. (2022) ethical leadership has a great influence on the followers' knowledge sharing, what is crucial to a culture of continuous

improvement because it can influence employees development and performance, and also the quality of services. According with these authors, employees' professional commitment plays a moderating role on this behavior. In that sense, the developments of studies with different foci of commitment, and its relation with leadership, also underline the need to investigate the leader as a focus of commitment.

Likewise, there is unanimous recognition in the community of researchers that there is a need to learn more about commitment, to more thoroughly explore its different antecedents and how they influence the processes of commitment, combining studies with different foci and exploring its multidimensionality (van Rossenberg et al., 2022).

Since the commitment process is inherent to the individual's perceptual assessment, this study seeks to identify the extent to which employees' emotional awareness can be considered an antecedent of organizational commitment and affective commitment to the leader, under the scope of the Social Exchange Theory (SET; Homans, 1958) and Affective Events Theory (AET; Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996). The emotional awareness brings to the employees the ability to identify and manage emotions according with the context, being able to identify not only their own emotions, but also those of others, and adapt their behavior appropriately (Côté, 2014; Helvac and Yilmaz, 2020).

Thus, to contribute to fill this gap, supporting on AET the aims of the present study are twofold. The first goal is to analyze the extent to which employees' emotional awareness can be considered an antecedent of organizational commitment and affective commitment to the leader. Complementary, and based on SET, the second goal is to explain the leader member affective exchange. In other words, it is to analyze the extent to which affective commitment to the leader is a mediator of the process of employees' commitment to the organization. Finally, the discussion of the results of our study will provide some implications for theory and practice.

Theoretical framework and hypotheses development

Employees' emotional awareness as an antecedent of organizational commitment

Commitment is seen as a connection between an individual and a target; when it depends on extrinsic and intrinsic aspects of the individual, it can lead to behavioral stability (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001).

One of the most quoted conceptualizations of commitment is the three-component model (TCM) put forward by Meyer and Allen (1991). This model, which has been revisited in various studies, is composed of the affective, normative, and continuance dimensions. From the perspective of organizational commitment, within the affective dimension, individuals create

an affective and emotional bond with the organization and stay because they like it, and identify with it. The normative dimension implies a duty of moral obligation, and a feeling of indebtedness to the organization. Within the continuance dimension, individuals commit based on factors of an instrumental nature (material or monetary), which generate costs associated with change (Becker, 1960; Allen and Meyer, 1996; Meyer and Allen, 1997; Powell and Meyer, 2004; Klein et al., 2009).

Recent models suggest that commitment is influenced by antecedent variables that influence commitment processes according to various commitment foci. These variables can be of close influence (e.g., the nature of the task; relationships, and the status held in the organization) and of distant influence (e.g., personal characteristics, management practices, organizational climate, and culture; Meyer and Allen, 1997; Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001; Meyer, 2014; Klein et al., 2020). Thus, as commitment is a psychological state which is based on a set of perceptual assessments, the dynamics inherent in the way individuals perform these assessments will influence their behavioral process toward one or more foci (Meyer and Allen, 1997).

In view of this, the emotional response of an individual is closely related to their degree of awareness and their ability to interpret the facts they experience. How individuals interpret emotions, cognitive dynamics, and physical sensations determines their behavior and actions. There are several studies focused on positive emotions in the leader–member exchange literature (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Herman et al., 2018). In fact, social exchanges in organizations are the basis of the two-way relationship between leaders and employees (Bishop et al., 2005; Bhal et al., 2009).

Thus, the emotional experience has an implicit physical and intellectual impact, which triggers an emotional state affecting the individual's experience and interpretation in a given situation and context.

When the emotional process is carried out with a greater degree of awareness, it implies a more constructive emotional response, as it enables the individual to re-evaluate both the specific situation and the way in which they react emotionally (Smith and Lane, 2015; Panksepp et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2018).

For this current study were considered three variables that measure individuals' emotional awareness, such as Understanding self-emotions (USE); Self-control when facing criticism (SFC); and Understanding others' emotions (UOE), based on the model developed by Rego and Fernandes (2005), previously adapted from the emotional intelligence model of Mayer and Salovey (1997). In short, employees' emotional awareness can positively influence their day-to-day experience in the organization as well as their interpersonal relationships, and therefore also positively influence their organizational commitment. Thus, following this assumption, the first general hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Employees' emotional awareness is positively related to organizational commitment.

According to Rego and Fernandes (2005), understanding self-emotions refers to the way in which individuals interpret their

emotions and the event that triggered the emotion. This analysis allows individuals to understand what they feel and why enables them to regulate emotion constructively. This intellectual process can lead to individuals having greater awareness regarding the aspects with which they empathize and identify, and also positively influence affective, normative, and continuance organizational commitment. In view of the above, the following specific hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 1a: Understanding self-emotions is positively related to organizational commitment.

Self-control when facing criticism refers to individuals' ability to recognize and control their emotions in situations where they are the target of criticism. It implies the individual's ability to understand the reason for the criticism and, consequently, to know how to deal with it (Rego and Fernandes, 2005). As mentioned by Smith et al. (2018), when employees are criticized, they can interpret this context in several ways. Individuals with greater emotional awareness will tend to interpret criticism constructively, drawing on it to self-correct and be aligned with what is intended. On the other hand, a lesser capacity for emotional management implies that individuals interpret feedback only as criticism; this may lead to fear of losing one's job, or to becoming insecure because they think that they are not able to live up to expectations. Thus, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 1b: Self-control when facing criticism is positively related to organizational commitment.

Understanding others' emotions encompasses individuals' ability to identify and understand the emotions of those with whom they interact and adapt their interaction according to this interpretation. This intellectual dynamic leads individuals to regulate their behavior and communication to be in keeping with the context and the interlocutor (Rego and Fernandes, 2005). The quality of the interaction provides a greater ability to relate positively to the different stakeholders, with a certain level of emotional connection; this can promote the development of affective bonds and a sense of duty toward the organization. On the other hand, this capacity for emotional management can also provide individuals with the construction of solid relationships that foster continuity and the construction of a career in the organization. In view of the above, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 1c: Understanding others' emotions is positively related to organizational commitment.

Employees' emotional awareness and affective commitment to the leader

Although organizational commitment is one of the most studied constructs, the same is not the case for commitment to a leader; this target of commitment is yet to be fully explored (Meyer et al., 2015; Becker, 2016; Klein et al., 2020; van Rossenberg

et al., 2022). Leaders play a key role in promoting and implementing organizational transformations, as well as in day-to-day management and teams. As a figure who actively and continuously intervenes, the leader directly impacts employees' experience in the organization (Bycio et al., 1995; Avolio et al., 2004; Eisenberger et al., 2010). Some studies suggest that leadership style influences employees' organizational commitment (Bass et al., 2006; Zheng et al., 2015; Benevene et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2018; Bak, 2020). However, the leader as a commitment target has only been approached relatively recently, and is still the subject of few studies, whether conceptual or empirical (Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe, 2003; Becker et al., 2009; Meyer, 2009; Strauss et al., 2009; Meyer et al., 2015; Klein et al., 2020; van Rossenberg et al., 2022).

Despite the multidimensional nature of commitment, authors such as Klein et al. (2014) and Meyer et al. (2015) argue that commitment to a leader tends to be a unidimensional construct, where the affective dimension has the greatest consistency, and where the normative and continuance dimensions are strongly correlated.

There is unanimous agreement that leaders' actions influence employees, but the extent to which employees' emotional awareness influences the way they interpret actions and interactions is not clear, as well as the role they play in the commitment process. The AFC argues that emotions are a significant part of human beings, from which they support substantially their actions and reactions. Therefore, emotions have a great impact in organizations, in the relationships between the stakeholders, as well as on commitment in the workplace. Emotions are internal events that occur within an actor as a result of social exchange emerging when two or more people exchange valued outcomes such as rewards or payoffs (Lawler and Thye, 2006). The study of emotions and affective experiences in organizations is not new (Fredrickson, 2000; Barsade and Gibson, 2007). Treating emotional awareness as central feature of social exchange the common knowledge will be updated and enriched, through the social sharing of emotions at work.

The interpretation of emotions by the individual requires an assessment of the situation they are experiencing, and they will thus create representations or will rely on representations which were previously created in similar situations (Smith et al., 2018). This analysis can be conscious or not, where the assessment carried out is based on: (i) whether the situation is new or familiar; (ii) whether or not it is relevant to the current concerns of the individual; (iii) whether or not it is congruent with their objectives; (iv) whether it is within or outside their control; and (v) whether or not it is consistent with their norms or values (Brosch and Sander, 2013; Smith et al., 2018). A study of Zia et al. (2018) presented empirical evidences that employees' emotional intelligence has a positive influence during conflict resolution strategies by supervisors, and also contribute to organizational citizen behavior among the group members. It is therefore assumed that, by providing a greater ability to analyze and manage emotions, both for individuals and for those with whom they

interact, employees' emotional awareness leads to a more constructive and healthy leader-member exchange. In view of the above, the following general hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 2: Employees' emotional awareness is positively related to affective commitment to the leader.

Emotional awareness supports individuals by fostering a greater ability to face everyday situations in a satisfactory manner. Faced with the challenges that arise, they use these experiences to structure their own development (Yip and Côté, 2013; Côté, 2014; Rimé, 2015; Smith et al., 2018). Understanding self-emotions is expected to enable the individual to be aware of the affective connection to the leader, contributing to an increasing awareness of the affective bond of commitment. Thus, the following specific hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 2a: Understanding self-emotions is positively related to affective commitment to the leader.

Leader-member exchanges are imbued with moments of positive and negative feedback, in which employees' emotional awareness can represent an important aspect of managing feedback. Self-control when facing criticism assumes that employees take feedback as constructive and as an integral and fundamental part of their development and alignment with objectives. Thus, Self-control when facing criticism is expected to positively influence affective commitment to the leader, with feedback being viewed as a guide to their development, and with the employee feeling grateful for having it. In view of the above, the following specific hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 2b: Self-control when facing criticism is positively related to affective commitment to the leader.

Understanding others' emotions allows employees to identify and align their behavior with the emotions of those with whom they interact. Cost-benefit analysis plays a major role in the social exchange process at work according to the SET (Homans, 1958). This theory is one of the most relevant frameworks in organizational behavior at the moment in different disciplines (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Under this paradigm, employees essentially take the benefits of the relationship with the leader, and with the organization, and subtract the costs to determine how much it is worth. It is important to highlight that this form of interaction driven by the individual interest of the employees is likely to transform into collective emotions (Lawler et al., 2014) positively contributing to organizational culture (Rimé, 2020).

According with Zia et al. (2018) in conflict contexts the employees emotional intelligence allows to a better understanding of leader's conflicts resolution strategies, impacting also the employee's behaviors on the organization. In that sense, the ability to understand other's emotions permits to the individual

manage their actions and build positive relationships in the workplace, what enables the process of affective commitment to the leader. In this way, the following specific hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 2c: Understanding others' emotions is positively related to affective commitment to the leader.

The relationship between affective commitment to the leader and organizational commitment

Although there is consensus around the existence of multiple foci of commitment in the workplace, the same is not the case regarding their relationships and directionality, and few studies have undertaken an approach to two or more commitment foci (Klein, 2013; Meyer et al., 2015; Becker, 2016; Klein et al., 2020; van Rossenberg et al., 2022).

A recent study by Meyer et al. (2015), as an extension of the study by Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe (2003) which focused on two commitment foci, namely the organization and the supervisor, suggests that conceptual and empirical research on supervisor commitment is necessary, as well as its relationship with organizational commitment.

According to the aforementioned, the leader is one of the main actors in the organization, with active responsibility for the success and implementation of organizational measures. As such, it is the leader who interacts with employees and has a direct effect on individuals in the daily management of their responsibilities (Stinglhamber et al., 2015; Lapointe and Vandenberghe, 2017; Wu and Parker, 2017; Zhang et al., 2018). In this process of management and interaction, the leader can be an important target of commitment. Some studies have shown that the leadership style, as well as the way leaders give feedback to their teams, and the perception of interpersonal justice, can influence organizational commitment (Lapointe and Vandenberghe, 2017; Tetteh et al., 2019; Bak, 2020).

From the perspective of the dark side of leadership, Nadeem et al. (2020) identified the negative influence of destructive leadership on workplace and personal deviance, where emotional exhaustion plays a mediation role in the relationship. In this study is clear that the leadership can be oriented to create organizational damages, and even influence employees to act accordingly with this kind of interests. In this case, the employees' emotional exhaustion conduct to workplace deviance and interpersonal deviance.

In contrast, positive leader behaviors influence many positive aspects, as Zada et al. (2022) have argued; servant leadership behavior promotes knowledge sharing, but also brings to the relationship some kind of proximity that supports psychological safety at work, where cooperative behaviors are common while discouraging immoral behaviors. The same indicates the study of Fatima et al. (2017) where participative

leadership influences employee's commitment to change, and increases their innovative work behavior. Once again, the leader plays a relevant role in commitment in the workplace, reinforcing the need to expand studies about the leader as foci of commitment, and its relationship on organizational commitment.

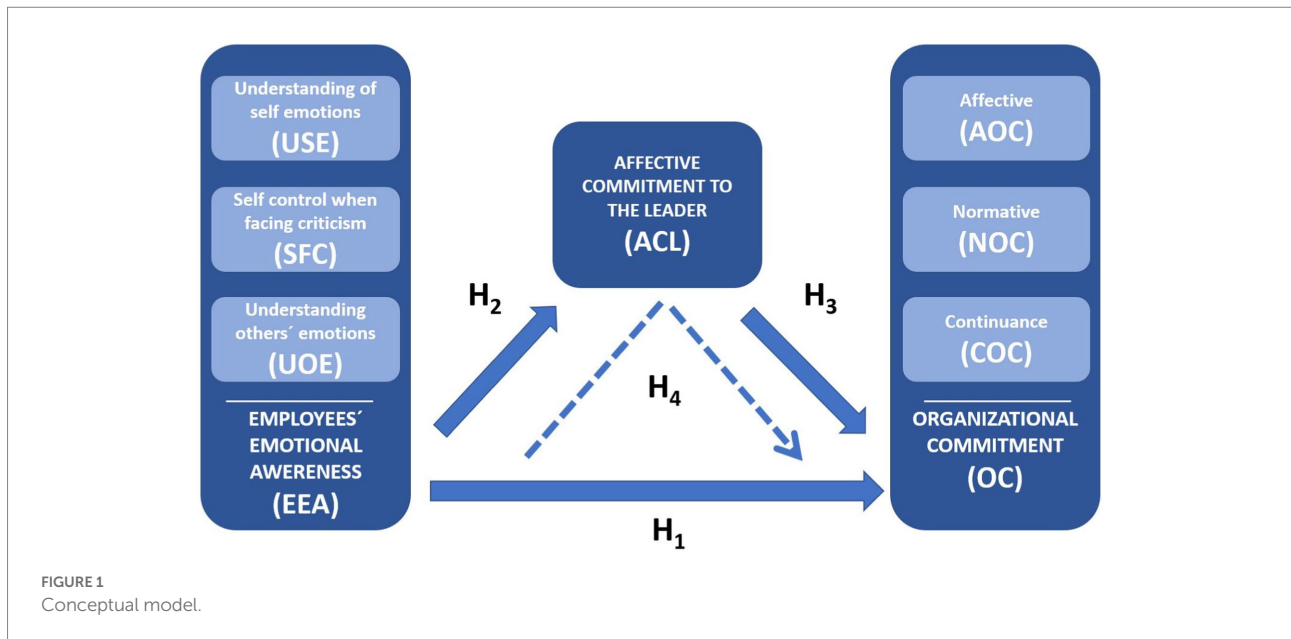
The study by Eisenberger et al. (2010) also suggest that the way employees perceive the leader's organizational embodiment positively influences their organizational commitment, as the leader is seen as a representative of the organization. The emotional awareness brings to the employees the ability to identify and manage emotions according to the context, being able to identify not only their own emotions, but also the others' emotions, and adapt their behavior appropriately. Similarly, Stinglhamber et al. (2015) presented empirical shreds of evidence about the influence of transformational leadership on follower's affective organizational commitment.

Based on these studies, affective commitment with the leader is expected to lead to affective organizational commitment, insofar as the affective bonds developed are directed toward a figure that represents the organization. Therefore, the quality of the leader-member exchange which maintains a satisfactory and close relationship may lead to the development of a sense of duty toward the organization, positively influencing normative-organizational commitment. Leaders have increasingly assumed an important role in the career development of their team members, establishing a relationship where the feedback is an important key for improvement (Crawshaw and Game, 2015; Bak, 2020). Therefore, this context stimulates the affective commitment to the leader, having inherent career interests, so a positive influence of affective commitment with the leader is expected in the continuance of organizational commitment. Thus, the following general hypothesis was formulated:

Hypothesis 3: Affective commitment to the leader is positively related to organizational commitment.

In the proposed model (see Figure 1) that lays out the hypotheses formulated above, a mediation relationship is also included (Baron and Kenny, 1986). The aim is therefore to identify whether the relationship between employees' emotional awareness and organizational commitment is mediated by affective commitment with the leader. Many studies have suggested that the leader influence employees' affective organizational commitment (Eisenberger et al., 2010; Stinglhamber et al., 2015; Lapointe and Vandenberghe, 2017; Benevene et al., 2018). Considering that, the leader is an important figure in the workplace, and several studies have suggested that many different types of leadership have positive influences, not only on employees positive behaviors, but also, influence the affective organizational commitment, it is expected that affective commitment to the leader play a mediating role in the relationship between employees' emotional awareness and organizational commitment.

In view of the above, the following hypothesis was formulated:



Hypothesis 4: Affective commitment to the leader positively mediates the relationship between employees' emotional awareness and organizational commitment.

Materials and methods

Sample

This study involved the participation of two large private organizations in Portugal, one of French nationality in the retail sector, and another multinational of Portuguese nationality in the food industry. These two companies were chosen to minimize the cultural country limitation, for the reason that both have employees of different nationalities. We have also decided to consider companies from different sectors to ensure sample diversity.

This convenience sample consisted of 403 respondents from two different sectors in Portugal: one company from the retail sector (14,000 employees) and the other company from the food industry company (3,000 employees). According to the calculation of samples for finite populations, we can consider that the sample of 403 is representative of the population of 17,000 and sample error less than 5%. It was composed of 56.1% female respondents and 43.9% male respondents, with an average age of 37 years; the minimum age of respondents was 20 years and the maximum age 65 years. Average tenure in the organization was 9 years, with the minimum tenure in the same organization being 1 year and the maximum 40 years.

Measures

This study used a questionnaire survey as the data collection instrument. The data were subjected to statistical

analysis and treatment using the *Statistical Package for Social Sciences—SPSS* (version 22) and *LISREL 9.2*. All measurement models were validated against the sample (with a dimension of 403 respondents) through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). They were respecified by eliminating items with factor loading values lower than 0.5 and high modification indices (Hair et al., 2010).

The questionnaire consisted of three author scales, with answers based on a seven-point Likert scale, where “1” corresponds to “Totally Disagree” and “7” to “Totally Agree.” Employees' Emotional Awareness was measured based on the model of Mayer and Salovey (1997) in the version adapted and validated for the Portuguese context by Rego and Fernandes (2005). It is a formative measurement model with nine items and three dimensions: Understanding self-emotions, Self-control when facing criticism, and Understanding others' emotions. According to Hair et al. (2010), the three dimensions have indexes that support their convergent validity (respectively Understanding self-emotions: $\alpha = 0.875$, AVE = 81%, and CR = 0.93; Self-control when facing criticism: $\alpha = 0.761$, AVE = 58%, and CR = 0.80; and Understanding others' emotions: $\alpha = 0.690$, AVE = 61%, and CR = 0.82).

Regarding organizational commitment, a scale was used which was adapted and validated for the Portuguese context by Nascimento et al. (2008) based on the scale of Meyer and Allen (1997). This questionnaire consists of nine items using the three dimensions (affective, normative, and continuance) of organizational commitment, each measured by three items. These dimensions also present indexes that support their convergent validity, in line with what was stipulated by Hair et al. (2010) (Affective organizational commitment: $\alpha = 0.825$, AVE = 68%, and CR = 0.86; Normative organizational commitment: $\alpha = 0.846$, AVE = 69%, and CR = 0.87; and Continuance organizational commitment: $\alpha = 0.735$, AVE = 54%, and CR = 0.78).

Finally, to measure affective commitment to the leader, the questionnaire validated by Nascimento et al. (2008) for the Portuguese context on organizational commitment was adapted for leader. This questionnaire only used the affective dimension of commitment to the leader, so three items of the scale were included in the questionnaire. It presented indexes that also support its convergent validity (Affective commitment to the leader: $\alpha = 0.879$, AVE = 78%, and CR = 0.91).

To minimize the common method bias, the different scales have reversed items, and for the design of the questionnaire, the scales were also subjected to a random distribution of the items of which they are composed (Podsakoff et al., 2012). The variance associated with the common method bias was calculated using the common factor method (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Following the process stipulated by Podsakoff et al. (2003), the model without the common factor is significantly different from the model with it [measured by all 21 items of the questionnaire; $\Delta\chi^2 = 48.37$; $\Delta df = 21$; critical value for $\Delta\chi^2(\Delta df = 15) = 32.671 < 48.37$]. On the other hand, it is also found that the inclusion of the common factor leads to a better adjustment of the model, namely in terms of RMSEA (0.068 vs. 0.059), GFI (0.906 vs. 0.928), and CFI (0.985 vs. 0.990). However, the average variance extracted (AVE) by the common factor (AVE = 20%) is lower than the reference value whereby “typical job performance measures contained an average of 22.5% method variance” (Podsakoff et al., 2003, p. 880). Considering the AVE by the common factor, despite the differences between the two models (with and without a common factor), it can be concluded that the common method biases will not have a significant influence on the estimation of the proposed model.

Results

Descriptive statistics

Based on the CFA, descriptive statistics of the latent variables are presented in Table 1. On analysis, it can be identified that the variable's averages have high values, with the dimension of continuity of organizational commitment showing the lowest average value with 3.09. They have a convergent validity determined by factor loading all of the above 0.5 and AVE above 0.5. Likewise, the internal consistency and reliability are acceptable with a Construct Reliability and a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient above 0.7 in all variables (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003; Hair et al., 2010).

Regarding the dimensions of emotional awareness (USE, SFC, and UOE) a significant correlation relationship was identified between Understanding self-emotions and Understanding others' emotions (0.43). This result suggests that we could be dealing with variables with different nomenclatures that measure similar factors. In this specific case, understanding emotions is a common factor; in the dimension of Understanding self-emotions, it refers to the individual's own emotions, and in the dimension of

Understanding others' emotions, it is about managing emotions while interactions with other people take place.

The correlation value between the normative and affective dimension of organizational commitment can also be emphasized (0.73). These data are in line with what is advocated by several authors regarding the need to reassess the commitment model, due to the fact that there may be an issue of a two-dimensional model (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Meyer et al., 2002; Meyer and Parfyonova, 2010).

Finally, a significant correlation was also found between the between affective organizational commitment and affective commitment to the leader (0.41). Once again, the affective component is common to both constructs, despite their different focus (organization and leader).

Given these results, a positive relationship was found between the three dimensions of emotional awareness (USE, SFC, and UOE) and affective organizational commitment, with statistically significant values. Regarding the relationship between the dimensions of emotional awareness and normative organizational commitment, they present positive and statistically significant results, with the exception of Self-control when facing criticism.

As for the relationship between emotional awareness and continuance organizational commitment, the only statistically significant correlation, to Self-control when facing criticism, is negative (-0.15^{**}). Regarding the relationship between emotional awareness and affective commitment to the leader, it can be identified that all dimensions (USE, SFC, and UOE) are positively correlated and have significantly high values.

Analysis of the structural model of the relationship between emotional awareness and organizational commitment

The model proposed has a good index for goodness of fit (Table 2).

Based on the results of the analysis, it was found that Understanding self-emotions has a positive relationship with the affective (0.33), normative (0.38) and continuance (0.23) dimensions of organizational commitment (Figure 2). In view of these results, we can state that H1_a was confirmed. Self-control when facing criticism has only a negative relationship (-0.25) with continuance organizational commitment. Thus, H1_b was rejected, as there was no relationship with affective organizational commitment or normative organizational commitment. In the case of Understanding others' emotions, it only presents a (positive) relationship with affective organizational commitment (0.20). Thus, H1_c was partially confirmed, insofar as there was no relationship with normative and continuance organizational commitment, despite the positive relationship presented above.

The determination coefficient (R^2) was also analyzed, and a relationship of influence of the dimensions of emotional

TABLE 1 Correlations between latent variables.

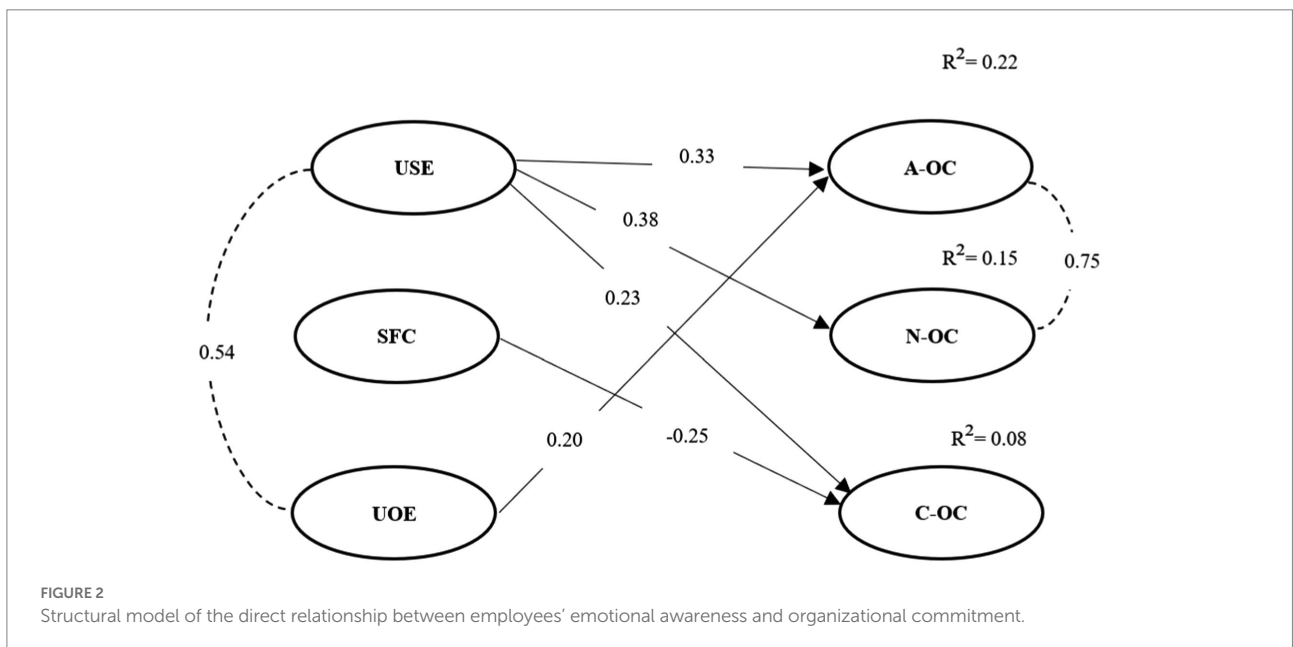
	M	DP	USE	SFC	UOE	A-CL	A-OC	N-OC	C-OC
USE	5.491	0.882	(0,88); [0,81]; {0,93}						
SFC	3.940	1.052	0.20**	(0,761); [0,58]; {0,80}					
UOE	4.819	0.619	0.43**	0.26**	(0,69); [0,61]; {0,82}				
A-CL	4.659	1.447	0.20**	0.25**	0.23**	(0,88); [0,78]; {0,91}			
A-OC	4.329	1.213	0.32**	0.15**	0.31**	0.41**	(0,83); [0,68]; {0,86}		
N-OC	3.938	1.380	0.27**	0.06	0.23**	0.29**	0.73**	(0,85); [0,69]; {0,87}	
C-OC	3.092	1.198	0.09	-0.15**	-0.02	-0.10*	0.08	0.10*	(0,74); [0,54]; {0,78}

USE, Understanding self-emotions; SFC, Self-control when facing criticism; UOE, Understanding others' emotions; A-CL, affective commitment to the leader; A-OC, affective organizational commitment; N-OC, normative organizational commitment; and C-OC, continuance organizational commitment.
 (), Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (acceptance values of 0.70); [], Average Variance Extracted (acceptance values of 0.50); and {}, Construct Reliability (acceptance values of 0.7).
 * $p < 0.05$ and ** $p < 0.01$.

TABLE 2 Goodness of fit index of the relation between emotional awareness and organizational commitment.

χ^2	df	p value	RMSEA (<0.8)	GFI (>0.9)	IFI (>0.9)	CFI (>0.93)	χ^2/df (<0.02)	AIC (smallest value)
188.10	126.00	0.000	0.065	0.917	0.950	0.950	1.49	3,136,62

(), Acceptable Fit (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003; Hair et al., 2010).



awareness regarding the three dimensions of organizational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance) was identified. We found that Understanding self-emotions and Understanding others' emotions explain 22% of affective organizational commitment. It is also noteworthy that

Understanding self-emotions explains 15% of normative organizational commitment. In the case of continuance organizational commitment, 8% is explained by its positive relationship with Understanding self-emotions, and by the negative relationship with Self-control when facing criticism.

Analysis of the effect of mediation of affective commitment to the leader

After analyzing the structural relationships and testing specific hypotheses between emotional awareness and organizational commitment, according to the methodology established by Baron and Kenny (1986), MacKinnon et al. (2007), and Hair et al. (2010) the mediating variable was introduced in the final model of direct structural relationships, in this case, affective commitment to the leader. The model obtained shows good goodness of fit index (Table 3).

Regarding the relationship between employees' emotional awareness and affective commitment to the leader, the analysis of these relationships started from the relationships in H1, that is, from the direct relationship between emotional awareness and organizational commitment. Thus, it was identified that, in the presence of affective commitment to the leader, relationships between the dimensions of Emotional awareness and organizational commitment changed (see Figure 3). Understanding self-emotions ceased to be positively related to continuance organizational commitment, and the strength of the relationships between the other dimensions of emotional awareness and organizational commitment decreased.

Regarding the relationship between the dimensions of emotional awareness and affective commitment to the leader, there was a positive relationship with Understanding self-emotions (0.20) and with Self-control when facing criticism (0.28). Thus H2_a and H2_b were confirmed. However, H2_c was rejected, as Understanding others' emotions did not reveal any relationship with affective commitment to the leader.

As for the relationship between affective commitment to the leader and organizational commitment, a positive relationship was identified with the affective (0.43) and normative (0.33) dimensions and a negative association with continuance (-0.14). So these results partially support the H3.

On the other hand, there was a negative relationship with the continuance dimension of organizational commitment. These results are not aligned with the established theoretical framework. As a result of including the affective commitment to the leader in the model, we identified that Understanding Self-Emotions and Self-Control when facing criticism explained 15% of affective commitment to the leader. There is also an increase in the coefficient of determination in the different dimensions of organizational commitment, where 39% of affective organizational commitment is explained by the relationships of the final model, 25% of normative organizational commitment, and 10% of

continuance organizational commitment. Thus, the data suggest that affective commitment to the leader plays a mediating role in organizational commitment.

Mackinnon's Z test of the mediation of affective commitment to the leader between employees' emotional awareness and organizational commitment

The final structural model reflects the mediation effect of affective commitment to the leader in the relationship between the dimensions of emotional awareness and organizational commitment. It identified that mediation conditions exist, as both indirect effects are statistically significant (Baron and Kenny, 1986; MacKinnon et al., 2007; Hair et al., 2010). In view of these results, the significance of indirect effects was tested using Mackinnon's Z.

General Hypothesis 4 posits the possibility of mediation existing of affective commitment to the leader in the relationship between employees' emotional awareness and organizational commitment. Thus, the final model identified the mediation relationships (Table 4).

Given the above, the results confirm the mediation relationship as presented in Hypothesis 4. Thus, the data indicate that affective commitment to the leader mediates the relationship between Understanding self-emotions and the affective, normative, and continuance dimensions of the organizational commitment, as well as mediating the negative relationship between Self-control when facing criticism and the continuance variable of organizational commitment.

Discussion

Research from different authors have suggested carrying out studies that allow identification of antecedents, different focus of commitment, causes, effects, changes over time, directionality, and profiles, and motivating to a better understanding of commitment and the behavioral phenomena that it involves (Bergman et al., 2013; Meyer et al., 2015; Eisenberger et al., 2019; Klein et al., 2020; van Rossenberg et al., 2022). A contribution that reconciles the academic and practical perspectives has also been sought.

The results of this study emerged from an analysis of the antecedence relationship of the emotional awareness dimensions

TABLE 3 Goodness of fit index of the relation between employees' emotional awareness, affective commitment to the leader, and organizational commitment.

χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> value	RMSEA (<0.8)	GFI (>0.9)	IFI (>0.9)	CFI (>0.93)	χ^2/df (<0.02)	AIC (smallest value)
262.82	175.00	0.000	0.068	0.901	0.984	0.984	1.501	3,325.57

(), Acceptable Fit (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003; Hair et al., 2010).

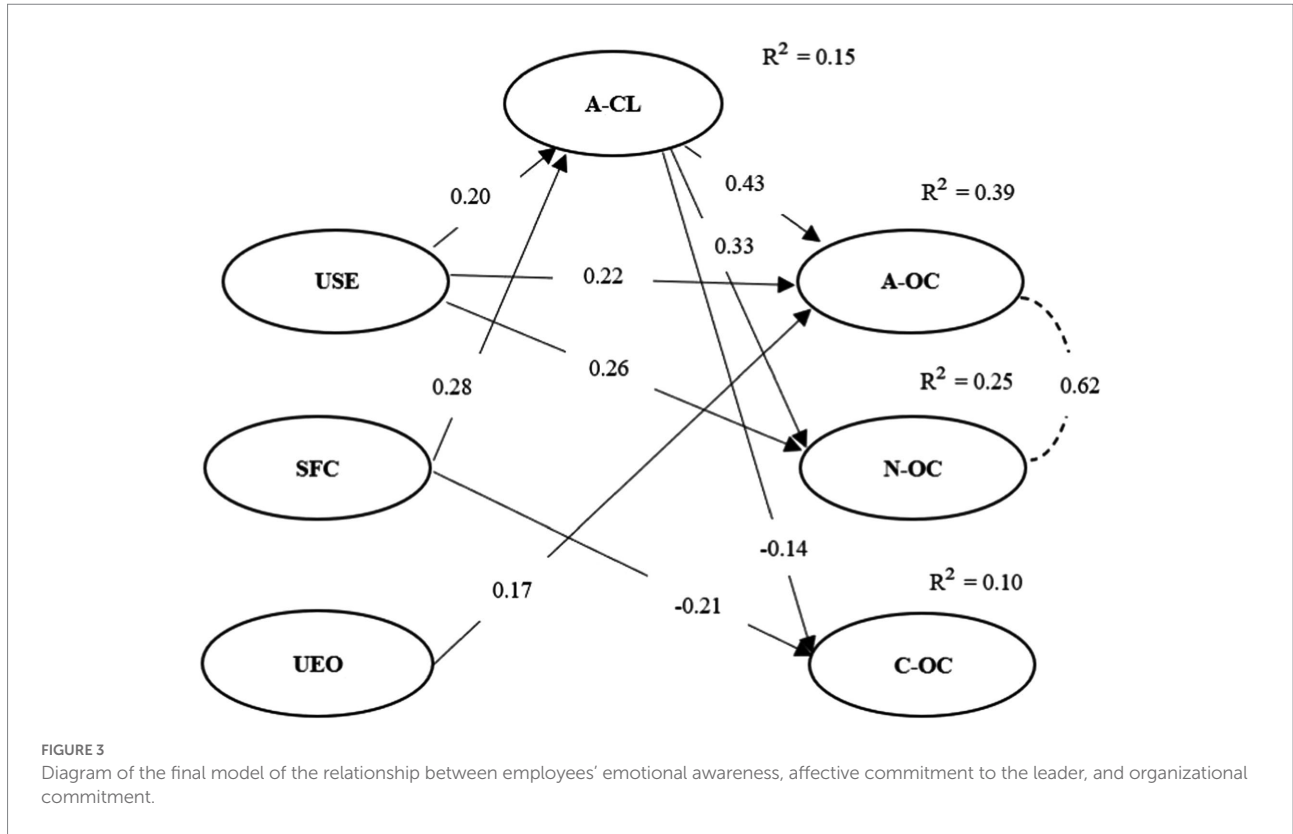


TABLE 4 Mediation relationships of affective commitment to the leader in the relation between employees' emotional awareness and organizational commitment.

Mediation relationships	Z'(Z' ≥ 0.97)	Conclusion
Mediation of A-CL between USE and A-OC	Z' = 2.856	Not rejected
Mediation of A-CL between USE and N-OC	Z' = 2.688	Not rejected
Mediation of A-CL between USE and C-OC	Z' = -1.710	Not rejected
Mediation of A-CL between USE and C-OC	Z' = -1.816	Not rejected

in relation to each dimension of organizational commitment. The results suggested that understanding self-emotions influences positively the three dimensions of organizational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance). Thus, it can be said that a greater degree of Understanding self-emotions, which is, being able to interpret and manage one's own emotions, promotes the conscious development of bonds that lead to organizational commitment. In this specific case, it can also be mentioned that this ability, despite its positive influence on the three dimensions of organizational commitment, has higher relationship values in the affective and normative dimensions (social exchange), and lower with the continuance dimension (financial exchange). This reveals that the conscious understanding of one's own emotions

favors the development of bonds of commitment, preferably affective, and of moral obligation toward the organization.

When affective commitment to the leader is included in the model of the direct relationship between emotional awareness and organizational commitment, a significantly positive relationship between Understanding self-emotions and affective commitment with the leader was found, but the relationship between Understanding self-emotions and continuance organizational commitment also disappeared. This result suggests that the strength of the affective commitment bond to the leader reduces the tendency for continuance organizational commitment.

Regarding to Understanding others' emotions, only its positive influence on affective organizational commitment was identified. This result is in line with the established theoretical framework, which states that a greater ability to consciously interpret others' emotions enables individuals to develop more satisfying and empathic interpersonal relationships. Thus, a higher level of Understanding others' emotions enhances the creation of affective or relational bonds; this will have consequences for the perception of the organizational context, and for the way in which employees analyze and assess the organization as a whole, developing affective organizational commitment.

Self-control when facing criticism showed a negative relationship with continuance organizational commitment. The theoretical framework argues that an employee's inability to constructively control emotions in feedback contexts may have an implicit rationale of fear, losing one's job, or having a lack of other

professional options (Smith et al., 2018). Therefore, this context can influence the development of organizational continuance commitment. Conversely, the greater the ability to accept criticism in a constructive and positive way and use it for one's own development, the lesser the tendency to link the context to the development of continuance organizational commitment.

The results also suggest the possibility that Self-control when facing criticism leverages affective commitment toward a personal commitment foci, and consequently a negative trend toward continuance organizational commitment. It should be recalled that in the final model (Figure 3), Self-control when facing criticism started by showing a positive relationship with affective commitment with the leader. It can be assumed that managing one's emotions and a positive attitude toward feedback may contribute to the positive relationship between employee and supervisor, strengthening affective commitment to the leader and decreasing continuance organizational commitment.

Thus, the greater the employees' emotional awareness, the greater their predisposition to affective commitment to the leader and the organization. The positive relationship of emotional awareness with two foci of commitment is linked to the possibility of having an antecedent of other foci of commitment.

Some authors such as Klein et al. (2009) or Meyer et al. (2012) argue that the affective dimension of commitment is actually the bond with the greatest strength. The results of this study corroborate this view, because both in relation to the organization and in relation to the leader, the coefficients of determination of the affective dimensions showed higher values than the continuance dimension. In view of this, it is also worth noting that affective commitment to the leader had a significant positive influence on affective organizational commitment and normative organizational commitment.

Recent studies which focused on commitment profiles, also suggested a strong correlation between affective and normative variables. The proposal is that this may constitute a moral duty profile, in which the employees are committed to the organization because they like it, but also because they feel a duty to contribute to organizational goals (Meyer and Parfyonova, 2010; Meyer et al., 2012).

Regarding the relationship between affective commitment to the leader and continuance organizational commitment, the relationship was found to be negative. We can therefore assume that, in the presence of an affective bond to the leader, the continuance bond not only loses relevance but is also inverse, i.e., negative. This result highlights the influence of commitment to the leader in forming organizational commitment.

Therefore, in line with what has also been argued by other authors, the results reveal the mediating role of affective commitment to the leader regarding the strength of the affective bond (Klein et al., 2009; Meyer et al., 2012; Klein, 2013).

The final model thus suggests that affective commitment to the leader has a mediating role in organizational commitment, specifically in the relationships between Understanding self-emotions and the three dimensions of organizational commitment

and in the relationship between Self-control when facing criticism and continuance organizational commitment (see Figure 2).

Theoretical contributions

The aim of this research was to contribute to the area of studies on commitment, reconciling two lines of research into commitment, one focused on identifying antecedent variables, and the other addressing the relationship between two foci of commitment in the workplace: the leader and the organization.

An analysis of the structural relationships was chosen in which three independent variables that reflect emotional awareness were established. An antecedent perspective was taken, with an approach to the multidimensionality of organizational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance), and the unidimensionality of affective commitment to the leader, from a relationship mediator perspective.

Thus, in view of the antecedent analysis regarding the two foci of commitment, the present study suggests that employees' emotional awareness, in particular Understanding self-emotions, Self-control facing criticism and Understanding others' emotions, influence the process of commitment to the leader and the organization, according with Affective Events Theory. The study also reveals that these relationships change according to the presence or absence of affective commitment to the leader, supporting the social exchange theory, more specifically the Leader Member Exchange Theory.

Based on the results, it can be stated that employees' emotional awareness, particularly Understanding self-emotions, can engender a greater predisposition to organizational commitment in its three dimensions: affective, normative, and continuance. Moreover, Understanding others' emotions positively influences affective organizational commitment. These results suggest that, according to Meyer and Allen's (1997) model, employees' emotional awareness may be a distant antecedent of commitment, as it is a personal characteristic of the employee.

Thus, the way in which the internal process of analyzing emotions is carried out, which may be a developed competence, is inherent to the individual around his experience with the external context. This dynamic is also subject to the experiences that individuals experience over time, carrying out different tasks in different organizational contexts. Individuals' behavior patterns are subject to the need to be permanently updated or renewed, depending on the experiences and needs of each individual's adaptive process, which is dynamic and continuous throughout life (Rimé, 2015; Smith et al., 2018).

For Rimé (2015) this process is complex, internal and in some cases time-consuming, which do not happen continually in moments of interaction with what is external to the individual. According to this author, the way in which this analysis process is undertaken internally may interfere with the way in which the individual overcomes obstacles, which may also impact an individual's commitment process.

A mediating role of affective commitment to the leader was also found, with the relationship between the dimensions of emotional awareness and organizational commitment changing. This dynamic showed that affective commitment to the leader inhibits the relationship between Understanding self-emotions and continuance organizational commitment. This result suggests that the affective bond with the leader is inverse to the continuance organizational commitment. Also, Self-control when facing criticism is shown to have a negative relationship with the continuance organizational commitment in its positive relationship with the affective commitment to the leader, which corroborates the previous interpretation of the results. Along these lines, regarding the relationship and directionality between the two commitment foci, we highlight the positive relationship between the affective commitment to the leader and affective and normative organizational commitment, and the negative relationship with continuance organizational commitment. This result again highlights the force of the affective bond in the commitment process. It should be noted that Klein et al. (2020) found that the continuance bond was more frequently reported regarding the organization than other foci. The result of our study corroborates this conclusion, from the perspective that the tendency of continuance commitment will decrease in the presence of an affective commitment to another target.

Finally, the positive correlation between the affective and normative dimension of organizational commitment should be highlighted. This result, once again, suggests the possibility that we there is a need to adjust the model, which could potentially be two-dimensional. Another interpretation, in line with studies of latent profiles, this result may suggest that what we are witnessing is a profile of moral duty (Meyer and Parfyonova, 2010; Meyer et al., 2012, 2015).

Practical implications

Commitment has been considered a significant subject in the strategy of organizations which aim to be competitive and develop a culture of high performance (Beer et al., 2015; Culibrk et al., 2018; Bak, 2020; Lee et al., 2020).

The challenges that commitment presents for management, especially people management, are fundamentally related to the difficulty of understanding what it is that enhances employee commitment; what the commitment bonds are; as well as determining the set of foci to which employees commit themselves in the organizational context (Beer et al., 2015; van Rossenberg et al., 2022).

Thus, this work identified that employees' emotional awareness has positive implications in their process of organizational commitment. It can be said that the emotional maturity of employees, that is, their ability to manage emotions more consciously, enhances their ability to satisfactorily understand and manages their daily lives, even in stressful situations (Mayer and Salovey, 1997; Smith et al., 2018; Zia et al.,

2018; Helvac and Yilmaz, 2020). According to the results of this study, understanding and conscious management of one's own emotions lead individuals to be more aware of what they want and what they seek as people and professionals. This condition enhances the creation of commitment bonds, in which the employee understands why he likes the organization, what makes him feel grateful to the organization and how he values instrumental aspects (career, salary, etc.).

The ability to understand others' emotions also has positive implications for affective organizational commitment, since this ability to manage and adapt one's emotional state according to those with whom one interacts tends to provide healthier and more satisfying relationships. This leads to a more positive perception of the organization and consequently leads to bonds of an affective nature.

It can thus be concluded that the development and emotional training of employees (from the basis until the top organizational positions) can be considered a measure that encourages the potential creation of commitment bonds in its different dimensions (affective, normative, and continuance).

It is common for organizations to opt for measures of an instrumental nature as a way to foster commitment. Investing in an attractive remuneration package may seem relatively less complex than implementing measures of a more abstract nature, such as affection, gratitude, or loyalty. However, the results show that a focus on measures for continuance organizational commitment is not necessarily more effective, whereby other organizations merely need to be willing to match or exceed the instrumental offer.

The present study highlighted the strength of the affective and normative bond in relation to the continuance bond (instrumental). On the one hand, affective and normative bonds were identified as showing stronger results in the relationship between emotional awareness and organizational commitment. On the other hand, in the presence of an affective commitment bond to the leader, there was a significant weakening of the continuance organizational commitment. These results suggest two relevant aspects; (i) the affective bond is potentially stronger and enhances commitment regarding other foci; and (ii) the leader is a commitment target with strong implications for affective and normative organizational commitment. Thus, the suggestion is that organizations should develop a culture of ethical leadership, where the leader also assumes a coaching role, contributing feedback to promote employees' development (Eisenberger et al., 2010; Bak, 2020; Saeed et al., 2022).

It should also be mentioned that development of affective commitment to the leader and positive feedback for employees significantly influences innovative work behaviors and organizational commitment (Bak, 2020). Given that, the present study suggests that a greater capacity for self-control when facing criticism favors affective commitment with the leader, developing employees' emotional awareness is suggested to enhance organizational commitment and affective commitment with the leader.

In short, a need can be identified to develop employees' emotional awareness and evolution, but also to reinforce the importance of leaders adopting a leadership style that enhances the employees' commitment to themselves and to the organization.

Limitations and future directions

This study did not identify a leadership style, nor did it measure the leaders' emotional awareness, namely from the perspective of his subordinates. This analysis could contribute to parallel readings regarding the results. This fact is not only a limitation, but also a recommendation for future studies.

The controversy that exists around the definition, measurement, and differences between emotional awareness and emotional intelligence may also be taken as a limitation, such that other scales may provide different results.

In the line of research used to carry out this work, it is also suggested to carry out studies that use other antecedent variables, such as employees' values and organizational values. The replication of this study using other scales, as well as other samples of greater size and diversity may identify similarities and differences, and contribute to new confirmations or conclusions. Undertaking studies with other objects of commitment present in the workplace is also suggested in order to identify their relationships and directions. In this vein, we also suggest to conduct multilevel studies to identify the influence of commitment between different hierarchical levels.

Longitudinal studies would also be extremely relevant for the study and understanding of commitment in order to identify the evolutions and dynamics over time of the different types, levels, and foci of commitment. The combination of this type of studies with the line of research into latent profiles would potentially reveal relevant suggestions for the study and evolution of the understanding of this construct.

Conclusion

The context to which organizations have been exposed has forced permanent organizational change. From changes in the labor market to technological transformation or even to socio-economic conditions, organizations have faced enormous challenges and uncertainties. The need to become more competitive, with a greater capacity for innovation that allows them to mark themselves as distinct in the market has led organizations to position their human capital as an important business driver (Ulrich, 2013; Strack et al., 2014; Beer et al., 2015; Markoulli et al., 2017; Culibrk et al., 2018). In this context, commitment is seen as a topic of great strategic importance, as it contributes not only to retaining talent, but also to enhancing better performance (Culibrk et al., 2018; Bak, 2020; Klein et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2020). It is thus urgent to provide organizations with knowledge that contributes to strengthening their people

management strategies, particularly within the scope of employee commitment, creating conditions for employees to deal with uncertainties and organizational changes and develop interests and commitment bonds in common with leadership and organization (Morrow, 2011; Bergman et al., 2013; Klein, 2013; Meyer et al., 2015).

In this study, the importance of employees' emotional awareness and its influence on organizational commitment and commitment to the leader was evident. It can be posited that employees' emotional maturity, namely identifying, perceiving, and learning from their emotions in the organizational context, provides more favorable conditions for commitment, considering different foci. The relevance of the affective bond with two commitment foci of the study was also noticeable, as it negatively impacted the instrumental bond of continuity organizational commitment in the presence of the affective commitment with the leader.

Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Author contributions

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct, and intellectual contribution to the work and approved it for publication.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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2.2 Article II

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Article

Dual Commitment to Leader and Organization: Alternative Models Based on the Employees' Emotional Awareness

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Abstract: Management has been considering employee commitment as one of the strategic priorities, due to many studies suggesting the positive influence of commitment on high performance, innovative work behavior, employee retention, and many other important business outcomes. Nevertheless, commitment is considered an abstract construct, from which human resources management needs to create policies and practices that effectively support the business strategy and organizational culture. The existence of many foci of commitment in the workplace has been a challenge in that scenario, being important to understand how different foci relate to each other and how they influence the employee commitment process. To contribute to filling this gap, this research aims to compare two different models, analyzing the relationship between two foci of commitment, namely the affective commitment to the leader and organizational commitment. For this purpose, the employees' emotional awareness has been considered as an independent variable. Hence, this study seeks to identify which model has higher explanatory power, and consequently, a more significant impact on the process of the employees' commitment. The implications for theory and practice are discussed.

Keywords: organizational commitment; commitment to the leader; commitment in the workplace; dual commitment; employees' emotional awareness



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1. Introduction

Over the last years, companies have faced a competitive context that has brought significant management challenges. These circumstances emphasized the potential of organizational human capital, specifically their contribution to boosting innovation levels, increasing organizational competitiveness, and consequently, the sustainability of the company [1–5]. Regarding this perspective, commitment has been considered as an issue with high strategic relevance to management [3,6–11].

According to this environment, human resources managers have been exposed to several challenges, mainly related to the need of planning, and have implemented strategic commitment policies and practices to support the business strategy and the organizational culture. The difficulties come from the fact that commitment is still considered an “abstract phenomenon”, and mostly due to the existence of many different foci in the workplace [12,13]. In this sense, the context requires empirical contributions from which human resources management finds the support required to develop the employee's commitment measure in the workplace [1,3,13]. Moreover, this demand is considered a commitment research line [3,8,14].

Commitment can be defined as a bond of a particular nature toward a specific focus, which leads to behavioral stability [3,15–17]. The organization has been one of the most studied foci of commitment, due to its influential relationship on variables such as an increase in high-performance, innovative work behaviors, talent retention, prosocial behaviors, and many others [3,17–20]. However, the relationship between organizational

commitment and other foci, as well as directionality in each relationship, are still under-explored [14,21–23]. As Becker et al. [12] highlighted, “there have been few attempts to explain how commitments to multiple foci combine to affect workplace phenomena” (p. 1203). Therefore, the analysis of the multiple commitment foci is a relevant approach to the commitment studies, particularly on how different foci influence each other, and their potential impact on employees’ commitment process.

This work is innovative in two ways. On the one hand, it is assumed that the leader is an extremely relevant figure in the organizational structure, being a key element in important communications between employer and employee. It is undeniable that the leadership role has emphasized the need to influence employees [14,21,24,25]. However, commitment to the leader is a recent construct, with few studies either conceptual or empirical [21,24,26]. On the other hand, emotions have been considered to play an important role in commitment. In the past decades, many researchers highlighted the relevance of emotions in organizations. Emotional awareness allows the employees to experience daily situations more satisfactorily, including in challenging contexts, presenting them with few levels of anxiety [27–31]. In that sense, the employees’ emotional awareness (EEA) was included in this modeling study as an independent variable influencing commitment at work.

Therefore, this study aims to compare two different models analyzing the relationship between two foci of commitment (leader and organization) to identify the cause–effect of the relationship between organizational commitment (OC) and affective commitment to the leader (ACL). The first proposed model establishes that the affective commitment to the leader influences the organizational commitment, and the second one establishes that the organizational commitment influences the affective commitment to the leader. This study relies on a multidimensional view of organizational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance) [32,33], and the affective dimension of commitment to the leader under the Social Exchange Theory for explaining the leader–member exchange framework.

In sum, this research aims to analyze and compare two alternative models, identifying which one has more explanatory power, how these two foci of commitment influence each other, and consequently, their potential impact on the employees’ commitment process.

After this introduction, a literature review and hypotheses development are presented to build the two alternative models. Later, the method and procedure are explained, followed by the statistical results that allow to point to the best model. Finally, the implications for theory and practice are discussed.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Affective Commitment to the Leader and Organizational Commitment—The Role of the Employee’s Emotional Awareness

The existence of multiple foci of commitment in the workplace is consensual, and many authors claim that employees’ commitment foci are dynamic, such as profession, career, organization, leader, and colleagues, amongst others [3,12,21]. This context hampers the perception of commitment as an integrated phenomenon, which consequently, represents an obstacle to implementing successful strategic policies and practices [3,12,15,17,34].

Regarding the Three-Component Model (TCM), Meyer and Allen [33] identified the social process of commitment, associating the reasons and the way in which employees commit. The TCM is formed by affective, normative, and continuance dimensions, in which in the affective dimension, the employees create an affective link to the organization, remaining because they like it. The normative dimension has an implicit moral duty, a feeling of debt, and an obligation to the organization, in which the commitment is based on the employee’ belief that the company deserves their commitment and contributions. In the continuance dimension, employees remain due to instrumental interests (material or monetary), as it can be the hierarchical position achieved, and the associated remunerations conditions [15,20,33].

The organization has been one of the most studied foci of commitment, once it is one of the most representative figures in the workplace. However, the socio-economic context has changed the labor market, new generations have been required to take on new ways of working, and other foci may have gained prominence [3]. In that sense, leadership has an implicit influence on employees, as much at the motivational as the operational level. The leader represents a fundamental role in daily management, particularly in promoting and implementing organizational changes [9,24,25,35]. This context exposes the relevance to include this figure as a focus of commitment [21,36]. The study of Eisenberger et al. [24] concluded that employees see the leader as an intermediary of the organization, and the employees' perception of the leader's embodiment to the organization influences their affective organizational commitment. This result suggests that the affective commitment to the leader may influence the employee's organizational commitment.

The employee process of commitment has an analysis of extrinsic aspects such as the organizational values, the work environment, the job characteristics, and many others, but also based on the employees' intrinsic characteristics [3,14–16,20].

The employees' emotional awareness can be defined as the ability to recognize and assimilate feelings and emotions, bringing to the individual a better understanding of the emotional dynamics, and consequently leading to the actions and thoughts [28,31,37–39]. Many studies have suggested that a great ability to manage emotions positively influences the individual to act properly, even in demanding situations, allowing a greater capacity for managing stress and anxiety. According to these studies, the emotional management ability endorses benefits such as greater self-awareness, greater life satisfaction, and the quality of the relationships both personally and professionally, contributing necessarily to a better experience [28,30,37,38].

For that reason, many authors have developed studies about the impact of emotions in the workplace, where emotions play an important role in many aspects of day-to-day organizations, as it can be a part of the decision process and employees' behavior [27–31,38–40].

Rego and Fernandes [41] proposed a model based on Mayer and Salovey [37] in which three emotional dimensions that support emotional awareness were considered. Based on that, understanding self-emotions (USE) is related to the individual ability to identify and understand self-emotions, and being able to identify the trigger causes. This ability can support the individuals' awareness of their feelings toward the organization, being aware of the aspects they appreciate, and what can positively influence the employee's organizational commitment (affective, normative, continuance). In the case of affective commitment to the leader, similarly the relationship will benefit by the ability to manage emotions and the development based on the emotional learning process.

Self-control when facing criticism (SFC) focuses on recognizing one's own emotions in critical situations, and being able to manage these emotions constructively. According to Smith et al. [28], in any organizational context, the reaction to criticism can be negative, as it can be interpreted as focused on the fear of losing a job; or positively, when it is interpreted as an opportunity to improve. The difference of how an individual decides to focus on the criticism can influence the organizational commitment and the affective commitment of the leader, from the perspective that if it is based on fear, the individual feeling is more oriented to be out of the company. On the other hand, if the individual positively interprets the criticism, the individual will tend to be grateful for the possibility to improve, which can lead to affective commitment to the leader and organizational commitment.

Finally, understanding others' emotions (UOE) is the ability to understand and identify other emotions in the moment of interaction, calibrating the behavior to act properly. This ability is the base to build better relationships, which can influence how the employee experiences the organization, leading to organizational commitment. In the same logical perspective, a great ability to create good relationships can lead to an affective commitment to the leader.

There are several studies focusing on positive emotions in the leader–member exchange literature [42,43], once social exchanges in organizations are the basis of the re-

relationship between employees and leaders impacting the organizational culture [44–48]. Consequently, and accordingly to the theoretical framework previously exposed, we established the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *Employees' Emotional Awareness relates positively to Affective Commitment to the Leader.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *Employees' Emotional Awareness relates positively to Organizational Commitment.*

As exposed before, this study focuses on the positive relationship between organizational commitment and affective commitment to the leader, and the reverse. However, the strength of this relationship still needs to be explored. For that reason, two new and alternative hypotheses are established, and two different models are statistically compared (see Figures 1 and 2).

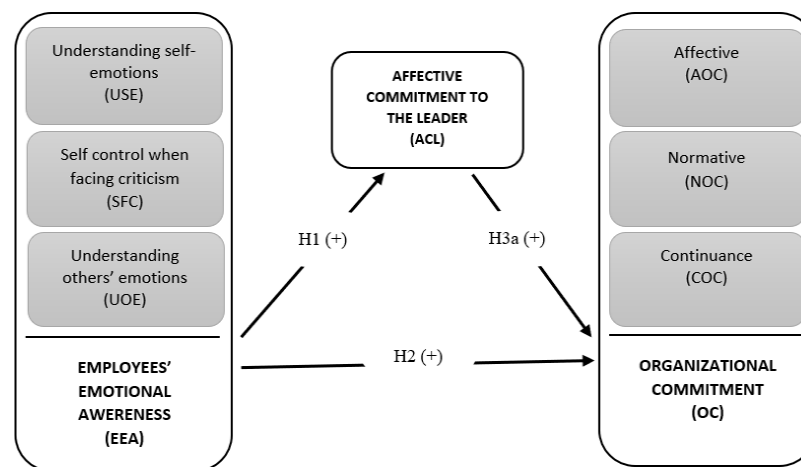


Figure 1. Research Model 1—the relationship between employees' emotional awareness to affective commitment to the leader and organizational commitment.

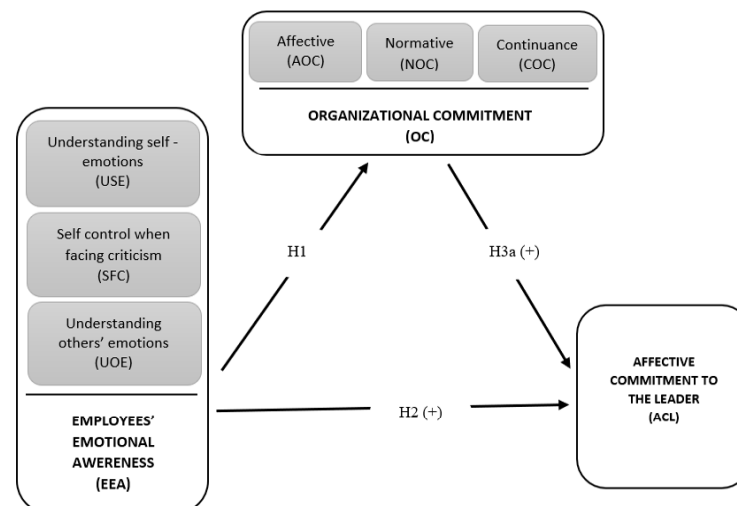


Figure 2. Research Model 2—the relationship of employees' emotional awareness to organizational commitment and affective commitment to the leader.

Hypothesis 3a (H3a). *Affective Commitment to the Leader relates positively to Organizational Commitment.*

Hypothesis 3b (H3b). *Organizational Commitment relates positively to Affective Commitment to the Leader.*

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Sample and Measures

This study was conducted mainly in two different multinational companies in Portugal, one from the retail sector with the Head Quarter in France, and the other from the distribution sector, with Head Quarters in Portugal but present in many different countries. The survey was answered by 403 participants, 107 of them corresponded to a random group belonging to different companies. All the incomplete surveys were deleted, as well as the surveys of participants with less than 1 year of tenure in the company. The participants were adverted that their participation should be voluntary, and no personal data would be collected.

The sample presents a good socio-demographic balance and is composed of 56.1% female and 43.9% male respondents. In terms of tenure in the organizations, the average is 9 years, being a minimum of 1 year and a maximum of 40 years. The respondents were also asked if they performed as leaders, with 38.2% responding positively and 61.8% responding negatively.

The survey was composed of three author scales from which the respondents were chosen from a 7-point Likert-format scale, which 1 corresponds to “totally disagree” and 7 to “totally agree”.

Concerning organizational commitment, we used an adapted and validated scale for the Portuguese context by Nascimento et al. [49], based on the Meyer and Allen [15] model. The indexes of this dimensions support their convergent validity, as suggested by Hair et al. [50] (affective organizational commitment: $\alpha = 0.825$, AVE = 68% and CR = 0.86; normative organizational commitment: $\alpha = 0.846$, AVE = 69% and CR = 0.87; and continuance organizational commitment: $\alpha = 0.735$, AVE = 54% and CR = 0.78).

To measure the affective commitment to the leader, we used the scale developed by Nascimento et al. [49] for organizational commitment, adapted to the leader, from which only the affective dimension was considered. The indexes support its convergent validity (affective commitment to the leader: $\alpha = 0.879$, AVE = 78% and CR = 0.91).

Regarding employees' emotional awareness, we used a scale adapted and validated for the Portuguese context by Rego and Fernandes [41] based on the model of Mayer and Salovey [37]. Only the items relative to manifest variables were used, such as understanding self-emotions, self-control when facing criticism; and understanding others' emotions. According to Hair et al. [50], all these dimensions presented indexes that support their convergent validity (understanding self-emotions: $\alpha = 0.875$, AVE = 81% and CR = 0.93; self-control when facing criticism: $\alpha = 0.761$, AVE = 58% and CR = 0.80; and understanding others' emotions: $\alpha = 0.690$, AVE = 61% and CR = 0.82).

3.2. Procedures and Statistical Analysis

For statistical analysis and treatment of data, we used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences—SPSS (version 22) and LISREL 9.2.

We followed the recommendations of Hair et al. [50], who argued for the need for independent variables in the study of directionality between constructs. An analysis of the common bias method was previously performed to identify a non-significant common variance [51].

Considering the sample validations, we proceeded to conduct a Confirmatory Factorial Analysis (CFA) to verify if the scales were appropriated to validate the theoretical model [52]. Thus, the Robust Maximum Likelihood method was used, being the most appropriate to estimate models with ordinal variables, through calculating polychoric correlations [50].

Therefore, we proceeded to structural relationships estimation, considering the internal consistency analysis of the latent variables, the value of variance extracted (≥ 0.5), and the construct reliability between 0.6 and 0.7 [50]. To estimate the percentage of variance extracted from dependent variables explained by independent variables, we considered the determination coefficient ($R^2 \geq 0.4$) [50,52].

Structural equations modeling was performed to identify the quality of the goodness-of-fit of the proposed models. This methodology is recommended to validate theoretical models supported by hypothetical causal relationships between variables. This analysis is supported by a set of statistical indicators such as (i) absolute fit indicators measures, (ii) incremental fit measures, and (iii) parsimony and comparison of model measures [50,52].

Therefore, for structural fit models evaluation, the following indicators of absolute fit were used: (i) Chi-square (χ^2), to quantify the differences between the covariance matrices; (ii) goodness-of-fit index (GFI > 0.9), which varies between 0 and 1 should be superior to 0.9, to guarantee the quality of fit of the proposed model; (iii) root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA < 0.08), which indicates the correction of the model based on the variables and the complexity of the proposed model, the lower the value, the better the quality of fit. It is acceptable values under 0.09 [50,52].

For reliability analysis of each scale, relative to the latent construct measurement, the coefficient alpha of Cronbach was considered, having as a reference a value greater or equal to 0.70, despite some authors considering it acceptable when it is superior to 0.60 [50,52].

The measures of incremental adjustment compare to the proposed model with the null model, so the more significant the difference between these models, the better the quality of the proposed model.

This study used the comparative fit index (CFI > 0.92). This indicator uses the degrees of freedom to fit the proposed model compared to the null model. This indicator is quite stable, being one of the most used indicators due to low sensitiveness to complex models.

The parsimony measures and comparison of models allow the possibility of identifying which model fits better. For this study, as an indicator of parsimony, we calculate by dividing the chi-square value with a value of degrees of freedom ($\chi^2/df \leq 3.0$).

Subsequently, the generated model is used, into which the existing direct relationship between the independent and dependent variables is inserted. In this stage, to consider the existence of mediation, all direct and indirect relationships must remain statistically significant [50].

4. Results

4.1. Model 1 Analysis—The Relationship between Employees' Emotional Awareness Influencing Affective Commitment to the Leader and Organizational Commitment

Final Model 1 (see Figure 3), which focus on the relationship between employees' emotional awareness and affective commitment to the leader influencing organizational commitment, presents good evidence of GFI (see Table 1).

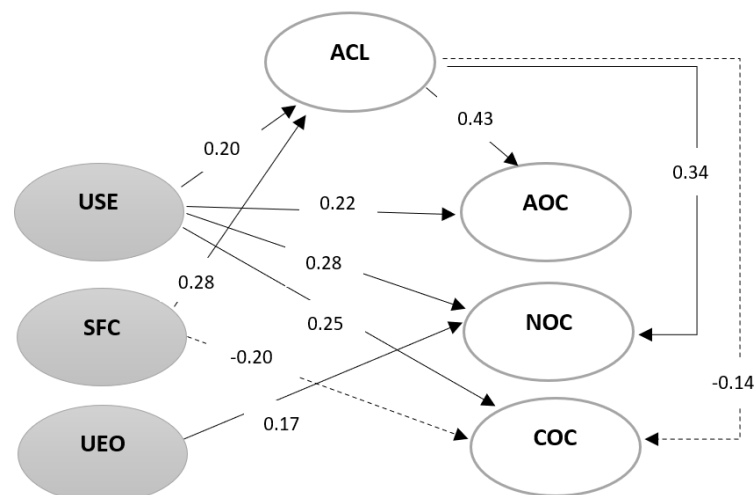


Figure 3. Final Model 1— The relationship between employees' emotional awareness to affective commitment to the leader influencing organizational commitment.

Table 1. The goodness-of-fit index of the Final Model 1.

	χ^2	df	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	χ^2/df
Final Model 1	256.29	173	0.067	0.983	0.983	1.481

The results present a positive relationship between the two foci of commitment, more precisely, between affective commitment to the leader towards affective organizational commitment (0.43) and normative organizational commitment (0.34). However, the relationship between affective commitment to the leader and continuance of organizational commitment is negative (−0.14).

Relatively to the relationship between the employees' emotional awareness dimensions and organizational commitment, the results provide evidence that only the understanding self-emotions is positively related to the three dimensions of organizational commitment, affective OC (0.22), normative OC (0.28), and continuance OC (0.25).

However, self-control when facing criticism is positively related to affective commitment to the leader (0.28), but negatively associated with the continuance of organizational commitment (−0.20). This result can be related to the ability to receive feedback, which has inherent certain emotional maturity, reinforcing the relevance of affective commitment bond to the leader, contrary to an instrumental interest in the organization.

The dimension of understanding others' emotions presents a positive relationship only with normative organizational commitment (0.17). This result suggests that the ability to understand the other's emotions influences employees' moral duty awareness.

The obtained results suggest that affective commitment to the leader positively influences the affective and normative organizational commitment, which means that affective commitment to the leader leads to a strong link that drives the employee's organizational commitment process based on an affective perspective, but also based on a moral duty towards the organization.

On the other hand, the model also suggests a trend, as greater employees' affective commitment to the leader lower the continuance of organizational commitment; in other words, lower will be the interest in monetary or instrumental factors.

With these results, we can infer that Hypothesis 1 is partially confirmed, once two of the three dimensions of emotional awareness dimensions considered in this study (understanding self-emotions and self-control when facing criticism) reflect a positive relationship with a commitment to the leader.

Thus, Hypothesis 3a can be assumed as partially valid as well, in the sense that a positive relationship between affective commitment to the leader and the affective and normative organizational commitment can be observed, but there is negative relationship to the continuance of organizational commitment.

4.2. Model 2 Analysis—The Relationship between Employees' Emotional Awareness Influencing Organizational Commitment and Affective Commitment to the Leader

As can be seen in Final Model 2 (see Figure 4), the direct relationship between employee emotional awareness and organizational commitment influencing affective commitment to the leader was tested. The model presents evidence of the goodness of fit (Table 2). A positive relationship was found between affective organizational commitment (0.53) and affective commitment to the leader and a negative relationship between continuance organizational commitment (−0.21) and affective commitment to the leader.

Table 2. The goodness-of-fit index of Final Model 2.

	χ^2	df	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	χ^2/df
Final Model 2	268.81	177	0.068	0.901	0.983	1.481

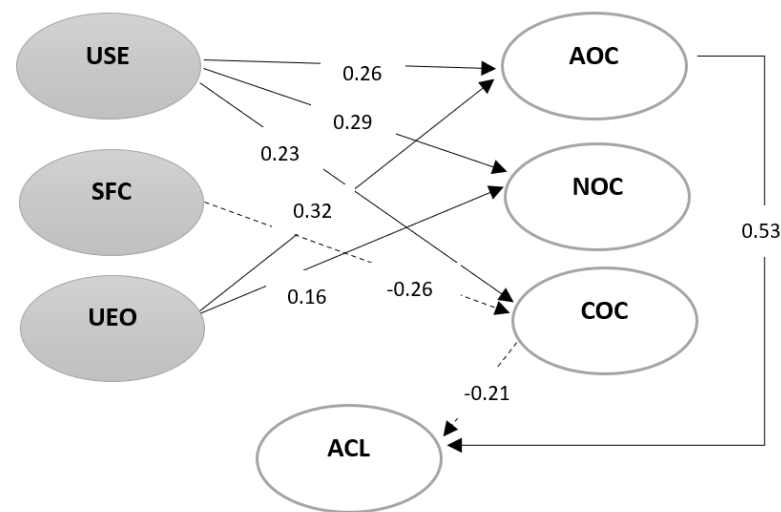


Figure 4. Final Model 2—The relationship between employees' emotional awareness to organizational commitment influencing affective commitment to the leader.

This model also suggests that affective dimensions of these two foci of commitment are positively related and significantly influence each other. This result can mean that when employees are already committed to monetary or material factors, it could more difficult to commit affectively to the leader, or if the affective commitment with the leader is non-existent, the employees tend to commit to the organization based on instrumental aspects.

Regarding the employees' emotional awareness, it was possible to identify the positive relationship between the understanding self-emotions and affective (0.26), normative (0.29), and continuance organizational commitment (0.23).

Self-control when facing criticism, only presents a negative relationship with the continuance of organizational commitment (-0.26), losing the positive relationship to affective commitment to the leader observed in Final Model 1 (Figure 3).

Understanding others' emotions presents a positive relationship between affective (0.32) and normative organizational commitment (0.16).

Moreover, it should be noted that in this model, the employees' emotional awareness does not reveal any relationship with the affective commitment to the leader.

Final Model 2 (Figure 4) reflects that the influence relationship between organizational commitment and affective commitment to the leader remains, however, with a lower number of structural relationships than Final Model 1. This fact could suggest that affective commitment to the leader, although unidimensional, could be a commitment focus with a more significant influence on organizational commitment than the opposite.

Thus, Hypothesis 3b is partially confirmed, once affective organizational commitment has a positive relationship with affective commitment to the leader, and a negative relationship with the continuance of organizational commitment.

Additionally, in this structural model, there is no relationship between normative organizational commitment and affective commitment to the leader, contrarily to Final Model 1 (Figure 3).

4.3. Comparative Analysis between Final Model 1 and Final Model 2

Following the analysis of the results, Table 3 reflects a comparison of the two proposed models under study, based on the R^2 values.

Table 3. Determination coefficient between Final Model 1 and Final Model 2.

R^2	ACL	AOC	NOC	COC
Final Model 1 (ACL \rightarrow OC)	0.148	0.386	0.245	0.093
Final Model 2 (OC \rightarrow ACL)	0.319	0.260	0.160	0.083

The results reflect that Final Model 2 performs a superior R^2 in affective commitment to the leader (0.319), but Final Model 1 presents a more significant R^2 on the remaining dimensions.

Thus, comparing the Final Models 1 and 2 (Figures 3 and 4) and their R^2 (Table 3), it can be assumed that Final Model 1 has a more significant explicative influence on the process of commitment between the affective commitment. That means that affective commitment to the leader has a greater effect on employees' organizational commitment process, once higher determination coefficient values are present in the affective, normative, and continuance dimensions. Additionally, regarding employees' emotional awareness dimensions, Final Model 1 reflects a more significant number of relationships than Final Model 2, which also suggests that the relationship between employees' emotional awareness and organizational commitment is superior when motivated by affective commitment to the leader.

5. Discussion

Although organizational commitment is considered a well-studied construct, a set of relationships are yet to be explored. Nevertheless, recent studies have raised relevant questions of this construct, suggesting studies concerning antecedents, new foci, cause-effects, dynamic changes, directionalities, and profiles [3,20,21,23]. Thus, the current research allows a better understanding of commitment and the behavioral phenomena that it encompasses on affective commitment to the leader and organizational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance).

This study aimed specifically to compare two different proposed models, to analyze the relationship between affective commitment to the leader and organizational commitment. For this purpose, employees' emotional awareness has been considered an independent variable to build two alternative models to analyze the dynamic/relationship between the two foci of commitment. The first model established that affective commitment to the leader has a positive influence on three dimensions of organizational commitment, the second offers the reverse relationship. The goal was to discover the model that has a higher explanatory power and, consequently, greater impact on the employees' commitment process. In both models, the employees' emotional awareness (understanding self-emotions, self-control when facing criticism, and understanding others' emotions) was included as the independent variable.

Findings suggested that Final Model 1 presents a more significant explicative influence on the process of commitment than Final Model 2, performing more structural relationships between employees' emotional awareness and affective commitment to the leader on the influence of organizational commitment. The results obtained reinforce the role of leaders influencing the employee commitment process.

5.1. Theoretical and Practical Considerations

A study by Meyer et al. [21] called for more research, to consider the influence of the hierarchical structure has on organizational commitment, and also on other different foci. The authors believe that different foci of commitment can be convergent, and the nature of bonds has implications on the employees' behavior [21,22]. For that reason, a multidimensional approach to studies of commitment has been suggested, in order to understand the dynamics of the nature of commitment bonds and its implications on behavior and different foci [23].

Thus, our models assumed the multidimensional approach of organizational commitment, and one-dimensionality of commitment to the leader (affective) in agreement with Klein et al. [53]. These authors suggested that some objects of commitment could assume one-dimensionality depending on the personal or abstract perspective.

Therefore, Final Model 1 suggests that the affective commitment to the leader influences affective and normative organizational commitment and that the greater the substantial affective commitment to the leader, the less tends to be the continuance of organizational commitment.

Comparatively, Final Model 2 demonstrates that organizational commitment influences the affective commitment to the leader. However, that relationship is only between the affective dimensions of both foci. It was also possible to identify the negative association of continuance of organizational commitment to affective commitment to the leader. This result can mean that when employees are committed to remunerative aspects or material reasons, the lower will tend to commit affectively to the leader, or if they are not affectively committed to the leader, the greater tends to be the commitment based on remuneration or instrumental aspects.

Therefore, after a comparative analysis of the two final models (Table 3), the determination coefficient (R^2), it could be concluded that the model which presents a better explanatory capacity is Final Model 1, with a set of structural relationships between the constructs.

As previously referred to, different studies argue that commitment links employees' motivation, greater performance, well-being, and the impact on business outcomes. In this sense, commitment is currently a strategic objective of future and competitive oriented organizations [1,3,12,13,22,54,55]. Thus, it is essential to contribute to Human Resources in the process of identifying and implementing effective HR practices to improve employees' commitment levels, influencing their contribution to organizational success, and consequently making them responsible for their careers [1,3,17,34,56].

Despite new trends on employee commitment, more recently focused on aspects of employee experience, it is still common to see the Human Resources departments adopting measures more focused on material benefits, investing on continuance of organizational commitment measures. The investment in an appealing remuneration package or instrumental benefits could be somewhat less complex than implementing measures related to conceptual factors, such as affection or defining a leadership culture, or even measures considering different foci, etc. However, studies reveal that the investment in continuance commitment measures may not necessarily be the most effective. For example, the study by Meyer and Parfyonova [57] argues that the affective and normative commitment bonds have stronger influence on the long term employee organizational remaining decision on the commitment process. This context is related to the fact that commitment is still considered an abstract phenomenon. According with the results of this study, affective commitment to the leader positively influences the affective and normative organizational commitment, which means that affective commitment to the leader has inherently a relatively strong link that drives affective and normative organizational commitment. Moreover, studies by Meyer et al. [14] and Meyer and Maltin [58] argue that a strong affective organizational commitment influences a higher level of well-being, and consequently, a greater predisposition to high-performance standards than those who are linked to continuance organizational commitment.

According to the results obtained, a greater emotional maturity has a positive influence on the affective commitment to the leader and, consequently, impacts employee's organizational commitment.

Furthermore, it reinforces the need of define a leadership culture, where the leader adopts a leadership style that improves an affective commitment, based on close relationships and feedback, once self-control, when facing criticism, is positively related to affective commitment to the leader. Therefore, employees' emotional awareness development is also recommended as a priority, as needed to improve commitment levels, and positively influencing the commitment process, based essentially on affective and normative bonds reinforcements. As it could be seen, understanding others' emotions also presents a positive relationship on normative organizational commitment. This result suggests that understanding the other's emotions influences employees' moral duty awareness and a feeling of debt and obligation. On the other hand, the model also suggests that the greater employees' affective commitment to the leader influences a lower continuance of organizational commitment. In other words, lower will be the relevance of remuneration or instrumental

aspects. Thus, measures related to organizational behavior culture can be more effective than economic investments.

However, we also have insights from Final Model 2, as it could be seen in the relationship between employees' emotional awareness dimensions towards the organizational commitment, influencing affective commitment to the leader. We found a positive relationship between affective organizational commitment and affective commitment to the leader and a negative relationship between them and continuance organizational commitment. This suggests that the affective dimensions of these two foci of commitment are positively related and significantly influence each other.

5.2. Limitations and Future Directions

Since this study has several limitations, it is important to pay attention to the specific results. First, it is relevant to highlight the difference in GFI between the two final models, which are only slightly different, mostly allowing us to understand that the first model presents more structural relationships, and for that reason, more influence on the employee's commitment processes.

Therefore, we propose future research focusing on different variables, apart from employees' emotional awareness. We also suggest future studies that test the one-dimensionality versus multidimensionality of commitment foci, such as goals, career, and colleagues with a more diversified sample, including in different public and private sectors.

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2.3. Article III

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Abstract: This research aims to identify whether leaders' affective organizational commitment influences employees' affective commitment to both the leader and the organization. Additionally, the study explores the role of employees' emotional awareness in shaping these relationships. Examining a sample of 154 leaders and 249 employees in multinational companies, this study adopts a multilevel approach.

The results reveal a positive influence between the two foci of commitment (leaders and organization) at both the leader and employee levels. Furthermore, it confirms that employees' emotional awareness plays a positive role in the commitment process. This research highlights the significance of implementing internal policies and measures that consider the various foci of commitment. To foster employees' commitment, it is crucial to establish a robust alignment between human resources management and leaders.

This study delves into the exploration of two commitment foci to deepen our comprehension of the directional relationship between them in the workplace. More specifically, our research scrutinizes the impact of leaders' affective organizational commitment on employees' affective commitment to the organization, while also analysing its reciprocal influence on employees' affective commitment toward their leaders.

Connecting leaders and employees' affective commitment: a multilevel analysis

Leadership &
Organization
Development
Journal

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Abstract

Purpose – This research aims to identify whether leaders' affective organizational commitment influences employees' affective commitment to both the leader and the organization. Additionally, the study explores the role of employees' emotional awareness in shaping these relationships.

Design/methodology/approach – Examining a sample of 154 leaders and 249 employees in multinational companies, this study adopts a multilevel approach.

Findings – The results reveal a positive influence between the two foci of commitment (leaders and organization) at both the leader and employee levels. Furthermore, it confirms that employees' emotional awareness plays a positive role in the commitment process.

Practical implications – This research highlights the significance of implementing internal policies and measures that consider the various foci of commitment. To foster employees' commitment, it is crucial to establish a robust alignment between human resources management and leaders.

Originality/value – This study delves into the exploration of two commitment foci to deepen our comprehension of the directional relationship between them in the workplace. More specifically, our research scrutinizes the impact of leaders' affective organizational commitment on employees' affective commitment to the organization, while also **analyzing** its reciprocal influence on employees' affective commitment toward their leaders.

Keywords Commitment, Employee involvement, Engaged leadership, Emotions in organizations, Leader commitment

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

AQ: 6 Commitment has a strategic relevance for management. Employee commitment is a global concern and ranks among the foremost and most challenging priorities for companies worldwide. Since the nature of work and workplaces continues to evolve, research in this area remains highly relevant. With the emergence of remote work, flexible work arrangements, and changing employee expectations, understanding workplace commitment is crucial for maintaining organizational success and competitiveness.

AQ: 7 Various models have proposed that certain personal characteristics can serve as antecedents to commitment, acting as triggers for employee commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Klein *et al.*, 2012). One such characteristic is the employee's emotional awareness, which refers to their ability to recognize and interpret their own and others' emotions (Santana-Martins *et al.*, 2022a). This ability enhances their accurate understanding of the context and guides their **behavior** accordingly. Additionally, emotional awareness enables individuals to perceive and express their emotions, supporting their capacity to regulate their feelings and develop emotional maturity (Rimé, 2015; Smith *et al.*, 2018; Santana-Martins *et al.*, 2022b).



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Hence, conducting studies that investigate antecedents such as emotional maturity and different commitment foci, including commitment to leaders, career commitment, commitment to colleagues, among others, is posited as essential for a more comprehensive understanding of the employee commitment process (Klein *et al.*, 2020; van Rossenberg *et al.*, 2022). While numerous studies have confirmed the ongoing relevance of organizational commitment as a focal point, further exploration is claimed to delve into its directionality and influence on different foci within the workplace. Multilevel studies investigating the influence of employees' affective commitment to the leader on their affective organizational commitment are notably absent (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2019; Klein *et al.*, 2020; van Rossenberg *et al.*, 2022).

Thus, this work addresses a significant gap in the existing literature, investigating the relationship between workplace commitment, emotional awareness, and maturity within the context of evolving work environments. That is crucial for understanding the dynamics that underpin effective leadership, employee commitment, and organizational success in the present and future. The primary objective of this study is to ascertain the potential influence exerted by leaders' affective organizational commitment on fostering corresponding affective commitment among employees towards both the leader and the overarching organization. Furthermore, this research endeavors to examine the pivotal role played by employees' emotional awareness in delineating and shaping the dynamics inherent in these relationships.

For that purpose, the study uses a multilevel approach, and explores the role of employees' emotional awareness in this process through these research questions: (1) To what extent does a leader's affective organizational commitment influence the employee's affective commitment to the leader? (2) To what extent does a leader's affective organizational commitment influence the employee's affective commitment to the organization? (3) What is the role of employees' emotional awareness to their affective commitment, both towards the leader and the organization?

This research is grounded in the Organizational Behavior literature which explores how individuals, groups, and structures within an organization interact and influence each other's behavior. Workplace commitment refers to the level of dedication and loyalty employees feel towards their organization and its goals. The combination of these two subjects offers valuable insights into the mechanisms underlying leader and employee organizational commitment by examining various theoretical perspectives and empirical findings. By understanding the factors that influence commitment, organizations can develop strategies to foster a positive work environment, enhance employee satisfaction, and improve organizational performance (Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Vandenberghe *et al.*, 2004; van Rossenberg *et al.*, 2022). This study is specifically grounded in a theoretical framework that encompasses both the Social Learning Theory and the Affective Events Theory.

The perspective of the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986), also known as Social Cognitive Theory, emphasizes the role of observational learning and cognitive processes in shaping human behavior (Ambrose *et al.*, 2016; Xie *et al.*, 2019; Wo *et al.*, 2019). Accordingly, this theory suggests that individuals learn by observing the behaviors of others, as well as through cognitive processes involved in encoding, retaining, and reproducing learned behaviors. This perspective supports this study which explores the impact of leaders' affective organizational commitment on employees and emphasizes the critical role of leaders as sources of influence for employees' commitment. In addition, the present research incorporates the lens of the Affective Events Theory (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996, 2017), which examines the influence of emotional experiences on individuals' attitudes, behavior, and job-related outcomes in the workplace. The theory suggests that events or situations in the work environment can trigger emotional responses, which subsequently impact various aspects of an individual's work life (Zapf *et al.*, 2016; Bakker and Demerouti, 2017; Weiss and Cropanzano, 2017). In line with these assumptions, this study specifically focuses on the

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influence of leaders' affective organizational commitment on employees' affective commitment to both the leader and the organization. This theory underscores the importance of emotional aspects within the leader-employee relationship and highlights the significance of affective experiences in shaping commitment.

Following this introduction to the research gap and establishment of the theoretical background, the subsequent section is dedicated to formulating the hypotheses that will undergo rigorous testing in section three. Section four presents the obtained results, while sections five and six are dedicated to an examination of these findings, offering discussions and conclusions inclusive of identified limitations and prospective avenues for future research.

2. Hypotheses development

Employee commitment, encompassing emotional attachment, sense of obligation, and continuance in the organization, has significant implications for organizational outcomes and performance (Beer *et al.*, 2015; Park *et al.*, 2022). The affective component of commitment is considered the most influential when compared to the normative and continuance components (Mercurio, 2015). The affective component captures the emotional attachment and identification individuals feel towards their organization, making it a significant determinant of their intention to remain with the company (Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Klein *et al.*, 2020; Iqbal *et al.*, 2023; Ngah *et al.*, 2023).

The leader, as a critical role common to all organizations, has immense responsibility and exerts a direct influence on employees (Liu *et al.*, 2021). Studies on leadership, encompassing direct supervisors, line managers, and top management, have highlighted the significant influence of leaders on employee behavior (Stinglhamber *et al.*, 2015; Khaola and Rambe, 2020). Moreover, the leader plays a pivotal role in implementing organizational changes, including human resources (HR) policies and practices, ensuring that their effectiveness influences employees' affective organizational commitment.

Prior research has shown that employees' commitment to their leader influences their commitment to the organization because the leader is perceived as an agent or representative of the organization (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2010). Loi *et al.* (2012) indicated a positive influence of leaders' affective commitment on employees' affective organizational commitment, which in turn impacted both the employees' extra-role behaviors and task performance. Recently, Santana-Martins *et al.* (2022b), in a comparative study to identify the foci (organization and leader) with higher explanatory influence on employees' commitment, concluded that affective commitment to the leader has a greater impact on employees' organizational commitment than the reverse.

Drawing upon the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986), individuals learn through observing the behaviors of others, while engaging in cognitive processes such as encoding, retaining, and reproducing learned behaviors. This process involves attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. Individuals pay close attention to the behaviors being demonstrated, retain the observed information in memory, reproduce the behaviors through imitation or modeling, and are motivated to engage in similar behaviors based on the observed consequences or outcomes. A leader who is strongly committed to the organization demonstrates enthusiastic behavior and maintains a positive attitude. Such leaders exhibit proactive problem-solving skills, going above and beyond to achieve goals and develop innovative solutions. These leaders prioritize effective communication, cooperation, and mutual respect within the team, contributing to the collective pursuit of goals (Loi *et al.*, 2012). On the one hand, and according to the previously presented Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986), higher self-efficacy instils greater confidence and motivation to engage in a particular behavior, whereas lower self-efficacy may lead to avoidance or a lack of

motivation. Cognitive processes, such as attention, perception, memory, and problem-solving, are actively employed by individuals when observing and imitating others. These cognitive processes also aid in evaluating the potential outcomes and consequences of one's own behaviors.

The theory underscores the importance of role models, social environments, and cognitive factors in shaping behavior. Hence, it is reasonable to expect that a leader's affective organizational commitment would have an impact on the employee's affective organizational commitment. On the other hand, the Affective Events Theory (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996, 2017) emphasizes the dynamic and episodic nature of emotions in the workplace. Emotional experiences can accumulate over time and significantly impact an individual's overall work-related attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, the theory acknowledges that affective events can have both direct and indirect effects on outcomes, as they have the potential to influence other psychological processes, including cognition and motivation. Consequently, it is reasonable to expect that a leader's affective organizational commitment would exert influence on the employee's affective commitment to the leader. The influential factor in shaping employees' understanding of their work environment is the emotions exhibited by their leaders, perceiving the leader's emotional bonds.

Research on emotions has indicated that the expression of emotions by one individual can shape the thoughts and behaviors of others. For instance, Cardon (2008) and Morris and Keltner (2000) have proposed the concept of emotional contagion, suggesting that leaders are more likely to transmit emotions while employees are more likely to receive them. Within the existing literature, there is generally a positive association between affective commitment and positive affect. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001) have emphasized that a strong positive emotion is the most salient aspect of affective commitment, while Herrbach (2006) has found that affective commitment reflects a favorable evaluation of the work environment and should correlate with more positive affective states at work. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that leaders with higher levels of affective commitment will display more positive emotions such as pride and joy (Loi et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2018; Klein, 2020). As employees observe these emotional displays from their leaders, they may draw inferences regarding the association between the leaders' affective commitment and the positive emotions exhibited. Consequently, employees' affective orientation towards the organization and the leader will be reinforced. Based on the aforementioned arguments, it is expected that the leader's affective organizational commitment influences the employee's affective commitment to both the leader and the organization. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are formulated (Figure 1):

F1

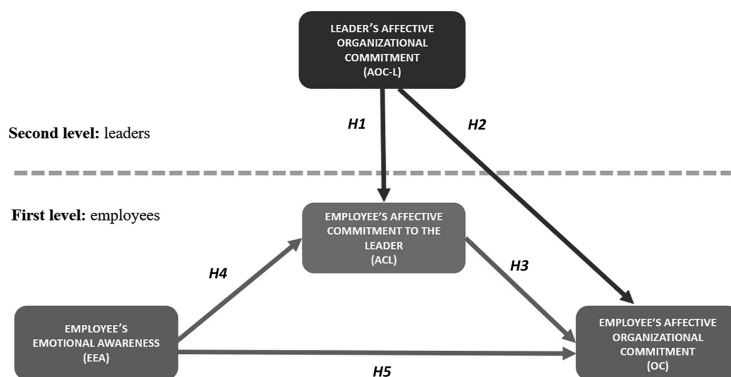


Figure 1. Proposed multilevel model

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- H1. The leader's affective organizational commitment positively influences the employee's affective commitment to the leader.
- H2. The leader's affective organizational commitment positively influences the employee's affective organizational commitment.
- H3. The employees' affective commitment to the leader positively influences the employee's affective organizational commitment.

In addition, emotions are considered an integral part of everyday work life, ranging from enthusiasm, joy, and frustration to stress and apathy. These emotions are influenced by various factors, including personal experiences, job satisfaction, work relationships, and organizational culture. The impact of emotions on employee performance is significant, as positive emotions such as enthusiasm and happiness can enhance creativity, problem-solving abilities, and motivation, while negative emotions like anger and anxiety can hinder productivity, decision-making, and overall job performance (Côté, 2014).

Studies on commitment have identified a set of variables that influence positively employees' commitment, often referred to as antecedents of commitment. These variables include work conditions, organizational and supervisor support, leadership style, climate and culture, relationships, and even organizational purpose (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe, 2003). Different models have proposed that certain personal characteristics can act as antecedents of commitment, facilitating individual commitment to specific foci. These variables play a role in influencing the employee's commitment process (Meyer and Allen, 1997). One such characteristic may be the employee's emotional awareness, which refers to their ability to accurately interpret their own and others' emotions, enabling a better understanding of the context and guiding appropriate behavior (Mayer and Salovey, 1997; Gara Bach Ouerdian *et al.*, 2021).

The Affective Events Theory (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996, 2017) highlights the significance of affective events, some specific incidents or situations evoke emotional responses in individuals. These events can be positive or negative and have immediate and subjective emotional reactions. The emotional reactions triggered by affective events are believed to have consequences or outcomes in the workplace, impacting various aspects of work life such as job satisfaction, job performance, motivation, turnover intentions, and overall well-being. Overall, employees' emotional awareness contributes to their well-being, enhances interpersonal relationships, facilitates conflict resolution, and promotes adaptability and resilience.

Emotions profoundly impact interpersonal relationships in the workplace, with positive emotions fostering better communication, cooperation, and collaboration among colleagues. Individuals with high emotional awareness can be characterized by their ability to recognize and understand their own emotions, motivations, and reactions. Following Mayer and Salovey (1997) and Rego and Fernandes (2005), the present study aims to examine the antecedent influence of emotional awareness, specifically understanding self-emotions (USE), self-control when facing criticism (SFC), and understanding others' emotions (UOE), on affective commitment to the leader and the organization. USE refers to an individual's ability to comprehend and manage their own emotions effectively. SFC is associated with an individual's capacity to regulate their emotions and handle feedback or criticism. UOE encompasses an individual's capability to comprehend the emotions of others with whom they interact.

We highlight that the emotional climate within an organization profoundly influences employees' perceptions of their work, colleagues, and the overall work environment, but it also depends on their emotional awareness (Gara Bach Ouerdian *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, emotional awareness enables employees to recognize and connect with the emotions of their colleagues and leaders. This emotional connection promotes a sense of camaraderie, trust,

and support within the workplace (Rimé, 2020). Thus, it is expected that employees' emotional awareness positively influences the employees' affective commitment to both foci (leader and organization) as expressed in the following additional hypotheses (Figure 1):

- H4. The employee's emotional awareness positively influences the employee's affective commitment to the leader.
- H5. The employee's emotional awareness positively influences the employee's affective organizational commitment.

3. Method

3.1 Population, sampling, and aggregation process

The study employed a convenience non-probabilistic sample consisting of 403 participants from three different types of companies. Among these, two were multinational companies, one French (with 106 participants) and the other Portuguese (with 190 participants). The third group included several public entities and private companies (with 107 participants). We formally informed the participants that their participation should be voluntary, and we guaranteed confidentiality since we would not collect any personal data. During the entire process, national and international ethical standards were strictly followed.

The collected data were subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS 22 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and LISREL 9.3 (Linear Structural Relations). Aggregation is a crucial step in multilevel statistical analysis, particularly when dealing with hierarchical data structures where lower-level units are nested within higher-level units (e.g. employees within organizations). The aggregation process involves combining or summarizing individual-level data to create higher-level units for analysis (Hair *et al.*, 2019; Raudenbush and Bryk, 2002). Therefore, this study adopted a two-level analysis approach, with the first level focusing on the employees and the second level examining the leaders.

Within the original sample, 62% of participants held non-managerial positions, while 38% had leadership roles. The average age of the sample was 37 years, with a standard deviation of 9.05 (minimum of 20 years old to a maximum of 65 years old). In terms of tenure, the minimum was 1 year, the maximum was 40 years, and the average tenure in the companies was 10 years, with a standard deviation of 8.13.

Level 2 data was obtained through a data aggregation process, which corresponded to the level of leadership. Two descriptive variables were used in this aggregation process: participants with leadership roles and the organization to which the participants belonged. In the initial phase we created three subsamples: subjects with leadership, participants without leadership roles, and a third subsample divided on the three types of participants (Portuguese, French and others). Based on these two criteria, the value of the variable Affective Organizational Commitment of Leaders – Level 2 – was calculated for each of them. At the end of this process, the variable Leader's Affective Organizational Commitment was included in the subsample of non-leaders (Level 1).

The subsample of non-leaders (Level 1) comprised 249 participants, with an average age of 36 years (SD = 9.00; Minimum = 20 years; Maximum = 61 years) and an average tenure of 9 years (SD = 8.12; Minimum = 1 year; Maximum = 20 years). The subsample of leaders (Level 2) had an average age of 39 years (SD = 8.99, Minimum = 20 years, Maximum = 35 years).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was undertaken on the sample to validate measurement instruments, assess the theoretical model, and ensure the reliability and validity of latent constructs. This method enables the evaluation of the fit between observed data and hypothesized models, thereby enhancing the robustness and credibility of research findings. To account for the ordinal nature of the variables, the Robust Maximum Likelihood

Method was employed to estimate the model and calculate polychoric correlations. Subsequently, the structural relationships were examined. The internal consistency of the latent variables was assessed using established criteria, such as a variance extracted value of ≥ 0.5 and construct reliability ranging between 0.6 and 0.7 (Hair *et al.*, 2019). During each phase of the structural multilevel analysis, statistically non-significant structural relationships were removed from the model, following guidelines outlined by Hair *et al.* (2019). A multi-level confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to assess the properties of the measures, while hierarchical linear modeling was employed to test the hypotheses (Raudenbush and Bryk, 2002).

3.2 Research instrument

We have used seven-point Likert scales. Organizational commitment was measured using the scale developed by Meyer and Allen (1997) and adapted to the Portuguese context by Nascimento *et al.* (2008). The employee affective organizational commitment shows a proper convergent validity ($\alpha = 0.825$, AVE = 68%, CR = 0.86). Commitment to the leader was assessed using an adapted scale derived from the organizational commitment scale, specifically the affective sub-scale focused on the leader. The convergent validity was also acceptable ($\alpha = 0.879$, AVE = 78%, CR = 0.91). For the emotional awareness variables, it was used the scale developed by Rego and Fernandes (2005) for the Portuguese context and based on Mayer and Salovey's (1997) model of Emotional Intelligence. All three dimensions had an acceptable convergent validity (understanding self-emotions: $\alpha = 0.875$, AVE = 81%, CR = 0.93; self-control when facing criticism: $\alpha = 0.761$, AVE = 58%, CR = 0.80, and understanding others' emotions: $\alpha = 0.690$, AVE = 61%, CR = 0.82).

To mitigate the potential influence of common method bias, we implemented several strategic measures. Firstly, we ensured the respondents' anonymity and confidentiality, fostering an environment where participants felt secure in providing honest and unbiased responses. Additionally, to counteract response patterns and reduce potential biases, the survey scales incorporated both reversed items and a varied order of items. As suggested by Podsakoff *et al.* (2003), these methodological choices were aimed at enhancing the robustness of our data collection process and fortifying the validity of the study outcomes. These authors also suggest using common method analysis to assess the impact of common method variance. This analysis revealed that the variance resulting from the common method accounted for 20.2%, which is below the general reference criterion of 25 and 40.7% established for attitude measurement.

4. Results

In terms of the descriptive statistics for the latent variables (Table 1) indicate that the means generally exhibit high correlation values. Notably, a significant correlation of 0.432** is

	Mean	SD	A-CL	AOC	USE	SFC	UEO	AOC_L
A-CL	4.67	1.43	1					
AOC	4.23	1.23	0.466**	1				
USE	5.49	0.92	0.240**	0.338**	1			
SFC	3.89	1.00	0.287**	0.177**	0.174**	1		
UEO	4.77	0.63	0.216**	0.329**	0.380**	0.238**	1	
AOC_L	4.50	0.38	0.184**	0.432**	0.157*	0.123	0.076	1

Note(s): **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics
and correlations

observed between employees' affective organizational commitment and leaders' affective organizational commitment.

The findings reveal several statistically significant relationships, particularly between affective commitment to the leader and all variables considered in this study. Affective commitment to the leader exhibits a significant and positive relationship with affective organizational commitment (0.466**).

Regarding the emotional awareness variables, all of them demonstrate a positive relationship with an affective commitment to the leader (understanding self-emotions: 0.240**; self-control when facing criticism: 0.287**; understanding others' emotions: 0.216**). A similar trend is observed between the emotional awareness variables and affective organizational commitment (understanding self-emotions: 0.338**; self-control when facing criticism: 0.177**; understanding others' emotions: 0.329**).

Furthermore, the leader's affective organizational commitment displays a positive and statistically significant association with both affective commitment to the leader (0.184**) and affective organizational commitment (0.432**). Regarding the relationship between the leader's affective organizational commitment and the emotional awareness variables, understanding self-emotions yields a positive and statistically significant result (0.157*), while self-control when facing criticism also shows a positive relationship (0.123). However, the relationship between understanding others' emotions and the leader's affective organizational commitment is non-significant (0.076).

The final model obtained from the structural multilevel analysis demonstrates an acceptable level of goodness-of-fit ($\chi^2 = 9.80$; $df = 7$; $RMSEA = 0.034$; $GFI = 0.965$; $SRMR = 0.054$; $NFI = 0.958$; $CFI = 0.987$; $RFI = 0.910$). This model explains 13% of the variance in affective commitment to the leader (ACL) ($R^2 = 0.13$) and 38% of the variance in affective organizational commitment ($R^2 = 0.38$) (Figure 2).

F2

The final model reveals a positive influence of leaders' affective organizational commitment (AOC-L) on both employees' affective commitment to the leader (0.13) and employees' affective organizational commitment (AOC) (0.34). Regarding the emotional awareness variables, it is found that only understanding self-emotions (0.18) and self-control when facing criticism (0.24) has a positive relationship with an affective commitment to the

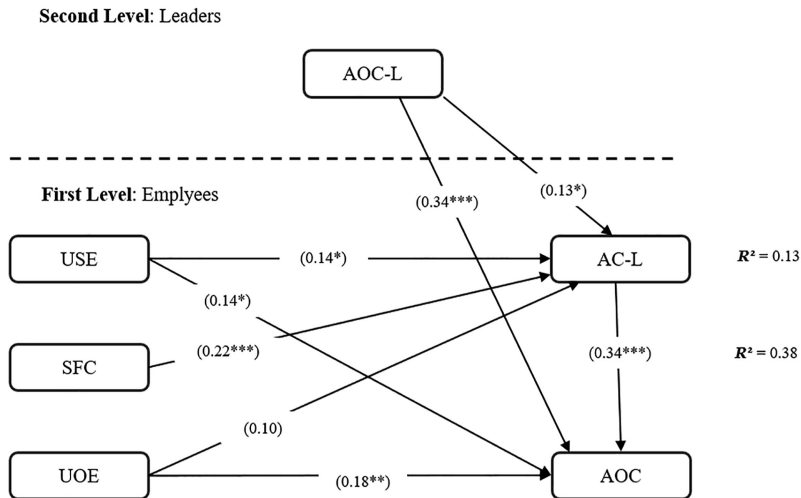


Figure 2. Final multilevel model

leader. Furthermore, concerning the relationship between emotional awareness and organizational commitment, understanding self-emotions (0.14) and understanding others' emotions (0.18) positively influence employees' affective organizational commitment.

Based on these findings, **H1** is confirmed, suggesting that the leader's affective organizational commitment positively influences employees' affective commitment to the leader (0.13). **H2** is also confirmed, as the leader's affective organizational commitment positively influences employees' affective organizational commitment (0.34). **H3** is partially confirmed, suggesting that employees' affective commitment to the leader (ACL) has a positive influence on employees' affective organizational commitment (AOC) (0.33). Regarding **H4**, it is partially confirmed, indicating that understanding self-emotions (0.18) and self-control when facing criticism (0.24) positively influence employees' affective commitment to the leader. Finally, **H5** is partially confirmed, revealing that understanding self-emotions (USE) and understanding others' emotions (UOE) only have a positive influence on employees' affective organizational commitment (0.14 and 0.18, respectively).

5. Discussion

While organizational commitment has been extensively studied, further exploration is necessary to understand its directionality and influence on different commitment foci. **Focusing** exclusively on organizational commitment limits the understanding of the interplay between different foci that coexist in the workplace (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2019; Klein *et al.*, 2020; van Rosenberg *et al.*, 2022).

The classical theoretical framework suggests that organizational commitment has traditionally been a stable focus, but the influence of other commitment foci on organizational commitment and the reciprocal influence remain to be explored.

This study builds upon the work initiated by Stinglhamber and Vandenberghe (2003), which examined supervisors as potential foci of commitment in the workplace. Loi *et al.* (2012) proposed a positive relationship between supervisors' affective commitment and employees' affective commitment, subsequently impacting employees' extra-role and task performance. These findings underscore that supervisors' affective mindset concerning their relationship with the organization significantly influences employees' emotional attachment to the organization. Subsequently, Meyer *et al.* (2015), Klein *et al.* (2020), and van Rosenberg *et al.* (2022) highlighted the need for studies on commitment to the leaders, considering their important role in the workplace, as well as the directionality between different foci of commitment and their mutual influence. To address this gap, this study used a multilevel approach aligned with these suggestions, to test the influence across different commitment foci.

Hence, our study aligns with social learning theory and affective events theory, confirming the influence of a leader's affective organizational commitment on employees' affective commitment to both the leader and the organization. Individuals learn through observing others' behaviors, and these cognitive processes aid in evaluating the potential outcomes and consequences of one's behaviors. The theoretical framework underscores the importance of role models, social environments, and cognitive factors in shaping behavior and commitment, particularly among leaders, employees' emotional awareness, and the organization. In line with the affective events theory, our results suggest the congruence of emotional awareness as an antecedent to commitment, fostering affective commitment to the leader and affective organizational commitment (Becker, 2016; Santana-Martins *et al.*, 2022a). This study underscores the relevance of socioemotional aspects in workplace commitment, emphasizing the importance of affective commitment to both the leader and the organization. This conclusion aligns with arguments put forth by authors such as Solinger *et al.* (2008) and Klein *et al.* (2012), asserting that affective bonds often form the strongest foundation for employee commitment.

The results suggest a positive influence of leaders' affective organizational commitment on employees' affective commitment to the leader. This indicates that as employees perceive the leader's strong commitment to the organization, their emotional bond with the leader tends to strengthen. Furthermore, the results also indicate a significant influence of leaders' affective organizational commitment on employees' affective organizational commitment. This suggests that as employees perceive the leader's strong commitment to the organization, it has a notable impact on their overall commitment to both the leader and the organization.

These findings highlight two important aspects: first, the pivotal role of the leader in fostering commitment, not only towards themselves but also towards the organization; and second, the power of affective bonds in both the leader-employee relationship and the employee-organization relationship.

Individuals are highly attentive to the behaviors exhibited by others, particularly leaders, and they retain these observed behaviors in their memory. Subsequently, individuals may reproduce these behaviors through imitation or modeling. A leader who displays a strong commitment to the organization not only exhibits enthusiastic behavior but also maintains a positive attitude. When employees witness a leader who is enthusiastic about their work and displays a positive outlook, it influences their attitudes and behaviors. They are more likely to be motivated and inspired to engage in similar behaviors that align with the leader's commitment. The impact of a committed leader goes beyond the surface level. It may foster a sense of purpose and dedication among employees, instilling a shared commitment to the organization's goals and values. This commitment is reinforced when employees observe the positive outcomes that result from the leader's enthusiastic behavior and positive attitude, such as increased productivity, enhanced team cohesion, and improved job satisfaction. Therefore, a leader's strong commitment to the organization not only influences their behavior but also catalyzes shaping the attitudes and behaviors of their followers. By embodying enthusiasm and maintaining a positive attitude, leaders can effectively inspire and motivate their employees, contributing to a culture of commitment and ultimately driving organizational success.

Additionally, in line with trickle effects research (Wo *et al.*, 2019), the results suggest that employees' emotional awareness reflects a positive trickle-up effect on affective commitment to the leader and to the organization.

Based on these findings, it is recommended to adopt an organizational leadership model that promotes cohesion and closeness with employees throughout the hierarchical structure (Raudenbush and Bryk, 2002). This model should prioritize people-oriented leadership, wherein leaders provide support in challenging and stressful situations, offer guidance and advice, create opportunities for employee skill development, recognize achievements, and empower team members to make decisions without constant approval. Leaders should serve as more than mere role models; they should act as facilitators, understanding employee needs and aligning them with organizational goals.

The results are aligned with the affective events theory (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996) which suggests that emotional experiences can impact various aspects of work life, including job satisfaction, job performance, motivation, turnover intentions, and overall well-being. The ability to understand self-emotions allows individuals to stay connected with themselves, be aware of their emotional state, and comprehend the underlying reasons for their emotions. This ability plays a crucial role in empowering employees to understand their motivations, values, and aspirations. By being attuned to their emotions, individuals can engage in self-reflection, evaluating the alignment between their values and those of the organization. This introspection fosters a deeper sense of personal investment and commitment to the organization. These emotional dynamics explain the positive relationship between this variable and affective commitment to the leader and affective organizational commitment.

Equally, self-control when facing criticism, which refers to an individual's ability to manage their emotions when receiving criticism or feedback, is positively related to affective commitment to the leader. This finding suggests that employees with a greater capacity to interpret feedback constructively, regardless of whether it is positive or negative, are more likely to develop an affective bond with their leader. However, it is crucial to note that the leader's approach during the feedback process plays a significant role in how employees receive and interpret such feedback (Zheng *et al.*, 2015; Khaola and Rambe, 2020; Cenkci *et al.*, 2021).

Furthermore, the employee's ability to understand others' emotions is positively associated with affective organizational commitment. This finding indicates that the capacity to understand others' emotions enables individuals to be more empathetic, thereby supporting the development of satisfactory relationships in the workplace and reinforcing a tendency to strengthen the affective commitment to the leader and the organization.

Finally, organizations should invest in the emotional development of both employees and leaders, fostering a human-centric organizational culture that recognizes the power of emotions, honesty, and empathy as fundamental elements for sustainable personal growth and organizational success. The current context is characterized by tremendous changes, highlighting the importance of leaders effectively communicating how these changes will impact employees, and what they need to be aware of, to adapt successfully to new circumstances. This focused attention can be viewed as constructive feedback, helping employees understand how they can improve and adapt to changes while aligning themselves with the company's goals. Furthermore, this feedback or mentoring program between employees and leaders can prove to be an effective approach to enhance commitment levels.

These measures collectively reinforce the relationship between employees, leadership, and the organization, potentially fostering affective commitment and a reciprocal sense of duty, as employees recognize the respect and consideration shown by their leaders. Additionally, alongside these measures and behavioral suggestions, a well-structured communication strategy can be implemented to enhance how the leader's affective organizational commitment is perceived by employees.

6. Conclusion, limitations and future lines of research

The role of commitment in shaping the success and long-term sustainability of organizations has been widely discussed in organizational behavior and management research. This study has made expressive strides in addressing gaps in the existing literature by comprehensively examining multiple targets of commitment and employing a robust multilevel methodology to explore the dynamics of commitment. By considering the leader and the organization, we have broadened the scope of our analysis and shed light on the relationship between these different foci. Furthermore, our utilization of a multilevel methodology has been instrumental in capturing the complex dynamics of commitment. Rooted in organizational behavior, this approach recognizes that commitment is not solely an individual-level phenomenon but is influenced by various contextual factors at the organizational and leadership level. By examining commitment dynamics across different levels, we have unraveled the intricate interplay between individual and organizational factors, providing a more nuanced understanding of commitment in the workplace.

Our study recognizes the leader as a focal point of commitment with a significant impact on the employee's commitment process. Leaders can reinforce employees' commitment toward different foci in the workplace. Furthermore, organizations remain an important focus of commitment, as employees' perception of leaders' affective organizational commitment influences their affective organizational commitment. Hence, although organizational commitment is a stable focus, it can be nurtured by effective leadership.

Our findings make substantial contributions to commitment literature by addressing gaps and elucidating underlying mechanisms and antecedents. This understanding can inform the development of more efficacious strategies to foster commitment among employees, leaders, and organizations. Additionally, the study's novel contributions, considering multiple commitment targets and employing a multilevel methodology, deepen our comprehension of commitment dynamics, offering valuable insights for academia and practice. Nonetheless, a limitation in our study arises from we considered the mean of the leader's affective commitment and the employee's commitment towards their organization. The lack of correspondence between the leader and his or her specific team on Level 2 was necessary for preserving the anonymity of the participants.

Considering the above, we suggest that future research explore the dynamics between leaders and their team members. As work environments continue to evolve, organizations need to future-proof themselves. Understanding how emotional awareness and maturity affect commitment can help in nurturing leaders who can foster a more committed workforce. Research in this area can contribute to creating frameworks and practices that align with emerging trends, technological advancements, and shifting workforce demographics, ensuring sustained commitment and success.

Throughout the present study, several new questions have emerged, such as the influence of e-leadership on employees' commitment to both the leader and the organization. Exploring this area could serve as a fruitful avenue for future research. Additionally, understanding how emotional awareness operates concerning different targets, such as colleagues or career aspirations, would be of interest. Furthermore, there is a need for more studies that consider different foci of commitment, expanding beyond the examination of directionality to explore the influence between different organizational levels. Longitudinal studies are also recommended to gain a deeper understanding of dynamics over time and to identify the antecedents and consequences of commitment. Overall, by addressing these considerations, future research can contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of commitment.

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Chapter 3 - Conclusions, limitations, and future research

Numerous scholars have advocated for comprehensive investigations that delve into the identification of antecedents, different commitment foci, causal relationships, and directionalities, underlying a more profound understanding of commitment and the associated behavioural phenomena (Bergman *et al.*, 2013; Meyer *et al.*, 2015; Eisenberger *et al.*, 2019; Klein *et al.*, 2020; van Rossenberg *et al.*, 2022). By strategically venturing into some of the previously uncharted territory, this research seeks to not only fill this void but also to enhance theoretical and practical insights.

The crux of a thesis presented as a compendium of papers resides in its intrinsic research-oriented nature, thereby signifying that a substantial portion of the findings and insights gleaned during its creation are directly derived from the articles encompassed within the thesis itself. This assemblage effectively integrates the outcomes emanating from the dedicated research endeavours of the doctoral candidate over the past years, with a specific focus on commitment.

In light of these considerations, the principal conclusions stemming from this doctoral thesis are delineated: initially, the general theoretical conclusions, followed by the general practical conclusions. The chapter culminates by offering a comprehensive overview of the inherent limitations within the publications and subsequently outlining potential trajectories for future research attempts.

3.1. General theoretical conclusions

Drawing on the research recommendations, the integrated outcomes from the three publications encompass a consolidation of the subsequent core conclusions.

- Regarding the examination of antecedents within the purview of the two commitment foci, this study underscores the pivotal role that employees' emotional awareness plays, particularly encompassing dimensions such as understanding self-emotions, self-control

when facing criticism, and understanding others' emotions, in influencing the commitment process towards both the leader and the organization. In light of the outcomes, it becomes evident that heightened emotional awareness among employees, notably exemplified by understanding self-emotions, can influence an increased tendency towards organizational commitment across its affective, normative, and continuance dimensions. Interestingly, self-control when facing criticism exhibits a dual relationship: negatively correlated with continuance organizational commitment, but positively correlated with affective commitment towards the leader. This implies that employees' affective commitment to their leader reduces the inclination towards commitment based on material aspects. Furthermore, the understanding of others' emotions significantly contributes to the augmentation of affective organizational commitment. These findings substantiate that, in alignment with Meyer and Allen's (1997) model, employees' emotional awareness could be regarded as a distant antecedent of commitment, reflective of a personal attribute intrinsic to the employee.

- Emphasizing the importance of heightened emotional awareness, employees gain the cognitive prowess to measure their aspirations and expectations within interpersonal relationships and their professional scene. This harmony with the contours of Affective Events Theory, which postulates that emotional experiences reverberate across diverse dimensions of work life, encompassing job satisfaction, performance, motivation, turnover intentions, and overall well-being, underscores the synergy between emotional awareness as a critical antecedent and its resultant impact on fostering affective commitment to both the leader and the organization.
- The insights garnered from these findings spotlight the indelible significance of socioemotional aspects in the landscape of workplace commitment. Additionally, in resonance with the premises of trickle effects research (Wo *et al.*, 2019), the results unveil that heightened emotional awareness among employees engenders a positive "trickle-up effect," amplifying affective commitment both towards the leader and the broader organization.

- A significant mediating role of affective commitment to the leader also emerges, leading to shifts in the dynamic between emotional awareness dimensions and organizational commitment. In addition, the leader's role surpasses the realm of fostering affective commitment solely within themselves, extending to significantly shape employees' affective organizational commitment. This insight implies that the leader's influence extends beyond individual commitment, cascading effects onto other commitment foci within the organizational sphere. This concurs with the research by Eisenberger *et al.* (2019) and Klein *et al.* (2020), validating the expansive impact across diverse commitment foci and the interconnected triad of leaders, employees, and the organization in alignment with Social Learning and Affective Events Theory.
- Furthermore, concerning the interplay and directional nexus between the two commitment foci, the positive association between affective commitment to the leader and affective and normative organizational commitment merits careful consideration, juxtaposed with the inverse link to continuance organizational commitment. This discovery reaffirms the potency of the affective bond within the commitment process. Notably, Klein *et al.* (2020) previously indicated the prevalence of the continuance bond towards the organization compared to other foci. A distinctive revelation arises: the inverse relationship between the affective tie with the leader and the continuance organizational commitment. Our study substantiates this notion, illustrating that the tendency towards continuance commitment diminishes in the presence of affective commitment directed towards alternative foci.
- Moreover, the findings underscore the relevance of affective commitment encompassing both the leader and the organization. This resonates harmoniously with viewpoints espoused by several scholars who contend that affective bonds form the bedrock of employee commitment (Solinger *et al.*, 2008; Klein *et al.*, 2012).
- The marked positive correlation between the affective and normative dimensions of organizational commitment warrants acknowledgment, as latent profile studies suggest that this result potentially alludes to the existence of a moral duty profile (Meyer and Parfyonova, 2010; Meyer *et al.*, 2012, 2015). In alternative, the correlation between the

normative and affective dimensions of organizational commitment further reinforces the assertions of numerous scholars who advocate for a reevaluation of the commitment model, proposing the potential viability of a two-dimensional conceptual framework (Meyer and Allen, 1997; Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Klein *et. al.*, 2012).

- Hence, while organizational commitment inherently encompasses an element of stability, this study underscores the nurturing potential stemming from effective and emotionally resonant leadership.

3.2. General practical conclusions

Upon expounding the theoretical implications extrapolated from the published articles, subsequent practical insights are now exposed. The multiple results from the three publications encapsulate the following set of conclusions:

- The findings suggest that employees' emotional awareness yields positive implications for their journey toward organizational commitment. Furthermore, proficiency in comprehending the emotions of others brings about favourable implications for affective organizational commitment. The skilful management and alignment of one's emotional state with interpersonal interactions contribute to healthier relationships, consequently fostering a more positive perception of the organization and facilitating the development of affective connections (Mayer and Salovey, 1997; Smith *et al.*, 2018; Zia *et al.*, 2018; Helvac and Yilmaz, 2020).
- The comprehensive understanding and conscious regulation of one's emotions empower individuals to become attuned to their personal and professional aspirations. This heightened awareness facilitates the establishment of commitment bonds, where employees deeply comprehend their affinity towards the organization, the sources of their gratitude, and their valuation of instrumental aspects such as career growth and compensation.

- In summary, it is inferred that promoting employees' emotional development and training, spanning from entry-level positions to senior leadership roles, can be deemed a strategy that stimulates the potential formation of commitment bonds across diverse dimensions—namely, affective, normative, and continuance. This emotional resilience enhances commitment by empowering employees to sustain dedication and motivation, even in the face of adversity. Consequently, organizations stand to benefit from investments in both employee and leader emotional development, nurturing a human-centric organizational ethos that recognizes emotions, transparency, and empathy as vital ingredients for sustainable personal and organizational evolution.
- Moreover, it is noteworthy that fostering affective commitment toward the leader and delivering constructive feedback to employees significantly stimulates innovative work behaviours and organizational commitment (Bak, 2020). In light of these findings, the results underscore that cultivating a higher capacity for self-control when facing criticism amplifies affective commitment with the leader. This discovery underscores that employees endowed with a heightened ability to interpret feedback constructively are more disposed to develop an affective link with their leader. However, it is imperative to acknowledge that the leader's demeanour during the feedback process significantly modulates how employees receive and construe such input (Zheng *et al.*, 2015; Khaola and Rambe, 2020; Cenkci *et al.*, 2021).
- Often, organizations lean towards instrumental measures as a means to nurture commitment. Initiatives aimed at enhancing monetary benefits might seem simpler in comparison to implementing strategies centered around abstract concepts such as affection, gratitude, or loyalty. Nevertheless, the outcomes unveiled in this study showcase that prioritizing actions tailored for the continuance organizational commitment might not necessarily yield heightened effectiveness. Consequently, other organizations might merely need to match or surpass the instrumental offerings. This investigation accentuated the robustness of affective and normative bonds in contrast to the continuance bond (instrumental). In light of this, the recommendation is for organizations to cultivate an ethical leadership culture, wherein leaders also embrace

coaching roles, providing feedback to propel employees' development (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2010; Bak, 2020; Saeed *et al.*, 2022).

- Additionally, the insights underscore the affirmative influence of leaders' affective organizational commitment on employees' commitment. This substantiates the notion that heightened perceptions of a leader's dedication to the organization correspondingly invigorate the emotional bond shared between the leader and their team members. Beyond this, the results yield another compelling revelation: the pronounced impact of leaders' affective organizational commitment extends beyond their self-commitment; it significantly permeates and shapes employees' affective organizational commitment.
- A pivotal insight surfaces – individuals meticulously observe behaviours, particularly those exhibited by leaders, imprinting these acts within their memory. Therefore, a leader's robust affiliation with the organization does not merely reshape their behaviour; it serves as a catalyst, sculpting the attitudes and behaviours of their followers. By embodying enthusiasm and showing optimism, leaders can proficiently inspire and galvanize their team members, fostering a culture of commitment that ultimately steers organizational success.
- Anchored in these revelations, it is prudent to advocate for an organizational leadership paradigm that propagates cohesiveness and proximity across all hierarchical levels. This model should promote a people-centric leadership, wherein leaders extend support during daunting and demanding scenarios, proffer guidance and counsel, create avenues for employee skill development, acknowledge accomplishments, and empower team constituents to make decisions without continuous validation.
- In the contemporary landscape marked by permanent changes, leaders are tasked with effectively communicating the implications of these changes to employees. This focused outreach can be construed as constructive feedback, aiding employees in comprehending how they can adapt and improve while aligning with the organization's objectives. Moreover, mentorship programs or feedback mechanisms between leaders and employees stand as efficacious strategies to elevate commitment levels. These

initiatives not only galvanize the leader-employee rapport but also foster emotional management, confidence, and performance.

- Cumulatively, these measures reinforce the symbiotic linkage between employees, leadership, and the organization, potentially fostering affective commitment and a reciprocal sense of duty, as employees discern the respect and consideration exhibited by their leaders. Additionally, hand in hand with these measures and behavioural recommendations, a meticulously crafted communication strategy can be harnessed to amplify the perceptual reception of the leader's affective organizational commitment by employees.

3.3. Limitations and future research

The present doctoral thesis, while imparting substantial insights, is not devoid of limitations. These constraints are subsequently expounded, diverging from the shared limitation that resonates through the trio of studies. Moreover, suggestions for future research are also put forth.

- Relative to limitations, the first article's scope does not encompass an exploration of specific leadership styles, nor does it incorporate a comprehensive assessment of leaders' emotional awareness, particularly from the perspective of their subordinates. Such an exploration could enrich the interpretation of outcomes by offering a parallel vantage point. This aspect, while presenting a constraint, simultaneously serves as a recommendation for future investigations.
- Similarly in Article II, certain limitations warrant meticulous consideration when interpreting the study's findings. Principally, it is essential to underscore the nuanced variations in the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) observed are marginal. Specifically, the first model shows a larger array of structural relationships, signifying its heightened influence on the employee commitment processes.

- In the context of Article III, an equally crucial limitation emerges from the disconnect between the leader and their specific team on level two (AOC-L). The study's focal point on the leader's affective commitment and the employees' organizational commitment inadvertently bypasses the interactions within a leader's team. This limitation underscores the need for future investigations to delve into the complex dynamics between leaders and their team members through a layered multilevel study approach.
- Furthermore, the ongoing debate surrounding the characterization, measurement, and distinctions between emotional awareness and emotional intelligence also surfaces as a limitation. This caveat underscores the potential for divergent outcomes with the adoption of alternative measurement scales.

As future research, many uncharted inquiries have surfaced, demanding attention towards unexplored territories.

- The exploration of e-leadership's impact on employee commitment, extending its influence to encompass commitment towards both the leader and the organization. Furthermore, the analysis of emotional awareness across different foci of commitment, such as colleagues or career, warrants comprehensive examination.
- Expanding the purview to encompass various foci of commitment existing within the workplace would provide a more comprehensive understanding of their interrelations and orientations. As well as the exploration of additional antecedent variables, such as employees' values and the alignment of these values with organizational objectives.
- In addition, the study underscores the imperative of delving into the dichotomy between one-dimensionality and multidimensionality of commitment foci. The commitment concept extends across diverse dimensions, including goals, career aspirations, and relationships. Thus, it is recommended to extend future investigations to encompass these dimensions, employing a more diversified and comprehensive sample. The inclusion of participants spanning diverse public and private sectors would bolster the

generalizability of findings, providing a holistic understanding of commitment across varied organizational landscapes.

- Moreover, a longitudinal study design holds considerable promise in enhancing the comprehension of commitment by tracing its evolutionary trajectories and temporal dynamics. This longitudinal approach could illuminate the metamorphosis of commitment in its various manifestations, levels, and orientations over time.

In conclusion, this necessitates active involvement with the delineated considerations, which collectively propel the advancement of commitment studies and enrich the broader frame of knowledge in this domain.

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Annexes

Annex A: Communications in National and International Congresses

1. IX SIMPÓSIO DE COMPORTAMENTO ORGANIZACIONAL - Tomar – Portugal, 24-26 May 2018

AS EMOÇÕES E A SUA INFLUENCIA NO COMPROMETIMENTO - UM PROCESSO DE TOMADA DE CONSCIÊNCIA

ABSTRACT

O Comprometimento tem vindo a ser assumido, quer por autores quer pelas organizações, como um tema que se reveste de especial cariz estratégico. A necessidade de comprometer os colaboradores sob uma perspetiva de potenciar a competitividade Organizacional, tem realçado a relevância do comprometimento nas organizações (Beer, Boselie, & Brewster, 2015; Meyer, 2009; Meyer, Morin, & Vandenberghe, 2015).

Esta realidade coloca à Gestão de Recursos Humanos inúmeros desafios, nomeadamente sobre a necessidade de adotar medidas estratégicas, que considerem a múltipla coexistência de comprometimentos no local de trabalho.

É inegável a complexidade do local de trabalho ao ter implícito um conjunto de variáveis muito diversificada, como são as relações interpessoais com os diferentes Stackholders; o excesso de trabalho; a pressão do cliente, os fracassos, a instabilidade do mercado, entre outros. Qualquer um destes contextos acarreta fortes emoções nos colaboradores, que não raras vezes são sobrecarregadas por outras situações da vida privada do indivíduo.

As emoções ganharam a sua merecida relevância muito recentemente, associado à divulgação do conceito Inteligência Emocional. Porém, a complexidade inerente às emoções, e a ausência de uma cultura de educação direcionada ao conhecimento emocional tem marginalizado a

evolução nesta área, o que tem comportado cada vez mais doenças de âmbito emocional como a depressão.

De acordo com Kelman (1958), a influência social a que um indivíduo está sujeito influencia os seus comportamentos, podendo agir de acordo com as normas ou regras, por se identificar com o grupo ou entidade, e pela sua adaptação aos valores estabelecidos. O Comprometimento é visto por alguns autores como comportamentos explícitos pelos quais o indivíduo optou, influenciado por fatores intrínsecos e extrínsecos como uma ligação de um indivíduo a um objeto que confere uma estabilidade comportamental e um sentido de pertença social ou Organizacional (Salancik, 1995; Weick, 2001).

Considerando António Damásio (1995, 2000, 2010) a emoção está fortemente relacionada com a qualidade pensamento, da decisão, do raciocínio, e à aprendizagem.

De acordo com Rimé (2015) a habilidade de Gestão das Emoções e a aprendizagem evolutiva no campo emocional tem inerente inevitavelmente a necessidade um processo de consciência e de um trabalho de análise intelectual. Para o autor esta dinâmica pode ser mais ou menos complexa, mais curta ou prolongada no tempo, dependendo do tipo de acontecimentos que a despoleta.

De acordo com o que é defendido por Damásio e Rimé, pode pressupor-se que uma maior capacidade de gestão das emoções possa ser um antecedente do comprometimento, no sentido em que proporcionará uma maior habilidade para processar emoções inerentes ao local de trabalho e conseqüentemente adotar uma interpretação e conduta no sentido do comprometimento.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Comprometimento, Comprometimento no local de trabalho, Emoção; Gestão Emocional

**THE PERSONAL VALUES AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS
ANTECEDENTS OF COMMITMENT IN THE WORKPLACE – THE INFLUENCE
ON DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR**

ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a conceptual model that allows understand how Personal Values and Emotional Intelligence of the employees can be considered as an antecedent of the Commitment at work place. This model also introduces the Deviant Behaviors in order to identify the influence of the relationships between different hierarchical levels, proposing the analysis of structural relationships on a multilevel study. For the antecedent variables will be considered the model of the Personal Values of Schwartz (2003), (Self Transcendence, Self-Promotion, Conservation and Openness to Change), and the four dimensions of the Emotional Intelligence scale of Mayer & Salovey (1997), (Perceiving Emotions; Use of Emotion to facilitate thought, Understanding Emotions, Managing Emotions). To Commitment, will be considered the multidimensional model of Meyer & Allen (1997) (Affective, Normative, Calculative). Deviant behaviors follow the two-dimensional model of Robinson and Bennett (2000), (Interpersonal Deviant Behavior, Organizational Deviant Behavior).

KEYWORDS: Commitment, Emotional Intelligence, Personal Values, Deviant Behavior

Annex B: Other Scientific Production and Merits

1. International pre doctoral stay

- Institut de Recherche en Sciences Psychologiques, Université catholique de Louvain, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium. From 18th October 2022 to 20th January 2023

(3 months)

2. Lecturer

- Pós-graduação em Gestão do Talento (3ETCs) at FEUC - Faculdade de Economia da Universidade de Coimbra (2022).

3. Article Published in Academic Journal

- Santana-Martins, M., Nascimento, J.L., Sanchez-Hernandez, M.I. (2020). The personal values and emotional intelligence as antecedents of commitment in the workplace – the influence on deviant behaviour. *Egitania Scientia*, 26, 1646-8848.

Annex C: Articles published in the press

- Os melhores empregadores situam os colaboradores no centro da organização. *Jornal Económico – Portugal (2020)*.
- Os Recursos Humanos na era da competitividade e da inovação. *Jornal Económico – Portugal (2020)*.
- ¿Cómo ser un Top Employer en el contexto post-covid? *Observatório de Recursos Humanos – Spain (2020)*.
- Os oito passos fundamentais para o seu Employer Branding. *Jornal Económico - Portugal (2021)*.
- O impacto da transformação digital na gestão de recursos humanos – áreas de destaque em 2021. *Comunica RH - Portugal (2021)*.
- A saúde mental dos colaboradores: uma prioridade global. *Jornal Económico - Portugal (2021)*.
- Seis práticas de RH inovadoras: uma perspetiva europeia. *Jornal Económico - Portugal (2021)*.
- Tendências globais na gestão de recursos humanos em 2021. *Jornal Económico - Portugal (2021)*.
- Saúde mental dos colaboradores: uma prioridade global. *Jornal Económico - Portugal (2021)*.
- Revisitado - Boas práticas em tempos de pandemia: liderança, teletrabalho e saúde mental. *Jornal Económico - Portugal (2022)*.
- Diversidade e inclusão. Estão as organizações no caminho certo? *Jornal Económico - Portugal (2022)*.
- Diversidade equidade e inclusão – uma perspetiva sobre políticas e práticas globais. *Jornal Económico - Portugal (2024)*.

Annex D: Participation in Round Tables

- La salud emocional como pilar estratégico de la experiencia empleado”. - Best practice sharing with Axa- España - Top Employers Institute - Spain (2021).
- Talk Top Employers Portugal – Jornal Económico TV – Portugal (2021).
- La perspectiva sobre la transformación digital y su impacto en la Experiencia Empleado en Generali-España - Top Employers Institute - Spain (2021).
- Liderança Digital para Gestores e quadros intermédios. Interreg - Euroace España y Portugal - La Transformación digital en la gestión de recursos humanos - beneficios y desafíos. - Portugal (2021).
- Talk Top Employers Portugal – Jornal Económico TV - Portugal (2022).
- Talk Top Employers Portugal – Jornal Económico TV- Portugal (2023).
- A força das ações da diversidade equidade e inclusão nas empresas – a pluralidade da diversidade – Boas práticas globais - Porto RH Meeting - Portugal (2023)
- Top Employers 2024 – Forbes & Jornal Económico Talk - Portugal (2024)