

# Work and Its meanings: a study of forensic experts in the Federal Police

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One of the main challenges of human resources management in public administration is to make sure that civil servants are committed to and driven by values of the public ethos. Understanding the elements that give meaning to their work can be a way to take pertinent action, leaving aside the stigma and misinterpretation of the relationship between individuals and their work in the public sector. This article aims to assess the antecedent factors of our central construct, meaning of work, and its relationships with psychological well-being, psychological distress and affective commitment for forensic experts in the Federal Police. It is a quantitative study that uses confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. The results show that forensic experts find meaning in their work through its social utility and the opportunities they have to learn and develop. Meaning is positively related to psychological well-being and affective commitment, and negatively related to psychological distress. This study discusses the results of applying this model in light of a managerial accountability framework to develop the civil service and concludes that it offers a good contribution to human resources management in the public sector, making it possible to discuss factors that favor the experience of commitment and psychological quality of life in the work environment.

**Keywords:** meaning of work; psychological well-being; psychological distress; organizational commitment; Federal Police.

**O trabalho e seus sentidos: um estudo com peritos criminais da Polícia Federal**

Servidores públicos comprometidos e orientados por valores do éthos público é um dos principais desafios da gestão de pessoas. Conhecer o que lhes dá sentido ao trabalho pode ser um caminho para ações pertinentes, fora de estigmas e más interpretações sobre a relação entre o indivíduo e seu trabalho no setor público. O propósito deste artigo é avaliar os fatores antecedentes da experiência de sentido do trabalho, bem como sua relação com bem-estar psicológico, sofrimento psicológico e comprometimento afetivo em peritos criminais da Polícia Federal.

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Trata-se de pesquisa de natureza quantitativa, com uso de análise fatorial confirmatória e modelagem de equações estruturais. Os resultados indicam que os peritos veem sentido em seu trabalho, o qual advém de sua utilidade social e das oportunidades de aprendizagem e desenvolvimento. O sentido está positivamente relacionado com bem-estar psicológico e comprometimento afetivo e negativamente com sofrimento psicológico. São discutidos os resultados da aplicação do modelo à luz de um marco de responsabilidade gerencial para desenvolvimento da função pública e conclui-se que ele oferece boa contribuição para gestão de pessoas no setor público possibilitando discutir fatores que favorecem a experiência de comprometimento e qualidade de vida psíquica no ambiente de trabalho.

**Palavras-chave:** sentidos do trabalho; bem-estar psicológico no trabalho; sofrimento no trabalho; comprometimento organizacional; Polícia Federal.

### **El trabajo y sus significados: un estudio con expertos en delitos de la Policía Federal**

Servidores públicos comprometidos y guiados por los valores del ethos público es uno de los principales retos de la gestión de personas. Saber lo que les da sentido al trabajo puede ser una forma para acciones pertinentes, fuera de los estigmas y conceptos erróneos acerca de la relación entre el individuo y su trabajo en el sector público. Este estudio tiene como objetivo evaluar los factores de fondo de la experiencia de sentido en el trabajo y su relación con el bienestar psicológico, la angustia psicológica y el compromiso emocional a los expertos forenses de la Policía Federal. Se trata de una investigación cuantitativa, utilizando el análisis factorial confirmatoria y modelos de ecuaciones estructurales. Utilidad social del trabajo y de aprendizaje y desarrollo de oportunidades eran la mayoría de los factores de fondo importantes. El significado del trabajo se relaciona negativamente con la angustia psicológica y positivamente con el compromiso afectivo y bienestar psicológico. Los resultados de la aplicación del modelo se discuten a la luz de un marco de responsabilidad de gestión para el desarrollo de la función pública. Se llegó a la conclusión de que ofrece una buena contribución a la gestión de personas en el sector público que permite analizar los factores que favorecen la experiencia del compromiso y de la calidad de la vida psíquica en el lugar de trabajo.

**Palabras clave:** sentidos del trabajo; bienestar psicológico en el trabajo; sufrimiento en el trabajo; comprometimiento organizacional; Policía Federal.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The modernization of human resources management is always one of the topics of greatest interest in the reform agenda for public administration. However, this topic brings with it a certain skepticism, given a dominant perception among public managers that combines a critique of current models and a strong conviction that it is difficult to change them. After more than two decades of reform of the Brazilian state, overall criticism persists in regard to the functioning and performance of the State (Abrucio, 2007).

The idea of a corps of professional bureaucrats or civil servants<sup>1</sup> (Bacellar Filho, 2003; Longo, 2007) requires applying the topics that have usually been associated with private administration to the public sector. Skills, discretion, managerial development, customer service and performance are some of the terms that populate studies about the need for a technical corps that is able to deal with recent changes in the organizational models of the contemporary State (Secchi, 2009). This implies a laborious and tumultuous transition from a sluggish Taylorist system to what Bresser-Pereira and Spink (1998) call post-bureaucratic or managerial state models. Secchi (2009) presents the transitions between organizational models in Brazilian public administration. Among other sources of tension,

<sup>1</sup> In English, the term civil servant is applied to all public functionaries. However, Longo (2007) refers to “função pública” only for those professionals who follow typical State carriers. These are the case of forensic experts. Herein we translate “função pública” as civil servant.

these changes require that public functionaries abandon a hostile, self-referential profile and an indifference to the public good (Junquilha, 2002) and instead become professionals with skills in decision making and teamwork with the ability to acquire knowledge, technical and human skills, and who are imbued with a desire to improve public well-being. These changes in organizational models can only take root if they are accompanied by other ways of giving meaning to being a civil servant as well as better working conditions which increase the likelihood of psychological quality of life and positive experiences in the servant-work and servant-public organization relationships.

This work represents a contribution to the knowledge of what constitutes the meaning of work for civil servants, within the idea of the development of public services as a paradigm of human resource development in the Brazilian state.

Our specific objective is to evaluate the antecedent factors of the meaning of work experience, as well as their relationship to psychological well-being, psychological distress and affective commitment among forensic experts working for the Federal Police. This issue is relevant to academia, the institution in question, all of its civil servants and Brazilian society as a whole. It is of interest to academia, because it marks the first time that an integrated model with antecedents as well as central and consequential constructs has been used with research subjects in a Brazilian government organization. It is of interest to the Federal Police, given that the results obtained will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in terms of civil servants and their work in this internationally renowned Brazilian government organization. For the servants, it is of interest in that it will help them reflect on their work, outside of the polarizing views of public servants who consider their work a vocation *versus* utilitarian. Finally, it is of interest to Brazilian society in order to understand the work of civil servants outside of disqualifying stereotypes of unmotivated professionals.

In the field of management studies, the meaning of work has been treated as being indicative of motivation, an idea that can be traced back to the Sociotechnical School (Trist, 1978, 1981) and Job Design Theory (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). Both theoretical perspectives highlight that the worker relationship is not limited to rational and instrumental issues, and that it involves subjectivity and the generation of positive psychological states in the work itself, as well as the workplace environment. Other studies relate the meaning of work with engagement (May, Gilson and Harter, 2004), work satisfaction (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997), the reduction of stress (Elangovan, Pinder and McLean, 2010) and business ethics (Michaelson et al., 2014).

“What is the meaning of work to you?” was the question on which Morin (2001) based a qualitative study of executives of various sectors, including public servants in the province of Quebec, Canada. Later Morin (2008) elaborated and tested six hypotheses relating antecedent constructs with the meaning of work. This study was replicated with Brazilian and Canadian university professors (Villas Boas and Morin, 2013), inspired the work of Rodrigues, Barrichello and Morin (2016), and is the model that we have chosen to employ in this present article.

This article is divided into six sections, including this introduction. Next we will present the theoretical framework upon which the discussions of this subject will be based. The third section covers the methodology used and the treatment of our data. The fourth section describes our study’s results, which are discussed in the fifth section. Finally, the sixth section will present the implications of this investigation and will propose an agenda for future study.

## 2. THEORETICAL MODEL

The meaning of work has already appeared as an important variable in classic studies of the Socio-technical School (Trist, 1981) and Job Design Theory (Hackman and Oldham, 1976; Sims, Szilagyi and Keller, 1976), with the latter proposing that considering one's own work significant is part of a psychological state that leads one to have greater productivity (quantity of work delivered), better productivity (quality of work delivered), reduced levels of absenteeism, expected behavior that comes closer to the *best fit*, and less turnover.

Studies of the meaning of work are frequently associated with the Meaning of Work Group (MOW), which was created at the end of the 1970s and developed comparative applied studies to identify the characteristics of the meaning of work in different countries. According to its results, it may be inferred that the meaning of work is a function of individual experience as much as the organizational and environmental context of the individual (MOW, 1987). Morin and Cherré (1999), inspired by the work of MOW, established an evaluation scale for the meanings of work with three antecedent factors related to individual experience, termed factors in the meaning *of* work — autonomy, opportunities to develop and learn, and the work's social utility — and three factors related to the environment, termed factors in meaning *at* work — cooperation and relationship with colleagues, recognition and moral rectitude.

The model presented here relates the six factors used by Morin and Cherré (1999) as antecedent constructs associated with the experience of meaning — autonomy, learning and development, social utility, recognition, moral rectitude and cooperation with peers — as its central construct, the meaning of work. The work of Morin (2003) has been followed for the definition of the central construct, which uses the concept of the *meaningfulness of work* based on the definition of May, Gilson and Harter (2004). The proposition of using these six constructs as antecedents is also in line with the statements of Ciulla (2000) regarding the meaning of work as containing an objective dimension (working conditions such as the environment and relationships) and a subjective dimension (worker perspectives in terms of autonomy and purpose). This idea has since been corroborated by Michaelson and partners (2014).

Table 1 summarizes the definitions, hypotheses and references which have inspired the formulation of these six hypotheses about the antecedent factors to the meaning of work construct. In terms of the previous works that present the theoretical basis for the proposition of these six hypotheses, we have opted to list the arguments succinctly and the works on which they are based.

**TABLE 1** HYPOTHESES ABOUT ANTECEDENT VARIABLES FOR THE MEANING OF WORK

Factors		Hypothesis	Reference
<b>Social Utility</b>	The objective of work is contributing to society.	H1: The greater the social utility or perceived contribution to society, the greater the meaning.	Dik and Duffy (2009); Wrzesniewski et al. (1997)
<b>Autonomy</b>	The realization of work involves the capacity to make decisions about time, resources and results.	H2: The greater the perception of autonomy, the greater the meaning of work.	Isaksen (2000); Sims, Szilagyi and Keller (1976)

*Continue*

Factors		Hypothesis	Reference
<b>Opportunities to Learn and Develop</b>	Work involves the experience of acquiring knowledge and skills.	H3: The greater the perception of opportunities to learn and develop, the greater the meaning of work.	Isaksen (2000); Ketchum and Trist (1992)
<b>Cooperation and Relationships with Colleagues</b>	The realization of work involves experiences of solidarity in good and relevant relationships with colleagues and peers.	H4: The greater the perception of cooperation and relationships with colleagues at work, the greater the meaning of work.	Pratt and Ashforth (2003); Wrzesniewski (2003)
<b>Recognition</b>	The realization of work produces positive feedback from superiors and peers.	H5: The greater the perception of recognition, the greater the meaning of work.	Siegrist (1996); Siegrist, Li and Montano (2014)
<b>Moral Rectitude</b>	Work is in keeping with the individual's values (the ethical dimension).	H6: The greater the perception of moral rectitude, the greater the meaning of work.	Morin (2001)

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Complementing this, it is understood that this central construct is related to three consequential constructs which are psychological well-being, its antithesis psychological distress, and affective commitment. These three are considered to be indicators of the quality of psychological life at work, according to the experience of Vilas Boas and Morin (2013, 2014). They sustain the idea that the experience of meaning is related to the experience of psychological health, associated not only with psychological well-being (Huppert, 2009; Veit and Ware, 1983), but also with an affective commitment to the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991) and low levels of psychological distress (Veit and Ware, 1983).

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as a state of well-being in which an individual can realize his or her potential by working productively while coping with the normal stresses of life, thus contributing to his or her community (Organisation Mondiale de la Santé, 1999; World Health Organization, 2001). If on one hand possible antecedent factors have been defined and tested, the present article has also sought to understand whether meaning can be an indicator for other variables which are important in understanding the lives of people in the workplace. Thus, we have sought to relate meaning with psychological well-being and commitment, both constructs related to the possibilities of a healthy and productive existence.

For operational purposes, we have used the work of Veit and Ware (1983) to define psychological well-being and psychological distress at work. These authors, in turn, avail themselves of the Mental Health Inventory (MHI) scale, which globally evaluates the state of health or mental distress based on a score. It is an instrument that makes it possible to construct an overall score with the original scale as well as partial scores for six subscales: anxiety, depression, loss of behavioral/emotional control, general positive affect, emotional ties and general satisfaction with life (Davies et al., 1998). This article uses five of these subscales: anxiety, depression, loss of behavioral/emotional control,



emotional ties and general positive affect. They have all been constructed in such a manner that the greater the score, the greater the variable that it is named for. In this way, the greater the score in the subscales for anxiety, depression, and loss of behavioral/emotional control, the greater the level of psychological distress. The greater the score in the subscales for general positive affect and emotional ties, the better the individual's psychological well-being.

The concept of psychological well-being incorporates not only the notion of positive emotions of contentment and happiness, but also others such as commitment, self-esteem and affection. Huppert (2009) points out that psychological well-being has evolved from a concept related to the notion of the absence of dysfunction or poor adaptation to the social environment, to notions related to the development of an individual's potential, having control over one's own life, and having plans and objectives to achieve as well as positive experiences in social relations. This being so, as Morin did on her own (2008) and jointly in Vilas Boas and Morin (2013, 2014), we will assume the hypothesis that meaning is an indicator of the presence of psychological well-being at work.

*Hypothesis 7: The meaning of work positively influences psychological well-being at work.*

The notion of sustained well-being does not require that individuals feel well all the time. The experience of painful emotions (deception, failure, mourning, for example) is a normal part of life and being able to manage these negative or painful emotions is essential to long-term well-being. However, it can be compromised when negative emotions are extreme or last a long time and interfere in the ability of a person to function in his or her daily life (Huppert, 2009). Massé and partners (1998) demonstrate that psychological well-being and psychological distress are different but complementary mental states. Thus, we will assume the hypothesis that meaning negatively influences psychological distress, which in the present article is evaluated through three MHI subscales: anxiety, depression and the loss of behavioral/emotional control.

*Hypothesis 8: The meaning of work negatively influences psychological distress.*

The last aggregate construct of this study is commitment. It is the force that leads individuals to take actions that are pertinent to the achieving of one or more objectives. The dominant interest in studies of commitment to work is related to performance and employee retention policies.

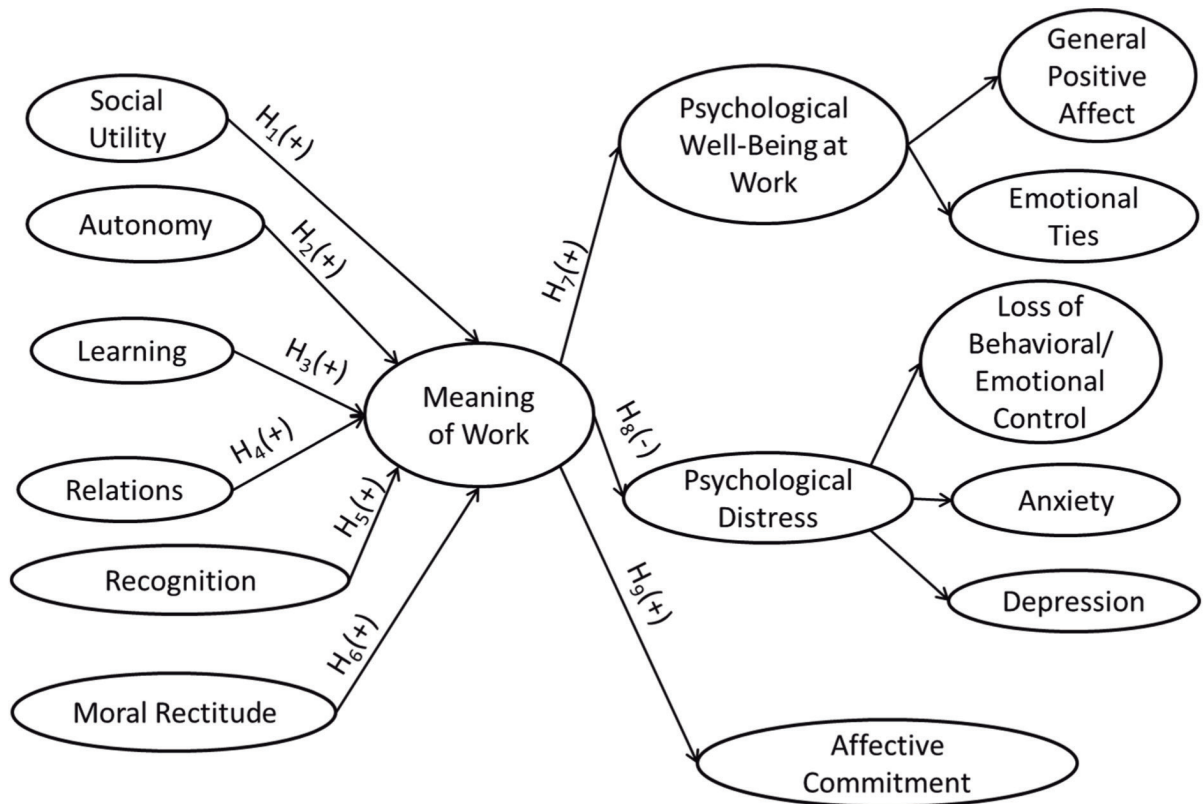
According to the three component model (Meyer and Allen, 1991), it is characterized by a psychological state or mindset that assumes three dimensions: affective commitment (AC), which reflects emotional ties and a desire to stay in the organization, normative commitment (NC), which occurs through a feeling of obligation to stay in the organization, and finally continuance commitment (CC), which reflects a fear of loss related to the transaction costs involved in a possible exit. All three of these forms of commitment represent a tie between the individual and the organization and a diminution of the probability of leaving it. The degree of commitment that people feel in their work can be explained, from the organizational point of view, with the help of factors associated with work itself or social relations that occur in the professional environment. The present study is limited to studying affective commitment, whose scale, as developed by Meyer and Allen (1991), has been shown to be more consistent when applied to the considered sample. Affective commitment reflects the emotional tie that results from identification with an organization or its leadership (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001). Among the qualifications for commitment, affective commitment stands out due to its association with other important

organizational constructs such as low turnover and good performance (Meyer et al., 2002). Thus we reach the ninth hypothesis.

*Hypothesis 9: The meaning of work positively influences affective commitment.*

Now that we have presented the theoretical framework that governs this study as well as the nine underlying hypotheses, we display an illustrative schema for this model in Figure 1. The left side contains the six antecedent constructs of the central construct, the meaning of work. On the right, we have the consequent constructs of the meaning of work, and the use of the MHI enables us to identify first order constructs (the constructs that cause the measured variables, the phrases of the questionnaire used in this study) — anxiety, depression, loss of behavioral/emotional control, general positive affect and emotional ties — and the second order constructs (the constructs that cause the first order constructs, which would be psychological well-being and psychological distress). In presenting this composition, we can identify the need to verify possible alternative models which will show variations in the presence of first and second order constructs, and these models will be addressed using the proposed theoretical model.

**FIGURE 1 THEORETICAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES**



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

## 2.1 BRAZILIAN CIVIL SERVANTS: WHY DOES THE MEANING OF WORK MATTER?

The changes in the management of human resources in the twentieth century in the private sector as well as the public sector have brought great complexity to administration. The management models have been affected by the advent of the notion of flexibility in hiring, together with the decline of the idea that the adoption of a rigid bureaucratic organizational model can handle the new challenges that have come with factors linked to the globalization of markets, advances in technology and the augmented participation of services in the economy. Work remains the main factor that has been made flexible to minimize costs and generate results at the same time as the notion of hiring has made individuals focus on learning, skills and autonomy.

Work in the public sector has gone through marked changes in organizational models and proposals for management and governance (Secchi, 2009). Differences between professionals who pursue careers in public and private sectors are the object of analysis and proposals of distinctions based on characteristics, and works like that of Lyons, Duxbury and Higgins (2006) assert that there are values that go beyond any identification with a specific sector. Even so, we can recognize that there are singular characteristics of careers in the public sector. As explained by Longo (2007), the concept of civil service elucidates the extent to which the management of public employment should be understood as singular territory.

Not every type of public employment constitutes civil service; it is only when the job occurs within given institutional contexts: those which make the existence and protection of professional administration possible. We will consider that these exist when public institutions have a series of attributes that enable them to have at their disposal the personnel with the aptitudes, attitudes and values necessary for the efficient and effective performance of their activities. Among other things, this means guaranteeing the public professionalism and objectivity on the part of public servants and conduct that respects democratic institutions; it also requires them to respect the principles of equality, merit, and capacity in their management. [Longo, 2007:58]

The professionalism of public administration is an attribute that is necessary for the effectiveness of public services, and it requires a group of institutional arrangements that preserve and protect it. With 20 years having passed since the reform of the State, many changes have occurred in the contracts, careers and profile of the public sector professional. The logic of loyalty and stability has suffered reverses such as multiple bidding being implemented as in business and the appearance new management tools such as public-private partnerships. This is why there is support for the idea that professional management of public systems requires a new framework of managerial accountability that Echebarria (2000) has defined in terms of four important pillars:

- 1) greater space for discretion on the part of public agents, given the need for decentralization, autonomy and accountability;
- 2) an increase in the control and transparency of spending on the part of public servants, and accountability as an essential practice in democratic societies and a guarantee of trustworthy performance in the interests of society;
- 3) a group of reference values which public servants can identify with in addition to the organization's mission and the promotion of the public good in general. The promotion of so-called public ethics which involves, among other things, returning to the notion of the devoted civil servant, the pro-



- motion and implementation of changes in the attraction of new talents to public administration, and fighting the overarching focus on passing the public service qualifying exams;
- 4) a regime of awards and sanctions, in which the idea of merit and recognition takes precedence over the old pattern of remuneration based on title description and length of service.

Considering the challenges of managing human resources in the public sector, there is a need for professionalized public administration, which is reduced in size and governed by democratic controls. This is why the concept of civil service seems pertinent and useful in thinking of what needs to be done to form a corps of civil servants that will be competent to handle the challenges of the contemporary State. Aspects such as meaning, autonomy, recognition, purpose and learning have to be included in a framework of accountability for technically and behaviorally competent public managers. In the face of this, the proposed theoretical model encompasses relevant constructs and the results may contribute to the advance of the management of human resources in the Brazilian public sector. The meaning of work construct, its six antecedents — autonomy, social utility, opportunities to learn and develop, cooperation with peers, recognition and moral rectitude — and the consequential constructs — psychological well-being, psychological distress and affective commitment — offer content for the evaluation of the relationships between civil servants and their work and their organization. Using structural equation modeling makes it possible to analyze these constructs as a whole, contemplating aspects found in the four pillars of the managerial accountability framework proposed by Echebarria (2000) and presented by Longo (2007). This study offers the opportunity to apply this model to a profession that falls within the concept of civil service, which is characterized by its relevance to the democratic rule of law: that of the forensic expert of the Federal Police. This study has been conducted specifically with these professionals who perform duties that require highly qualified skills and whose work is fundamental to the realization of trials of criminal threats to the rule of law in Brazil.

### 3. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

#### 3.1 CHARACTERIZATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

The federal forensics expert (FFE)<sup>2</sup> is one of the civil servants of the Federal Police, being the professional responsible for dealing with the crime scene and exams performed on the corpus delicti. This individual, like any other member of the police force, has to protect individual rights and collective national public security, investigate penal infractions, and prevent drug and contraband trafficking among other functions. The Federal Police exercises typical activity of the State, wielding police powers on the national level to preserve public order, in accordance with Art. 144 of the Brazilian Constitution.

The list of FFE responsibilities includes directing, planning, coordinating, orienting, executing, controlling and evaluating forensics activities and those related to genetic profiles. They work in the Central Government Body — the National Criminal Institute (INC) —, the Technical Scientific Sectors (Setec) in state capitals, and as of recently the Technical Scientific Units (Utec), created in some precincts in cities within the country's interior.

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<sup>2</sup> Activities foreseen in Art. 247 of the Brazilian Constitution (Const. Amend. n. 20 of 1998) and in Art. 4<sup>o</sup>, subparagraph III of Law n. 11,079 of 2004. There are no corresponding positions in the private sector, because they express the power of the State and are part of the strategic nucleus of the State, and for this reason, require greater responsibility from professionals.

The FFEs are professionals who have the task of understanding how a criminal act was committed (the dynamics of the facts), and thus the duty to evolve their activities at the same rate or more rapidly than the specialization and sophistication of the advance of criminal activities, which is a very demanding challenge. Thus, this professional's main arm is research which depends upon the civil servant realizing his or her activities with efficiency and commitment.

All of the 1,111 FFEs of the Brazilian Federal Police were invited to participate in this study, which thus includes those posted in the states as well as Brasilia. Other professionals of the Federal Police, such as deputies, administrative personnel, agents and forensic scientists are not included in this study. It should also be noted that this study invited all FFEs, including those who are currently acting in the area as well as those who have since moved to other functions within the Federal Police.

### **3.2 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

The data was collected through a structured questionnaire, sent by electronic mail to all forensic experts in the Federal Police, consisting of 1,111 professionals spread throughout Brazil. The data collection instrument was developed based on the scales used in the works of Meyer and Allen (1991) for the measurement of affective commitment, Veit and Ware (1983) for the measurement of psychological well-being and distress, Morin (2003) for the six constructs that determine the meaning of work (social utility, opportunities to learn and develop, autonomy, cooperation and relationships with colleagues, recognition and moral rectitude), and the contribution of May, Gilson and Harter (2004) for the central construct, the meaning of work.

The translation of the statements from the English language to Portuguese was submitted to two specialists in the construction of social science scales with doctorates in organizational behavior. The final version of the questionnaire in Portuguese was sent to the respondents after reconciling the evaluations and suggested alterations made by the specialists. The dimensions were measured using a Likert type scale of 1 to 6 (1 = "completely disagree"; 6 = "completely agree"), in which the respondent filled in his or her degree of agreement or disagreement with each presented statement. In addition to the scales used, questions qualifying the professional's profile were inserted into the questionnaire.

The quantitative method adopted involved descriptive statistical analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling, with all the calculations being realized using IBM SPSS Statistics<sup>®</sup> 20.0 (descriptive analysis) and IBM SPSS Amos<sup>®</sup> 22.0 (confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling) software.

## **4. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS**

After repeated interventions featuring invitations to all of the forensic experts, the study was finalized with 250 questionnaires answered completely, giving a total of 22.5% as our work sample. The number of respondents was close to the minimum value for achieving the quantity of five respondents per item (Bentler and Chou, 1987), and falls within the range of 150 to 400 needed to use the maximum likelihood estimation technique (Hair Jr. et al., 2009), ensuring significance and representativeness for the collected sample.

In table 2 we have the profile of the participants and it may be noted that there is a significant concentration of respondents in the masculine gender (87.2%), the minimum age is over 30 (the cal-

culated average was 44), and there is a good level of stability in the activity with a strong concentration of respondents (over 50%) with more than five years in this position, and more than 15% with more than 10 years in this position (the calculated average was eight years).

A significant portion of the respondents (30%) have degrees in accounting/economics, followed by computer sciences (14%), with technical areas (chemistry, pharmacology and biochemistry, and chemical engineering) always below 10%.

**TABLE 2** PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

GENDER	FREQUENCY	%
Masculine	218	87.2%
Feminine	32	12.8%
AGE	FREQUENCY	%
From 32 to 35	21	8.4%
From 36 to 45	135	54.0%
From 46 to 55	82	32.8%
Over 55	11	4.4%
Did not respond	1	0.4%
TIME IN POSITION	FREQUENCY	%
From 0 to 5 years	83	33.2%
From 6 to 10 years	128	51.2%
From 11 to 15 years	14	5.6%
More than 15 years	25	10.0%
EDUCATION	FREQUENCY	%
Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry	11	4.4%
Computer Science	35	14.0%
Biological/Biomedical Sciences	7	2.8%
Accounting/Economic Sciences	75	30.0%
Agronomic Engineering	13	5.2%
Cartographic Engineering	2	0.8%
Civil Engineering	18	7.2%
Mining Engineering	1	0.4%
Electrical Engineering	18	7.2%
Forest Engineering	9	3.6%
Mechanical/Mechatronic Engineering	3	1.2%
Chemical/Industrial Chemical Engineering	22	8.8%
Pharmacology and Biochemistry	16	6.4%
Physics	2	0.8%
Geology	7	2.8%
Medicine	2	0.8%
Veterinary Medicine	7	2.8%
Orthodontics	2	0.8%

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In the confirmatory factor analysis, the measurement model estimation involved the variables affective commitment, anxiety, depression, loss of behavioral and emotional control, general positive affect, emotional ties, social utility, autonomy, opportunities to learn and develop, cooperation and relationships with colleagues, recognition, moral rectitude and the meaning of work, and was performed using the maximum likelihood method (Byrne, 2009; Marôco, 2014).

The measurement model presented healthy goodness-of-fit indices:  $\chi^2 = 3254.333_{(1756)}$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , RMSEA = 0.059, CFI = 0.896, IFI = 0.897, TLI = 0.884, PCFI = 0.805, ECVI = 15.158 (Byrne, 2009; Marôco, 2014). The correlations found between items of the same construct were incorporated into the model, improving its *fit* and did not compromise the performed analyses (Byrne, 2009).

In addition, the evaluation of the measurement model was performed using factor weight analysis for each item in its respective construct (factorial validity), composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE — convergent validity) for each scale.

Tables 3 and 4 show the scales used with their items and respective factor weights, average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR).

**TABLE 3 CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS — PART 1**

Construct	Item	Factor Weight	AVE	CR
Affective Commitment	I would be happy to work at my organization until I retire.	0.769	0.412	0.673
	I do not feel that I really “belong” to my organization. (R)	0.564		
	I do not feel “emotionally tied” to my organization. (R)	0.572		
Anxiety	Think about your past month at work. How have you felt?		0.732	0.956
	Very nervous	0.862		
	Restless because of a nervous feeling	0.890		
	Tense	0.846		
	Anxious, preoccupied	0.816		
	Have you had difficulty relaxing	0.908		
	Scared	0.812		
	Exhausted, impatient, “at my limit”	0.830		
Depression	Annoyed, irritated, confused	0.874	0.747	0.922
	Think about your past month at work. How have you felt?			
	Moody	0.824		
	Sad	0.852		
	With tightness in your chest	0.921		
	Depressed	0.857		

*Continue*

Construct	Item	Factor Weight	AVE	CR
Loss of Behavioral and Emotional Control	Think about your past month at work. How have you felt?		0.537	0.873
	I've worried about "losing my head"	0.836		
	Nothing has turned out as I wanted	0.706		
	Like crying	0.744		
	I would be better off dead	0.557		
	Garbage	0.755		
	Nothing seems to interest me	0.769		
General Positive Affect	Think about your past month at work. How have you felt?		0.659	0.945
	Happy	0.895		
	Satisfied	0.870		
	I am leading a good life	0.840		
	Calm, at peace	0.858		
	Joyful, enthusiastic	0.910		
	Appreciating life	0.827		
	Relaxed, with no tension	0.714		
	Feeling refreshed when I wake up	0.593		
Hopeful, optimistic	0.746			
Emotional Ties	Think about your past month at work. How have you felt?		0.476	0.727
	Loved and wanted	0.753		
	Satisfied with my relationships with the people I love	0.761		
	Feeling the urge to be with my friends	0.532		

Source: Elaborated by the authors.  
 (R) Items inverted during the analyses.

The results presented in tables 3 and 4 were calculated and analyzed together. They have been divided into two tables just to facilitate the presentation and formatting of the data.

Due to low factor loadings, some statements in this initial questionnaire were discarded. The evaluation of composite reliability (CR) showed that the latent variables, except for affective commitment, presented higher than recommended values ( $\geq 0.7$ ), in the same way that the values for average variance extracted (AVE — converging validity) were above the recommended limit ( $\geq 0.5$ ), except for affective commitment, emotional ties and autonomy (Byrne, 2009; Marôco, 2014). These values were not considered great enough discrepancies to invalidate our proceeding with the study.

According to the procedure suggested by Fornell and Larcker (1981), the discriminant validity of the scales was checked by examining the AVE (average variance extracted), which should have a value greater than the square of the Pearson correlations of the latent variables. Table 5 presents this data and it may be noted that the squares of the correlations are indeed less than the AVE values, except for a few cases involving affective commitment, anxiety, depression and autonomy. These values were also not considered great enough discrepancies to invalidate our proceeding with the study.



**TABLE 4 CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS — PART 2**

Construct	Item	Factor Weight	AVE	CR
Social Utility	My work is useful to society.	0.904	0.823	0.933
	My work makes a contribution to society.	0.914		
	My work is useful to other people.	0.904		
Autonomy	I have autonomy at work.	0.590	0.464	0.720
	I can make decisions at work to be more effective.	0.733		
	I am free to perform my work.	0.711		
Opportunities to Learn and Develop	My work enables me to reach my potential.	0.860	0.705	0.877
	My work enables me to develop my abilities.	0.897		
	My work gives me the opportunity to learn.	0.755		
Cooperation and Relationships with Colleagues	I have good relationships with my colleagues at work.	0.723	0.572	0.841
	I collaborate with my colleagues to reach objectives.	0.779		
	I can count on support from my colleagues.	0.643		
	My colleagues and I work together as a team.	0.863		
Recognition	I receive recognition from my superiors.	0.805	0.545	0.825
	I receive recognition from my colleagues at work.	0.705		
	I receive the recognition I deserve, considering my efforts at work.	0.819		
	My career perspectives are just, considering my efforts.	0.603		
Moral Rectitude	I work in an environment that pays attention to human dignity.	0.778	0.678	0.894
	I work in an environment that respects human rights.	0.819		
	I work in an environment that values treating people equally.	0.790		
	I work in an environment that respects people.	0.902		
Meaning of Work	The work that I do is very important to me.	0.686	0.666	0.947
	The work I do here has value.	0.788		
	The work that I do in this organization has significance to me.	0.791		
	I feel that the work that I do in this organization has significance.	0.844		
	The work that I do in this organization is very important to me.	0.821		
	The work that I do in this organization has value.	0.898		
	The work that I do in this organization has meaning for me.	0.898		
	I feel that the work that I do in this organization is valued.	0.868		
	My work is important to this organization.	0.721		

**Source:** Elaborated by the authors.

(R) Items inverted during the analyses.

**TABLE 5** AVEs AND THE SQUARES OF THE CORRELATIONS OF THE LATENT VARIABLES

	1. AC	2. Anx	3. Dep	4. LBEC	5. GPA	6. ET	7. SU	8. Aut	9. OLD	10. CRC	11. Rec	12. MR	13. MW
1. Affective Commitment	<b>0.412</b>												
2. Anxiety	0.171	<b>0.732</b>											
3. Depression	0.285	0.806	<b>0.747</b>										
4. Loss of Behavioral and Emotional Control	0.193	0.684	0.845	<b>0.537</b>									
5. General Positive Affect	0.341	0.465	0.521	0.487	<b>0.659</b>								
6. Emotional Ties	0.054	0.052	0.031	0.039	0.331	<b>0.476</b>							
7. Social Utility	0.241	0.085	0.184	0.169	0.142	0.000	<b>0.823</b>						
8. Autonomy	0.306	0.276	0.229	0.241	0.323	0.138	0.233	<b>0.464</b>					
9. Opportunities to Learn and Develop	0.429	0.100	0.199	0.178	0.321	0.052	0.468	0.349	<b>0.705</b>				
10. Cooperation and Relationships with Colleagues	0.108	0.099	0.180	0.118	0.142	0.066	0.169	0.176	0.224	<b>0.572</b>			
11. Recognition	0.415	0.231	0.301	0.231	0.371	0.097	0.194	0.489	0.497	0.341	<b>0.545</b>		
12. Moral Rectitude	0.392	0.264	0.288	0.252	0.276	0.035	0.176	0.389	0.294	0.095	0.504	<b>0.678</b>	
13. Meaning of Work	0.540	0.144	0.264	0.235	0.308	0.013	0.839	0.332	0.711	0.165	0.362	0.282	<b>0.666</b>

**Source:** Elaborated by the authors.

**Note:** The calculated AVE values are in bold and the other values are the squares of the correlations.

To evaluate the sensitiveness of the analysis performed in terms of the common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003), a Harman unique factor test was performed, adapted for confirmatory factor analysis, to verify whether a unique latent factor could be responsible for all the used indicators. This test shows whether the variance generated by the common method, derived from systematic error in the data collection, represents a considerable risk to the analytical procedures that have been developed (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

It compares, through the  $\chi^2$  difference test and evaluation of the goodness-of-fit indices, a hypothetical single factor model (the common factor model) and the 13-factor model under study (affective commitment, anxiety, depression, loss of behavioral and emotional control, general positive affect, emotional ties, social utility, autonomy, opportunities to learn and develop, cooperation and relationships with colleagues, recognition, moral rectitude and the meaning of work), which had already yielded the following data:  $\chi^2 = 3254.333_{(1756)}$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , RMSEA = 0.059, CFI = 0.896, IFI = 0.897, TLI = 0.884, PCFI = 0.805, and ECVI = 15.158.

The single factor model presented the results  $\chi^2 = 7059.894_{(1834)}$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , RMSEA = 0.107, CFI = 0.636, IFI = 0.639, TLI = 0.613, PCFI = 0.598, and ECVI = 29.815. In addition to having goodness-of-fit index values below the minimum recommended by Byrne (2009) and Marôco (2014), the  $\chi^2$  difference test demonstrated a significant distinction between the two models ( $\Delta\chi^2_{(78)} = 3805.561 > \chi^2_{(critical)} = 99.617$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that the fit of the 13-factor model is significantly better than that of the single factor, which provides evidence of our model's robustness in relation to the variance of the common method.

This work's hypotheses seek to verify the relationships between the central construct, the meaning of work, and the antecedent variables social utility, autonomy, opportunities to learn and develop, recognition, cooperation and relationships with colleagues and moral rectitude, as well as the consequential variables affective commitment, anxiety, depression, loss of behavioral and emotional control, general positive affect and emotional ties.

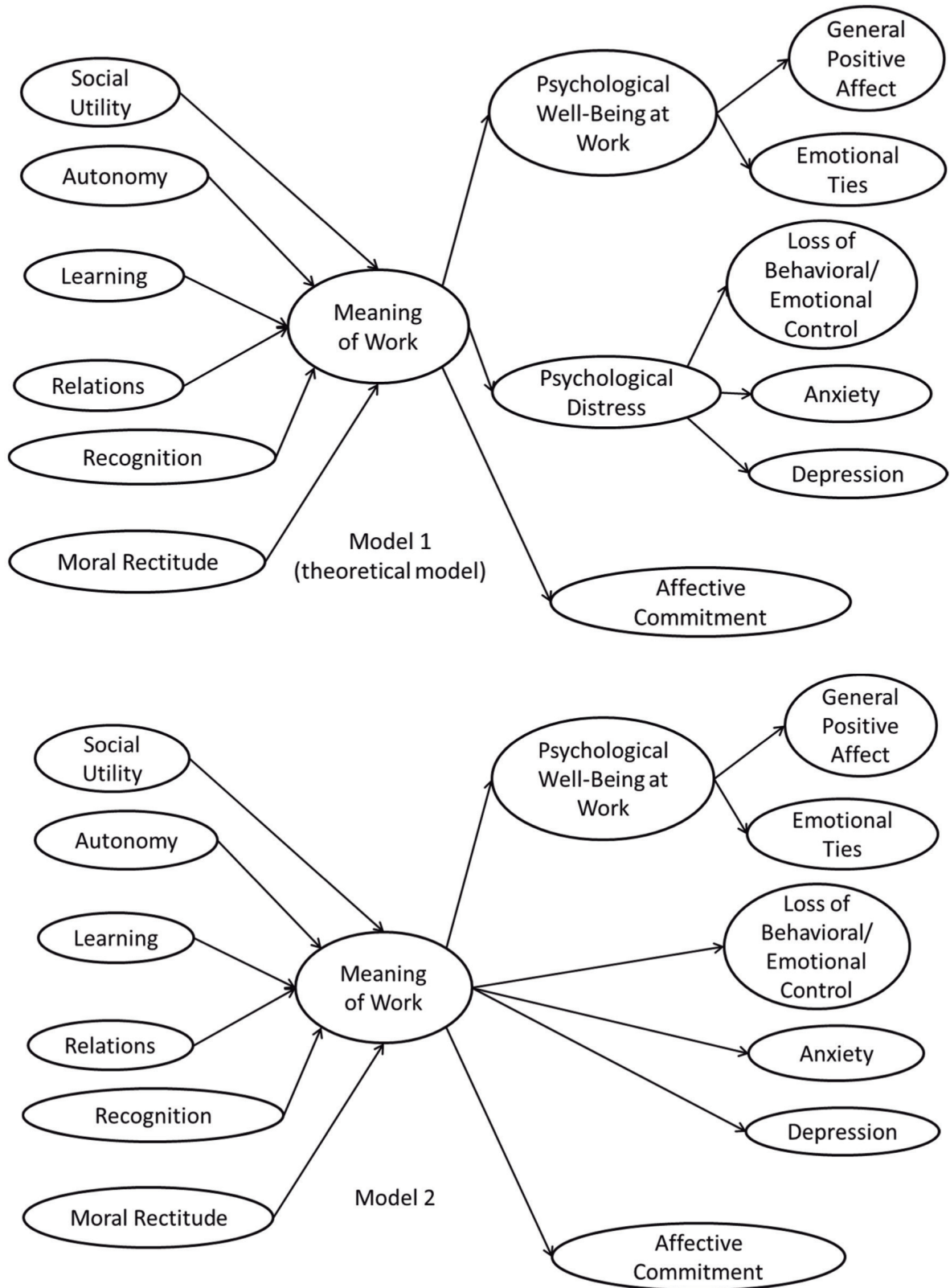
However, the fact that the proposal of Veit and Ware (1983) considers anxiety, depression and the loss of behavioral and emotional control to be component factors of a higher order construct termed psychological distress makes it necessary to verify which structure has a better fit statistically. A similar situation occurs with general positive affect and emotional ties which are components of psychological well-being at work.

According to Hair and partners (2009), a construct is a latent variable that cannot be measured directly. Higher order constructs are those that are reflected in other latent variables, other constructs, which are in turn the cause of the measured variables that make up the used scales. In one of the cases considered here, psychological well-being is a second order construct and the constructs general positive affect and emotional ties are first order constructs, and thus are linked to the scales which were utilized for measurement.

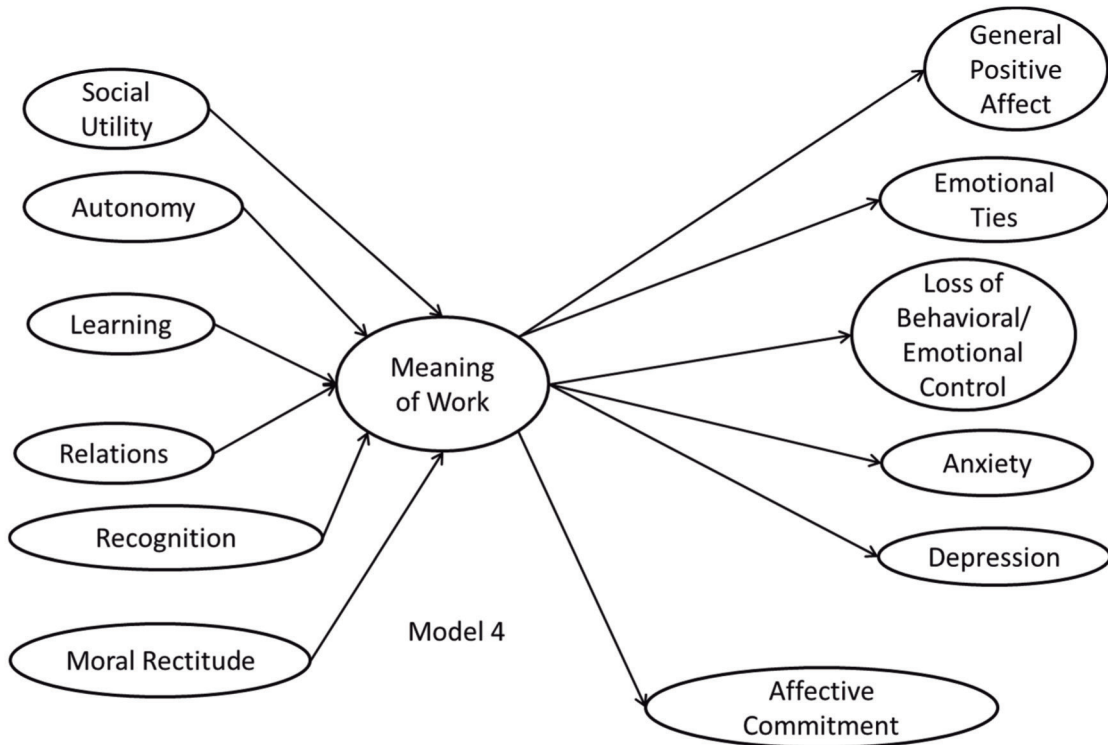
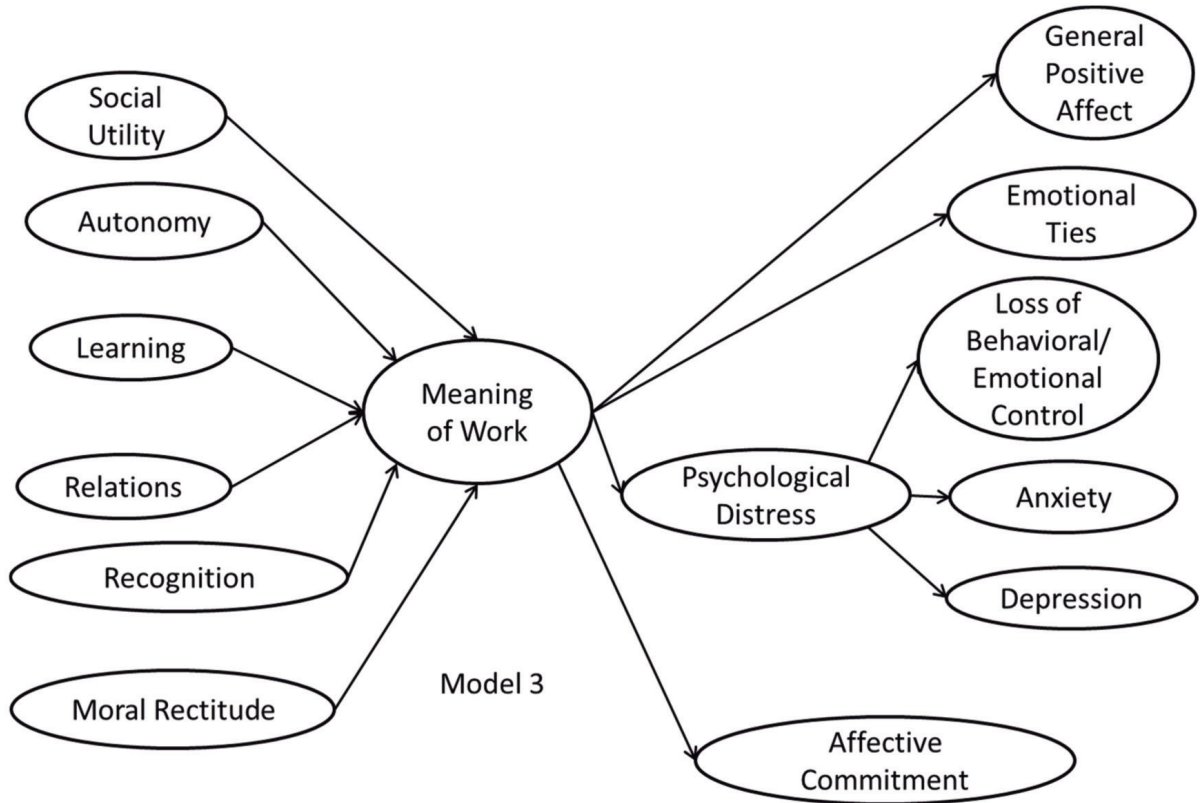
The use of structural equation modeling to study the relationships between constructs is based on the identification of the goodness-of-fit (Marôco, 2014). This is the same as saying that one should seek the model with the greatest explanatory capacity in terms of the studied phenomenon. Thus, four possible models were considered: the theoretical model, henceforth termed Model 1, which considers all the second order factors, as was explained in the theoretical review, and three others in which one or none of the second order factors (psychological well-being and psychological distress) were considered (figure 2). The four structural models were tested and their respective goodness-of-fit indicators can be found in table 6.

As can be verified in table 6, Model 1 (the theoretical model), which considers the second order factors defined by Veit and Ware (1983), presents a significantly better result in the  $\chi^2$  difference test in comparison to the other models. It is also the one that presents the best goodness-of-fit indicators, closer to a fit considered acceptable or good (Marôco, 2014), and therefore was the one chosen for the continuity of the analyses.

**FIGURE 2** COMPARISON OF THEORETICAL MODELS



*Continue*



Source: Elaborated by the authors.



**TABLE 6** GOODNESS-OF-FIT INDICATORS

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
N	250	250	250	250
Minimum Fit Function Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ )	3577.438	4411.24	4182.765	4821.715
Degrees of Freedom (df)	1807	1808	1808	1809
$\Delta\chi^2_i$	-	833.802	605.327	1244.277
$\Delta\chi^2_{i-1}$	-	1	1	2
$\chi^2_{critical}^{**}$	-	3.841	3.841	5.991
$\chi^2 / df$	1.980	2.440	2.313	2.665
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.063	0.076	0.073	0.082
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.877	0.819	0.835	0.790
Incremental Index of Fit (IFI)	0.878	0.821	0.836	0.792
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.867	0.804	0.822	0.774
Parsimony CFI (PCFI)	0.811	0.758	0.773	0.732
Expected Cross-Validation Index (ECVI)	16.046	19.387	18.469	21.027
Results	Best Fit	Worse than Model 1	Worse than Model 1	Worse than Model 1

**Source:** Elaborated by the authors.

\*\*  $p < 0.05$  i: Differences calculated in relation to the values of Model 1.

Following the evaluation of Model 1, an analysis of the significance of the relationships between the constructs was performed using regression coefficients (Byrne, 2009), also known as path coefficients (Byrne, 2009), structural regression coefficients (Byrne, 2009), a causal trajectory estimate (Marôco, 2014) or a structural parametric estimate (Hair et al., 2009) which can be found in table 7.

**TABLE 7** REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS — MODEL 1

Relationships	$\beta$	p-value
Social Utility → Meaning of Work	0.613	< 0.001
Autonomy → Meaning of Work	0.026	0.633
Opportunities to Learn and Develop → Meaning of Work	0.357	< 0.001
Cooperation and Relationships with Colleagues → Meaning of Work	-0.089	0.030
Recognition → Meaning of Work	0.118	0.121
Moral Rectitude → Meaning of Work	0.033	0.493
Meaning of Work → Affective Commitment	0.701	< 0.001
Meaning of Work → Psychological Distress	-0.528	< 0.001
Meaning of Work → Psychological Well-Being at Work	0.563	< 0.001

**Source:** Elaborated by the authors.

From an analysis of the data presented it can be concluded that the constructs social utility and opportunities to learn and develop have a positive and significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) relationship/association with the central construct meaning of work, with social utility being more important to functionaries (higher Beta) than opportunities to learn and develop, when considering what gives meaning to the work they perform. In the same manner, the data also showed that there was no significant relationship between autonomy, recognition, moral rectitude and the meaning of work ( $p > 0.05$ ). It should be mentioned that this affirmation means that the respondents demonstrated that they do not consider the relationship between one construct and another to the extent that it can be captured statistically. If the authors were to state that a relationship exists, they would be risking an error above an acceptable level for this study, namely 5% ( $p > 0.05$ ).

In addition, the data showed a negative but significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) relationship/association between the constructs cooperation and relationships with colleagues and the meaning of work. This result not only negates Hypothesis H4, it also appears to be a counter-intuitive result, given that it is plausible that the idea of cooperation and good relationships should contribute to the experience of the meaning of work. One possibility for understanding this result is to consider that the routines of the forensic expert lead to a working life of a solitary nature. Another hypothesis would be to consider this result an indicator of an environment with a low experience of cooperation, which is filled with conflict and even hostile. The results of the consequent constructs that will be examined below may be able to contribute to the understanding of this apparently singular finding.

Moving on to the analysis of the consequent constructs and analyzing the meaning of work construct as an effects generator, it can be verified that there is a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) relationship/association between this construct and affective commitment and psychological well-being at work (positive relationship) and psychological distress (negative relationship). The relationship between the meaning of work and affective commitment is the strongest of them (highest Beta) and psychological distress is the weakest. The conclusion that one can make from this data is that the respondents considered that the greater the perception that their work has meaning, the greater their affective commitment to it is, reinforcing the idea that the FFE identifies with the organization and establishes a relationship that involves positive emotions (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001).

The analysis of the coefficients of determination ( $R^2$ ), as presented in table 8, shows that social utility, opportunities to learn and develop and cooperation and relationships with colleagues, constructs with a significant relationship, explain more than 90% of the meaning of work of the respondents accessed by the information sampling tool, which shows the high explanatory power of the model to this construct. On the other hand, meaning of work as an effects generator by itself explains almost 50% of the affective commitment of the forensic experts who have participated in this study, a little less than 30% of the mitigation of psychological distress and a little more than 30% of psychological well-being at work, which leads to the conclusion that there must exist other factors not envisaged by the model that explain the percentages remaining to give a total of 100%, which highlights the need for more investigations of this, while nonetheless showing the explanatory capacity of the constructs as a whole.

**TABLE 8** COEFFICIENTS OF DETERMINATION

Construct	R <sup>2</sup>
Meaning of Work	0.927
Affective Commitment	0.492
Psychological Distress	0.278
Psychological Well-Being at Work	0.317

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Considering the analyses performed, we can affirm that Hypotheses H1, H3, H7, H8 and H9, listed in table 9, have been statistically confirmed in this study.

**TABLE 9** CONFIRMED HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis	Content
H1	The greater the social utility or perceived social contribution at work, the greater its meaning.
H3	The greater the perception of opportunities to learn and develop, the greater the meaning of work.
H7	The meaning of work positively influences psychological well-being at work.
H8	The meaning of work negatively influences psychological distress.
H9	The meaning of work positively influences affective commitment.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

## 5. DISCUSSION

Our discussion about the results of the application of this model will be made considering the four pillars of the managerial accountability framework proposed by Echebarria (2000), considering the development of a civil service as a pertinent goal in the formation of a specific professional corps, oriented towards performing actions that maximize positive public policy.

In terms of the antecedents, the results of this study lead us to conclude that forensic experts in the Federal Police find meaning in their work and it comes mainly from social utility as well as opportunities to learn and develop. The forensic experts see value and importance in what they do, because it has important social impact and gives them access to opportunities for professional development. Knowing that this study deals with an elite, highly qualified career, it is commendable that these professionals consider opportunities to advance their knowledge to be important in generating results for Brazilian society. Isaksen (2000) affirms that the possibility of learning at work is an im-

portant path to finding meaning in it. Keyes (1998) argues that understanding that one's work makes an important contribution to society makes individuals see themselves as people of value, which constitutes a process of identification and strengthens their ties to their work and their organization.

Autonomy, recognition and moral rectitude are antecedent constructs which did not present a significant relationship with the central construct. For forensic experts, they find meaning in their work, but it is not associated with any of these three variables.

According to Isaksen (2000), autonomy constitutes the experience of empowerment and the sensation of liberty, and is thus a way of finding meaning in work. The perception of the power to make decisions about one's time, tasks and planning reinforce the experience of an alignment between the individual's values and those of the organization. This also is related to discretion, which also is found among the pillars of the accountability framework for the development of the civil service. This result could be related to the history of the police bureaucracy, in which obedience and attention to hierarchy is always valued and never questioned in terms of giving meaning or not giving meaning to work. This deserves attention if we consider that discretion and making decisions are important skills for new organizational designs in forming a network or matrices, as has been occurring to the extent that the State includes organizations with these new models.

In terms of recognition, the questions involved relationships with superiors, peers, personal effort and career perspectives. Siegrist (1996) explains that recognition is related to the perception of reward which appears, in general, in the form of esteem and respect from one's peers and superiors, or satisfaction with working conditions, remuneration or a positive perception of possibilities for career advancement. Our results suggest that these aspects do not exert an influence on the perception of the meaning of work for the professionals in this study, and the only item that is outside this study is remuneration in the Federal Police, which is considered appropriate for the profile of civil servants, but which cannot, however, be the only cause of the lack of an identified link. A lack of perceived recognition could be an indicator of low motivation and generate a negative effect on productivity even in the short term.

The fact that the moral rectitude construct does not present a significant relationship does not mean that we can conclude that forensic experts face a work environment with ethical issues or few positive experiences in terms of personal relationships between distinct hierarchical levels. The lack of statistical significance indicates that there is not a relevant relationship between our studied constructs and it is not necessarily a negative relationship. However, the analysis made for the previous construct is also valid here, or in other words, one can suggest the hypothesis that there is a low perception of values and human dignity. This requires further investigation.

Work is a central activity in social life which puts people in contact with each other and significantly contributes to the construction of one's social identity. However, May, Gilson and Harter (2004) show that it is possible to sustain the hypothesis that the relationship with peers and superiors is not associated with the meaning of work. The authors argue that individuals may not value interactions with colleagues given that they perceive that individually they are treated with dignity and justice. Our results show that there is a significant relationship between cooperation with colleagues and the meaning of work, but a negative one, which leads us to believe that the work environment deserves attention, given that there is no cooperation. It should be remembered, however, that the routine and

attributes of a forensic expert at work are governed by study, research, data analysis, evidence and crime scenes, and that it is by nature solitary work. When evaluated from this perspective, this result may be considered more understandable and in keeping with the reality of the group of professionals under study, which suggests that the meaning of work for this sample of police professionals could be related more to individual realization than satisfactory or significant social relationships.

In relation to the results in terms of the relationships between the central construct and psychological well-being or distress, our observations affirm that the experience of meaning indicates the absence of distress and the presence of psychological well-being. Corroborating Vilas Boas and Morin (2014), this study has enabled us to conclude that the concept of the meaning of work is an absolute indicator of the quality of psychological life at work.

Finally, meaning has a significant relationship with affective commitment, or in other words, the experience of a positive tie to the organization, which reinforces the idea that the meaning of work can be a construct that reveals the force, priority and intensity of the relationships of individuals with their work and organizations. The forensic experts are shown to be professionals who value the organization where they work and perceive their work as being important to society.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this article is to identify what gives meaning to the work of civil servants and whether the experience of meaning is associated with commitment and psychological well-being. This study has examined forensic experts in the Federal Police by the application of a model using confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. The results indicate that civil servants experience meaning in their work through their perception of social utility in their work and the opportunities to learn and develop that the Federal Police must offer. The experience of meaning is associated with affective commitment and psychological well-being, a result that indicates the quality of psychological life at work. The fact that the variables of autonomy, recognition and moral rectitude did not have a significant relationship with the meaning of work leads to hypotheses about motivation and the characteristics related to the organizational climate.

Meaning of work studies such as this one are of value in the development of civil servants as part of the formation of a competent and committed technical corps which values public management and is dedicated to the well-being of citizens.

### 6.1 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

This study is a photograph of a group of professionals at a given moment within an organization that has gone through profound changes in terms of its image in the eyes of the Brazilian population in recent years. These changes have meant greater pressure for results on the part of forensic experts, which are always questioned and exposed. Thus, the repetition of this study at another time may lead to different results, which should be performed to further our knowledge of the behavioral profile of these professionals and to create pertinent and effective human resource management policies, given that forensic experts can be considered professionals of the State who adhere to the concept of civil service that we have employed in this study.



Another point of interest resides in the fact that this study has presented counter-intuitive and unexpected results in terms of cooperation and relationships with colleagues, which is something as important from the theoretical point of view as it is from the managerial point of view. Often policies and procedures are adopted in view of expected common sense and not empirical studies that are based on methodologies and procedures. Thus, this suggests the need for research on organizational development policies to orient professionals based on structured experimental analyses that can reflect the real positioning of people in organizational life.

Finally, we need to emphasize the centrality of work in the life of humanity since the advent of modernity, which evokes the idea that we spend more time in our work environments than we do with our families, with people dedicating the best years of their lives to organizations. It is therefore valid to insist that the idea of meaning must be related to well-being, at the risk of leading a painful and unhealthy life that can cause damage and harm to human life. In the case of civil servants, it is to be expected that the absence of meaning would mean work devoid of purpose which would benefit neither the citizen nor the State.

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