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SUSTAINABLE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND THE IMPACTS ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Práticas de Gestão Sustentável de Recursos Humanos e os Impactos no Comprometimento Organizacional

Prácticas de Gestión Sostenible de Recursos Humanos y los Impactos en el Compromiso Organizacional

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to identify the impact of sustainable human resource management (SHRM) practices on organizational commitment (OC). The study used a sample of 290 employees linked to six companies classified in the Bovespa Sustainability Index. The research hypotheses were tested based on a structural model, using the structural equation modeling (SEM) technique. The results show that SHRM practices are represented by three dimensions: attraction and retention of professionals, maintaining healthy and motivated professionals, and developing the skills of professionals. These practices have a significant and positive impact on affective commitment (AC) and normative commitment (NC). Besides, the AC stands out as a partial mediator of the relationship between SHRM practices and NC.

Keywords: sustainable HRM, SHRM practices, organizational commitment, affective commitment, normative commitment

RESUMO

O objetivo deste artigo é identificar o impacto das práticas de gestão sustentável de recursos humanos (GSRH) no comprometimento organizacional (CO). O estudo utilizou uma amostra de 290 funcionários vinculados a seis empresas classificadas no Índice de Sustentabilidade Empresarial da Bovespa. As hipóteses de pesquisa foram testadas com base em um modelo estrutural, utilizando a técnica de modelagem de equações estruturais (MEE). Os resultados mostram que as práticas de GSRH são representadas por três dimensões: atração e retenção de profissionais, manutenção de profissionais saudáveis e motivados e desenvolvimento de competências dos profissionais. Essas práticas têm um impacto significativo e positivo no comprometimento afetivo (CA) e no comprometimento normativo (CN). Além disso, o CA se destaca como um mediador parcial da relação entre as práticas de GSRH e o CN.

Palavras-chave: gestão sustentável de recursos humanos, práticas de GSRH, comprometimento organizacional, comprometimento afetivo, comprometimento normativo.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este artículo es identificar el impacto de las prácticas de gestión sostenible de recursos humanos (GSRH) en el compromiso organizacional (CO). El estudio utilizó una muestra de 290 empleados vinculados a seis empresas clasificadas en el Índice de Sostenibilidad Empresarial de la Bovespa (Bolsa de Valores de São Paulo). Las hipótesis de investigación se probaron con base en un modelo estructural, utilizando la técnica de modelado de ecuaciones estructurales (MEE). Los resultados muestran que las prácticas de GSRH están representadas por tres dimensiones: atracción y retención de profesionales, mantenimiento de profesionales saludables y motivados y desarrollo de competencias de los profesionales. Esas prácticas tienen un impacto significativo y positivo en el compromiso afectivo (CA) y en el compromiso normativo (CN). Además, el CA se destaca como un mediador parcial de la relación entre las prácticas de GSRH y el CN.

Palabras clave: gestión sostenible de recursos humanos, prácticas de GSRH, compromiso organizacional, compromiso afectivo, compromiso normativo.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development has been a relevant topic due to the rapid depletion of natural resources, the concern about wealth disparities in the community, and the importance of corporate social responsibility (Dao, Langella, & Carbo, 2011). As a result, sustainable development has stood out in the business context (Tooranloo, Azadi, & Sayyahpoor, 2017), particularly regarding policies, management strategies, and practices for their implementation (Dyllick & Muff, 2015). In this sense, there is a growing interest in analyzing how human resource management (HRM) can contribute to sustainable business development, focusing on a perspective to improve social well-being and concern for the stakeholders (Ehnert, Parsa, Roper, Wagner, & Muller-Camen, 2016; Kramar, 2014).

The described scenario gives rise to a new paradigm: sustainable human resource management (SHRM). In this perspective, the managers of organizations, especially those managing human resources, must emphasize that organizational effectiveness is not based only on the financial performance of the business; there is a need to encompass factors linked to sustainable development (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005; Kramar, 2014; Tooranloo et al., 2017).

SHRM can be understood in two strands. The first strand highlights the role that human resource management plays in supporting business sustainability by adopting practices that can influence individuals and groups to develop attitudes and behaviors consistent with the sustainable perspective (Cohen, Taylor & Muller-Camen, 2012). The second strand argues that the principles of sustainability can be incorporated into human resource management practices, providing long-term physical, social, and economic well-being for professionals (Stefano, Bagdadli, & Camuffo, 2018; Taylor, Osland, & Egri, 2012).

On the other hand, the two perspectives can be integrated, considering that human resource management benefits from the premises of sustainability and, concomitantly, assists in implementing its precepts (Guerci & Pedrini, 2014; Macke & Genari, 2019). This view is corroborated by identifying that organizational sustainability depends on employees' understanding of the company's new purpose and mission. Also, human resource management practices are an important indicator for professionals to believe in the organization's effective commitment to sustainability (Mohrman & Shani, 2011).

SHRM is considered a contemporary approach in management and business studies (Prins, Stuer, & Gielens, 2020). Therefore, because it is an emerging perspective, several authors highlight it as an opportunity to develop new conceptual and practical studies to reduce existing research gaps (Ehnert et al., 2016; Macke & Genari, 2019; Tooranloo et al., 2017).

Researchers who discuss the topic also note the urgency of a more holistic approach concerning assessing the sustainability of human resource management practices (Mak, Cheung, Mak & Leung, 2014; Tabatabaei, Omran, Hashemi & Sedaghat, 2017) and a lack of empirical studies (Lange, 2016; Prins et al., 2020). There are research opportunities in the context of developing countries, particularly Brazil, since studies that demonstrate the importance of the human resource management process and its practices as promoters of organizational sustainability are

incipient regarding theoretical and empirical evidence (Freitas, Jabbour, Mangili, Filho & Oliveira, 2012; Mariappanadar, 2020; Vriend, Said, Janssen, & Jordan, 2020).

Factors such as the acceptance of organizational goals and values, the willingness to dedicate to the company, and the desire to remain in the corporation, are relevant to SHRM practices regarding professionals' commitment (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979). Therefore, commitment influences turnover, turnover intention, and absenteeism (Allen & Meyer, 1990; González & Guillen, 2008; Rego & Cunha, 2008; Kim, Eisenberger, & Baik, 2016). Besides this evidence, no study has yet linked SHRM practices to affective commitment (AC) and normative commitment (NC). Against this backdrop, this study addresses the following research question: What are the impacts of the SHRM practices on organizational commitment?

The research aims to identify the impacts of SHRM practices of Brazilian companies on organizational commitment. The literature review in the next section addresses both concepts and presents the hypothetical relationships between the proposed constructs, offering a conceptual model. The methodology section details the survey method, the sample criteria, and data collection, followed by the analysis and results section. Finally, the discussions, conclusions, and limitations are presented.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

This section addresses the Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) practices and their relation to Organizational Commitment (OC). It is important to point out that, in addition to the studies identified from systematic literature reviews, this theoretical framework was elaborated and complemented with articles related to the research themes and books and other relevant publications.

Sustainable Human Resource Management (SHRM) Practices

The strategic perspective of human resource management (HRM) was predominant in the last three decades (Kramar, 2014; Markoulli, Lee, Byington, & Felps, 2017). In this traditional paradigm, HRM activities aim to contribute to the economic goals of the organization, with emphasis on compliance with legal regulations, reduction of lawsuits, minimization of costs per employee, and programs related to employee attitudes and motivation (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005). Therefore, human resource strategy management is related to a set of practices developed to achieve the company's objectives, mainly in the financial area (Jabbour & Santos, 2008).

The perspective of sustainability has spread in the business sphere in recent years (Dyllick & Muff, 2015), considering that it is impossible to develop a sustainable society without the effective participation of corporations (Schaltegger, Hansen, & Lüdeke-Freund, 2016). This context can be used as a basis for discussing the role of the HRM process for the sustainable development of organizations.

HRM may relate to organizational sustainability as something to look at when developing processes or considering organizational sustainability as its final goal. In the first case, HRM policies and practices are designed to help develop a mindset and actions to achieve corporate sustainability. In the second case, sustainability principles are embodied in HRM practices, which are designed to provide long-term physical, social, and economic well-being to employees (Taylor et al., 2012). The sustainable management of the company's professionals leads to the sustainability of other resources within the organization (Tooranloo et al., 2017).

Therefore, there are two premises: the role of HRM so that organizations establish and implement strategies for sustainability and the HRM process itself sustainably developed (Cohen et al., 2012; Guerci & Pedrini, 2014; Stefano et al., 2018). In short, HRM concomitantly favors corporate sustainability and benefits from sustainability premises (Järström, Saru, & Vanhala, 2018).

In this study, SHRM is defined as a set of practices that contribute to the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of a corporation with a long-term vision and promote the well-being, commitment, and satisfaction of professionals. Accordingly, SHRM plays a crucial role in balancing aspects related to the triple bottom line (Cohen et al., 2012). SHRM favors the maintenance and improvement of the well-being of present and future generations, the creation of a harmonious organizational environment, the improvement of the quality of life, and the mitigation of social inequalities (Tooranloo et al., 2017).

The approach to human relations at work evolved to a perspective of quality of life in the organizational environment, which aimed to balance the interests of workers and companies: this perspective sought to align the well-being of employees with productivity, increasing satisfaction and the commitment of individuals to the organization (Boselie, 2010; Deadrick & Stone, 2014).

This view of sustainability embedded in human resource management practices is consistent with the category of studies described by Kramar (2014, p. 8) as “capability reproduction.” According to the author, there are studies (Ehnert, 2009; Wilkinson, Hill, & Gollan, 2001) that relate human resource management practices to the internal results of the organization, assuming the contribution of this process to economic, social, and human results from the company.

Researchers addressing this line of thought recognize the negative impact of human resource practices (such as increased work pace, temporary employment, excessive-performance standards, and ambiguous corporate roles) on satisfaction, health, well-being, and in the family and community context in which the employee is inserted (Kramar, 2014; Mariappanadar, 2013; Mariappanadar & Aust, 2017; Prins et al., 2020).

This category of studies also discusses the idea of sustainable work systems (Kramar, 2014). This system typology is based on the following premises: (i) the opportunity of the individual to develop as a person, professional, and member of society through work-related experiences; (ii) economic sustainability depends on social and human sustainability; (iii) sustainability is one of the foundations for social development and; (iv) the sustainability of human and social resources is necessary to ensure ecological sustainability since only people and groups that

operate sustainably can understand, prioritize, and work toward environmental sustainability (Docherty, Kira, & Shani, 2008).

The sustainability of the HRM process, in which the principles of sustainable development are incorporated into HRM practices, is based on a long-term perspective that enables the attraction, development, and management of employees in a sustainable and socially responsible manner. Consequently, organizations should, for example, select professionals with learning skills, emphasize fairness and workers' rights, develop talents and strengthen working relationships (Becker, 2011). More specifically, SHRM practices should focus on attracting and retaining motivated and talented employees to provide a healthy work environment and development opportunities (Ehnert, 2009; Prins et al., 2020).

Still focusing on the premise that sustainability can be incorporated into HRM practices, three dimensions can be highlighted (Ehnert, 2009; Macke & Genari, 2019). In the first, which is geared toward attracting and retaining talents, the company must develop practices that address the challenges of the labor market, such as the shortage of professionals, the increasing diversity of the workforce in companies within the globalized context, and the changing values of society (Ehnert, 2009).

The presentation of why human resource management is related to the stakeholder theory can be complemented by highlighting how this integration is operationalized (Guerci & Shani, 2014). The management of people with this sort of skills, training managers and teams so they are prepared to interact with stakeholders, the promotion of an organizational environment that helps to mitigate possible conflicts between the corporation and the stakeholders, and the establishment of evaluation systems to assess social performance, and the company relationships with stakeholders are established as guidelines that favor the association of human resource management practices and stakeholder management (Osland & Osland, 2007).

The stakeholder theory establishes that the decision-making process and strategic organizational definitions consider the interests of actors linked to the corporate sphere, reinforcing the possibility of including the stakeholder theory to support the GSRH perspective. Therefore, to address the challenges mentioned and attract and retain professionals, an organization must be recognized as an attractive employer, a place where people want to work and develop their careers. In this dimension, the main practices of SHRM are the development of a challenging and attractive workplace; the recognition of the company as a reliable and socially responsible employer; the appreciation of cultural and gender diversity, with equal opportunities and; the establishment of appropriate reward practices, with a fair definition of the compensation and benefits that will be made available to professionals (Ehnert, 2009; Järlström et al., 2018).

The second dimension is represented by practices that emphasize the maintenance of motivated and healthy professionals. This perspective is important when considering that the company has recruited and selected the workers (Ehnert, 2009). The main actions to retain professionals are the existence of ergonomic conditions in the workplace; the possibility of balancing personal and professional life, adopting practices to prevent stress, and promoting health and safety at work (Ehnert, 2009; Järlström et al., 2018).

Finally, developing the skills of professionals represents the third dimension of SHRM practices. In this sense, the organization must invest in the workers' skills according to current needs or future demands at an individual, group, and management level. Several actions may be carried out, including tutoring, coaching, mentoring, internships, career plans, succession programs, and vocational qualifications (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005; Ehnert, 2009).

Combining these three dimensions and their respective practices contributes to an organization's ability to manage its human resources in a sustainable way (Ehnert, 2009). As an example, we mention the promotion of practices that favor the health and well-being of professionals. These activities reinforce the social role of the organization for sustainable development and, at the same time, improve its economic performance by reducing absenteeism, medical expenses, indemnities, and insurance costs. On the other hand, society benefits from improving relationships within the family, considering that work aspects impact the relationship between work and family (Mariappanadar & Aust, 2017).

The literature indicates that SHRM practices are characterized by multidimensionality (Ehnert, 2009; Guerci & Pedrini, 2014; Järleström et al., 2018), the dimensions and practices cited reflect the construct as a latent and higher-order variable. Thus, the following research hypothesis is formulated:

H1: SHRM practices are reflective, a latent construct of second-order, and capture the following three factors, namely (a) attraction and retention of professionals, (b) maintenance of healthy and motivated professionals, and (c) developing the skills of professionals.

SHRM Practices and Organizational Commitment (OC)

Organizational commitment (OC) represents an important construct in management research. It relates to the degree to which employees are dedicated and commit their efforts to benefit teams and the company (Yamaguchi, 2013). The OC also embodies the individual's psychological state, which characterizes their relationships with the organization and has implications for whether they remain in the company (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The OC represents an attitude that describes the link between the individual and the organization and a set of behaviors through which the professionals manifest this relationship (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).

The OC has a multidimensional approach (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002; Mory, Wirtz, & Göttel, 2016), based on three components (Meyer & Allen, 1991): (i) continuance (CC) - the awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization. In this case, professionals remain with their company because they need to do so and not because of their desire to belong to the corporation; (ii) affective (AC) - the employee's emotional involvement and identification with the corporation. The professionals remain with the organization because they want to belong to the company; (iii) normative (NC) - a feeling of obligation to remain with the organization. In this dimension, employees

are likely to behave concerning obligations and duties of loyalty and, therefore, display positive behaviors.

The CC develops when the employee has no alternative employment in other organizations or realizes that, when leaving the company, they will lose the investments made in it (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Rego & Cunha, 2008). One of the main antecedents of the CC is the availability of jobs in the market (Meyer & Allen, 1991). This external factor goes beyond the field of influence of the company. Considering the main objective, the focus of this study was to analyze the impacts of SHRM practices on AC and NC.

Previous studies indicate that HRM practices precede OC (Aladwan, Bhanugopan, & D'Netto, 2015; Wright & Kehoe, 2008). The study by Scheible and Bastos (2013) suggests that HRM practices contribute to strengthening employee ties with the company, showing that the perception of employees about training and development practices, work stability, and compensation and benefits is positively related to AC.

In convergence, Shen and Zhu (2011) indicate that an HRM system aimed at social responsibility and organizational sustainability is positively related to the commitment of professionals. Therefore, the practices developed in the corporation should be based on their compliance with labor laws and standards established by the International Labor Organization, focusing on equal opportunities, health, and safety at work, the control of working hours, and fair remuneration.

In this context, HRM practices must highlight the needs of workers and their families, going beyond compliance with legal issues. This perspective encompasses practices such as training and development opportunities, career management, democracy in the workplace, and actions for the participation and involvement of the employees. HRM practices should also draw attention to social responsibility initiatives, considering the interests of the stakeholders and achieving short-term effectiveness and long-term sustainability (Shen & Zhu, 2011).

The SHRM practices are related to commitment, considering that the individuals' commitment is influenced by the organizational values, the fair and adequate treatment of the employees, and the appreciation of the professionals (Rego & Cunha, 2008). At the same time, companies that implement SHRM practices promote diversity, positive relationships at work, workers' well-being, favorable working conditions, and development and career opportunities (Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005; Ehnert, 2009; Järlström et al., 2018). Therefore, it can be inferred that the development of the aforementioned human resources actions will allow employees to feel supported, valued, and respected by the company's management. This context will consequently lead to commitment.

In this sense, it is noteworthy that the AC tends to be more representative when employees realize that the company has a humanized and socially responsible orientation. At the same time, the NC, which establishes employee loyalty bonds with the corporation, is strengthened by HRM policies and practices that value workers as individuals and not just as resources (Rego & Cunha, 2008).

Considering the context presented and previous studies that suggest that SHRM practices impact AC and NC (Ehnert, 2009; Cohen et al., 2012; Mory et al., 2016; Shen & Zhu, 2011), the following research hypotheses are proposed:

H2: SHRM practices have a significant and positive impact on AC.

H3: SHRM practices have a significant and positive impact on NC.

The relationship between AC and NC is addressed below. Based on information found in the literature, [González and Guillen \(2008\)](#) highlight the explanatory factors of these types of commitment: (i) AC is related to the emotional bond of the employees to their identification and their involvement with the company. Therefore, it represents the desire to achieve something, such as remaining with the organization or striving to meet corporate goals; (ii) NC refers to the feeling of obligation to remain with the company; individuals feel that they must accomplish something under a moral commitment.

In this context, workers who wish to remain in an organization because of positive experiences (AC) may also feel some sense of obligation toward the company (NC) ([Meyer & Smith, 2000](#)). In other words, positive experiences linked to the company, which generate AC, can also cause a feeling of reciprocity with the organization, triggering NC ([Bergman, 2006](#)).

AC is associated with attitudes toward the organization, which influence the behavior and duty to remain in the company (NC) ([Meyer & Parfyonova, 2010](#)). According to the context described and considering previous studies that indicate the relationship between AC and NC ([Bergman, 2006](#); [Meyer & Smith, 2000](#); [Mory et al., 2016](#)), the following research hypothesis is proposed:

H4: AC has a significant and positive impact on NC and establishes a mediation relationship between SHRM practices and NC.

METHOD

This research was developed with a sample of employees from listed companies included in the BM&FBOVESPA Corporate Sustainability Index (ISE). The index was designed to show the market performance of companies that apply sustainability principles, encouraging good practices in the Brazilian business environment, and working as a benchmark for sustainable development investment ([Monzoni, 2016](#)). Companies were contacted by telephone. Employees that took part in the study work for six companies: three banking institutions, two manufacturing companies, and one insurance company. The first emails to present the research and the data collection procedures were sent between September 26, 2017, and December 6, 2017.

A total of 290 answered questionnaires were considered valid. The majority of respondents (58.3%) were female. When analyzing the age group, there was a predominance of individuals ranging from 31 to 40 years of age (44.5%). Concerning education, there was a higher number of professionals with a university degree (37.2%) or a postgraduate degree (45.9%). There was a balance in the proportion of respondents who indicated to work in operational positions (47.6%), including analysts, assistants, or subordinates, and in managerial positions (52.4%). 43.4% of respondents had been working at the company for over ten years.

The structure of the research instrument involved three sections. The first consisted of 22 items related to the SHRM practice scale, based on Ehnert's (2009) work. In this preliminary study, the researchers developed descriptive-exploratory research in fifty European multinational companies linked to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) by analyzing the publications' content on the corporations' websites (such as sustainability reports and best practices). The main result of this previous research was the proposal of a list of human resource management practices related to sustainability (Ehnert, 2009; Guerci & Pedrini, 2014). The items were adapted, with the support of a panel of experts, with academic and managerial experience.

In general, experts only suggested adjustments in terms of the wording of the items. The most significant change occurred concerning the item that dealt with the company's concern with maintaining a reputation as a socially responsible organization and a trusted employer. In this case, two experts recommended separating into two issues, considering that being socially responsible and a trustworthy employer dealt with different approaches. Based on this advice, the item was restructured. The scale used to measure SHRM practices is presented in Table 1.

The second section presented six items related to AC and NC. The items were adapted from the studies of Rego and Cunha (2008) and Allen and Meyer (1990). As examples of items on this scale: "I feel like 'part of the family' at my organization" (AC) and "Even if it were to my advantage, it would not be right to leave my organization now" (NC).

The survey instrument adopted a seven-point Likert scale (7 "strongly agree" to 1 "strongly disagree"). Considering that the questionnaire was applied to Brazilian companies, and the studies that originated its items were developed in English, a back-translation for cross-cultural research was performed (Mcgorry, 2000).

Finally, the last block of questions dealt with the respondents' demographic data (gender, age, education level, organizational tenure, and hierarchical level). Also, other characteristics were controlled (company sector, national or multinational, and public or private operations).

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Data analysis was performed using the SEM technique, supported by SPSS (version 22) and Amos (version 24). The assumptions related to multivariate analysis were tested. Data normality was assessed from the univariate dimension and detected using kurtosis and asymmetry measurements, with values less than |3| and |10|, respectively (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016; Kline, 2015).

The assumption of linearity was also met based on the scatterplot assessment (Kline, 2015). Collinearity and multicollinearity were evaluated by the following techniques: (i) examination of the correlation matrix of the variables, using Pearson's correlation coefficient, with values below 0.90; (ii) tolerance value with values greater than 0.10; and (iii) variance inflation factor with values below 10 (Hair et al., 2016; Kline, 2015). Finally, homoscedasticity was confirmed with the Levine test ($p > 0.05$) (Hair et al., 2016).

The covariance matrix was used as standard data input (Byrne, 2016; Kline, 2015). The estimation of maximum likelihood was applied, considering that the assumptions of multivariate normality were attained (Kline, 2015).

Following the analysis of the results, the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the measurement model of the SHRM practices construct, and the construct validation procedures are presented. Finally, the structural model and the outcome of the hypothesis test are described.

A multi-group analysis was developed according to recommendations in the literature, considering that the individuals participating in the study have diverse profiles and belong to different companies (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Williams, Vandenberg, & Edwards, 2009). The multi-group analysis was based on the general structural model (Byrne, 2016), evaluating the significant differences between the relationships proposed for the constructs.

The relationships between the constructs did not change significantly when the following control groups were evaluated: gender, age, company time, hierarchical level, level of education, and whether in a public or private company.

EFA of the SHRM Practices Construct

The variables related to the SHRM practices construct were listed based on Ehnert's (2009) exploratory study. These variables were adapted, considering that the original study was written in English and the research instrument was translated into Brazilian Portuguese by a team of three language and theoretical specialists. An exploratory factorial analysis was chosen, aiming to evaluate the structure of the set of variables and reduce the data (Hair et al., 2016). The data were submitted to a factorial analysis - principal component analysis (PCA), with orthogonal varimax rotation.

Initially, the EFA produced four factors that explained 60.49% of the variance. The value of 0.916 was also identified for the KMO sample adequacy index, indicating the factoriability of the data. Bartlett's test of sphericity showed a significance of 0.000, which indicates a correlation of the variables within the researched cases (Hair et al., 2016).

However, in the first solution, there were variables with commonality values lower than 0.50 or loads divided between the identified factors. A process of evaluation of commonalities and factor loads was started, and eight variables were eliminated. The adjustments resulted in a solution consisting of three factors (Table 1), with 66.58% of explained variance. This result showed that the grouping of variables into three factors converged with the dimensions indicated in the exploratory study by Ehnert (2009).

Table 1. EFA of the SHRM practices construct

Factors	Variables	Commonalities	Factor loads
Attraction and retention of professional Mean: 5.68 SD: 1.094	1.1- The company offers an attractive and challenging work environment.	0.674	0.744
	1.2- The company offers career opportunities.	0.653	0.708
	1.3- The company promotes cultural and gender diversity in relation to its employees.	0.510	0.665
	1.4- The company has compensation and benefits practices that favor the attraction and retention of professionals.	0.556	0.658
Maintenance of healthy and motivated professional Mean: 5.22 SD: 1.217	2.1- The company develops actions that favor the reduction and prevention of stress.	0.741	0.830
	2.2- The company favors the adoption of a healthy lifestyle by its employees.	0.711	0.807
	2.3- The company is concerned about the well-being of its employees.	0.721	0.799
	2.4- The company favors the balance between the personal and professional life of its employees.	0.698	0.703
	2.5- The company provides ergonomic conditions in the workplace.	0.520	0.697
	2.6- The company is concerned about its employees' satisfaction and motivation.	0.699	0.693
Developing the skills of professionals Mean: 5.64 SD: 1.183	3.1- The company offers professional training to employees, with a long-term vision.	0.808	0.837
	3.2- The company invests in the training and development of different groups of employees.	0.740	0.804
	3.3- The company invests in the employees' education.	0.637	0.705
	3.4- The company invests in the training of employees and in the development of their knowledge.	0.654	0.671

In addition to the EFA, a descriptive analysis of the dimensions related to SHRM practices and organizational commitment (OC) was developed. For the SHRM practices construct (Table 1) the dimension ‘attraction and retention of professionals’ presented the highest mean (5.68), followed by the mean for the dimension of developing the skills of professionals (5.64), and the mean for maintenance of healthy and motivated professionals (5.22). Results show that respondents presented high levels of affective commitment (AC) (Mean: 5.99; SD: 1.033) and normative commitment (NC) (Mean: 4.65; SD: 1.719). These findings are in line with the literature, which indicates that SHRM practices promote OC (Cohen et al., 2012; Ehnert, 2009; Mory et al., 2016; Shen & Zhu, 2011).

Measurement Model of the SHRM Practices Construct

In many situations, multidimensional models show lower adjustment than one-dimensional models (Williams et al., 2009). Therefore, in agreement with hypothesis H1, which states that the SHRM practices represent a latent, reflexive construct of a higher order, the evaluation of the solutions with one or three factors was developed by comparing nested models. The chi-square difference statistic ($\Delta\chi^2$) was determined, with the subtraction of the χ^2 values between the reference model and the alternative nested model (Byrne, 2016; Kline, 2015). The results (Table 2) show that the three-factor solution is better suited due to the lower value of χ^2 and $\chi^2/df < 5$ (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012).

Table 2. χ^2 difference test

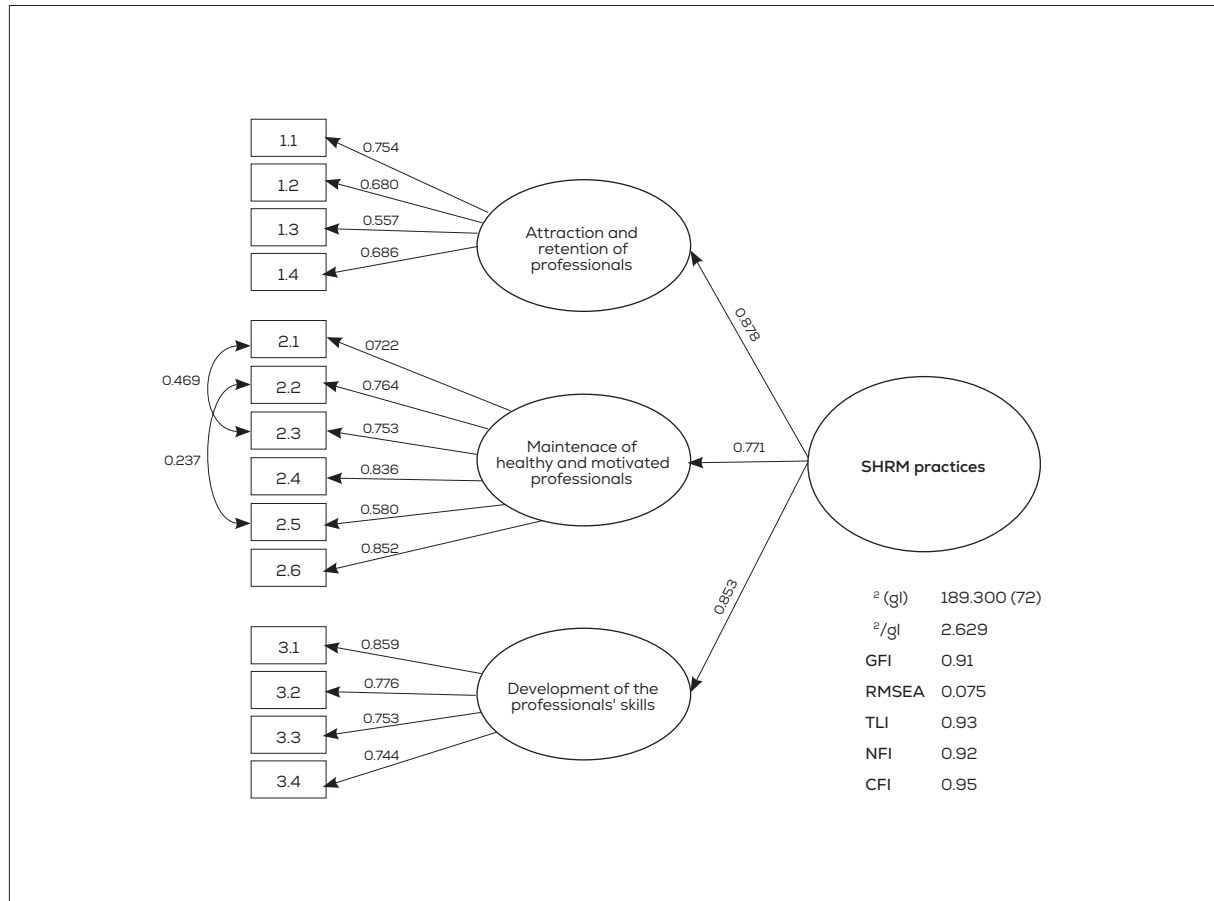
	χ^2	Gf	χ^2/gf	p
Three-factor solution	253.338	74	3.423	0.000
One-factor solution	630.894	77	8.193	0.000
Nested model comparison	377.556	3	-	0.000

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for the construct and the adjustment indices of the measurement model were analyzed (Figure 1). After establishing two relations between the variables, based on the modification indexes (Kline, 2015), the SHRM practices model presented an adjustment according to the parameters found in the literature (Byrne, 2016; Kline, 2015). Covariance was included among the indicators 2.1 “The company develops actions that favor the reduction and prevention of stress” and 2.3 “The company is concerned about the well-being of its employees.” These variables have an important relation since they are linked to the development of actions that influence professionals’ health and well-being .

A covariance was established between items 2.2, “The company favors the adoption of a healthy lifestyle by its employees” and 2.5, “The company provides ergonomic conditions in

the workplace.” Ergonomics in the workplace is associated with implementing programs that promote the health and safety of professionals by improving equipment, workstations, policies, and procedures. In this sense, the relationship between ergonomic conditions and the likelihood of developing a healthy lifestyle is justified.

Figure 1. Second-order CFA



Construct Validation

The data from Table 3 show the internal consistency of the constructs, with Cronbach's α levels >0.70 (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Hair et al., 2016). The composite reliability presented appropriate values (>0.70) (Hair et al., 2016). The average variance extracted AVE (>0.50) was also analyzed, which suggests adequate convergence (Hair et al., 2016). These results were obtained by carrying out a CFA and indicate that the constructs have convergent validity (Byrne, 2016).

The discriminant validity was examined by comparing the AVE for each construct to the square of the correlation estimate between such dimensions. Therefore, the AVE (numbers highlighted in bold) shows higher values than the square correlation estimate (Hair et al., 2016).

Table 3. Discriminant and convergent validity

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Attraction and retention of professionals	0.578				
2. Maintenance of healthy and motivated professionals	0.412	0.723			
3. Developin the skills of professionals	0.561	0.412	0.740		
4. Affective commitment	0.376	0.327	0.139	0.819	
5. Normative commitment	0.217	0.149	0.084	0.298	0.770
Average variance extracted	0.578	0.723	0.740	0.819	0.770
Composite reliability	0.844	0.939	0.919	0.931	0.909
Cronbach's α	0.752	0.897	0.853	0.874	0.843

The data have no measurement bias. The latent common factor test was developed through CFA, linking all the items observed in the model. The new variable relationship scheme led to the following adjustment measures: $\chi^2(\text{gl})= 329.482 (159)$, $\chi^2/\text{gl}= 2.072$, GFI= 0.89, RMSEA= 0.06, TLI= 0.94, NFI= 0.91 e CFI= 0.95. All relationships between observable items and latent variables remained significant, even with the introduction of the common factor. Moreover, no relationship with this factor showed significance.

Concerning Harman's single-factor test, the common variance identified was 40.8%, which means that no dominant factor appeared and no problems were related to the measurement bias (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). In convergence, the latent common factor test was performed, which identified that all relationships between the observable items and the latent variables remained significant, even with the introduction of the common factor. Moreover, no relationship with this factor has shown significance (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

Final Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The final structural model was designed, considering the relation between the constructs. This model presented adjustment indexes compatible with recommendations in the literature (Figure 2).

The hypotheses related to SHRM practices (higher-order construct) and their respective dimensions were significant. The most important effect was identified in the dimension "maintaining healthy and motivated professionals" ($\gamma: 0.875$), followed by the dimensions associated with attracting and retaining professionals ($\gamma: 0.843$) and developing the skills of professionals ($\gamma: 0.744$). The results indicate that the SHRM practices scale has convergent and

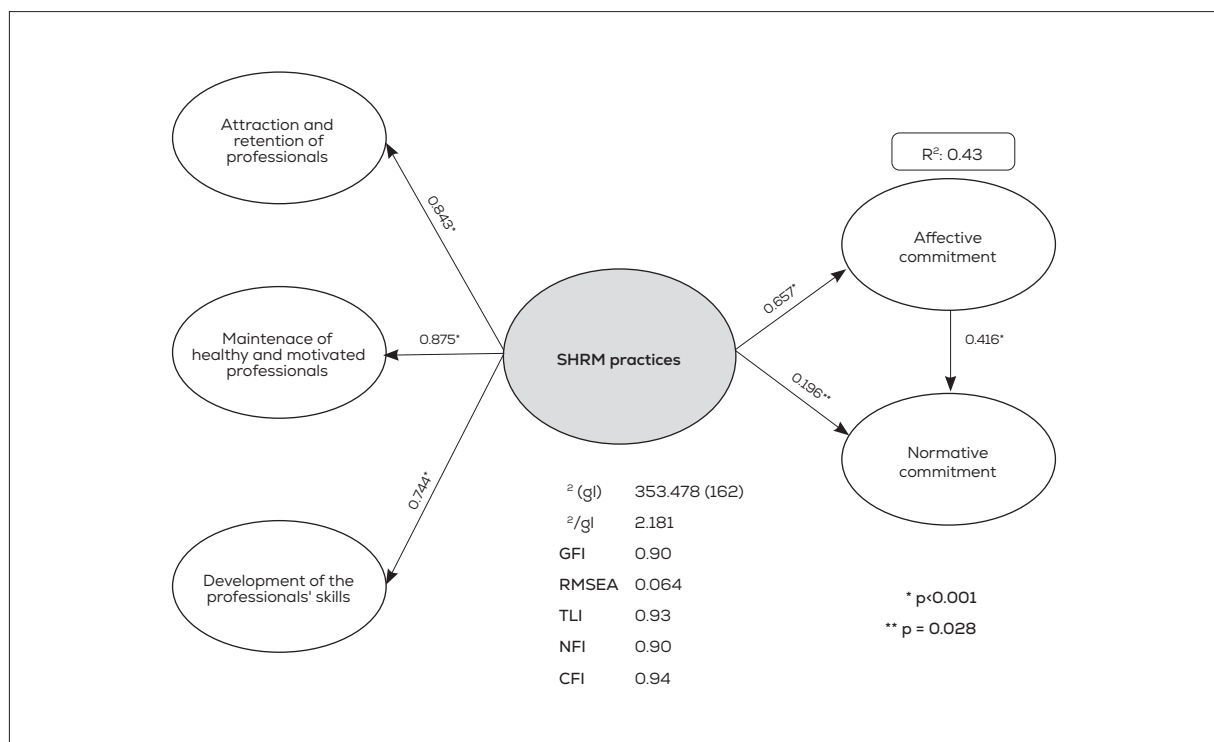
discriminant validity among its factors, demonstrating its suitability as a second-order construct. In this sense, the hypotheses H1(a), H1(b), and H1(c) can be empirically confirmed in this study.

The hypotheses that stated the positive and significant impact of SHRM practices on AC (H2- β : 0.657, $p < 0.001$) and NC (H3- β : 0.196, $p = 0.028$) were also confirmed. In this case, 43% of the variance associated with AC was explained by SHRM practices (R^2 : 0.43), in agreement with the view that these practices make professionals feel supported, valued, and respected in the organizational scope and, consequently, committed.

Although the relationship between SHRM practices and NC is positive and significant, the impact of the practices on this type of commitment is not substantial (β : 0.196; $p = 0.028$). Therefore, the proposition that AC has a significant and positive impact on NC and establishes a mediation relationship between SHRM practices and NC (H4) seems to be adequate.

The propositions highlighted by Baron and Kenny (1986) were considered. Initially, an analysis was carried out regarding a significant correlation between the involved constructs and the AC that significantly and positively impacts the NC (β : 0.416; $p < 0.001$). The relationship between SHRM practices and NC, without the inclusion of an additional predictor (AC), was identified as significant (β : 0.520, $p < 0.001$). However, by including AC as an additional predictor, the magnitude of the relationship between SHRM practices and NC is reduced (β : 0.196; $p = 0.028$), which means a partial mediation. A mediation relationship would not be sustained if an additional predictor did not modify the magnitude and significance of the relationship between the constructs (Hair et al., 2014).

Figure 2. Structural model



DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

Although SHRM has been addressed in previous studies published approximately 20 years ago (Gollan; 2000; Zaugg, Blum, & Thom, 2001), the multiplicity of conceptual approaches and the difficulty of establishing which HRM practices are considered sustainable are still evident (Ehnert et al., 2016; Järlström et al., 2018; Prins et al., 2020; Tooranloo et al., 2017).

Therefore, the first theoretical implication is the empirical evaluation of the dimensions and variables that represent the construct. In a recent study, Prins et al. (2020) presented the development of a scale that measures these practices, focusing on three factors called decent working conditions, democracy in the workplace, and environment for a sustainable career. However, the authors did not indicate the origin of the items and, although they identified three dimensions, they conducted the study based on a single factor.

Nevertheless, this study considered the multidimensional nature of SHRM (Ehnert, 2009; Guerci & Pedrini, 2014; Järlström et al., 2018) and empirically evaluated a broader scale, which incorporates the main functions of human resource management: attraction, retention, and development. In this case, the attraction and retention of professionals, the maintenance of motivated and healthy professionals, and developing the skills of professionals represent the latent dimensions that reflect the SHRM practices construct. These factors presented reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity within the indicated parameters in the literature and the statistical tests showed that adopting a second-order construct is the most adequate.

By highlighting the importance of commitment in the corporate context, the second contribution of the study is established based on the positive and significant relationship between SHRM practices and AC and NC. These practices impact the emotional involvement of employees, their identification, the desire to remain in the corporation (AC), and the feeling of obligation and loyalty to the company (NC).

Additionally, AC was identified as having a positive impact on NC and playing a role of partial mediation in the situations that SHRM practices promote the NC of the worker to the corporation. Thus, the confirmation of this mediation relationship is presented as the third theoretical implication of the research and further emphasizes the importance of knowing the factors that precede AC (Meyer et al., 2002; Mory et al., 2016).

The predominant academic focus of HRM is based mainly on the needs of hiring, motivating, and developing people concerning talents and skills linked to corporate aspirations, especially from an economic perspective. However, this view is relatively unilateral and does not address the needs of individuals and society, focusing mainly on employers' goals and performance-related analysis of variables (Prins et al., 2020).

The relevance of this study is based on recommendations in the literature, which highlight corporate sustainability, SHRM practices, and their impacts at the individual and corporate level, as emerging and significant research themes for the current social context and the field of study of applied social sciences.

This study not only focuses on the wishes of entrepreneurs and shareholders but also emphasizes the employee as a key stakeholder for organizations, considering that, in many situations, the emphasis on the individual is neglected in the human resource management research agenda (Järlström et al., 2018). Therefore, management practices should include the needs and expectations of individuals and contribute to the well-being of professionals and society (Barrena-Martínez, López-Fernández, & Romero-Fernández, 2019; Bondarouk & Brewster, 2016).

The results of this research prove how SHRM practices focus on valuing diversity, discounts, and economic benefits, offering career opportunities and training, and developing actions that favor the physical and psychological well-being of individuals. This study supports a human resource management research agenda that emphasizes outcomes for staff and organizations. In this case, the employee's emotional involvement and the existence of identification with the corporation stand out (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Smith, 2000). Therefore, it is inferred that, empirically, the interviewees are dealing with the commitment to the organization, considering that pride is an indicator of affective commitment (Rego & Cunha, 2008).

The results show that regarding the dimensions of the SHRM practices construct, the most significant effect was identified about the maintenance factor of motivated and healthy professionals. HR managers should prioritize actions that promote: (i) stress reduction and prevention and the adoption of a healthy lifestyle by employees; (ii) the welfare of professionals; (iii) the balance between personal and professional life; (iv) the establishment of ergonomic conditions in the workplace and; (v) concern with the satisfaction and motivation of individuals.

The existence of an attractive and challenging workplace, career opportunities, diversity management, and the existence of competitive practices of compensation and benefits (dimension of attraction and retention of professionals) should also be considered. Similarly, investments in training, development, and education (dimension of professional development) also need to be carried out, although they have a lesser impact.

In addition to the theoretical implications, this paper also has practical contributions. When considering the importance of sustainable development issues in the business scenario and the connection of HRM with sustainability, it is worth pointing out the importance for managers to know which SHRM practices are more likely to reflect the employees' perceptions.

Another important managerial implication is associated with OC. Increasingly, companies seek to improve their performance by implementing appropriate HRM policies and practices that focus on internal and external stakeholders (Shen & Zhu, 2011). In this context, SHRM practices, which positively impact commitment, play a crucial role in promoting the professional's desire to remain in the organization, adhere to and become involved with the company's objectives, and act with reciprocity and responsibility.

Some limitations of this study may be addressed in future research. This was a cross-sectional research, not allowing analysis of changes in employee perceptions regarding SHRM practices and OC over time. In the future, longitudinal research may be developed for this purpose. In addition, considering that the study used SEM to develop a model, future studies

may cross-validate with an independent sample (Hair et al., 2016). The exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis could be conducted with independent samples.

This study contributed to identifying dimensions and variables related to SHRM practices. However, new research could evaluate the variables used in this study in different contexts, considering that evaluations in SHRM studies are undergoing a continuous change process (Prins et al., 2020). Research on companies that are not included in sustainable rankings can be performed to compare results.

Whereas previous studies point out that SHRM practices can be analyzed from employees' perspectives (Nishii, Lepak, & Schneider, 2008), future studies that evaluate these practices from the perspective of entrepreneurs and managers are recommended (Järnlström et al., 2018). This research opportunity may also focus on possible discrepancies between discourse and the effective implementation of SHRM practices.

Finally, future studies can analyze the impacts of SHRM practices on other constructs, such as work-related health and social harm, job satisfaction, turnover intention, and well-being at work. More specifically, relations with continuance commitment can also be evaluated, considering the economic situation and the availability of jobs in the market as moderating variables.

In sum, the study provides several contributions to the literature on HRM. Firstly, the research provides an empirical and comprehensive evaluation of the variables related to SHRM practices, considering the multidimensional characteristic of this construct. Secondly, this is the first study that empirically evaluates the impacts of SHRM practices on OC. Finally, this study supports the research agenda of the HRM field regarding the results for individuals and organizations.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

Denise Genari and Janaina Macke worked on the conceptualization and theoretical-methodological approach. The theoretical review was conducted by Denise Genari. Data collection was coordinated by Denise Genari. Data analysis included Denise Genari and Janaina Macke. Denise Genari and Janaina Macke worked together in the writing and final revision of the manuscript.