

Fostering Sustainability through Organizational Commitment and Employee Motivation: Insights from a Financial Institution Case Study

Maria Neves L*¹, Joaquim Vicente J², Margarida Vitorino³

Higher Institute of Management – Business & Economics School, Lisbon, Portugal

¹ORCID: 0000-0002-1605-6848

¹CIGEST – Management Research Center, Lisbon, Portugal

¹CEFAGE – Center for Advanced Studies in Management and Economics, Évora, Portugal

²CIGEST – Management Research Center, Lisbon, Portugal

²CEGIST – Center for Studies in Management, Lisbon, Portugal

²ORCID: 0000-0003-3444-2838

***Correspondence:**

Maria Lurdes Neves

maria.neves@isg.pt

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ABSTRACT

The present study focuses on the Impact of organizational commitment and Employee Motivation on Sustainable Practices: A Case Study in a Financial Institution.

This study aims to investigate how organizational commitment and employee motivation influence attitudes and sustainable behaviors in a financial institution. With this purpose, specific objectives were outlined, including the analysis of the relationship between commitment and employee motivation, the investigation of the influence of commitment on sustainable practices, the exploration of the impact of motivation on the adoption of sustainable behaviors, and the evaluation of the mediating role of motivation between organizational commitment and sustainable practices.

The methodology adopted was based on a descriptive quantitative study, employing a structured questionnaire as the data collection instrument. The sample consisted of 121 employees from a financial institution selected through convenience sampling. The collected data were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistical analysis to identify patterns and associations between the studied variables.

The results reveal a negative correlation between organizational commitment and employee motivation. Additionally, no significant association was observed between organizational commitment and the adoption of sustainable practices, as well as between employee motivation and adherence to sustainable behaviors.

It should be noted that motivation at work moderates the relationship between organizational commitment and sustainable behaviors.

INTRODUCTION

The relevance of this topic lies in the growing importance of corporate sustainability and the need for financial organizations to adopt sustainable practices to face contemporary socio-environmental challenges. Understanding how organizational commitment (OC) and employee motivation contribute to the effective adoption and implementation of sustainable practices is crucial to promoting a sustainability-oriented organizational culture.

OC is a fundamental concept in human resource management, reflecting the level of identification and involvement of employees with the entity (Meyer, Stanley and Vandenberg, 2013). This commitment can manifest itself in several ways and has been studied through different theories over the years.

The factors that motivate employees coincide with those that contribute to their satisfaction in the work environment, and it can be concluded that motivated employees are also satisfied with their work (Roos and Van Eeden, 2008; Manzoor et al., 2021). The same authors suggest that motivation is manifested through attitudes, such as the satisfaction expressed by the employee, and behaviors, such as the employee's performance.

Corporate sustainability is a concept that has gained increasing relevance in the business world, representing the integration of environmental, social and economic concerns into business practices (Waddock and Bodwell, 2004). This approach goes beyond the traditional focus on profit, recognizing the need for companies to take responsibility for their actions and impacts on society and the environment. Elkington (1999) introduced the concept of Triple Bottom Line (TBL), which proposes that companies should measure their performance not only based on financial results, but also on the social and environmental impacts of their activities.

This study aims to investigate how organizational commitment and employee motivation affect the development of sustainable attitudes and behaviors within a financial institution.

The document is structured into several sections, each focusing on different aspects of the study. This structure ensures a comprehensive exploration of the research topic, systematically addressing each component from theoretical foundations to practical

implementation and analysis. Literature Review is described in section 2. This section reviews existing literature and provides a theoretical foundation for the study. Methodology can be found in section 3. This section explains the research method used in the study and describes how data was collected. Section 4 presents the results following by section 5 with a discussion of the results. Finally, in section 6, conclusions are reported and summarizes the findings of the study and suggests areas for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of the organizational commitment construct

Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-dimensional model, widely recognized in the literature, categorizes commitment into three main components: affective, calculative and normative. Affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional connection to the organization. Employees who have high emotional commitment stay in the organization because they really want to and end up developing a strong identification with the organization's values and objectives, resulting in greater job satisfaction and pro-social behaviors (Meyer et al., 2002). According to Luiz and Beuren (2024), affective OC is a cognitive process that links the employee to the organization, involving the acceptance of organizational values and objectives, the willingness to engage in favor of the organization and the desire to maintain the employment relationship. Calculative commitment is based on the perception of costs associated with leaving the organization. When employees consider leaving an organization, they consider the financial, social, and professional sacrifices involved. Thus, they remain in the organization because they feel they have to (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Normative commitment refers to the sense of obligation that employees feel to remain with the organization. This commitment is shaped by cultural and social norms, as well as the internalization of organizational values. Employees with high normative commitment stay with the organization because they feel it is the right thing to do (Meyer and Parfyonova, 2010).

Several factors can influence employees' level of OC, ranging from individual characteristics to specific organizational practices. Effective socialization processes, which include training and mentoring, can help employees understand and accept the organization's values and norms, thus increasing their emotional commitment.

The perception of justice within the organization, which encompasses distributive, procedural and international justice, is fundamental to developing strong OC. When employees perceive that they are treated fairly, both in processes and in daily interactions, they are more likely to develop a strong emotional bond with the organization (Colquitt et al., 2013).

OC has significant implications for individual and organizational performance. Studies indicate that highly committed employees are more likely to exhibit organizational citizenship attitudes, which are voluntary actions that contribute to the well-being of the organization and go beyond their formal responsibilities (Meyer, Stanley and Vandenberg, 2013). Furthermore, OC can reduce turnover and absenteeism, creating a more stable and committed workforce (Jena, 2015).

Dimensions of the organizational commitment construct

Meyer et al., (2002) highlight that this type of commitment is deeply rooted in the emotional bonds that employees establish with the organization, resulting in high performance and a lower propensity for turnover. Solinger et al. (2008) also corroborate this idea, highlighting that affective commitment implies a genuine connection between employees and the company, where they remain not out of obligation, but because they wish to contribute to its success.

Continuity commitment, on the other hand, arises from a different perspective. Meyer and Allen (1991) explain that this type of commitment is more associated with the need to avoid the costs and losses associated with leaving the organization. Thus, employees may remain with the company not because of a strong emotional connection, but because of fear of the financial or professional consequences of leaving. This commitment can lead to behaviors such as absenteeism, where employees may be physically present, but without true commitment or dedication to their work (Meyer, Allen and Smith, 1991).

Normative commitment is reflected in employees' sense of duty and obligation to the organization. According to (Meyer, Stanley and Vandenberg, 2013) they highlight that this type of commitment is related to employees' perception of what is morally correct or socially acceptable. Thus, employees stay with the organization not so much because of an emotional connection or fear of the consequences of leaving, but rather because they feel it is the right thing to do, whether out of respect for the company's norms and values or their loyalty to colleagues and superiors.

Factors Influencing organizational commitment

The factors that influence organizational commitment are varied and complex, reflecting the interaction between employees and the organization's structure. One of these factors is organizational socialization, which plays a fundamental role in the integration of new members.

When employees feel supported and valued by the organization, they tend to demonstrate greater loyalty and commitment to achieving organizational objectives and goals. The study by Adresi and Darun (2017) highlighted the relevance of

organizational support for improving employee engagement, as training, performance evaluation and remuneration activities (in order of importance) revealed a positive relationship with OC. OC influences employee turnover, turnover intention and absenteeism, being crucial for the stability and productivity of the organization (Genari and Macke, 2022).

Impact of Commitment on Employee Performance

Studies show that employees' affective commitment is positively associated with high and consistent performance (Meyer et al., 2002). Furthermore, employee commitment influences their willingness to proactively contribute to the success of the organization. More recent studies by Meyer and Parfyonova (2012) show this relationship and that normative commitment is positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors.

OC affects employees' propensity to stay with the organization long-term. Recent studies have corroborated Allen and Meyer's (1996) conclusion that employees' commitment to continuance, influenced by the perception of costs associated with leaving, presents a negative correlation related to the intention to leave the organization (Ramos and Silva, 2021). Satisfied employees tend to demonstrate higher levels of performance, less propensity to leave the organization and greater commitment, which can be beneficial for organizational performance (Luiz and Beuren, 2024).

Marques (2014) observed that, as temporary workers spend more time at the user company, the level of normative commitment tends to increase. However, the relationship with the user company is not so linear. It also highlighted that, with increasing age, the level of calculating commitment of temporary workers tends to increase. However, the 30-39 age group had a lower average, indicating that there is still some expectation of obtaining a permanent contractual relationship in this age group.

International literature has demonstrated that OC has a positive relationship with employee satisfaction, intention to remain in the organization and work performance in the banking sector. In the banking context in Portugal, OC has been influenced by factors such as the perception of organizational justice, the quality of relationships with co-workers and the effectiveness of leadership (Marques and Lopes, 2018).

Several studies suggest a positive relationship between OC and motivation. For example, Meyer et al. (2002) found that employees with a high level of affective commitment demonstrate greater intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, normative commitment can be strengthened through management practices that promote a fair and equitable work environment (Meyer and Herscovitch, 2001).

Conceptual evolution of the motivation construct

The understanding of motivation in the organizational context is based on a variety of theories, both classic and contemporary. One of the most influential classical approaches is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. This theory argues that human needs are organized into five levels: physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. Therefore, the needs of a higher level only arise after the needs of the previous level are satisfied and whenever the lower needs are satisfied, people seek to satisfy the needs of higher levels. The author argues that individuals seek to find meaning and purpose in their lives (Maslow, 1943). However, more recent studies have questioned the rigidity of this hierarchy and its universal applicability in various cultural and organizational contexts (Cherry, 2018).

This theory was followed by other classic approaches, such as McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y (1960), which proposed two contrasting views on human nature and people management. Although both have been criticized for their simplification of human nature, they have contributed significantly to the development of thinking about management and leadership in organizations (Torraco, 2017).

Herzberg, in 1959, developed Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory where he identified two sets of factors that influence motivation at work, there are hygienic factors (working conditions, salary, relationships with supervisors and colleagues), which affect motivation at work and motivational factors (achievement, recognition, responsibility).

Vroom's Expectancy Theory focuses on the relationship between effort, performance and rewards. According to Vroom, motivation depends on the expectation that effort will lead to desired performance and that performance will be rewarded. People choose actions that they expect will lead to desired outcomes and avoid actions that they expect will lead to undesired consequences (Vroom, 1964).

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan, which constitutes one of the most recent theoretical advances in motivation and which we adopted as the theoretical basis of the present study, is one of the most important approaches to human motivation, being applied in various contexts (Ryan and Deci, 2017). According to the authors, the higher the level of self-determination of an individual's behavior, the higher the quality of their motivation. SDT highlights the importance of satisfying the needs for autonomy, competence and social bonding to stimulate and preserve high levels of intrinsic motivation in the individual. According to the authors, competence refers to the desire to feel capable of efficiently performing the various roles assumed throughout life, the need for social bonds refers to the innate desire to connect with others, so that the individual feels truly valued and appreciated by them and autonomy represents the need to regulate one's own behavior without external controlling influences. This theory focuses on social conditions that promote or impede human

development (Ryan and Deci, 2017) and, above all, on psychological issues, relying on individual perceptions about their environment.

SDT also presents two distinct concepts in relation to motivation, Autonomous Motivation and Controlled Motivation, (Ryan and Deci, 2017). Autonomous Motivation refers to goals that are personally meaningful and aligned with individual values. This type of motivation can also be described as the pursuit of goals that provide pleasure and satisfaction, on the other hand, Controlled Motivation involves goals in response to external or internal pressures, they state (Ryan and Deci, 2008).

In addition to defining these two types of motivation, SDT proposes that motivation is influenced by three main factors: 1) skills; 2) autonomy; and 3) proximity or similarity (Malek et al., 2020). Satisfying these factors facilitates or hinders motivation (Shaheen, 2022). According to AT, motivation is directly linked to the abilities perceived by individuals, that is, their ability to perform and complete tasks. Thus, individuals tend to choose activities in which they feel more competent. Therefore, if an employee has more skills or knowledge, he will have more motivation. Regarding the second factor, autonomy is strongly related to motivation, reflecting the capabilities, desires and needs of individuals (Shaheen, 2022).

This theory describes autonomy not as independence, detachment or selfishness, but as the feeling of will when carrying out any action. The greater an individual's perception of control over a certain behavior, the greater their motivation to act in a certain way. In relation to the concept of proximity or similarity, AT refers to feelings of belonging or connection with other individuals in a social environment. The authors state that the stronger these feelings, the greater the individual's motivation (Shaheen, 2022).

SDT distinguishes between two types of motivation: Autonomous Motivation and Controlled Motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2017). Autonomous Motivation is associated with goals that are personally meaningful and aligned with individual values. This type of motivation can also be described as the investigation of goals that provide pleasure and satisfaction. In contrast, Controlled Motivation involves goals that arise in response to external or internal pressures. Literature indicates that autonomous motivation tends to be more beneficial, while controlled motivation can often have negative effects (Clegg et al., 2022).

The satisfaction of the three factors facilitates or hinders motivation (Shaheen, 2022). According to AT, motivation is closely linked to the skills understood by individuals, that is, their ability to perform and complete tasks. Therefore, individuals tend to choose activities in which they feel most competent. Thus, if an employee has more skills or knowledge, their motivation will be greater. Regarding the second factor, autonomy is strongly associated with motivation, reflecting individual skills, desires and needs (Shaheen, 2022).

This theory describes autonomy as the feeling of voluntariness when carrying out any action. The greater an individual's awareness of controlling a certain behavior, the greater their motivation to act in that way. When it comes to the concept of proximity or similarity, AT refers to the affections of belonging or connection with other subjects in a social environment. Individuals' motivation will be stronger the stronger these feelings are (Shaheen, 2022).

Employee motivation plays an essential role in increasing productivity, functioning as a driver for the tasks and goals established by the organization to be achieved efficiently and effectively (Manzoor et al., 2021). However, motivation is a complex issue, and it is difficult to determine whether an employee is truly motivated (Manzoor et al., 2021). Authors Roos and Van Eeden (2008) explain that this complexity comes from the fact that motivation is an intrinsic force, adapted and sustained by a combination of individual factors.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation: Differences and Implications

Understanding the differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is essential for the study of motivation in the organizational context. Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal drive that leads an individual to perform an activity for the pleasure and interest inherent in the activity itself (Ryan and Deci, 2017). An employee who engages in challenging projects because they find them stimulating and rewarding is demonstrating intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is based on external rewards, such as money, recognition or promotions, that motivate employees to perform certain tasks (Ryan and Deci, 2017). Studies have shown that intrinsically motivated individuals tend to show greater creativity, persistence and job satisfaction (Grant, 2008). On the other hand, excessive dependence on extrinsic rewards can decrease autonomy and job satisfaction, leading to lower quality of performance (Pink, 2011).

TAD (Ryan and Deci, 2017) presents a multifaceted approach to understanding motivation, highlighting how different types of motivation can be promoted or inhibited. According to this theory, there are three main types of motivation: amotivation, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Amotivation refers to the lack of motivation to perform a certain activity (Ryan and Deci, 2017). Intrinsic motivation, in turn, occurs when carrying out an activity because it is, in itself, interesting and rewarding (Ryan and Deci, 2017). In contrast, extrinsic motivation involves carrying out activities for instrumental reasons, such as obtaining rewards, gaining approval, avoiding punishment, increasing self-esteem, or achieving a valued personal goal (Ryan and Deci, 2017).

External regulation is a form of extrinsic motivation that is not completely internalized, where the activity is performed to obtain rewards (Bizarria et al., 2018). Introjected

regulation, which involves regulating behavior through internal pressures such as shame and guilt, is known as ego-involvement and is perceived as internal control (Bizarria et al., 2018). Finally, identified regulation occurs when the activity is carried out because its value or meaning is recognized, accepting it as one's own. Unlike intrinsic motivation, identified regulation is motivated by the instrumental value of the activity, and not by the internal satisfaction it provides, while internally controlled motivation is often associated with positive results in terms of behavior, attitudes and affectivity (Ryan and Deci, 2017). The negative correlation between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic regulation, as well as amotivation, indicates that different types of motivation are related in different ways (Neves and Coimbra, 2018).

The Role of Motivation in Employee Behavior and Performance

The literature states that the elements that motivate employees are the same ones that contribute to their satisfaction in the work environment. In this way, it is possible to infer that motivated employees are also satisfied with their jobs. The literature also indicates that motivation is reflected both in attitudes, such as the satisfaction demonstrated by the employee, and in behaviors, such as work performance (Roos and Van Eeden, 2008; Manzoor et al., 2021).

Motivation plays a crucial role in employee behavior and performance within organizations. When employees are motivated, they are more likely to demonstrate proactive behaviors such as initiative, persistence, and commitment (Latham and Pinder, 2005). When people are intrinsically motivated to accomplish their tasks, they are more likely to seek creative solutions and think "outside the box." This can lead to improvements in organizational processes, development of new products and services and competitive advantages in the market (Amabile, 2012). Employees who feel motivated in their jobs tend to have greater satisfaction and commitment, which in turn is associated with higher levels of psychological and physical well-being.

The intrinsic motivation of employees in the banking sector is stimulated by the satisfaction of performing their tasks autonomously, as well as by the feeling of competence and personal accomplishment (Silva and Oliveira, 2019). On the other hand, the extrinsic motivation of bank employees is conditioned by external factors such as financial awards, social recognition and promotions, which are considered incentives for performance at work (Ferreira et al., 2017).

Several studies have shown that implementing sustainable practices in organizations can have a positive effect on employee motivation. According to Ryan and Deci (2017), AT suggests that individuals are more motivated when they feel that their actions are aligned with intrinsic values and significant personal goals. In this sense, promoting sustainable attitudes can reinforce employees' intrinsic motivation, since these

practices often align with personal values and concerns related to the environment and social responsibility.

Concept and Importance of Corporate Sustainability

At the business level, the implementation of sustainable strategies has become increasingly crucial, driven by global changes that have significantly modified consumer preferences, resulting in higher expectations regarding the social, environmental and ethical responsibility of companies (Belyaeva, Rudawska and Lopatkova, 2020). The positive relationship between sustainability and financial success has driven research into sustainable business models, leading companies to adopt more sustainable practices (Kluza, Ziolo and Spoz, 2021).

Carroll (1999) highlights that companies have a significant role in promoting sustainable development, contributing to improving the quality of life in the communities where they operate and preserving natural resources for future generations. Considering the growing responsibility of companies in relation to negative environmental and social consequences, they have been forced to incorporate sustainability into their practices, seeking to contribute to the construction of more resilient societies (Kluza, Ziolo and Spoz, 2021).

According to Al-Shaikh and Hanaysha (2023), corporate sustainability emerged from the debate about the effective applicability of the sustainability concept in the organizational context. Several scholars have defined corporate sustainability as a corporate strategy that wants to achieve competitive advantage through the adoption of sustainable practices (Jiang et al., 2018; Sarma et al., 2013).

In this sense, more recent studies have focused on the manifestation of sustainability in methods that promote innovation, integration and cooperation in the business scenario (Jiang et al., 2018; Sarma et al., 2013). Hassini, Surti and Searcy. (2012), i.e., define corporate sustainability as the ability to conduct a business with the long-term objective of maintaining economic, environmental and societal well-being. In this context, it is essential that companies adopt a holistic approach to sustainability, integrating it into all areas of their business, from human resources management to production and distribution operations (Schaltegger and Burritt, 2018). This approach requires a genuine commitment from company leadership, as well as the involvement of all employees in promoting corporate sustainability. By doing so, companies can not only mitigate the risks associated with climate change and resource scarcity, but also create long-term value for all stakeholders involved.

Sustainable Attitudes in the Workplace: Examples and Benefits

In the current context, promoting sustainable attitudes in the workplace has become a growing concern for organizations seeking to integrate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices into their operations (Ramus and Steger, 2000). These initiatives not only contribute to reducing the environmental impact of the company's operations, but can also improve its reputation, attract talent and increase employee satisfaction and commitment. Furthermore, sustainable attitudes in the workplace can bring a series of benefits to both organizations and employees. Studies have shown that employees involved in sustainability initiatives tend to be more satisfied with their work and feel more committed to the company's goals (Robertson and Barling, 2013).

Companies that promote a culture of sustainability in the workplace can benefit from a better reputation with customers, investors and other stakeholders, which can result in significant competitive advantages in the market (Afsar, Umrani and Butt, 2016).

The implementation of sustainable practices by banking institutions is fundamental to promoting economic and social development, ensuring environmental preservation and OC (Martins and Pereira, 2020). In the banking sector, sustainability has become a global concern, with financial institutions adopting measures that integrate environmental, social and leadership standards into their activities (Santos and Costa, 2018). In Portugal, banks have demonstrated an increasing commitment to sustainability, applying policies and practices aimed at reducing environmental impact and supporting sustainable development (Fernandes and Rodrigues, 2019).

Organizational Factors that Promote Sustainable Attitudes

Alvarenga (2018) highlights that leaders committed to sustainability are able to significantly influence organizational culture, promoting values and behaviors aligned with environmental responsibility. Organizations that integrate sustainability into their recruitment, selection and talent development processes tend to attract professionals who value social and environmental responsibility (Silva and Oliveira, 2019).

Organizational structure also plays a key role in promoting sustainability. Companies that adopt flexible structures that are open to innovation have a greater capacity to adapt and implement sustainable initiatives (Costa and Almeida, 2021). Interdepartmental collaboration and effective communication are essential for integrating environmental concerns across all areas of the organization, from the supply chain to marketing and sales (Santos, 2018).

Transparency and accountability are crucial for organizational sustainability. Companies that clearly and honestly communicate their environmental impacts, as well as ongoing efforts to mitigate these impacts, tend to gain the trust of stakeholders and society in general (Ferreira et al., 2020). Creating opportunities for employees to actively participate in sustainability initiatives, listen to their ideas and concerns, and

involve them in sustainability-related decision-making can increase their sense of belonging and commitment to the company, thus encouraging more sustainable behaviors.

Behaviors and attitudes towards sustainability are divided into three factors, conscious consumption, concern for the environment and waste (Silva, 2021; Almeida, 2021). Conscious consumption is characterized by the responsible behavior of individuals in the acquisition and use of products and services, considering the social, economic and environmental impacts of these selections. This behavior involves reflecting on the true need for consumption, the search for durable and quality products, the choice of sustainable and ethical products, in addition to the adequate rejection of waste (Silva, 2021).

Environmental concerns are attitudes and concerns of individuals regarding the preservation and conservation of the environment. Such concerns can motivate individual and collective actions, such as reducing the consumption of natural resources, applying sustainable practices and adhering to conservation initiatives (Almeida, 2021).

The relationship between Commitment, Motivation and Corporate Sustainability

Commitment is intrinsically linked to employee motivation and their involvement with the company's mission and values (Afsar, Umrani and Butt, 2016). Employees who identify with the company's sustainability goals tend to be more motivated and committed to their work, which can increase the effectiveness and impact of sustainability initiatives.

Employees who are highly committed to the company are more likely to actively participate in sustainability initiatives, suggest innovative ideas and contribute to the creation of a more sustainability-oriented organizational culture (Afsar, Umrani and Butt, 2016).

Employee motivation plays a fundamental role in the adoption of sustainability practices in the banking sector, as it has a direct impact on the commitment and efficiency of these initiatives (Rodrigues, 2019). Employee involvement with sustainability objectives is crucial to the success of environmental policies implemented by banks (Santos and Pereira, 2020). In Portugal, the implementation of sustainable procedures in the banking sector has been encouraged by European regulations and growing customer interest in more responsible financial services (Ferreira, 2018).

The combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is vital to promoting employee commitment to sustainability practices in the banking sector (Oliveira, 2021).

Substantiation of the hypotheses under study

Hypothesis 1: OC positively influences employee motivation.

Meyer et al. (2002) carried out a meta-analysis that demonstrated a strong correlation between affective commitment and employees' intrinsic motivation. When employees feel emotionally connected to the organization, they are more likely to engage in behaviors that benefit both themselves and the organization.

Hypothesis 2: OC positively influences employees to adopt sustainable practices in the organization

The adoption of sustainable practices within organizations can be significantly influenced by employees' level of OC. Norton, Zacher and Ashkanasy (2014) suggest that when employees are strongly committed to the organization, they are more likely to adopt behaviors that align their personal values with the company's goals, including sustainable practices.

Hypothesis 3: Motivation positively influences employees to adopt sustainable practices in the organization

Employee motivation is a determining factor in the adoption of sustainable practices in organizations. According to AT, proposed by Ryan and Deci (2017), intrinsic motivation, which is driven by personal interests and values, can lead employees to engage in sustainable practices. When employees are intrinsically motivated, they view sustainable practices as meaningful and aligned with their personal values. Norton, Zacher and Ashkanasy (2014) reinforce that intrinsic motivation can mediate the relationship between organizational sustainability policies and employees' sustainable behaviors.

Hypothesis 4: Motivation mediates the relationship between OC and sustainable practices

The relationship between OC and the adoption of sustainable practices may be mediated by employee motivation. Meyer et al. (2002) suggest that affective commitment can increase employees' intrinsic motivation, which, in turn, can lead to the adoption of sustainable practices.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study is based on descriptive quantitative methodology, conducted through the application of a structured questionnaire. The sample was of convenience, encompassing employees from different departments of a specific financial institution with greater proximity and access to people. The selection of participants was based on

availability and willingness to respond to the questionnaire, ensuring adequate representation of the different hierarchical levels and functional areas of the organization.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Main Objective:

The main objective of this study is to investigate how organizational commitment (OC) and employee motivation influence sustainable attitudes and behaviors in a financial institution.

Specific Objectives:

1. Analyze the relationship between organizational commitment and employee motivation at the financial institution.
2. Investigate the influence of organizational commitment on the sustainable practices adopted by employees.
3. Explore the impact of motivation on the adoption of sustainable behaviors by employees.
4. Evaluate the mediating role of motivation and organizational commitment in the implementation of sustainable practices.

These objectives gave rise to a model with four hypotheses, subdivided into H1, H2 and H3, which will be analyzed at the institution under study, as represented in Table 1.

SAMPLE

The sample for this study is made up of 121 employees from a financial institution with a total of 5,959 employees, representing approximately 2% of the total universe. The sample revealed that the majority of interviewees were female (67.8%) and 32.2% were male. The predominant marital status is married or in a stable union (51.2%), followed by single (38.8%), divorced (9.1%) and widowed (0.8%), with divorced and widowed people grouped with singles, representing 48.8% of the sample.

The average age of respondents is 40.4 years old, with the youngest person being 21 years old and the oldest being 65 years old. Age was grouped into three categories: 38.8% were between 20 and 35 years old, 38% were between 36 and 51 years old, and 23.1% were over 52 years old. On average, respondents have 17.2 years of service, with a minimum of 0 years and a maximum of 45 years of service. The highest incidence of employees has between 0 and 14 years of service (42.1%).

In relation to educational qualifications, 52.1% of respondents have an undergraduate degree, 30.6% have a 9th year, 12th year or CTeSP, and 17.4% have a postgraduate, master's or doctorate degree. Regarding employment, 24.8% have fixed-term contracts and 75.2% have indefinite-term contracts. In the question about position occupation, 70.2% of the sample do not occupy a position at the institution and 29.8% do.

For the type of position, 85.1% belong to the support group (assistance, coordination, analysis and administrative) and 14.9% to the management and governance group (direction, management and board of directors), with an irrelevant percentage of responses of the board of directors.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

Sociodemographic questionnaire

In order to characterize the employees, sociodemographic data was collected. For example, gender, marital status, age, among others.

The Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS)

The OCS (Meyer, Allen and Smith, 1991; Portuguese version by Nascimento, Lopes, and Salgueiro, 2008) consists of 19 items distributed in three subscales: affective commitment (6 items) can be defined as emotional identification with the organization, calculative commitment (7 items) is considered as the cost of leaving the organization (such as loss of seniority or lower wages) and normative commitment (6 items) is interpreted as the obligation to remain in the organization, due to factors external (ethics or morals). Responses are rated on a seven-point Likert scale, from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7).

The Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS)

The MWMS, based on AT, evaluates the quality of motivation, considering different types of motivation, such as intrinsic, extrinsic and amotivation. The scale consists of 19 items, with answers on a seven-point Likert scale. The reliability of the MWMS, assessed by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, was greater than 0.76 in all dimensions. The Portuguese version used was adapted by Neves and Coimbra (2018).

The Sustainability Behavior Scale

Developed in 2020, this scale contains 10 items that measure three dimensions: "conscious consumption", "concern for the environment" and "waste". Conscious consumption involves the responsible acquisition and use of products and services, considering their social, economic and environmental impacts, as well as the choice of durable, sustainable and ethical products, and the appropriate rejection of waste.

Environmental concerns refer to individuals' attitudes toward preserving the environment, encompassing awareness of issues such as climate change and pollution, and motivating sustainable practices and conservation initiatives. Waste refers to the inefficient use of resources, resulting in unnecessary losses, and its reduction aims at the efficiency and sustainability of the resources used. Conscious consumption brings together 4 items related to consumer attitudes towards products or companies that have a lower impact. Concern for the environment incorporates 3 items related to environmental issues. Finally, waste integrates 3 items relating to waste and saving resources. Responses are given on a five-point Likert scale.

PROCEDURE

The procedure adopted in this study in terms of data collection includes the use of a structured questionnaire, informed on the Google Forms platform, on 04/23/2024 and with a deadline of 05/08/2024. After collection, the data was stored securely and confidentially, and was subsequently analyzed using Jamovi statistical software, which allowed an in-depth statistical analysis and facilitated the evaluation of the hypotheses (variables) under study.

RESULTS

Analysis of psychometric properties

Validity was analyzed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), with varimax rotation, which sought to understand the factorial structure of the instruments. An analysis of sample adequacy was carried out using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) indicator, which varies from zero (0) to one (1). The sample is considered adequate when the value is equal to or greater than 0.70, as indicated by Shrestha (2021).

An analysis of the internal consistency of the questionnaires was carried out using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. To be considered satisfactory, values must be equal to or greater than 0.70, as recommended by Fullmer and Daniel (2020).

Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS)

According to the original version, the OCS in the EFA exhibited a structure composed of three factors, where affective commitment explains 23% of the total variance. The KMO indicator (0.827) appears to be adequate.

Using Pearson's correlation, it was found that the three OC factors are positively correlated. The affective and the calculative factor ($r = 0.212$; $p = 0.02$), the affective and the normative ($r = 0.662$; $p < .001$) and finally the calculative with the normative ($r = 0.386$; $p < 0.001$), being these values are not very significant.

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with the OCS divided into 3 subscales, the affective commitment subscale ($\alpha = 0.856$), the calculative commitment subscale ($\alpha = 0.783$) and the normative commitment subscale ($\alpha = 0.810$), that is, the internal consistency of the CO proved to be adequate, presenting ($\alpha = 0.875$).

Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS)

The EFA revealed that the MWMS presents a structure of five factors, which explain 76.5% of the total variance, whose KMO indicator (0.863) is adequate.

To analyze internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used, presenting the following values for each factor: (amotivation: $\alpha = 0.868$; extrinsic regulation: $\alpha = 0.918$; identified regulation: $\alpha = 0.956$; introjected regulation: $\alpha = 0.960$; motivation intrinsic: $\alpha = 0.871$). The MWMS revealed high internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of ($\alpha = 0.916$).

Behavior Scale for Sustainability

The sustainability behavior scale in the exploratory factor analysis exhibited a structure composed of three factors, similar to the original version, 71.8% explaining the total variance of the set. The KMO indicator was equal to 0.5. Using Pearson's correlation, it was found that the three behavioral factors for sustainability are insignificantly positively correlated.

The three factors that make up the construct presented the Cronbach's alpha index and expose the following values: (conscious consumption $\alpha = 0.828$; concern for the environment $\alpha = 0.864$; waste $\alpha = 0.919$), with conscious consumption, concern for the environment and waste together have high internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.856$).

Comparison between the variables under study and sociodemographic data

There is statistically significant evidence that the average OC of employees varies depending on age ($F(2) = 4.15$, $p = 0.018$), marital status ($F(1) = 5.70$, $p = 0.019$), years of service ($F(2) = 8.42$, $p < 0.001$) and holds leadership and/or intermediate leadership positions ($F(1) = 5.07$, $p = 0.026$).

There is no statistically significant evidence that the level of OC of employees varies depending on the other sociodemographic data, such as gender, education, employment relationship and the type of position that employees occupy.

By analyzing the graph of estimated marginal averages, it is evident that employees who do not occupy leadership positions and/or intermediate leadership positions have a lower level of emotional commitment and vice versa.

The average motivation at work reveals that there is no statistically significant evidence that causes a variation in sociodemographic variables, the same happens with behaviors for sustainability, with the exception of educational qualifications ($F(2) = 4.44$, $p = 0.014$).

Validation of research hypotheses

Analysis of the correlation between OC and employee motivation

Hypothesis 1.1: Affective Commitment positively influences extrinsic regulation.

The correlation between affective commitment and extrinsic regulation is negative and statistically significant ($r = -0.204$, $p < 0.025$). The negative direction of the correlation indicates that an increase in affective commitment is associated with a decrease in extrinsic regulation. Statistical significance ($p = 0.025$) suggests robust evidence for this correlation.

These results suggest that affective commitment, which involves an emotional bond with the organization, can reduce the need for extrinsic motivation, such as external rewards. Previous studies indicate that employees with high affective commitment tend to become more intrinsically involved in their activities, reducing dependence on external motivators (Meyer, Allen and Smith, 1991).

Hypothesis 1.2: Affective Commitment positively influences intrinsic motivation.

The correlation between affective commitment and intrinsic motivation is positive and statistically non-significant ($r = 0.064$, $p < 0.485$). These results do not support the hypothesis that affective commitment increases employees' intrinsic motivation.

The literature suggests that, although affective commitment is often associated with greater intrinsic motivation, the lack of significance may indicate other moderating factors that were not considered in this study (Gagné and Deci, 2005).

Hypothesis 1.3: Calculative Commitment and Normative Commitment positively influence extrinsic regulation and intrinsic motivation.

The correlations between calculative and normative commitment with extrinsic regulation and intrinsic motivation are negative and insignificant. This suggests that these types of commitment do not significantly affect employee motivation in the financial institution studied. Studies indicate that calculative commitment, based on perceived costs of leaving the organization, and normative commitment, based on moral obligations, may not be directly related to employees' intrinsic or extrinsic motivation (Meyer, Allen and Smith, 1991).

Influence of organizational commitment to sustainable practices in the organization

Hypothesis 2.1: OC positively influences Conscious Consumption and Concern for the environment.

The correlations between OC and conscious consumption ($r = -0.090$, $p < 0.328$) and between OC and concern for the environment ($r = -0.114$, $p < 0.213$) are negative and insignificant. These results suggest that OC is not a determining factor for conscious consumption or concern for the environment among employees.

The literature points out that, although OC can influence proactive behaviors, the adoption of sustainable practices may depend more on specific organizational policies and perceived support for sustainability (Ramus and Steger, 2000).

Hypothesis 2.2: OC positively influences Waste.

The correlation between OC and waste is positive, but not significant ($r = 0.124$, $p < 0.174$). This indicates that OC, in itself, is not a determining factor in reducing waste. Studies suggest that reducing waste requires specific interventions and organizational strategies, in addition to general OC (Daily, Bishop and Steiner, 2007).

Influence of motivation on employees to adopt sustainable practices in the organization

Hypothesis 3.1: Extrinsic Regulation positively influences Sustainability behaviors.

The correlation between extrinsic regulation and sustainability behaviors is positive, but not significant ($r = 0.078$, $p < 0.397$). Therefore, there is not enough evidence to state that extrinsic regulation positively influences sustainability behaviors. The literature highlights that although extrinsic motivation can encourage certain behaviors, sustainability is generally more associated with intrinsic motivation and the alignment of personal values with sustainable practices (Ryan and Deci, 2017)

Hypothesis 3.2: Intrinsic Motivation positively influences Sustainability behaviors.

The correlation between intrinsic motivation and sustainability behaviors is negative and almost significant ($r = -0.153$, $p < 0.095$), suggesting that greater intrinsic motivation may be related to lower sustainability behaviors.

These results are contrary to theoretical expectations and may indicate that intrinsic motivation, without adequate organizational support, is not sufficient to promote sustainable behaviors. Previous studies suggest that the combination of intrinsic and

extrinsic motivation, together with organizational policies, is more effective in promoting sustainability (Gagné and Deci, 2005).

It was found that motivation, regardless of whether it is intrinsic or extrinsic, does not have a significant influence on the adoption of sustainable practices in the financial institution.

Analysis of the moderating effect of work motivation on the relationship between organizational commitment and sustainability behaviors

The results show that when levels of OC ($\beta = 0.112$, $t = 1.17$, $p = 0.245$) and sustainability behaviors ($\beta = -0.495$, $t = -1.82$, $p = 0.071$) are analyzed separately, do not significantly influence motivation at work. However, the interaction between these factors presents a significant effect ($\beta = 3.729$, $t = 6.04$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that the combination of high OC and high work motivation is associated with better sustainability behaviors.

These results indicate that work motivation can act as a significant moderator in the relationship between OC and sustainable behaviors. Studies indicate that a work environment that supports both commitment and motivation can enhance sustainable practices (Ramus and Steger, 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2017)).

The positive effect of the interaction suggests that the higher the levels of OC of employees and the greater their motivation at work, the better their sustainability behaviors tend to be.

Given the above, we can state that motivation at work moderates the relationship between levels of OC and sustainability behaviors.

DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1 suggests that OC positively influences employee motivation. However, the sub-hypotheses tested provide contrary or non-significant evidence. Based on the results of the sub-hypotheses, there is not enough support to accept Hypothesis 1, in this sense and based on the available evidence it is rejected.

The literature supports the conclusion that OC does not consistently positively influence employee motivation. Specific studies carried out in Portugal indicate that OC may not have a consistent relationship with employee motivation. Santos and Gonçalves (2010) found that, in some Portuguese companies, OC was more related to employee retention than to increasing intrinsic motivation.

It was found that OC does not positively influence employees to adopt sustainable practices in the organization, therefore, Hypothesis 2 is rejected. Robertson and Barling

(2017) argue that organizational culture plays a crucial role in determining employee behaviors, including sustainable practices. In many organizations, culture may not be fully aligned with sustainability, even if there is a high level of OC.

Based on the results of the sub-hypotheses, there is insufficient support to accept Hypothesis 3. The data indicates that motivation, both extrinsic and intrinsic, does not positively influence the adoption of sustainable practices among employees. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is rejected based on the available evidence.

According to Graves, Sarkis and Zhu (2020), intrinsic motivation is driven by internal factors, such as personal satisfaction and intrinsic interest in activities. However, when it comes to sustainable behaviors, these behaviors may require personal sacrifices or habit changes that are not intrinsically rewarding, leading to an observed negative correlation. Extrinsic regulation, based on rewards and punishments, may not be effective in promoting long-term sustainable behaviors. Studies show that extrinsic motivation can lead to temporary compliance, but not necessarily to sustainable and profound behavior in ecological practices (Gkorezis, Petridou and Xanthiakos, 2021).

The evidence that the interaction between OC and motivation leads to better sustainability behaviors supports Hypothesis 4. The significance of the interaction indicates that work motivation moderates the relationship between OC and sustainable behaviors.

This conclusion is congruent with those found by Kuvaas, Buch and Dysvik (2020) who address the importance of motivation at work as a moderating factor that can intensify the relationship between OC and sustainable environmental practices. Without adequate motivation, OC alone may not be sufficient to promote sustainable changes, although the data does not show that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation positively influence the adoption of sustainable practices among employees, which also rejected hypothesis 3. Ritz, Brewer and Neumann (2022) found that work motivation acts as a moderator, intensifying the positive effects of OC on sustainable practices.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this study indicate that, contrary to initial expectations, organizational commitment (OC) and employee motivation alone are not sufficient to promote sustainable practices within the studied financial institution. Affective commitment was associated with a decrease in extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation did not significantly correlate with sustainable behaviors. This suggests that an emotional bond with the organization does not necessarily result in greater adoption of sustainable practices, echoing findings from Santos and Gonçalves (2010), who observed that OC in Portuguese organizations is more associated with retention than with motivation for sustainable actions.

However, the interaction between high levels of OC and work motivation was crucial in promoting sustainable practices. This supports findings from Kuvaas, Buch, and Dysvik (2020), who emphasized the moderating role of motivation in enhancing the effects of OC on sustainability behaviors. Employees who demonstrate both high levels of commitment and motivation tend to adopt more sustainable practices, indicating that organizations must focus on fostering both dimensions simultaneously. This conclusion aligns with the work of Ramus and Steger (2000), who highlighted that commitment alone is insufficient without organizational policies that actively support sustainability.

The results also challenge the assumption that intrinsic motivation is inherently linked to sustainable behaviors, as proposed by Ryan and Deci (2017). Instead, this study found that intrinsic motivation, when unsupported by organizational structures, may not lead to significant improvements in sustainability practices. Furthermore, extrinsic regulation, often seen as a driver for compliance, did not significantly influence sustainable behaviors, echoing Gkorezis, Petridou, and Xanthiakos (2021), who argued that extrinsic motivators tend to yield only short-term behavioral changes.

Overall, these conclusions suggest that while organizational policies aimed at increasing commitment and motivation are important, they should be part of a more integrated approach that also addresses structural and cultural factors within the organization. Simply enhancing OC and motivation may not be sufficient to drive sustainable change unless accompanied by targeted interventions, such as clear sustainability policies and incentives that align with both extrinsic and intrinsic motivators.

Future research

Future research should consider expanding the scope of this study by using larger and more representative samples across different sectors and cultural contexts. It is also recommended to employ mixed-method approaches, integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection, such as semi-structured interviews, to capture a deeper understanding of how organizational and contextual factors influence commitment, motivation, and sustainable behaviors.

Additionally, exploring the role of organizational policies and leadership in fostering a culture of sustainability would provide valuable insights. This includes examining how specific practices—such as corporate sustainability programs, employee engagement initiatives, and leadership support—can strengthen the relationship between OC, motivation, and sustainable behaviors. Research could also delve into the potential moderating effects of other variables, such as job satisfaction, perceived organizational support, and environmental awareness, as suggested by Ritz, Brewer, and Neumann

(2022). This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms that drive sustainability in organizational settings.

By addressing these gaps, future studies can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how to effectively integrate sustainability into the fabric of organizational culture, ensuring that both commitment and motivation are aligned with broader environmental goals.

Figures

Figure 1 - Representation of the conceptual model to be studied

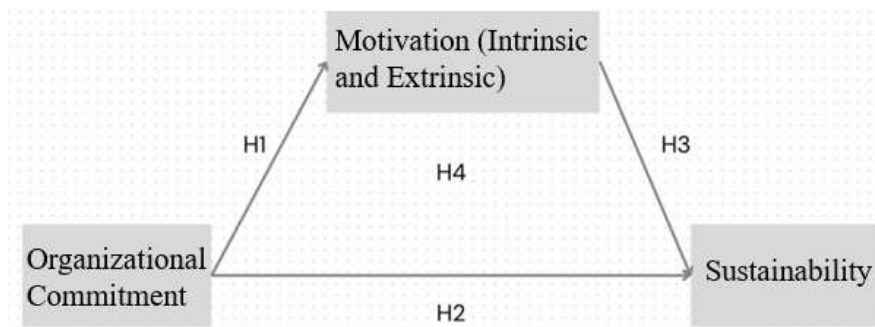


Figure 2 - Estimated Marginal Means – Affective Commitment; Occupies Leadership and/or Intermediate Leadership Positions



Figure 3 - Partial Correlation – Affective, Calculative, Normative Commitment, Extrinsic Regulation and Intrinsic Motivation

		Affective Commitment	Calculative Commitment	Normative Commitment
Affective Commitment	Pearson's R	–		
	P-value	–		
Calculative Commitment	Pearson's R	0.212	–	
	P-value	0.020	–	
Normative Commitment	Pearson's R	0.662	0.386	–
	P-value	<.001	<.001	–
Extrinsic Regulation	Pearson's R	–0.204	–0.085	–0.019
	P-value	0.025	0.352	0.835
Intrinsic Motivation	Pearson's R	0.064	–0.001	–0.010
	P-value	0.485	0.994	0.912

Figure 4 – Partial Correlation – OC, Consumption

		Organizational Commitment
Organizational Commitment	Pearson's R	–
	P-value	–
Conscious Consumerism	Pearson's R	–0.090
	P-value	0.328
Concern for the environment	Pearson's R	–0.114
	P-value	0.213
Waste	Pearson's R	0.124
	P-value	0.174

Figure 5 - Partial Correlation – Behaviors for Sustainability, Extrinsic Regulation and Intrinsic Motivation

		Extrinsic Regulation	Intrinsic Motivation
Extrinsic Regulation	Pearson's R	–	
	P-value	–	
Intrinsic Motivation	Pearson's R	–0.089	–
	P-value	0.330	–
Behaviors for Sustainability	Pearson's R	0.078	–0.153
	P-value	0.397	0.095

Figure 6 - Linear Regression – Motivation at work

Model fit measures		
Model	R	R ²
1	0.199	0.0395

Model Coefficients - Motivation				
Predictor	Estimates	Standard error	t	p
Intercept	3.729	0.6172	6.04	<.001
Organizational Commitment	0.112	0.0961	1.17	0.245
Behaviors for Sustainability	-0.492	0.2703	-1.82	0.071

Tables

Table 1 - Hypotheses to be studied

H1	OC positively influences employee motivation.
H1.1	Affective Commitment positively influences extrinsic regulation.
H1.2	Affective Commitment positively influences intrinsic motivation.
H1.3	Calculative Commitment and Normative Commitment positively influence extrinsic regulation and intrinsic motivation
H2	OC positively influences employees to adopt sustainable practices in the organization
H2.1	OC positively influences Conscious Consumption and Concern for the environment
H2.2	OC positively influences Waste
H3	Motivation positively influences employees to adopt sustainable practices in the organization
H3.1	Extrinsic Regulation positively influences behaviors towards Sustainability
H3.2	Intrinsic Motivation positively influences Sustainability behaviors
H4	Motivation mediates the relationship between OC and sustainable practices

Nomenclature

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS)

Organizational Commitment (OC)

Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS)

Self-Determination Theory (TA)

Conflict of Interest

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

Author Contributions

Equal contribution: These authors contributed equally to this work

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The datasets generated for this study can be found in the Business and Economics School.