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### Explanatory contribution of Social Responsibility and Organizational Justice on Organizational Commitment: An exploratory study in a Higher Public Education institution

**Abstract:** This study aimed to analyze the explanatory contribution of social responsibility and organizational justice on commitment through the setting up of a theoretical model in order to better understand the relationships that are established between these constructs. The empirical study was developed in a public higher education institution with a sample of 233 employees, professors and staff. The proposed model was estimated using a structural equation model. It was possible to observe a relationship between interactional justice perceptions and social responsibility and there contribute to the explanation of organizational affective commitment. At the same time, it was possible to observe a relationship between distributive justice and social responsibility of employees.

**Keywords:** Social Responsibility, Organizational Commitment, Organizational Justice, Structural Equation Model

#### Introduction

In the same way that “no man is an isolated island” (John Donne)\*, organizations cannot exist in isolation, thus reducing the world to its existence. Milocco (2003) states that all organizations are part of a social system, and this is the reason why they have obligations and responsibilities that may be of action or omission, tangible or intangible. The involvement of organizations in social responsibility practices can be associated with various benefits such as improved visibility and reputation (e.g., Aksak, Ferguson, & Duman, 2016; Brammer & Millington, 2005) and greater recognition from its stakeholders, which will be reflected in a better relationship with them and, in turn, better organizational results (Kang, Lee, & Huh, 2010). One of the most important forms of social responsibility (SR) is the promotion of the well-being of employees themselves through an organizational culture perceived as fair and

equitable (Greenberg, 2004). Both employees’ perceptions of social responsibility practices and organizational justice are widely cited in the literature as predictors of health, well-being and attitudes towards work (e.g., Clay-Warner, Reynolds, & Roman, 2005; Colquitt et al., 2013; Donia & Sirsly, 2016), namely at the organizational commitment level (e.g., Cheng, 2014; Peterson 2004; Rego, Leal, Cunha, Faria, & Pinho, 2010; Rupp, Ganapathi, Aguilera, & Williams, 2006; Rupp, Shao, Jones, & Liao, 2014; Turker, 2009). At a micro level, studies have shown that SR initiatives have unique consequences for the employees’ engagement, as well as their perspective of fairness and justice perception (Marin, Cuestas, & Roman, 2015). At the same time, several studies show that the organization’s fair treatment and leadership strengthens the bond between the employee and the organization which supports the relationship between justice and organizational commitment (e.g., Almeida, Silva, & Santos, 2013; Rego,

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Moreira, Felício, & Souto, 2003). Thus, the objectives of this research are to analyze the positive association of organizational justice and social responsibility in organizational commitment at a public higher education institution (PHEI). It is our expectation that the positive assessment of social responsibility positively affects the perception of social justice and that both contributes to the explanation of organizational commitment. Once this relationship has been established, justice's practices and policies and organizational social responsibility may be identified and implemented, thereby favoring the organizational commitment of employees.

### The Case of the Public Higher Education Institutions (PHEI)

Most of the studies have been developed in the context of private sector companies, and few studies have been developed within the public sector, particularly in higher education institutions (Hoy & Tarter 2004; Kale, 2013). However, we believe that the social, economic, political and cultural changes imply that public organizations face new regulatory obligations and seek to develop attitudes oriented to welfare and ethical principles. In this sense, PHEIs are also called upon to develop a cultural change that allows for the integration of social responsibility, not only to fulfil obligations, but also to improve working conditions, and their relationship with the community at the same time that they seek to contribute to scientific and technological advances. Although universities share characteristics with other public institutions, they face different challenges, as is the case with financing in recent decades. Universities have seen government funding reduced in conjunction with increased pressure for efficient self-financed management (e.g., Acker, Webber, & Smythe, 2010; Barnett & Middlehurst, 1993; Tilley, 1998), which implies that employees, including teachers, must engage in work activities that go beyond teaching and research (see also Winter, 2009; Kenny & Fluck, 2014). In this regard, studies have shown an increase in tension between the new university management approach, focused on economic results (see O'Byrne & Bond, 2014 for a review) and the traditional approach, focused on academic and scientific results, characterized by a high degree of flexibility and autonomy (e.g., Craig, 2014; Kenny & Fluck, 2014).

On the other hand, compared to other public institutions, universities are closely linked to the community, are called to organize and participate in social activities (e.g., volunteer work) and business (e.g., supporting the creation of new companies, the legitimization of scientific knowledge, the promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship) (see also Barnett & Guzmán-Valenzuela, 2016; Basit et al., 2015; Hall & Thomas, 2005) and to collaborate with other public institutions (e.g., participation in public management agencies) (e.g., Poocharoen & Wong, 2016). In contrast, universities depend upon these actions to increase their reputation, to promote the employability of their graduates (e.g., Sin & Amaral, 2016; Barnett & Guzmán-Valenzuela, 2016), and for their own funding and research itself (e.g.,

Lehtimäki & Peltonen, 2013). These new concerns have a profound impact on the workplace, imposing the need for new forms of management and organizational culture. Peleais and Rivadeneira (2008) showed that organizational culture is a key element in achieving social responsibility in a PHEI. To fulfil social, public interest and "business" management functions, it becomes essential to guarantee the quality of the public services, which is only possible with employees committed and engaged with their work (Kunkel & Vieira, 2012). In turn, this can be optimized by positive perceptions of social responsibility and a greater sense of organizational justice.

### Organizational Justice (OJ)

Greenberg (1990) defined organizational justice as a way to describe and explain the role of fairness in the workplace. Based on equity perception assumptions (Adams, 1965) within the social exchanges, organizational justice is reflected in the kind of reciprocity of employees (e.g., Cropanzano & Byrne, 2000).

Researchers investigating justice recognize three primary components of organizational justice: distributive, procedural, and interactional (Colquitt, 2001; Judge, Scott, & Ilies, 2006; Moorman, 1991; Rego & Souto, 2004). Distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness of the outcomes or rewards (salaries, promotions, etc.) an employee receives, procedural justice focuses on the process and refers to the justice of the wherewithal used to achieve those same purposes (performance appraisal systems, recruitment and selection processes, etc.), and interactional justice is defined as employees' perceived fairness of the treatment during the enactment of organizational procedures or in the explanation of those procedures (Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001). Interactional justice consists of two facets: interpersonal justice and informational justice – are focused, respectively on the quality of interaction with decision makers (defined as the treatment that people receive) and the way the procedures are communicated to them. Interpersonal justice integrates the perceptions of fairness with respect to whether employees are treated properly, with dignity and respect within an organization, informational justice refers to the perceived fairness of which employees have an adequate explanation and rationale for the decision from the authority (Colquitt, 2001; Lam et al., 2013). Some researchers (e.g., Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt, Noe, & Jackson, 2002) argue that the two components of interactional justice have effects on individuals independent of one another, which justify the conceptual, and consequently, measure distinctions. The four-dimensional approach was applied by some authors (e.g., Colquitt, 2001; Rego, 2003), which considered that the four-dimensional model (distributive, procedural, interpersonal and informational) appears to be more appropriate than the three-dimensional model. All three components of organizational justice perceptions will be heavily influenced by how fair employees consider their organization actions (Frazier, Johnson, Gavin, Gooty, & Snow, 2010).

In this regard, several studies have allowed for the observation of the relationship between organizational

justice and other variables such as organizational trust (e.g., Sirin, 2016), perception of organizational support (Colquitt et al., 2013), organizational citizenship behaviors (e.g., Moorman, 1991; Karriker & Williams, 2009), work satisfaction (Clay-Warner et al., 2005), overall fairness evaluations (e.g., Ambrose & Schminke, 2009), stress (Judge & Colquitt, 2004), performance (e.g., Colquitt et al., 2001) and commitment (e.g., Cheng, 2014; Peterson, 2004) among other concerns. Organizational justice is a basic requirement for employee satisfaction and organizational effectiveness (Kunkel & Vieira, 2012).

Sotomayor (2006) argues that in organizations individuals who are subject to decisions made by superiors, such as in terms of performance evaluation or salary, have to make decisions. The consequences of these decisions lead to an assessment of fairness and justice, whether or not actually fair – this is the concept of organizational justice. In other words, the SR activities developed by the organizations could be determinant for the employees' estimations about whether they have been treated fairly within the organization (Moon, Hur, Ko, Kim, & Yoon, 2013). Colquitt (2001) further adds that economic consequences and emotional partnership may be the reason for individuals working in these companies and institutions. In the present study, the four-dimensional approach to organizational justice proposed by Colquitt (2001) is considered.

### Social Responsibility (SR)

Nowadays, there is an increase in national and international organizations that are dedicated to the issues of SR, ethics and sustainable development. The concept of SR has undergone constant change since its conceptualization in 1953, which is highlighted in Howard Bowen's book, *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman*. The author defined SR as the obligations of businessmen to pursue policies, make decisions and follow desirable lines of action according to the goals and values of the society (Carroll, 1999).

An important contribution to the development of the concept of SR was spurred by Carroll (1979), who identified four dimensions: economic (be profitable), legal (comply with standards and laws), ethics (do the right and the good thing for everyone) and discretionary (also called, charitable). A sequence pyramid can represent this whose base is the economic aspect. The great assets of this model focuses on the notion that economic and social goals can be interconnected, i.e., a company can be socially responsible and simultaneously ensure profit maximization through social development activities (Fernández, Mauricio, & Francisco, 2015; Lomôcano et al., 2012).

The gradual importance that SR has for organizations and society has promoted the design of a wide range of approaches and theories (e.g., Carrol, 1979; Quazi & O'Brien, 2000; Turker, 2009), sometimes ambiguous and complex, and implying a conceptual delimitation effort of SR (Maon, Lindgreen, & Swaen, 2010). It is important to take an integrative approach to SR that encompasses economic, environmental, ethical and social aspects, and

takes into account all of its stakeholders. This concern is reflected in the Green Paper presented by the European Commission (2001, p. 7), which defines SR as “the voluntary integration of social and environmental concerns by companies in their operations and in their interaction with other stakeholders,” as mentioned in Turker's (2009) approach focused on organizational behavior aimed at positively affecting its stakeholders. According to this author, SR practices are structured into four areas: social and non-social stakeholders (society, environment and future generations and NGO's), employees, customers, and government (Turker, 2009). Stakeholders use their investments as an expression of personal identity for themselves and others (Barbosa, Jorge, & Sampaio, 2015), thus socially responsible investment is an extension of their way of life. Most studies have focused on the impact of the dimensions of SR on organizational performance in terms of reputation, competitiveness and sustainability (e.g., Porter & Kramer, 2002) or in terms of financial performance (e.g., Antelo-González, Alfonso-Robaina, Callejo-Carballeda, Léon-Martin, 2015; Fernández et al., 2015; Pava & Krausz, 1996), by emphasizing how the social activities of organizations affect the responses of external stakeholders, especially customers (e.g. Maignan, Ferrell, & Hult, 1999). This is the reason why Turker's (2009) multidimensional approach to SR, based on the Stakeholders Management Theory (SMT), is a valuable model for understanding the impact that SR may have on the actors involved, including the employees of a PHEI.

The common definition of SR practices, adopted from Turker (2009), pointed out that internal SR practices are activities that directly related with the physical and psychological working environment of employees. Among the connections SR, it was observed that the major classification of measures are training and development, health and safety, human rights, workplace diversity, employee involvement, family and work life balance, and organizational justice (Peng, 2014). From this perspective, it is assumed that there is a positive influence on the organizational commitment of employees if they feel proud to work in an organization with a favourable reputation that results from their actions of social responsibility. So, it is urgent to discuss the repercussions of the environment of organizational justice on social responsibility and their consequences on employee's attitudes and behaviours. As stated above, one of the forms of social responsibility is the fair and equitable treatment of employees (e.g., Greenberg, 2004), so our first hypothesis is as follows:

*H1: A positive perception of organizational justice is associated to social responsibility perceptions.*

### Organizational Commitment (OC)

Organizational commitment is one of the concepts that have triggered great interest in recent decades (Allen & Meyer, 1990, 1996; Meyer & Allen, 1991, 1997). Allen and Meyer (2000) argue that organizational commitment is the psychological tie that features the individual's relationship with the organization.

In terms of the theoretical framework for organizational commitment two major approaches are highlighted: behavioral (e.g., Randall, Fedor, & Longenecker, 1990; Swailes, 2000) and attitudinal (e.g., Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday, Seers, & Porter, 1979). The behavioral approach is essentially based on behavior, where the individual's commitment is dependent on situational factors (Swailes, 2000). The attitudinal approach refers to an individual's emotional and psychological link to the organization, which is manifested in their involvement and willingness to stay in the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Allen and Meyer (1990) developed a multidimensional model of organizational commitment, conceptualizing it in three components or different dimensions, generating different attitudes and behaviors: affective orientation, instrumental orientation and normative guidance (Allen & Meyer, 1996, 2000; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnysky, 2002). According to this model, the employees of an organization can be committed through emotional character relationships (affective commitment) through obligation and moral duty to the organization (normative commitment) and transactional relationships based on a personal investment for a certain return, including the costs associated with exit (instrumental commitment). Each of the components tend to generate different consequences (Rego, 2003). The employees who are affectively committed tend to develop more significant efforts in the organization's defence compared to the employees with a weak emotional bond. Employees with a normative commitment feel they have a moral responsibility to the organization, and the reason why they remain in the organization is because they feel they should do it (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Regarding the instrumental component, individuals remain in the organization until they have alternatives, or because of the high costs associated with change (Meyer & Allen, 1997). According to Meyer and his colleagues, an employee may develop these three components of commitment at varying levels of intensity, but may not develop all three components at the same time. Moreover, these three components are not mutually exclusive, but may be highly correlated (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovich, Topolnysky, 2002). Some studies (e.g., Boyne, 2002) show lower levels of organizational commitment in the public sector compared with the private. According to Boyne (2002), this is due to the lack of flexibility in human resources management procedures and the weak link between performance and rewards. Thus, the lack of independence in public organizations to establish benefits or rewards, in that they are fixed legally, does not allow for the development of links based on exchange/investments. In summary, it may be assumed that employees with higher affective and normative commitment exhibit higher productivity and better performance levels than those who are instrumentally committed. Therefore, researchers and human resource managers can seek to identify factors that promote affective and normative commitment (Rego, Souto, & Cunha, 2007).

Employees develop stronger affective and normative bonds and weaker instrumental ties, when: a) they feel that there is organizational justice and that the organization treats them in a fair, respectful and supportive way; b) the organization's leaders are receptive to their suggestions, participation and are ethically fair and reliable; c) they have training, learning and personal development opportunities; d) the organization acts as a good citizen in the community with values and a culture with humanized guidance (Rego et al., 2007). This relationship between SR and organizational commitment has been investigated in various studies (e.g., Peterson, 2004; Turker, 2009; Jamali, Dirani, & Harwood, 2015) which show that SR contributes positively to employees' positive attitudes and behaviors, since they strongly identify with the organization's positive values (Lin, Lyau, Tsai, Chen, & Chiu, 2010). Consequently, employees establish an emotional involvement, that is, a commitment with the organization (e.g., Peterson, 2004). Mueller, Hattrup, Spiess, and Lin-Hi (2012), through a sample of 1,084 employees from 17 different countries, observed that the perception of corporate social responsibility contributed positively to the affective commitment of workers. Also Turker (2009) studied the relationship between organizations' SR and organizational commitment, based on social identity theory.

SR activities developed could increase/decrease the different types of organizational commitment. In one hand, workplace democracy (participation and unions' voices) make employees feel respected and identify with organizations. So, the implementation of family-friendly policies is positively associated with affective commitment (AC) (Shen & Zhu, 2011). Employees working in organizations that adopt SR strategies would be more identified to their organizations and develop AC. A range of SR practices may be specific to employees' own organizations and there is uncertainty about whether other organizations would adopt the same Human Resource Management practices. Employees working in such organizations would feel it costly if they had to leave, so could decrease the instrumental commitment (Shen & Zhu, 2011). A range of SR practices (such as: flexible working hours/employment and priority in employment) given to those who are in the most need, may be regarded by employees as 'extras' above employer obligations. Hence, it is likely that employees working in such organizations may increase their sense of moral obligation to reciprocate for the provision of organizational benefits, consequently leading to the development of normative commitment (Bagraim & Sader, 2007). In line with the argument of Meyer and Allen (1991) that receipt of organizational benefits is the antecedent of normative commitment.

Although, some studies are conducted on the perceived value of SR and their relationship with work outcomes and attitudes/behaviours in private organizations, but very few studies are conducted to explore this effects in Higher Education (Nadeem & Kakakhel, 2012), specifically, on organizational commitment (Asrar-ul-Haq, Kuchinke, & Iqbal, 2017). So, with respect to PHEIs, those considered *knowledge* institutions are linked to

several social responsibility activities, which integrates the employees in two different ways: (1) individually, (2) collectively. It is expected that, similar to the studies in private institutions, the SR actions of PHEIs will contribute to the explanation of organizational commitment.

Thus, we posit as a second hypothesis the following:

*H2: The perception of social responsibility of employees has a positive association to organizational commitment.*

Social identity theory underpins the relationship between SR and organizational justice. In this regard, Taifel and Turner (1986) argue that the employees, when they perceive an organization as ethical, tend to suppose that the organization is fair to them (e.g., Greenberg, 2004). If, as mentioned above, organizational commitment is an attitude that can be seen as resulting from SR perceptions, then it can be expected that positive perceptions of organizational justice also have a predictive effect on SR perceptions of employees and on their organizational commitment. Specifically, Rego and Souto (2004) state that among the various backgrounds that best explain organizational commitment, and in particular the affective, are the perceptions that organizations are socially responsible and the perception of justice. On the other hand, the literature has shown that two types of justice, distributive and procedural, are strongly related to organizational commitment (e.g., Colquitt et al., 2013; Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetric, 2002). Thus, the third and fourth hypotheses were formulated as follows:

*H3: Organizational justice and social responsibility contributes to the explanation of organizational commitment, especially of its affective dimension.*

*H4: Distributive and procedural justice contributes to the explanation of organizational commitment.*

## Method

### Participants

The sample consisted of 233 teaching and non-teaching staff (81.5% female and 18.5% male) at a higher education institution, aged between 23 and 63 years. The overall mean age was 46.9 years (SD=7.56). The distribution of the sample regarding level of educational level was as follows: basic education (13.7%), secondary education (44.6%), academic degree (28.81%), master's degree (5.6%) and doctoral degree (6.9%). Regarding the length of stay in the organization, the minimum value was 1 year and the maximum is 31 years of service in the institution (M=16.79, SD=6.9). Participants were divided by two school subsystems with 49.4% in polytechnics, and 50.6% in the university. With regard to occupation, the majority of respondents (88%) were non-teaching staff and 12% were teachers. Only 8.2% of the participants exercised management positions. All professional categories were represented: operational assistant (59.7%), technical assistant (29.2%) and higher technical assistant (19.3%). Regarding the type of employment contract with the institution most (58.9%) had a fixed-term public functions contract.

### Measures

The data were collected through a questionnaire structured into two distinct parts: the first focused on the scales of organizational justice perception (Colquitt, 2001), social responsibility perception (Turker, 2009b), and the organizational commitment scale (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The second part was related to the respondents' sociodemographic and professional data in order to characterize the sample.

#### *Organizational justice scale*

We used the Portuguese version of the scale (Rafael, Gonçalves, Santos, & Orgambidez-Ramos, 2015) developed by Colquitt (2001). This instrument consists of 20 items, assessed on a Likert scale from 1 (never) to 7 (always), measuring four dimensions of OJ: procedural justice with 7 items (e.g., item 5: "The procedures were based on objective information"), distributive justice (4 items, e.g., item 8: "The results reflect the effort invested in the work"), interpersonal justice (4 items, e.g., item 13: "He/she treats me with dignity"), and informational justice with 5 items (e.g., item 16: "Has he/she been sincere in communicating with you?"). The organizational justice scale's internal consistency is good (0.90) and the Cronbach's alphas for these dimensions are as follows: procedural justice (0.79), distributive justice (0.89), interpersonal justice (0.87), and informational justice (0.93). These values are similar to the original.

#### *Corporate social responsibility scale (CSR)*

This scale was developed by Turker (2009b) and translated and adapted to the Portuguese population by Rafael, Lima, Borges, Figueiredo, and Noronha Vaz (2012). This scale consists of 17 items in the form of a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree), and measures 4 dimensions: SR of social and non-social stakeholders (society, environment, future generations and NGOs) – 7 items (e.g., item 2: "It makes investments that aim at providing a better life for future generations"); SR of employees – 5 items (e.g., item 12: "Supports employees who wish to acquire additional training"); SR of customer – 3 items (e.g., item 15: "Customer satisfaction is very important") and SR of the government – 2 items (e.g., item 17: "We must fully and promptly adopt legal norms"). Internal consistency analysis showed values between 0.76 and 0.91 which are in accordance with the values obtained by Turker (2009b).

#### *Organizational commitment scale*

The instrument was developed by Meyer and Allen (1997) and adapted to the Portuguese population by Rego, Cunha, and Souto (2005). This instrument consists of 12 items distributed on 3 subscales, measuring each of the components of organizational commitment: affective (items 3, 5 and 7), normative (items 1, 4 and 12) and instrumental (2, 8, 9 and 11). Items 6 and 10 are screening items. The responses to each dimension are given on a Likert scale of 6 points where (1) corresponds to "the statement applies absolutely not at all to me", and (6) "the statement

applies completely to me” (Rego et al., 2005). The internal consistencies of the three dimensions of the scale are appropriate and approximate to the original: affective commitment (0.86), normative commitment (0.80) and instrumental commitment (0.83).

### Procedures

This is a quantitative study that was carried out in a public higher education institution, and based on a sample of teaching and non-teaching staff selected for convenience. Data were collected personally at the participants’ work during the months of December 2014, January and February 2015. The anonymity and confidentiality of responses was guaranteed. No compensation was offered to participants.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed using the SPSS statistical package (v. 20) and STATA software (v. 13), with an estimated probability of significance of 0.05. For the confirmatory analysis, the variance-covariance’s matrices were considered as input, adopting the maximum likelihood estimator (ML), which assumes the normality of the data, since it is a robust estimator when this assumption is not met. The following indicators were calculated:  $\chi^2$ , which is a significance test of the minimized discrepancy function during model fitting and for which, the lower the value, the better the adjustment (Marôco, 2010); CMIN/DF, which corresponds the data adjustment probability to the theoretical model, and whose values must vary between 2 and 5; comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis

Index (TLI) vary between 0 and 1, assuming 0.90 as a good model fit indices; root-mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) whose ideal value is between 0.05 and 0.08, with acceptable values up to 0.10; standardized residual root-mean square (SRMR) corresponds to the mean of the measured normalized residuals and proper fit of the model is indicated by values lower than 0.05 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

### Results

Table 1 shows the mean values and standard deviations for the scales of social responsibility perception, organizational commitment and organizational justice. From the results we can see that all dimensions had mean values greater than the midpoint (mp) of the scales (3.5 for social responsibility and organizational justice scales, and 3 on the organizational commitment scale). Since the midpoint of the scales is variable and standard deviations values are substantially different for different dimensions, to be able to compare the results, we include the probability of a value being above the mean point of the range ( $P(x > mp)$ ); that is, the probability of an individual had a positive perception of a particular item.

Table 1 shows that the social responsibility perception scale had an overall mean of 4.55, with a  $SD=0.83$  and  $P_+=89.8$  per cent. By analyzing the concept of social responsibility based on the stakeholders, it is possible to observe that responsibility to the government had the highest mean ( $M=5.26$ ), however due to the high standard deviation ( $SD=1.26$ ) the probability of positive results

**Table 1. Descriptive analysis of the results (N = 233)**

	N° Items	M	DP	$P(x > mp) = P_+$ %
<b>Social Responsibility (SR) – Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4.55</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>89.8</b>
1. Environment, future generations and NGO’s	7	4.46	0.90	85.8
2. Employees	5	4.00	1.13	67.3
3. Customers	3	5.19	0.95	96.3
4. Government	2	5.26	1.26	91.9
<b>Organizational Commitment (OC) – Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>84.8</b>
1. Affective	5	4.63	0.95	95.7
2. Normative	2	3.44	1.20	64.5
3. Instrumental	3	3.61	1.16	70.2
<b>Organizational Justice – Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>97.0</b>
1. Procedure	7	4.54	0.89	88.0
2. Distributive	4	4.29	1.46	70.7
3. Interpersonal	4	6.12	1.04	99.4
4. Informational	5	5.34	1.12	95.0

$P_+$  = Positive perception probability,  $P(x > pm)$

( $P_+$  = 91.9 per cent) was lower than the probability of being positive in respect to social responsibility to customers with  $P_+$  = 96.3 per cent ( $M = 5.19$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ). The perception of social responsibility practices towards employees showed the lower value with  $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 1.13$  and  $P_+$  = 67.3 per cent.

The organizational justice scale presented a global mean of 5 ( $SD = 0.8$  and  $P_+$  = 97 per cent), thus presenting the highest value of the three variables. The interpersonal dimension of organizational justice showed the highest mean with values greater than 5 in the four items with a mean of 6.12 ( $SD = 1.04$ ) and a probability of  $P_+$  = 99.4 per cent. This means that all individuals in the sample had a positive perception regarding the interpersonal dimension of organizational justice. We also observed a high value for the dimension informational justice with a mean of 5.34 ( $SD = 1.12$ ) and  $P_+$  = 95 per cent. The dimensions of distributive and procedural justice had more moderate values for mean and probability:  $M = 4.29$ ,  $P_+$  = 70.7 per cent; and  $M = 4.54$ ,  $P_+$  = 88 per cent, respectively.

For organizational commitment, the results observed show a mean of 3.87 ( $SD = 0.85$ ) and a positive probability of 84.8 per cent. The affective dimension presented a mean and a probability of a higher positive ( $M = 4.63$  and  $P_+$  = 95.7 per cent), with mean values greater than 4 in the three items. The normative and instrumental commitments had relatively low values:  $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ,  $P_+$  = 64.5 per cent; and  $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ,  $P_+$  = 70.2 per cent, respectively. Regarding the lower levels of this two dimensions, they wasn't considered in the other analyses.

In summary, the descriptive results show that the dimensions of interpersonal justice, informational justice, organizational affective commitment and social responsibility to customers present a probability of being positive (above 95 per cent). In contrast, social

responsibility towards employees, normative and instrumental commitment, and distributive justice have relatively low values (below 84 per cent).

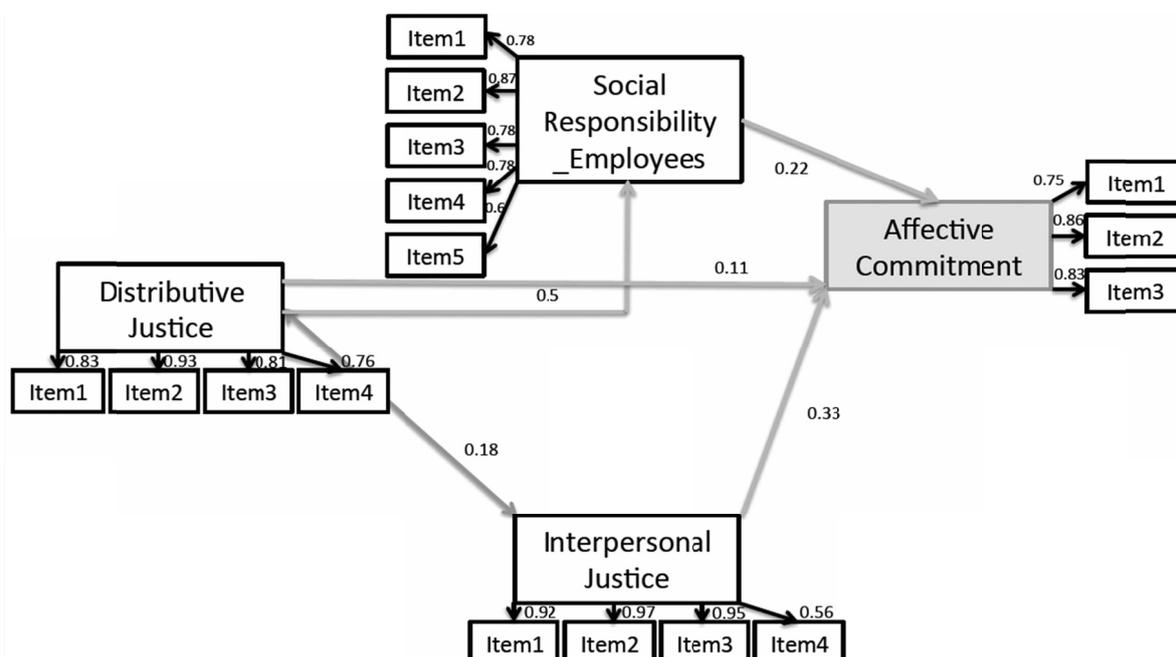
In the second phase of data analysis, we resorted to the structural equation model in order to verify the dependency relationships between perceptions of social responsibility, organizational commitment and perceptions of organizational justice. Regarding the social responsibility we only considered the employees perceptions (more related to the analyzed variables). Attending to the organizational justice were considered two dimensions: Distributive (more related to the notion of global) and Interpersonal (highest mean). In addition, both have some important evidences on predicting performance in HE contexts (Mehmood, Norulkamar, & Ahmad, 2016). For the organizational commitment it was only considered the affective dimension, the observed higher mean.

Figure 1 presents the significant relationships with the results of the proposed model, which consists of four constructs: perceptions of social responsibility of employees (RES\_COLA), distributive justice (JU\_DIS), interactional justice (JU\_INTER) and organizational affective commitment (COMP\_AFE). Latent variables were operationalized by 16 observable variables: 5 for the perception of social responsibility of employees, 4 for distributive justice, 4 for interpersonal justice, and 3 for affective commitment.

The coefficients for the "path" in the structural equation model on distributive justice, interactional justice, social responsibility to employees and affective commitment are presented in Figure 1.

The model fit indices met the limits of recommended reference values (Marôco, 2011). The results were:  $X^2/df = 1.8141$ , CFI value = 0.968, and TLI = 0.962, which indicate good adjustment values as they are close

Figure 1. Structural equation model



to unity. The value of RMSEA (0.059) was less than 0.10 and the value of SRMR (0.046) is acceptable. For the model adjustment, no equality coefficients restriction was imposed. Model fit indices are within the limits recommended by the reference values so that the model was adequate in its entirety, with all “paths” being statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

The values obtained allowed us to observe the following: all indicators show high factor loadings for the latent variable, interpersonal justice, ranging between  $r = 0.56$  and  $r = 0.97$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; there is a correlation between distributive justice and interactional justice, although with a low value ( $r = 0.18$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); the variable with the greatest predictive value of responsibility to employees is distributive justice, with a value of 0.5; in turn, responsibility to employees is a predictor of affective commitment with a value of 0.22; interpersonal justice is the variable with the greatest predictive value of organizational affective commitment ( $r = 0.33$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

In summary, for the participants in the study, social responsibility perceptions towards employees and interpersonal justice have a predictive ability for organizational affective commitment. The study results also showed a high relationship between distributive justice and social responsibility to employees and a low one with affective commitment, where interpersonal justice played a significant role in predicting organizational affective commitment.

### Discussion

The analysis of the global means of organizational commitment, social responsibility and organizational justice perceptions has revealed that the perception of organizational commitment is the one with the lowest value. It was observed that organizational commitment is predominantly of an emotional nature, followed by instrumental commitment. Normative commitment is less significant, which suggests a lower sense of obligation to remain in an institution. These results may be a reflection of the country’s current economic context, that has an impact on the management of public institutions and on available alternatives. The importance of the emotional costs associated with a potential exit from an institution, namely the disruption of interpersonal relationships and maintaining seniority of about 15 years in the organization for the sample under study, the need to stay in an organization can be also motivated by personal investments, which then lead to identification with and involvement in the institution.

With regard to social responsibility perceptions, it is possible to observe the existence of a positive association between the social responsibility perception to employees and the affective commitment of the same; this can be explained by social identity theory as already observed in previous studies conducted in private sector companies (e.g., Brammer, Millington, Rayton, 2007; Rego et al., 2010), thus confirming that the SR of employees plays a significant role in predicting organizational affective commitment.

As regards the perception of organizational justice, it was observed that the distributive dimension had an effect on social responsibility to employees, and that interpersonal justice contributes to the explanation of organizational affective commitment. Rego and Souto (2004) showed in their study concerning the importance of perceptions of organizational justice in organizational commitment, that when people feel treated fairly, they show higher rates of affective and normative commitment and lower rates of instrumental commitment. In this study, only an influence on affective commitment was found. Similarly, Moon, Hur, Ko, Kim, and Yoon (2014) showed that employees’ social responsibility perceptions contribute positively to explaining compassion at work through organizational justice and organizational affective commitment perceptions.

This study also reinforced Colquitt’s (2001) proposed separation between interpersonal and informational justice, which argues that interpersonal justice reflects the degree to which people are treated with courtesy, dignity and have respect for managers and that informational justice focuses on explanations provided to employees concerning certain procedures. It also found that interpersonal justice has a relationship with distributive justice, affective commitment and responsibility to employees, while informational justice does not have any contributive role.

### Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the relationship between organizational justice perceptions, social responsibility and the organizational commitment of employees, teachers and staff at a public higher education institution. The analysis of results showed that interpersonal organizational justice and social responsibility to employees contribute significantly to the affective commitment. It was also observed that there is a relationship between distributive justice and social responsibility to employees.

We still consider that these data may contribute to the definition and implementation of human resources policies and practices that promote SR in organizations within public institutions, particularly in PHEIs, to the extent that they may have a significant and effective impact on the emotional commitment of the employees and the organization (Jamali, Dirani, & Harwood, 2015).

Employees of PHEIs are often faced with a new management and organizational culture paradigm resulting from the convergence of professional requirements (functions and management activities, academic, research and connection to the community) in the search for efficient resource management and self-financing based on the enhancement of its image and reputation that encourages competition for students and resources (Budd, 2016; Craig, 2014; Kenny & Fluck, 2014; Tilley, 1998). On the other hand, PHEI members (especially teachers) have no defined working hours, or payment or compensation for overtime, which allows professional demands to be exceeded (e.g., Kwok, 2013). This new paradigm increases the importance of the organizational justice construct in terms of decision-

making processes, procedures, distribution and evaluation of the work and career progression, thereby contributing to internal conflict and work-family interaction and negatively affecting health, attitudes and behaviors. It was evident from this study that an organizations' involvement in socially responsible practices can promote the involvement of its employees, which is a key variable for their productivity, so, future studies will further analyze these aspects.

The study here presented offers a contribution to the understanding of this relationship, the perception of organizational justice, particularly in its interpersonal dimension as a predictor of affective commitment. In future studies it would be interesting to use a larger sample size as well as to extend this research to other public organizations in order to consolidate or revise the results. For a richer model, other variables could be introduced, such as the organizational support or professional performance, to analyze possible differences between organizations with different characteristics, such as the public and private sectors. Despite the organizational justice scale and that its dimensions had adequate internal consistency values, the two categories of employees (teachers and staff) are faced with different decision makers and managers. Teachers respond to various "leaders" (department, direction, scientific, etc.), which is not the case with the non-teaching staff. Our study, although balanced in terms of participating teachers and staff, did not consider a model separating this category of employees, and therefore, this should be an aspect to consider in future studies.

An organization's functioning and surroundings are of significant importance in people's lives, and so as the understanding of organizational behavior is greatly complex, this study functions as a contribution to the analysis of this complexity.

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