

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNICATION AND COMMITMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study is to explore the relationship between organizational communication and interpersonal communication, as well as the relationship between communication and commitment. Through a quantitative study, the perception of 800 employees of companies from four different sectors, occupying operational, technical and administrative positions, was analyzed. Among the results, we highlight the influence of organizational communication on the communication of leaders and on communication among colleagues. While organizational communication influences commitment, leadership communication and peer communication do not have this potential for influence.

Keywords: communication, commitment, perception, organization

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1 INTRODUCTION

Communication is a basic factor in generating quality in the organizational environment. This quality, in turn, is an essential element to infuse commitment, which is related not only to efficiency in people management (FARIA, BARBOSA, 2007), but also to the full acceptance of organizational values and objectives (MODWAY, PORTER, STEERS, 1982). Commitment may be manifested in association with the following factors: persons or groups; congruence with the individual value system; rewards; the need to avoid specific punishments (BECKER, 1992).

Becker (1992) states that commitment may be by the individual toward a group, a project (e.g., social or political) and/or an organization; by a group toward an individual, a project and/or an organization; by an organization toward an individual (a rather rare situation), a project and/or another organization.

In this work, we assume that the most common focus is on the commitment of individuals or groups toward an organization or project of this organization, based on power and work relations. Such relationships are an inherent condition of life in organizations and generate efficiency when organizational objectives are understood and shared; At this point, the relationship between communication and commitment is indicated.

In order to deal with communication, it is essential to associate it with the social context and the need to use language. Chauí (2002) affirms the importance of language in communication: only man is a political animal, that is, social and civic, because only he is endowed with language. However, in this work, we take as a reference the fact that, as an essentially social issue, it is not only the word that is part of communication. In order to understand communication, it must be analyzed in a broader context, which involves not only language, which is only one way of communicating.

Casado (2002, p. 272) emphasizes the fact that communication involves content and form. Regarding content, the author attributes to communication “the transmission of information; the possibility of expressing emotions; expressing social values; perpetuating the culture of a group; registering and disseminating discoveries and technological advances.” With regard to form, communication is related to human development, with the provision of technologies. This author explains that communication is essentially a social issue and includes the transference and understanding of meanings.

Since communication is a social process and the corporate environment is composed of social relations, it is possible to assume that communication within organizations is essential to human coexistence in the corporate environment. To promote and build positive relationships, leaders need to communicate effectively with their subordinates in the most honest and direct way possible. Especially during times of uncertainty (ZEFFANE; TIPU; RYAN, 2011).

Nars, Ferreira and Fischer (2013) detected in the discourse of the universe employees composed of 66 companies, elements that showed the actions taken with the objective of keeping them motivated during the period of the global crisis of 2008 and 2009. This analysis resulted in three proposed categories: (1) management’s actions; (2) communication; (3) team morale maintenance.

In this article, two forms of communication are considered, the formal communication of the organization and the interpersonal, in three distinct levels: organization; leadership; peers or co-workers. These levels of communication are explored as to their relationship to commitment. In other words, the study’s main objective is to explore the relationship between organizational communication and interpersonal communication, as well as the relationship between

communication and commitment. In order to reach this objective, a quantitative study was carried out in which the perception of 800 professionals occupying operational, technical and administrative positions of companies from four different sectors was considered. These respondents are employees of organizations that stand out in the Brazilian market regarding the positive organizational climate and good practices of people management.

This paper was structured in three sections, in addition to the introduction and final considerations. In the first section, the theoretical perspectives on communication and commitment are presented and related to the hypotheses of the study. In the second, the methodology is described and, in the latter, the results are presented and analyzed.

2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

This section deals with the themes that are essential to the purpose of the research work, as well as the elaboration of the hypotheses tested in the study presented here.

2.1 Communication in Organizations

Communication has been a critical factor in organizations, both in the more traditional and in those seeking more advanced management models. To explain the emergence of the competency model in organizations, Zarifian (1999) states that communication implies understanding the other and oneself, it means agreeing on organizational goals, sharing norms about their management. In this view, the traditional and vertical hierarchical structure should be replaced by organizations with more flexible boundaries that facilitate communication.

To understand organizational communication, Robbins, Judge and Sobral (2010) distinguish formal networks from networks of rumors. Formal networks can be very complex, including hundreds of people and dozens of hierarchical levels. The network's effectiveness depends on the objectives that the communication channel aims to achieve. On the other hand, rumor networks are informal communication systems within a group or organization. Although they are informal, this does not mean that they are not an important source of information. Rumor networks have three main characteristics: 1. They are not controlled by the company's leadership; 2. A majority of the employees considers them to be more reliable and candid than the organization's formal top-down communications; 3. They are widely used to serve the personal interests of those who are part of it.

Rumors, as these authors have shown, emerge as a reaction to situations that are important to people, when there is ambiguity and under conditions that arouse anxiety. In this view, the rumor holds as long as the desires and expectations that generate uncertainty are not met or as long as the anxiety is not reduced. Corporate communication, however, relies on other means as well. Electronic communication, consisting of e-mail and instant text messages; social media; blogs and Twitter, among others. However, according to Tassigny, Brasil and Bugarim (2012):

The flow of information through organizational communication can be carried out through several channels, often leaving the responsibility of communication consultants to choose the right tool for the organization. It is worth mentioning that some advisory services are easily induced to believe that they are fulfilling their role, working in the harmonization of the work environment only by editing small newsletters and internal newspapers, while organizational communication is not restricted to this function (TASSIGNY; BRASIL; BUGARIM, 2012, p. 264)

Given this view, in this study, it is assumed that organizational communication influences the way people communicate. This assumption is represented by Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 1 - The perception about organizational communication influences the employees' perception about communication among colleagues.

According to Fleury and Fischer (1989), organizational communication is capable of influencing the establishment of culture, in addition to reinforcing and sustaining organizational identity. At the same time, since organizational communication, in the view of Casado (2002), is able to indicate patterns of behavior and relationship, it is assumed and that leaders, as representatives of the organization, have a direct influence on organizational communication, which can interfere, even in the way they communicate. This assumption is represented by Hypothesis 2:

Hypothesis 2 - The perception about organizational communication influences the perception of employees about the communication of the leader.

Schein (1989) points to leadership as the fundamental process by which organizational cultures are shaped and changed. In this author's view, culture and leadership are two sides of the same coin and cannot be understood on their own. They are the leaders who create, destroy and strengthen the culture. For him, the leader is the only person who can have enough power to destroy a culture and start another or to articulate visions that change people's assumptions. In this view, the leader would be able to define the quality of an organizational environment. Schein exemplifies this situation by stating that leaders can convey the sense of commitment to the group from their discernment, motivation, and ability to communicate.

From the observation of the importance of the communication of the leader in the establishment of behavior patterns, the second presupposition of this study leads to the indication of the possible influence of the communication of the leader on the communication between colleagues. This assumption is represented by Hypothesis 3:

Hypothesis 3 - The perception about the communication of the leader influences the perception of the employees on the communication between colleagues.

Communication, for Robbins, Judge and Sobral (2010, p. 326) also includes "transferring and understanding meaning" and has four basic functions within the group or organization: the **first** relates to the action of communication in controlling people's behavior. The **second** is to facilitate motivation by clarifying what should be done, what is the quality of performance, and how to improve it if it is below expectations. The **third** emerges when communication, within the group, becomes a fundamental mechanism for its members to express their frustrations or satisfaction. The **fourth** function is to facilitate decision making by providing the information that people and groups need to make decisions. In this way, the functions of communication relate to control, motivation, emotional expression and information.

These functions help establish the link between organizational communication and interpersonal communication.

2.1.1 Interpersonal Communication

Minicucci (2012) states that human communication only really exists when two or more people establish *psychological contact*. Moscovici (1981) states that communication is an interpersonal competence for professionals, especially for people managers. Interpersonal skills are related to the ability to deal effectively with interpersonal relationships, in a manner appropriate to the needs and requirements of each situation. According to this author, communication can be established in three ways: oral communication; written communication; nonverbal communication.

Robbins, Judge, and Sobral (2010) analyzed the interference of personality traits in communication, listing barriers that may hamper organizational communication: **filtering** refers to the manipulation of information by the sender so that the receiver sees it more favorably. **Selective perception** happens when the receiver in the communication process sees and listens selectively, based on one's needs, motivations, experiences, history, and other personal characteristics. **Information overload** happens when information exceeds a person's processing power. **Emotions**, on the other hand, interfere when more extreme emotional states, such as euphoria or depression, are more likely to impede effective communication.

The authors also pointed out the role of **languages** (even when we are communicating in the same language, words have different meanings for different people) and **silence** itself (research suggests that silence and the denial of information are both common and problematic). **Fear of communication** is typical of people experiencing tension or anxiety for no apparent reason in oral, written, or both. Finally, Robbins, Judge and Sobral (2010) also listed **gender differences** as barriers (men tend to use speech to reaffirm their status, while women use it to create connections and closeness) and **politically correct communication**, when concern about not being offensive, detracts from meaning or becomes a hindrance to free expression.

However, these barriers, for these authors, can be positioned as **cultural barriers** when words mean different things to different people. In this sense, there are barriers caused by connotations, intonation differences, conflict tolerance differences, and methods for solving them. Cultures tend to differ as to the degree of influence of context on the meaning that people perceive of communication.

Understanding the barriers is something that indicates the complexity of the communication, however, within the scope of this work, it is essential to understand also the conceptual model that aims at this theme. The observation of the systemic model, which presupposes the influence of the environment on communication, leads to the presupposition of the interconnection between the perceptions of the various forms of communication in companies. This reasoning gave rise to the assumption that peer communication and leader communication influence organizational communication.

Bambacas and Patrickson (2008) argue that managers are able to translate and model organizational communication by the use of their interpersonal relationship skills, in addition, they are able to embody the image of the organization in themselves. Thus, effective leaders in interpersonal communication focus mainly on clarity and frequency of messages, on their ability to actively listen and to lead collaboratively (BAMBACAS; PATRICKSON, 2008). These assumptions are represented by Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 5:

Hypothesis 4 - The perception about communication among colleagues influences employee perception of the organization's communication.

Hypothesis 5 - The perception about the communication of the leader influences the perception of the employees about the communication of the organization.

As a complement to the reasoning that supported the presented hypotheses, besides the organizational questions, to all that indicates, there is a reasonable portion of bias in the process of communication resulting from innate personality traits. In the issues of interpersonal communication, there are interferences arising both from internal processes and from social processes. Significant example of the interference of social processes can be found in the need to adapt to the technology that marks the formal and informal communication (TREVISAN, VELOSO, 2004). Since the beginning of this century, electronic media have made significant strides, so much so that Robbins and his co-authors included them in the 2010 edition of "Organizational Behavior" adapted to the Brazilian context among organizational media (ROBBINS; JUDGE; SOBRAL, 2010).

Today, the use of electronic means of communication, visibly more accessible to all social strata, opens new possibilities for interaction between companies and employees and between people in general. Socially, these means represent a cultural change, since the area of people management itself uses social networks for certain processes, including recruitment and selection. You can use these networks both to recruit candidates and to obtain information about them during the selection process. The interaction among colleagues also adds new dimensions to communication, and can promote, including mutual and constant surveillance of employees' private lives of any company. These are hallmarks of communication that certainly influence the contemporary corporate environment.

2.2 Organizational commitment

Rodrigues and Bastos (2010) affirm that the concept of commitment, as well as studies aimed at its operationalization and measurement, arose in the middle of the 20th century. At that time, strategies were adopted for the retention of qualified professionals and the reduction of personnel replacement costs. However, as these authors show, starting at the end of the 20th century, with new working relations, reduction of organizations and diffusion of the concept of competencies, the search for permanence in the employee gradually gives rise to the need for good performance, work and results for the organization.

Given this scenario, in the role of attitudes towards the organization, special attention was devoted to the construct of organizational commitment, related to factors favorable to both the organization and the worker (SIQUEIRA, GOMIDE, 2004).

According to Carvalho, Alves, Peixoto and Bastos (2011), the current relevance of the search for commitment in organizations is related to a scenario in which the relations between worker and organization are considered a source of competitive advantage. Committed people become responsible for the company or the group and act more motivated and prone to discretionary effort, with an impact on performance.

Numerous forms of work commitment have already been investigated, as Rodrigues and Bastos (2010) pointed out. According to these authors, these investigations consider the different focuses (organization, career, work, profession, objectives, union, among others) and the bases of commitment (affective, normative, continuation, affiliative, alienating, moral, etc.). According to these authors, to this diversity, there is added the multiplicity of scales, not always conceptually well delimited, that are used to measure this construct. In this sense, several conceptual models, presented in the following, allow different ways of analyzing commitment.

2.2.1 Three-dimensional Model

As regards conceptualization, Meyer and Allen (1991) present three bases for organizational commitment: the first, called **continuation commitment**, analyzes the possibility that the individual will continue in a certain course of action, after calculating the costs involved in moving away from that line; the second, that of **affective commitment**, deals with the notion of affection towards the organization, which stimulates the individual to remain because he likes, shares values and becomes involved with organizational roles; and the third, **normative commitment**, suggests that in some cases the individual remains in the organization because he feels obliged, after internalizing the organizational norms.

2.2.2 Two-dimensional Model

Although the three-dimensional model is the most used, other studies propose the two-dimensional model, according to Cohen (2007). The first of these dimensions would be the **instrumental commitment**, which consists in the exchange between individuals and organization and is linked to the motivational process and benefits perceived in the permanence in the organization. The logic of this type of commitment is based on a different set of situational and organizational experiences, developed from the exchange with a specific organization. The second dimension, on the other hand, sees commitment as a normative or affective process, resulting from socialization or work experiences. In this dimension, **normative and affective commitment** is a result of the internalization of organizational objectives, values and organizational norms.

2.2.3 One-dimensional Model

According to Solinges, Olffen and Roe (2008), the current research agenda points to the return to one-dimensionality of the construct as a way of overcoming the problems of conceptualizing commitment. This line of argument suggests **affective commitment** as the only dimension, and the other bases of the construct may not measure the same phenomenon. In this view, it is based on the argument that the affective basis is the one that best characterizes commitment, from the *active bond*, related to intentions favorable to the organization, such as intentions of extra commitment, permanence and sacrifice (SWAILES, 2002).

In this work the unidimensional vision is adopted, with interest only in affective commitment. At the same time, Zeffane, Tipu and Ryan (2011) have demonstrated the importance of effective communication within organizations with respect to organizational commitment and trust. In particular, these authors show that trust and commitment do not happen by chance; they are forged and maintained by the effectiveness of communication.

The way in which the messages are sent by the leadership, especially for its clarity and frequency, tends to influence or increase the commitment of the employees (BAMBACAS; PATRICKSON, 2008). Thus, it is possible to raise the assumption, represented by Hypothesis 6, that organizational communication, communication of leaders and communication between colleagues influence organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 6 - Employees' perception about the organization's communication, leaders and colleagues influences organizational commitment.

Despite the decision of this work due to the one-dimensionality of the concept of commitment, it is important to consider the view of Rodrigues and Bastos (2010) that the permanence or non-permanence of the worker in the organization can be explained by many variables besides commitment, permanence should not be treated as a constitutive dimension of the construct, but as one of its possible consequences. For these authors, there is a wide range of facets incorporated into the concept of commitment. There is also a clear separation between dimensions that represent the active bond (expressed by engagement, intention of extra commitment, affection and identification with the organization) and the dimensions that manifest passive relation, which is reduced to the permanence and the relation of exchange with the organization.

In addition to these discussions, it is also worth noting the increasing importance of the *active link*, with the trend towards more decentralized people management. In the case of the management of remote units this type of link is used to unite people around a very precise purpose (LEITE, ALBUQUERQUE, 2013).

Defined hypotheses and the conceptual basis of research work, the next section is dedicated to the methodology that led to the study.

3 METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out using a database of organizations that stand out for their positive organizational climate and for their good practices of people management. The data used in this study refer to the application of the survey in the year of 2011 and relate to the contemporary corporate environment insofar as they consider only the employees' perceptions about specific factors already mentioned in the introduction of this article: organizational communication, and among colleagues, in addition to organizational commitment.

The respondents, who were randomly selected, answered a questionnaire with 64 assertions on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1-totally disagree to 5-strongly agree. However, in this study, we selected only the 17 assertions that presented some term related to the organizational communication process (CASADO, 2002), in addition to the 6 related to affective commitment, expressed in terms of active connotation of engagement; intention of extra commitment; affection and identification with the organization (RODRIGUES & MEDEIROS, 2010).

The 504 organizations registered for the survey, which annually elects the *Best Companies to Work for*, necessarily had to have more than 100 employees and to work in the Brazilian and/or international market for more than five years. These companies have characteristics that differentiate them from each other: size, sectors of activity, region of operation in the country, origin of capital, among others. Access to the database was made available by the institution responsible for the methodology of this annual survey, which seeks to ascertain several aspects of the contemporary corporate environment (VELOSO et al., 2007).

For the accomplishment of the sampling procedure, companies were asked to send a numbered list of their employees in alphabetical order and, from this list, those who were supposed to respond to the survey were randomly selected. All of the drawers were employees with a formal job link. The total number of questionnaires obtained was 136,800, representing the 1,543,243 total employees of these organizations.

Outliers were treated using the Mahalanobis Distance Technique in SPSS 17 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 17), and the randomness of the omissions in the variables was verified. Next, the random lottery of 200 respondents, who worked in four different branches of activity: industry; technology and computing; cooperatives and public services, totaling 800 respondents of the total sample.

This procedure was performed with the objective of achieving satisfactory sampling for the structural equation modeling, with the application of the ADF (Asymptotically Distribution-free) method, in the software AMOS 18 (Analysis of Moment Structures, version 18). Identification of non-normality of the variables contained in the respective database was also considered, and, at the same time, an attempt was made to avoid an exaggerated increase of the X^2 statistic due to the use of large samples (HAIR JR et al., 2009).

In the sample used, most of the respondents were from the State of São Paulo (38%), male (54.5%), with a mean age of 33.5 years, with a high school education or above (75.7%), who (78%), with salaries between R\$ 2,000 and R\$ 5,000 (60%), and that they were linked to their organizations, on average, for approximately eight years.

The exposition of the study design criteria is complemented with the definition of the assertions used and the analyzes undertaken, which are presented in the next section.

4 RESULT ANALYSIS

The first result to be highlighted refers to the identification and evaluation of the factors of this study. Next, we present the analysis and discussion of the hypotheses about the relationship between communication and organizational commitment.

4.1 Exploratory Factorial Analysis

The quality measures of the exploratory factor analysis KMO (0.95), MSAs (> 0.5) and the Bartlett test ($p < 0.01$) proved to be quite satisfactory, indicating the adequacy of the use of this technique for the constructs of the study.

The extraction of the factors was performed by the main axis method, with oblique rotation, because it allows the correlation of the factors. Thus, it was possible to verify, through eigenvalues (> 1), the probable existence of three factors for the communication scale, classified in this study as: organizational communication (six assertions), leader communication (eight assertions) and communication among colleagues (three assertions). These assertions can be observed in Table 1, below, with their respective factorial loads and communalities, all higher than the reference value of 0.5. In addition, the combined explained variance for the three factors was 63.58.

Table 1: **Assertions, Factorial Loads and Community of Factors about Organizational Communication**

| | Factorial Loads | Communalities |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Organizational Communication | | |
| I get all the information I need to do my job well. | 0.71 | 0.53 |
| I know what I should do to grow professionally in this company. | 0.77 | 0.60 |
| This company encourages me to know the work done by my colleagues. | 0.79 | 0.64 |
| This company hears and puts into practice its employees' suggestions. | 0.71 | 0.58 |
| When I need support from another company department, I am well treated. | 0.57 | 0.60 |
| The information about this company is transmitted to the employees clearly, quickly and with a good response time. | 0.76 | 0.60 |
| Leader Communication | | |
| My manager always makes it clear what is expected of my work. | 0.71 | 0.59 |
| I feel free to contribute with criticism and suggestions to my manager. | 0.77 | 0.60 |
| I trust what my manager says. | 0.84 | 0.71 |
| In this company the managers practice what they preach. | 0.77 | 0.64 |
| I periodically receive honest reviews from my manager about my performance. | 0.72 | 0.55 |
| My manager is consistent and uses "the same weight and the same measure" in his or her decisions. | 0.86 | 0.75 |
| Managers know how to contribute to the company's objectives. | 0.75 | 0.67 |
| My manager hears and respects the opinion of his or her team | 0.86 | 0.76 |
| Communication between colleagues | | |
| In this company, people are always willing to help each other | 0.79 | 0.65 |
| My colleagues are always willing to share with me what they know | 0.77 | 0.63 |
| I am always treated well when I need a co-worker | 0.84 | 0.71 |

Because it was considered a distinct communication factor and has its own literature, the commitment factor was analyzed only in the processing of the confirmatory factorial analysis, together with the three communication factors identified in the exploratory factorial analysis. The six assertions used in measuring commitment are shown below in Table 2 with their factorial loads:

Table 2: **Assertions and Factorial Loads of the Commitment Factor**

| | Factorial Loads |
|---|-----------------|
| Commitment | |
| I would recommend to my relatives and friends this company as a great place to work | 0.78 |
| I have confidence in the company where I work | 0.76 |
| I am proud to tell relatives and friends that I work for this company | 0.78 |
| I feel like I participate in the decisions that affect me and my work | 0.70 |
| People who work at this company know what they should do to make it better and better | 0.74 |
| I know and agree with the goals of the company in which I work | 0.71 |

In Table 3, it is possible to observe the means, standard deviations, reliability indexes and cross-correlations between all variables included in the study. These cross-correlations appear to be evidence of the relevance of the proposed model. All variables obtained significant correlations between pairs. The perception about commitment was highly correlated with the perception about the organizational communication and communication of the leader and moderately with the communication among colleagues; the perception about organizational communication was highly related to the peer communication and peer communication perception; the communication perception of the leader obtained a moderate correlation with the communication among the colleagues.

Table 3: **Mean, Standard Deviation, Cross-correlations and Reliability**

| Factor | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---------------------------------|------|------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Commitment | 3.71 | 1.15 | 0.88 | | | |
| 2. Organization's communication | 3.39 | 1.19 | 0.95 | 0.84 | | |
| 3. Leader Communication | 3.48 | 1.24 | 0.79 | 0.84** | 0.92 | |
| 4. Colleagues' communication | 3.19 | 1.04 | 0.68 | 0.76** | 0.64** | 0.76 |

Notes: N = 800. The Cronbach Alpha reliability indexes (α) are on the matrix diagonal.

M: mean. SD: standard deviation.

** $p < .01$.

The lowest mean was communication between colleagues (3.19) and the highest compromise (3.71). The Cronbach Alpha reliability indexes were satisfactory in compromise (0.88), organizational communication (0.84), leader communication (0.92), and peer communication (0.76).

4.2 Confirmatory Factorial Analysis and Structural Model

A structural theory is a conceptual representation of the relationships between constructs, which can be expressed in terms of a structural model. Such a model represents theory with a set of structural equations, which is generally described as a visual diagram. A structural model infers that relationships meet the conditions necessary for causality and are a junction between path analysis and confirmatory factor analysis (HAIR Jr. et al., 2009; KLINE, 2005).

In the modeling of structural equations there are several indices that evaluate the fit quality of the model to the data, however, there are no indexes considered ideal for evaluation of a given model. Thus, in the general evaluation of the model, it is necessary to have an overview of the various indexes, not being restricted to a particular index (KLINE, 2005; HAIR JR et al., 2009). Therefore, the indexes that were used in this study were: absolute adjustment three (χ^2 , GFI and RMSEA) and two incremental adjustment (CFI and AIC) (HAIR JR et al., 2009).

The main index of absolute fit of the model is the chi-square (χ^2). According to Hair Jr et al. (2009), the value of this statistical test is sensitive to large sample sizes and to the number of variables observed, which may reduce the fit of a model for reasons that may not be truly detrimental to its overall validity. In models with between 12 and 30 observed variables and samples larger than 250, therefore, significant p-values can be expected (HAIR JR et al, 2009).

Other commonly used absolute adjustment indices are the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), which is an adjustment statistic less sensitive to sample size, whose reference value is 0.9; and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), a measure that attempts to correct the tendency of chi-square statistics to reject models with large samples or large number of variables observed, with a reference value between 0.05 and 0.08.

The following indexes of incremental adjustment were used to compare alternative models: Comparative Fit Index (CFI), whose reference value is 0.9, and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), used to compare models with different numbers of constructs, in which models with smaller values are the most adjusted.

Table 4 presents the adjustment statistics for the measurement model. The indices show that the proposed measurement adjustment obtained better data fit indices than the alternative models tested (χ^2 (52, N = 800) = 1104.43, $p < 0.01$, $\chi^2 / df = 4.93$, GFI = 0.90, CFI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.07, TLI = 0.91), although the value χ^2 is significant, which can also be observed in the evaluation of the structural model, in the same table.

Table 4: Measurement Model Statistics

| Tested Measurement Models | χ^2 | df | χ^2 / df | $\Delta \chi^2$ | GFI | CFI | RMSEA | TLI |
|---------------------------|------------|----|---------------|-----------------|------|------|-------|------|
| Four Factor Model | 1104.43** | 52 | 4.93 | - | 0.90 | 0.92 | 0.07 | 0.91 |
| Independent Model | 11214.41** | 23 | 44.32 | -10109.98** | 0.17 | - | 0.23 | - |
| Two-factor Model | 1154.70** | 49 | 5.09 | -50.27** | 0.89 | 0.91 | 0.07 | 0.91 |
| One-factor Model | 2035.25** | 46 | 8.84 | -930.82** | 0.77 | 0.83 | 0.09 | 0.82 |

** $p < .01$.

Following the recommendations of Hair Jr et al. (2009) and Kline (2005), concurrent models were tested in addition to the one proposed by the study. First, there was the comparison with the independent model. Then, a two-factor model was tested in which the three communication factors (organizational, leader, peer) were grouped into one factor and the other referred to commitment. Already the second model tested grouped the four factors proposed in only one factor.

Considering the satisfactory adjustment of the measurement model, the same strategy was followed in the structural model of comparison to a concurrent model, in which the perception about commitment was influenced by the perception about the communication, as Table 5, and not the contrary, as proposed by this study.

Table 5: Structural Model Statistics

| Tested Structural Models | χ^2 | df | χ^2 / df | $\Delta \chi^2$ | GFI | CFI | RMSEA | TLI |
|--------------------------|-----------|----|---------------|-----------------|------|------|-------|------|
| Proposed Model | 1104.72** | 52 | 4.93 | - | 0.90 | 0.92 | 0.07 | 0.91 |
| Alternative Model | 1152.87** | 49 | 5.08 | ** | 0.88 | 0.92 | 0.07 | 0.91 |

** $p < .01$.

In the end, the proposed theoretical model presented the best X^2 adjustment indexes (52, $N = 800$) = 1104.72, $p < 0.01$, $X^2 / df = 4.93$, GFI = 0.90, CFI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.07, TLI = 0.91). However, in this model, there were no significant influences ($p < .05$) on the perception of the communication from the leader ($\beta = 0.02$) and colleagues ($\beta = -0.10$) on commitment. The alternative model in which the perception of commitment influenced the perception of the communication presented the worst indexes X^2 (49, $N = 800$) = 1152.87, $p < 0.01$, $X^2 / df = 5.08$, GFI = 0.88, CFI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.07, TLI = 0.91). Thus, the model proposed by this research was considered the most plausible among the tested, and it can be observed below in Figure 1.

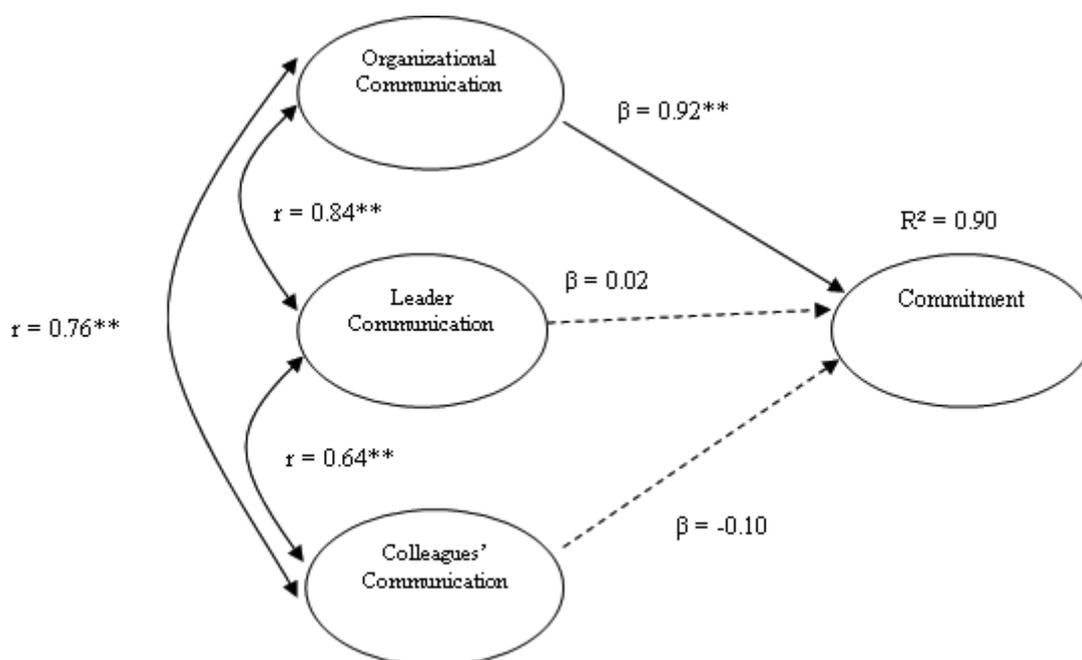


Figure 1. Study Model

** $p < .01$.

The results showed that the perception about organizational communication positively influences the perception about commitment ($\beta = 0.92$, $p < 0.01$), but the perceptions about leaders' communication ($\beta = 0.02$, $p > 0.05$) and co-workers ($\beta = -0.10$, $p > 0.05$) did not present such a relationship.

When analyzing the correlation between the communication factors, the cognitive process of respondents was strongly associated with the communication of the leaders ($r = 0.84$, $p < 0.01$) and among coworkers ($r = 0.76$, $p < 0.01$) with the communication of the organization and the communication of the leaders with the communication among work colleagues ($r = 0.64$, $p < 0.01$).

After the results analysis, some reflections and conclusions of the study are presented below.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The contemporary corporate environment is complex and indicates several possibilities for analysis. Understanding the various aspects that make up this environment and involve the perception of people about work is a task that requires the combination of theory and method. The promotion of this junction was one of the intentions of the study design presented in this article, which focused on the quantitative analysis of the relationship between the perception about communication and the perception about the organizational commitment.

The main contribution of the study to the area of administration, especially for the management of people, is in revealing the relevance of organizational communication in promoting affective commitment. Since the communication of leaders and communication between colleagues does not influence commitment, it is possible to analyze this construct at the macro organizational level. In this way, promoting commitment is a possibility that depends on strategic institutional actions. In this sense, authors addressed in the theoretical framework helped clarify the relationship between work experiences and the company's strategic intent, revealing organizational communication as an important mediating factor between people and organization.

At the same time, the fact that organizational communication has the potential to influence leadership communication and communication among colleagues is highlighted. This is a result that points to the responsibility of the company to promote collective actions of contact with its employees, since such actions have the potential to influence behaviors at different levels of the organization.

The relationships between the levels of the communication process and commitment were measured through the perception of people occupying operational, technical and administrative positions and constituted an evolution of analysis proposed by this study because, in contrast to addressing organizational actions, the effects of these actions were observed. The fact that employees of different companies responded to the survey allows us to point out more general tendencies than could be related only to the reality of a specific organization.

As a limitation, it is important to consider that several other factors besides communication can influence organizational commitment. Therefore, new studies, considering other antecedent variables, are recommended, as well as qualitative researches that complement the analyses presented here. The fact that the respondents work in companies that seek to be recognized by their positive organizational climate can also constitute a research bias. It is recommended, therefore, to extend the study to companies that do not intend to highlight their organizational environment.

In addition, the study of online communication among colleagues based on social networks is suggested, identifying their influence on the perceptions and behaviors of employees, both inside and outside the workplace. This suggestion is due to the assumption that there are differences of analysis when there is no organizational control variable.

Finally, it is suggested that organizations, when managing communication, consider it in terms of *organic vision*. In this view, it is necessary to include, besides the agents involved in the process, the *context*, which has to do with the role of leaders and co-workers in the formal communication of the organization. In general, the definitions of formal communication of the company need to be formulated in a way compatible with the strategic planning of people management.

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