RELATIONS BETWEEN SENSES OF WORK AND JOB SATISFACTION: ANALYSIS OF A PUBLIC SERVANTS CATEGORY

RELAÇÕES ENTRE OS SENTIDOS DO TRABALHO E A SATISFAÇÃO NO TRABALHO: UMA ANÁLISE COM UMA CATEGORIA DE SERVIDORES PÚBLICOS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This research had the aim to analyze if the senses of the work are able to influence the level of satisfaction of federal public servants.

Design/methodology/approach – For that, a mixed approach study was carried out with the technical-administrative servants in education of a Federal University, based in countryside of Minas Gerais state. A total of 186 questionnaires were collected, using an adaptation of the Meaningful Work Scale (MWS) and the Work Satisfaction Scale (EST), and 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted.

Findings – The correlation analyzes between the two constructs revealed the existence of moderated forces of association, for the most part, between the dimensions of the senses of work and the average score of work satisfaction, whereas linear regression revealed a genuine effect of the meanings of work on job satisfaction indexes. The content analysis of the interviews supported the results found, allowing to conclude that, for the servers surveyed, the identification with the work performed in an environment that values aspects such as ethics, autonomy, relationships and learning ends up influencing directly and positively the level of satisfaction with this job.

Originality/value – Understanding the relationship meanings and work satisfaction of public servants, in the context of people management, presents itself as an original and valuable research, contributing to university managers to seek new ways of encouraging employees.

Keywords - Meaning of work, Work satisfaction, Public servants, Technical-administrative servants in education.

RESUMO

Objetivo - Este estudo teve por objetivo principal analisar se os sentidos do trabalho são capazes de influenciar o nível de satisfação de servidores públicos federais.

Design/metodologia/abordagem - Para tanto, foi realizada uma pesquisa de abordagem mista junto aos servidores técnico-administrativos em educação de uma Universidade Federal, localizada no interior de Minas Gerais. Foram coletados 186 questionários, utilizando uma adaptação da Escala do Trabalho com Sentido (ETS) e a Escala de Satisfação no Trabalho (EST), e realizadas 10 entrevistas semiestruturadas.

Resultados - As análises de correlação entre os dois construtos revelaram a existência de forças de associação moderadas, em sua maioria, entre as dimensões dos sentidos do trabalho e o escore médio de satisfação no trabalho, enquanto que a regressão linear revelou um efeito genuíno dos sentidos do trabalho sobre os índices de satisfação no trabalho. A análise de conteúdo das entrevistas embasou os resultados encontrados, permitindo concluir que, para os servidores pesquisados, a identificação com o trabalho desempenhado em um ambiente que valoriza aspectos como ética, autonomia, relacionamentos e aprendizagem acaba influenciando direta e positivamente o nível de satisfação com este trabalho.

Originalidade/valor – Compreender as relações entre sentidos e satisfação no trabalho de servidores públicos, no contexto da gestão de pessoas, se apresenta como uma pesquisa original e de valor, contribuindo para que gestores das universidades busquem novas formas de incentivo aos servidores.

Palavras-chave - Sentidos do trabalho, Satisfação no trabalho, Servidores públicos, Técnicos-administrativos em educação.

1 INTRODUCTION

Work has always been present in the history of mankind, albeit in a very different way than it is today. According to Davel and Vergara (2001), in the field of organizational management, the relationship between work and individual started to be more strongly studied in the 1970s under the name of Human Resources Administration, and these traditional studies were based, primarily, on instrumentalist approaches, emphasizing quantitative, calculable and strategic aspects and facing people as a source of competitive advantages. Over time, however, the questioning of the strictly normative character adopted by this approach has given rise to a new critical stream of researchers, increasingly interested in human complexity and subjectivity and its relationship with the organizational environment. As a consequence, work started to be seen from a new perspective, which can be defined as "what the subject must add to the prescriptions in order to be able to achieve the objectives that are assigned to they" (Dejours, 2004, p. 28). In this way, the role played by workers within organizations started to be valued, associating the instrumental characteristics of the activities with the personal characteristics of the worker, their acquired experience, their own skills and knowledge.

Despite advances in the conception of work within organizational studies, some areas remain strongly influenced by the normative and instrumental approach. Such is the case of the Brazilian public administration, which, as Marconi (2005) points out, uses structural characteristics to attract its professionals, such as stability, increased salaries with length of service and questionable performance evaluations, resulting in a staff of accommodated employees, without motivation to innovate, improve and develop. In addition, the lack of autonomy of public managers to formulate and implement their own human resources development policies, capable of absorbing the particularities of each body and institution, ends up limiting the performance of these managers, further evidencing the structural and normative character of the sector.

Given the above, this research sought in the subjectivity of administrative theories an aid to the understanding of some characteristics of the public sector that could contribute to its im-

provement. According to Rodrigues, Barrichello, Irigaray, Soares and Morin (2017), one of the main challenges for people managers is to understand what makes sense for the work of public servants. Thus, this study set out to answer the following question: can the senses of work for the public servant have an effect on their perception of job satisfaction? To do so, starting from a sample of technical-administrative servants in education (TAE) of a Federal University, located in the interior of Minas Gerais, it was sought to understand if and how what the surveyed public servants perceived to be meaningful work could contribute to their level of job satisfaction.

Studies simultaneously addressing constructs senses of work and job satisfaction are not easily found in the academic. However, it is worth noting the search by Pinto, Mariano and Moraes (2011) for the identification of a possible relationship between the sense of work for educational managers and their satisfaction with this job. Duffy, Autin and Bott (2015), in turn, when examining a sample of 280 workers in the United States, were able to conclude that a job capable of providing sense contributes to increasing the level of satisfaction with this job. In addition, as pointed out by the bibliometric research carried out by Sá and Lemos (2017), there are few studies aimed at understanding the sense of work from the point of view of traditional professional categories, such as public servants.

Besides this introduction, this article contains four more sections. The second section presents the theoretical framework developed from a bibliographic review about the senses of work and job satisfaction. The third section presents the methodological procedures adopted in the research. In the fourth section, the results found are presented and discussed. Finally, the fifth section ends with the final considerations, the limitations of the study and some suggestions for future research.

2 THEORETICAL REFERENCE

Meanings and senses of work

The terms meaning and sense of work are treated very closely in academic research, coming to be considered synonyms in some of them, but in this study, the perspective that they relate to different phenomena was adopted. In this line, the meanings of work are seen as the collective constructions elaborated in a given historical, economic and social context, while the senses are characterized as a personal production due to the individual apprehension of collective meanings, resulting from everyday individual experiences (Tolfo, Coutinho, Baasch, & Cugnier, 2011).

As stated by Morin (2001), when studying work, it is important to know what individuals think about it. The first empirical studies on the meanings and senses of work were carried out by Hackman and Oldham, in 1975. The authors concluded that meaningful work had three fundamental characteristics: i) variety of tasks - it should require a variety of skills to be developed; ii) non-alienating work - it should allow the individual to see the process as a whole and have autonomy and freedom to determine how the tasks should be performed; iii) meaning of the task - it should generate considerable impacts on the organization and society in general (Andrade, Tolfo, & Dellagnelo, 2012).

In the 1980s, a group of researchers called MOW – Meaning of Work started an extensive investigation, together with more than 14 thousand individuals from eight different countries, on the variables capable of explaining the meanings attributed to work. As Bastos, Pinho and Costa (1995) suggest, one of the main contributions of the study conducted by the MOW group was the construction of the very concept of the meaning of work, whose general structure involved three major domains: the centrality of work, the social norms of work and the results and objectives val-

ued at work. Work centrality was understood as the degree of importance that work occupied in the individual's life at a given moment, identifying the relevance of the work for the subject's own image and in relation to the other spheres of his life. The social norms of work referred to the socially accepted norms about work, that is, the social standards that underpinned individual assessments of rights and duties in the work situation. In turn, the results and objectives valued at work were related to the purposes and reasons that led the individual to work (Bastos et al., 1995; Tolfo & Piccinini, 2007).

A few years later, two researchers in the group, England and Whiteley, identified six different patterns of work definitions. As mentioned by Morin (2001), patterns A, B and C reflected positive conceptions of work when looking at it as an activity capable of adding value to anything, of conferring a feeling of connection when being carried out and of contributing to society and benefit others. Patterns D and E reflected negative conceptions of work, that is, they viewed it as an unpleasant activity, mentally and physically demanding, dictated by others. The F pattern, in turn, referred to a neutral conception of work, seen as an activity carried out in a specific location, following a schedule.

Moving away from the term meanings of work, although strongly influenced by studies conducted by the MOW group, Morin (2001) identified that the main reasons that led individuals to work were directly related to the emancipatory character presented by the work. In addition, the author concluded that meaningful work would be that i) carried out in an efficient and organized manner, leading to useful results; ii) intrinsically satisfactory, allowing the individual to exercise their talents, learn new skills, update themselves and increase their autonomy; iii) morally acceptable, developed in a socially responsible manner; iv) source of satisfactory human experiences, permeated by honest people and quality social relationships; v) able to guarantee security, autonomy and independence to the individual; and vi) able to keep the individual busy, allowing him to structure and organize his daily life and personal history.

In 2006, Morin and Dassa endeavored to build an instrument dedicated to the identification of factors capable of making a job make sense. The instrument, called the Meaningful Work Scale (MWS), consists of 25 items divided into five factors capable of synthesizing the characteristics of meaningful work, namely: i) development and learning, referring to the possibility offered by the work so that people reach their goals, learn and develop; ii) social utility of work, which refers to the fact that work is useful to society and to others; iii) quality of relationships at work, regarding the existence of interesting contacts at work, the satisfaction of social needs and the support of colleagues; iv) autonomy at work, referring to the individual's ability to assume responsibilities, solve problems and make decisions freely; and v) work ethics, which assesses the existence of justice and equity at work (Bendassolli & Borges-Andrade, 2011, 2015). Such instrument, after being validated and adapted to a Brazilian sample by Bendassolli and Borges-Andrade (2011), was chosen to compose the questionnaire used in this research.

In a recent research, Nunes, Gonçalves, Schweitzer, Tolfo and Espinosa (2017) aimed to identify the senses and meanings of work for teaching staff and TAE at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC). Analyzing the work from its positive, instrumental and negative conceptions, the authors concluded that the social function, the pride of the institution, the liking of what is done and the possibility of professional and personal growth gave the work a positive aspect. The instrumental sense of work, in turn, was evident in aspects related to survival and financial stability. Finally, in its negative pole, the work was understood as disappointment, illness, demotivation and burden. Souza and Moulin (2014) also concluded that work is important in the material and symbolic structuring of the lives of public servants, its meaning being associated with survival, autonomy, independence,

social integration, personal fulfillment and existence itself.

Despite the diversity of use of the terminologies adopted in the researches that deal with this theme, starting from an epistemological social constructionist approach, the present study defends the idea that meanings and senses of work refer to two distinct and interdependent constructs and, thus, it is worth clarifying that the variable of interest considered here was the senses of the work.

Job motivation and satisfaction

The themes of motivation and job satisfaction have been attracting the attention of management scholars since the 1930s, when the organizational models proposed by Taylor and Fayol were put to the test and the human factor within organizations started to be valued (Lima, Vala, & Monteiro, 1988; Marqueze & Moreno, 2005; Pinto, Mariano, & Moraes, 2011). While those two theorists were moving towards the motivation and satisfaction of workers through premiums and wage improvements, it was from the studies of Elton Mayo, in his well-known Hawthorne effect, between the years 1927 and 1932, that the workers passed "to be considered in a more humane way, with their own wishes and goals" (Pinto et al., 2011, p. 3).

Since then, several theories and models have emerged to discuss the motivation and satisfaction of workers and, as with the meanings and senses of work, the two terms are often used interchangeably in organizational studies. However, for Coda (1997), motivation refers to a direct or intrinsic energy, linked to the meaning and nature of the work itself, while satisfaction refers to an indirect and extrinsic energy, linked to aspects such as salary, recognition, leadership and other conditions that, in the view of the employee, must be met by the work environment. Along the same lines, Archer (1997) states that motivation is an inclination towards action that originates in a reason (need), while satisfaction is the fulfillment or elimination of that need. Based on the conceptual distinction presented, it can be considered that only satisfaction is able to receive influences from the environment, which is why it was adopted in this study.

Although it has been studied for so long, there is still no consensus on the concept of job satisfaction, not even on its theoretical models or on the factors that determine it (Lima, Vala, & Monteiro, 1988; Martinez & Paraguay, 2003). However, all approaches agree that job satisfaction is a central theme for organizational psychology and that research on its predictors has relevant practical consequences for organizations (Hauff, Richter, & Tressin, 2015). In this way, several researchers have been dedicating efforts to point out which factors would be capable of influencing various aspects of the worker's organizational and personal life, such as health, quality of life, behavior, productivity, absenteeism rates and the number of accidents at work, among others (Aziri, 2011; Martinez & Paraguay, 2003).

For Archer (1997), for example, there are basically seven factors of satisfaction and counter-satisfaction capable of influencing an individual's behavior at work: i) invigorating factors, related to the working environment, hygiene and safety conditions and the work itself; ii) exchange factors, related to the exchange between people in work situations; iii) incentive factors, related to rewards and compensation; iv) driving factors, related to existing laws, rules and orders; v) intake factors, related to the internal consumption of the body, such as food, medical and hospital assistance; vi) influencing factors, related to leadership and authority; and vii) inspirational factors, related to learning, training and development.

In a survey conducted with different Brazilian organizations in the public and private sectors, Coda (1997) concluded that factors related to the nature of the work performed, identification

with the organization and interpersonal relationships in the workplace are the most commonly identified as a source of satisfaction, while factors related to salary policy, recognition, the management model adopted, the communication process and the quality of management are commonly identified as generating dissatisfaction.

More recently, Vespasiano and Mendes (2017) were concerned with the study of job satisfaction of technical-administrative employees at a federal university, concluding that the factors directly related to the satisfaction of these employees were linked to the boss, colleagues and the nature of the work itself, such as the treatment and professional recognition received from the boss, the friendship, collaboration and trust of co-workers, the variety and interest in the tasks performed. On the other hand, the dissatisfaction factors were related to promotions and salaries received, such as the promotion policy, the volume of work and the valorization of the training and efforts shown in the activities performed, issues that, as the authors point out, go beyond university management.

Siqueira (2008) states that, despite the various mutations suffered in the conception of job satisfaction over the years, the constitutive dimensions of the construct have not undergone major changes, maintaining five main ones, namely: satisfaction with salary, co-workers, management, promotions and work. Based on these five theoretical dimensions of the concept, the author developed and validated an instrument for measuring job satisfaction, called the Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS), which was also chosen to compose the questionnaire used in this research.

In view of the above, it is clear how controversial the study on job satisfaction can be, with the same factors sometimes appearing as conditions for satisfaction and sometimes as sources of job dissatisfaction. This is because such factors depend on the environment and working conditions, as well as on the personal assessment of the worker (Marqueze & Moreno, 2005), a fact that highlights the care that must be taken in generalizing studies on this topic. Therefore, Brown, Charlwood and Spencer (2012) point out that the use of job satisfaction measures has been questioned as to their real usefulness and ability to contribute to organizational studies and argue that quantitative research on job satisfaction must also be accompanied by qualitative research methods, so that it is possible to interpret the reasons that lead workers to satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their work. And it was on this path that this research followed.

3 METHODOLOGY

Considering the proposed objective, in this study the use of mixed methods research was chosen, in which the researcher bases their investigation on the assumption that the collection of different types of data improves the understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2007). In addition, this was a descriptive study, whose main objective consists of describing the characteristics of a given phenomenon to identifying the existence of relationships between variables (Gil, 2008).

Due to the accessibility criterion, a Federal University was chosen to carry out the research, located in the interior of Minas Gerais, with the population of interest in the study being the technical-administrative servants in education located in the largest of its campuses. For the collection of quantitative data, a questionnaire structured in three sections was used: sociodemographic data; senses of work, through the Meaningful Work Scale (MWS); and job satisfaction, through the Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS). To measure the responses, the questionnaire presented a five-point Likert scale. We chose to use non-probabilistic sampling which, despite demonstrating technical disadvantages in relation to probabilistic sampling, can satisfactorily meet the objectives of a study where there is no desire or need to generalize population parameters or where the total population is not available (Cooper & Schindler, 2003).

Regarding the Meaningful Work Scale, adapted and validated in Brazil by Bendassolli and Borges-Andrade (2011), it is worth clarifying that this instrument presents twenty-four questions capable of understanding the meanings of work from six dimensions, namely: i) social utility of work; ii) work ethics; iii) autonomy at work; iv) development and learning at work; v) quality of relationships at work and vi) expressiveness and identification at work. In addition, the scale also presents a question regarding the absolute importance attributed by the individual to work. For the analysis of the answers obtained in the questionnaire, it is assumed that the more people positively evaluate the presence of certain characteristics at work, the more sense they find in it (Bendassolli & Borges-Andrade, 2011).

The Job Satisfaction Scale, in turn, built and validated by Siqueira (2008), presents twenty-five questions that assess job satisfaction from five theoretical dimensions of the concept, namely: i) satisfaction with colleagues from job; ii) satisfaction with the salary; iii) satisfaction with management; iv) satisfaction with the nature of the work and v) satisfaction with the promotions. According to the author, the interpretation of the results considers that the higher the value of the average score of each dimension, the greater the degree of satisfaction of the individual with that dimension of their work.

The 726 TAE servers that comprised the population of interest were invited to answer the questionnaire and, after two months, 186 questionnaires were received, representing a return rate of approximately 26%. As for the collection of qualitative data, based on a sampling by quotas based on the level of classification of the respondents' positions in the questionnaire, 10 servers were conveniently chosen to participate in the interviews.

The data collected in the first stage of the research were tabulated and subjected to statistical analysis using the IBM® SPSS®Statistics program, version 22. At first, a descriptive analysis of these data was made, which, according to Barbetta (2003), allows exploring and evidencing relevant information from a set of values of a given variable, based on measures of central tendency and dispersion. Subsequently, correlation and regression analyzes were performed, which allowed to assess the strength of association between the dimensions of these two constructs and the predictive power of the senses on job satisfaction.

In turn, the interviews carried out in the second stage of the research were analyzed in the light of the techniques of content analysis, a set of techniques of analysis of communications that aims to obtain, through systematic procedures and objectives of description of the content of messages, indicators that allow the inference of knowledge related to the conditions of production/reception of these messages (Bardin, 2002).

4 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Sample profiles

Regarding the profile of the questionnaire respondents, it was observed that 53.8% of the participants were male, while 46.2% were female. The age group of approximately 62% of the respondents was up to 40 years old and, regarding marital status, 47.8% of them declared themselves married/cohabited.

The high qualification index of the surveyed civil servants drew attention, with 34.4% having specialization, 34.9% masters and 5.4% doctorates, especially when compared to the fact that the majority of these public servants occupy positions of level D (43.5%) and E (38.7%), whose minimum education requirements are high school and higher education, respectively. In addition, it was

observed that almost 76% of the sample worked as an effective employee of the institution for 10 years or less, representing a sample of relatively new servers within the institution, and that 58.6% of the servers were located in the same sector for 5 years or less.

Finally, in relation to the activities performed by the public servants, approximately 51% declared to carry out administrative activities, while the remaining 49% declared to carry out activities directly related to the academic area, such as teaching laboratories, unit directors and department secretaries and course collegiate boards.

In turn, with regard to the sample of employees participating in the interviews, it is noteworthy that five men and five women were interviewed, most of them under 30 years old and with administrative activities. Half of the sample said they were single, while the other half said they were married or in a stable relationship. Regarding the positions held, two occupants of level C positions were interviewed, four employees with level D positions and four employees with level E positions.

Statistical analyzes and their interpretations

In order to investigate a possible relationship between the constructs sense of work and job satisfaction, before starting the statistical analyzes of correlation and regression, it was necessary to examine the normality and homogeneity of the data variance, in order to choose the most suitable parametric or non-parametric methods for the sample. For this, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests and the Levene test, respectively, presented in Table 1, were performed. It is worth clarifying that the variables whose names begin with SE refer to the six dimensions of the senses of work, as proposed by the MWS, while the variables with names beginning in SA refer to the five dimensions of job satisfaction, as proposed by JSS. The variables "sentidogeral" and "satisfaçãogeral" refer to the average scores achieved by the senses of work and job satisfaction, respectively.

Table 1 - Tests of normality and homogeneity of variance with the sample data.

| Variables | Test of Normality | | | Test of Homogeneity of Variance | | | |
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] Statistic	df	Sig.	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
SEutilidade	,192	186	,000	,185	1	184	,668
SEética	,115	186	,000	,712	1	184	,400
SEautonomia	,107	186	,000	2,294	1	184	,132
SEdesenvolvimento	,135	186	,000	1,319	1	184	,252
SErelações	,149	186	,000	1,398	1	184	,239
SEidentificação	,106	186	,000	,998	1	184	,319
SAcolegas	,167	186	,000	1,884	1	184	,172
SAsalário	,103	186	,000	2,701	1	184	,102
SAchefia	,115	186	,000	2,537	1	184	,113
SAnatureza	,139	186	,000	2,242	1	184	,136
SApromoções	,086	186	,002	1,878	1	184	,172
sentidogeral	,042	186	,200*	,364	1	184	,547
satisfaçãogeral	,065	186	,056	2,388	1	184	,124

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
[a]. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

Source: Research data.

Considering the significance level of 5% adopted in this study, it appears that only the variables "Average score of work sense" (sentidogeral) and "Average score of job satisfaction" (satisfaçãogeral) showed a distribution close to normal, with p> 0.05. Regarding the Levene test, all variables showed homogeneity of variance, with p> 0.05. Such results were fundamental in the choice of the statistical procedures used in the present study, given that parametric tests can only be used when the conditions of normality and homogeneity of variance are applied, whereas non-parametric tests are used when such conditions are not met. Thus, for the analysis of the possible relationships between the dimensions of the senses of work and job satisfaction, it was decided to use Spearman's correlation, while for the analysis of the predictive power of senses of work on job satisfaction, simple linear regression was chosen.

According to Field (2009), the correlation is a measure of the linear relationship between variables, that is, the extent to which changes in one variable correspond to similar changes in the other variable. As explained by Cooper and Schindler (2003), the correlation can be positive (+), when the variables go together and as one increases the other also increases, or negative (-), when the large values of one variable are associated with small values of the other variable. In addition, the strength of association between variables is given by the correlation coefficient, provided that it is statistically significant, with coefficients between ± 0.01 and ± 0.20 indicating almost imperceptible strength of association between the variables, between ± 0.21 and ± 0.40 indicate small association strength, between ± 0.41 and ± 0.70 indicate moderate association strength, between ± 0.71 and ± 0.90 represent high association strength and, finally, coefficients between ± 0.91 and ± 1.00 represent a very strong association between the variables (Hair Junior, Babin, Money, & Samouel, 2005).

Therefore, it was decided to correlate the six dimensions of sense of work — social utility of work, work ethics, work autonomy, work development and learning, quality of work relationships and expressiveness and identification at work — with the five dimensions of job satisfaction — with colleagues, with salary, with bosses, with the nature of the job and with promotions, as well as with the average job satisfaction score itself. This procedure aimed to facilitate the approach to the subject at the time of the interviews.

The results found through Spearman's correlation are shown in Table 2. As it turns out, among the dimensions were found three correlations with high association strength, sixteen correlations with moderate strength, ten correlations with small strength and a correlation of light strength, almost imperceptible. In addition, between the dimensions of sense of work and the average job satisfaction score, five associations of moderate strength and only one of small but defined strength were found.

Table 2 - Correlation coefficients between the dimensions of sense of work and job satisfaction.

Spearman's Correlation	Job satisfaction dimension					
	With colleagues	With salary	With bosses	With the nature of the job	With promotions	Average score
Social utility of work	,308**	,079	,289**	,436**	,226**	,317**
Work ethics	,670**	,290**	,646**	,539**	,488**	,657**
Work autonomy	,467**	,297**	,461**	,529**	,345**	,512**
Work development and learning	,556**	,256**	,506**	,764**	,508**	,627**
Quality of work relationships	,803**	,238**	,548**	,521**	,322**	,592**
Expressiveness and identification at work	,473**	,310**	,466**	,731**	,540**	,631**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research data.

The dimension of work senses that obtained the highest correlation coefficient with the average job satisfaction score was "work ethics" (r = 0.657, p < 0.01), which calculation of the determination coefficient (r2 = 0.432) demonstrated that 43.2% of the variability in job satisfaction could be explained by the perception of justice, equity and respect in the work environment. Going further into this dimension, the strength of the correlation between work ethics and satisfaction with colleagues (r = 0.670, p < 0.01) and satisfaction with the boss (r = 0.646, p < 0.01) are highlighted, which values point to the importance that an ethical and respectful work environment has on the individuals' levels of satisfaction with the work team.

Also among the interviewees, the size of the influence that ethics and respect are capable of exerting on the level of satisfaction of the public servants was highlighted, whose relationship was pointed out as obvious by one of them. In this way, the damage that a disrespectful work environment, permeated by intrigue, coercion and harassment is capable of providing both to the server's own person and to the group's performance can be seen. According to Nunes et al. (2017), the existence of unethical practices within the university, such as exposure to moral harassment, excessive workloads and injustices in daily work, awakens a negative sense of work in the servants.

> Ah, I think it interferes a lot and I think that one of the big problems at the university is this issue of interpersonal relationships, we are not trained for that.[...] each one fighting over things that are not theirs, the lack of a more community-based thought, that it belongs to everyone, that we have to do things for the good of the organization and not for our own good, I think this is missing and then it ends up creating these lack of respect, one teacher does not talk to another, a technician does not ask for help from the other and then creates an all bad environment, so to speak. [...] it ends up disturbing the whole, the total. (E01)

The second correlation with the highest coefficient between the dimensions of sense and the average satisfaction score was "expressiveness and identification with work" (r = 0.631, p < 0.01), whose determination coefficient (r² = 0.398) points out that almost 40% of the variability in job sat-

isfaction is explained by the perception that the server has to perform tasks that arouse interest, in an environment that allows them to express themselves and make themselves heard. Freedom of expression and identification had already been identified as a source of satisfaction by Coda (1997).

With even greater strength of association, the high correlation between this dimension and satisfaction with the nature of the work also stands out ($r = 0.731$, $p < 0.01$), which suggests a direct and positive relationship between the identification of the servers with the work they perform and their level of satisfaction with the opportunity to develop activities that please and absorb, in which they are able to apply their own skills and abilities.

When asked about the influence that identification with work would be able to exert on satisfaction, most interviewees stated that they perceive a direct relationship between such factors, claiming that the fact of developing tasks in which they are interested, of recognizing themselves in the work they do and to establish a link beyond the financial with the work and with the institution itself makes the servers have more satisfactory experiences in their work:

> As much as we have the rational part, that we need to work because we need to earn money, because we need to eat, in short, for basic needs, eventually they will be addressed and then you have to create some other kind of bond with that, to make sense of it, and identification with the institution, with what you do, it is very important, it has to exist. (E02)

The third correlation with the highest coefficient was between the dimension "development and learning at work" and the average satisfaction score ($r = 0.627$, $p < 0.01$), which interpretation of the determination coefficient ($r^2 = 0.393$) suggests that almost 40% of the variability in the general perception of job satisfaction can also be explained by the opportunities that the job offers for employees to improve and develop their skills. Furthermore, between this dimension and satisfaction with the nature of the work, a high correlation strength correlation was identified ($r = 0.764$, $p < 0.01$), which points an even more expressive relationship between the level of satisfaction of the server in relation to the variability and complexity of the tasks performed and their perception of how much that work provides them with personal and/or professional growth and improvement. This function of work as a producer of professional and personal growth was also evidenced in the studies by Nunes et al. (2017), Lima and Silva (2014) and Souza and Moulin (2014).

In the interviews, the issue of development and learning at work was approached from the perspective of opportunities and training incentives offered by the institution and its influence on job satisfaction. About this, the interviewees were unanimous in pointing out that, although there is a lack of more constant training actions and more directed to the particularities of each sector, the simple fact that the institution encourages and helps its servants to seek greater training is already emerging as a factor of satisfaction, since they see it as a recognition and a counterpart, on the part of the institution, to the effort they dedicate to it. Still, the interviewees stressed that, in addition to improvements related to their own work, training also provides personal improvement:

> Look, I think it does collaborate. Yes, cases are difficult because each sector has a specific demand and, sometimes, the training is not so focused on that demand, but just because management shows that it is willing to train technicians, they already feel a little more valued, you know. Even if I didn't get that training right, but it's already something, I think it has a strong connection, I think this is important. (E08)

The dimension "quality of relationships at work" also showed a moderate correlation coefficient in relation to the average satisfaction score ($r = 0.592$, $p < 0.01$), which interpretation of the determination coefficient ($r^2 = 0.350$) indicates that 35% of the variability in the degree of satisfac-

tion of the servant with the job can be explained by the perception of working in a work environment where there is trust, collaboration and respect between colleagues. According to Souza and Moulin (2014), work can be seen as an operator of social integration, since it plays a fundamental role in the establishment of affective bonds and in the exchange of experiences. Entering the dimensions of job satisfaction, there was a correlation with a high strength of association between that dimension and satisfaction with colleagues (r = 0.803, p < 0.01), suggesting that the perception of a friendly and collaborative work environment is directly related to the satisfaction of the social needs of the individuals inserted there.

During the interviews, servants were asked whether and how interpersonal relationships were able to influence their levels of job satisfaction. It was possible to verify, as previously mentioned, that relations with co-workers are directly related to the level of satisfaction of the servant, so that when there is dialogue and collaboration in the work environment, the servant tends to feel more satisfied. On the other hand, if such collaboration is not so evident, causing an impression on the servers that they need to do the task of that colleague who does not appear to be properly committed to the work, this becomes a problem with immediate consequences on job satisfaction in general:

> This is the basics, having coworkers who support you, who give you ideas and who sometimes help you when you have a brief moment of making bad decisions is too important, understand? The friendly, peaceful atmosphere, in that I have always been very lucky. [...] And this is important, important because you create a mentality where people are not competing with each other, they can identify where the problems come from, together, this is more important than you are in a dispute and everyone ends up losing. (E05)

The dimension of "autonomy at work", in turn, proved to be capable of explaining 26.2% of the variability in the average satisfaction of servants with work (r = 0.512, p < 0.01; r^2 = 0.262). Also when related to the dimensions of job satisfaction, it showed a moderate association strength with satisfaction with the nature of the job (r = 0.529, p < 0.01), with satisfaction with colleagues (r = 0.467, p < 0 , 01) and with satisfaction with the head (r = 0.461, p < 0 .01). It is clear, therefore, that a work environment that allows the servers to control their activities and exercise their own discernment over them is directly associated with the level of satisfaction of that servers with the team with which they live and with the tasks they perform. Autonomy has been pointed out since Hackman and Oldham (1975) as one of the fundamental characteristics for meaningful work. As Morin (2001) suggests, the possibility for the worker to solve problems during the work and to exercise their judgment in making decisions regarding their activities reinforces their feeling of competence and personal effectiveness.

About this, the interviewees pointed out that, in fact, when they do not have the autonomy to perform those tasks that fit them, this ends up causing dissatisfaction and demotivation towards work, since they see their decision-making power curtailed and fail to achieve the final result of their activities or implement new ideas that could contribute to the good performance of the sector. To this, the interviewees attributed the university's own "bureaucracy", which ends up undermining freedom of action, and the fact that sometimes they are not heard by their bosses and end up just following orders:

> This is one of the things that influences my satisfaction, negatively. How far can I go, because I always have to take my opinion, take my thought, my experience to another person who does not always agree with me. And then I have to, even though I know [...] what is best, sometimes I cannot adopt what I think is best, what I see and which I am sure is better, because we have to follow the boss' order. (E09)

Finally, the dimension "social utility of work" showed a small, but defined, correlation coefficient with the average job satisfaction score (r = 0.317, p < 0.01), whose determination coefficient (r^2 = 0.100) indicates that only 10% of the variability in the level of satisfaction of the servant with the work can be explained by the mission and the objectives that the work aims to achieve. However, when related to the dimensions of job satisfaction, a moderate strength coefficient (r = 0.436, p < 0.01) was found between social utility and the nature of work, indicating that there is an association between the perception of carrying out work that aims to contribute to society and the level of satisfaction with the type of tasks performed.

Despite the small coefficient found in the statistical analysis, through the interviews it was possible to verify that the perception of carrying out work capable of positively contributing to society does help the servants to feel more satisfied with the work they perform. Although a large part of the activities performed by administrative technicians can be classified as middle activities, with an auxiliary character to teaching, research and extension, most respondents claimed that even this indirect impact caused by their activities to society as a whole is capable of making them more satisfied with their work. Thus, the interviewees pointed out that the fact of contributing to the academic life and the students' own training, in some cases, and being grateful and recognized for this, ends up providing them with satisfactory work experiences. As Dejours (2012) indicates, this perception of the interviewees reinforces the recognition of their own work capacity derived from the judgment of utility conferred by the beneficiaries of the work, that is, students and society.

> I think that, while it is pleasant for us to work on training, even some become friends of ours [...] we are kind of grateful, satisfied, for having helped that person to find a direction in life, to determine a direction, a professional activity in which the person will feel happy, will develop their work. So, I think this is the biggest factor, which is a very large human factor that the public service takes, [...] the gratitude of those people that you have directly or indirectly helped, they recognize in you part of that process that helped them. So this is rewarding. (E03)

On the other hand, the interviewee's speech E05 stood out for precisely pointing out the dissatisfaction that the lack of a direct return from the institution on the local community can cause. According to this interviewee, despite considering that their work is important for the academic community with which they deal directly, the distance that still exists between the university and the local community ends up causing them dissatisfaction, since they consider that the institution should seek more effective ways of bringing in the citizens of the city itself, who do not realize or do not enjoy the benefits that the institution should be able to provide them:

> Somehow yes, but I feel that the niches of society that are favored by my type of work are very restricted. Because the university itself, although it has been a little more democratized in recent times, it is still limited to a very, very privileged and very small section of the population, so few people feel that. And the community around the university, sometimes, I see that they are a little afraid to occupy university spaces, to use university structures, when they should be invited into the university, to participate effectively, and at the same time, the walls of the university are walls that are much more symbolic than physical. So, from the moment that a giant part of the city is totally separated from the goods that the university can provide for it and that it should provide, I do not feel much satisfaction in this regard. But for the people in here I think it's interesting, it's good. (E05)

Comparing the results found in this research with that developed by Pinto et al. (2011), which also had among its objectives to analyze possible correlations between the constructs sense of work and job satisfaction, it is clear that the relationships found here were more strongly associated. This is because the study of those authors identified only three correlations between the

dimensions of each construct, one of which is small but defined, and two of light strength, almost imperceptible. Despite having made use of instruments different from those used here, the results achieved by them demonstrated a positive relationship, albeit of low intensity, between the role of work and satisfaction with recognition ($r = 0.239$, $p < 0.01$) and with satisfaction with accomplishment ($r = 0.181$, $p < 0.05$) and between the centrality of work and satisfaction with physical work conditions ($r = 0.182$, $p < 0.05$).

As Field (2009) points out, it is worth noting that although the correlation coefficients (r) and determination (r^2) are useful measures to assess the relationship between variables and the degree of importance of an effect of one variable on the other, they cannot be used to infer any cause and effect relationships. Therefore, despite the analysis of the correlation coefficients between the dimensions presented here, they suggest a statistically significant relationship between the senses of work and job satisfaction, it was necessary to resort to the simple linear regression technique in an attempt to achieve the general objective of this study, seeking a possible effect of the senses of work on job satisfaction. Hair Junior et al. (2005) state that, although bivariate regression and correlation analysis are the same, only the regression technique is able to examine the information about the relationship between the independent variable and a dependent variable to, from there, make predictions about its behavior.

For the linear regression analysis, therefore, the least squares method was used, the default method of the SPSS program, which consists of finding "the best possible line to describe the data set, minimizing the differences between the model adjusted to the data and the data themselves" (Field, 2009, p. 160). Table 3 provides the summary of the model with the values calculated for R and R^2, in which it is possible to verify that the correlation between the sense of work and job satisfaction showed a high association strength ($r = 0.744$, $p < 0.001$), the sense of work being able to explain 55.4% of the variation in job satisfaction. This means that, although there are probably other variables capable of explaining the variation in the level of satisfaction of the employee with the work, only the sense of work is sufficient to explain 55.4% of this variation and, therefore, all other variables would not influence more than 44.6% of it.

Table 3 - Summary of the regression model.

Model Summary			
Model	R	R Square	Durbin-Watson
1	,744[a]	,554	1,762

[a] Predictors: (Constant), Average score of work sense.

Source: Research data.

The output that reports the analysis of variance (ANOVA), presented in Table 4, presents the result of comparing the amount of explained variance with the variance not explained by the model. Considering the value obtained from $F = 228.42$, $p < 0.001$, it can be said that the regression model proved to be highly significant when using the sense of work to predict the levels of satisfaction of servants with work.

Table 4 - ANOVA summary of the regression model.

		ANOVAᵃ				
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	45,790	1	45,790	228,422	,000ᵇ
	Residual	36,885	184	,200		
	Total	82,675	185			

ᵃ. Dependent Variable: Average score of job satisfaction
ᵇ. Predictors: (Constant), Average score of work sense

Source: Research data.

The coefficient table, shown in Table 5, provides details of the model parameters that, in linear regression, approximates the equation of the line, $Yi = b0 + b1Xi + ε$. Analyzing the parameters obtained with the model, the value of the constant b0 was 0.236 and its non-significant value (p > 0.05) suggests that this parameter is not used for predictive purposes. The value of 0.819 reached by b1 in the model means that with each increase of one point in the perception of the servants as to the sense of the work they perform, their level of satisfaction with that work increases by 0.819, an interpretation that is valid due to the level of significance obtained by this coefficient (p < 0.001).

Table 5 - Table of coefficients of the regression model.

		Coefficientsᵃ			
	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error		
1	(Constant)	,236	,215	1,098	,273
	Average score of work sense	,819	,054	15,114	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Average score of job satisfaction

Source: Research data.

Finally, to prove the validity of the regression model obtained, it was necessary to test the assumptions of normality of the residuals, absence of serial autocorrelation and homoscedasticity. The validation of such assumptions was performed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Durbin-Watson and Pesarán-Pesarán tests, respectively, whose results met the three assumptions satisfactorily.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study aimed to analyze a possible influence of the senses of work on the levels of job satisfaction and did this from a sample of technical-administrative employees of a Federal University, located in the interior of Minas Gerais. Statistical analyzes of the data obtained in the questionnaires revealed the existence of moderate forces of association, mostly between the dimensions of work senses and the average job satisfaction score, while linear regression revealed a genuine effect of the senses of work on job satisfaction rates. Such findings found support in the reports obtained during the interviews, in which the employees pointed out, in general, that the identification with the work performed in an environment that values aspects such as ethics, autonomy, relationships and learning ends up directly and positively influencing the level of satisfaction with this work. With that, it became possible to conclude that the perception of work with sense is able to influence the

level of satisfaction of the servants surveyed with the work.

Among the limitations of this study, we highlight the sample used in the statistical analyzes that, because it is not statistically representative, did not allow generalizations about the results found, the number and representativeness of the employees interviewed in the second stage of the research, unable to cover all the diversity of activities performed by the employees within the institution, in addition to the choice of simple linear regression to assess the predictive power of the senses on job satisfaction, since it is expected that other constructs are also able to exert effects on the perception of job satisfaction, such as, for example, organizational culture (Pereira Filho, Florencio, & Leone, 2014), organizational changes (Marques, Borges, & Reis, 2016), individual's overqualification and learning (Weymer, Maciel, & Castor, 2014).

Despite its limitations, however, it is still considered that the research presented here can positively contribute to the development of the area of organization theory, as well as assisting the people management sector of the institution in question to update and develop policies aimed at improving its technical-administrative staff. Finally, this study opens the way for new research to seek to further deepen the understanding of the senses and job satisfaction, either by including in the analysis the teaching staff, which performance directly related to the core activity of the universities may present new and interesting perspectives on the themes, either by replicating the study in other federal institutes, seeking to point out possible geographic and cultural interferences in the perceptions of servants, or by investigating and inserting new constructs capable of exerting significant effects on job satisfaction, in order to improve the model presented here.

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1. Definition of research problem	√	√
2. Development of hypotheses or research questions (empirical studies)	√	√
3. Development of theoretical propositions (theoretical work)		
4. Theoretical foundation / Literature review	√	
5. Definition of methodological procedures	√	√
6. Data collection	√	
7. Statistical analysis	√	
8. Analysis and interpretation of data	√	√
9. Critical revision of the manuscript	√	√
10. Manuscript writing	√	
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