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## **FACTORS THAT IMPACT THE WILLINGNESS TO STAY IN ORGANIZATIONS**

Mariana Sofia das Neves Cruz

Dissertation submitted as partial requirement for the conferral of  
Master of Science in Business Administration

Supervisor:

Prof. Álvaro Dias, Invited Professor, ISCTE Business School  
Marketing, Strategy and Operations Department

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“I stand  
On the sacrifices  
Of a million women before me  
Thinking  
*What can I do  
To make this mountain taller  
So the women after me  
Can see further”*

**Rupi Kaur**

## **Acknowledgments**

To Bárbara Pascoal, Rafaela Pereira and Filipa Castelão, for all the motivation, support, and help throughout this process. This dissertation wouldn't be finished if it weren't for you.

To Professor Álvaro Dias, for the patience and the mentorship. For simplifying the process and always making the time to help me get this dissertation done.

To my Parents, for the unconditional love and endless support. For being my safety net. For pushing me to go further. For nurturing my dreams. This achievement belongs to the three of us, I could never have done this without you. I owe you everything. And more.

To my younger Sister and my younger Brother, for making me laugh every day and for inspiring me to always do better.

To Margarida Carvajal, for never letting me give up (and I wanted to, so many times). For always telling me that I was almost there, even when I hadn't written a single page yet. You are my person and I could not do life without you.

To Joana Pires, for taking care of my mental health as if it were yours. For answering whenever I call. For listening and validating my anxieties. For making me breathe when I'm spiralling. You keep me sane and you inspire me.

To Inês Gonçalves, for understanding my (way too many) absences. For challenging me to think ahead. For reminding me of the important things when I forget them. For our bubble where we can talk about anything. Always together.

To Miguel Pais, for knowing me in euphoria and for respecting my silences. For comprehending that you couldn't ask about the thesis. For always saying "let's go" whenever I said I needed to stop and only exist. We should get married someday.

To all my friends, family, and co-workers, for the patience, inspiration and support.

To music, my only companion during so many lonely and hard-working hours.

To all the professionals that responded to this questionnaire, for their contribution to this research.

For my grandfather João, who wouldn't quite understand what this means but would still be so proud.

## **Abstract**

The competitive context of globalization is arising some complex issues for companies. One of the main problems is high turnover rates, that are affecting negatively organizations' results. The willingness to stay in a company can be affected by numerous variables and, understanding these variables can be crucial for the sustainability of any business.

This research aims to address and measure willingness to stay within a company, understand if and how much it is influenced by organizational culture, specifically by commitment, happiness, justice and loyalty. That is accomplished through formulating and testing of seven research hypothesis.

For that purpose we applied a questionnaire, preceded by a pre-test procedure, to a sample composed by any person, currently employed or not, having received a total of 284 valid answers.

Our results reveal that Willingness to Stay is positively affected by Organizational Commitment, Organizational Happiness and, Organizational Loyalty.

The results obtained also indicate that, although Organizational Justice doesn't affect directly Willingness to Stay, it acts has a mediator in the other three variables. These results point towards an indirect relationship between Organizational Justice and Willingness to Stay established through Organizational Commitment, Organizational Happiness and, Organizational Loyalty.

**Keywords:** Organizational Commitment; Organizational Happiness; Organizational Justice; Organizational Loyalty; Willingness to Stay

### **JEL Classification System:**

M10 – Business Administration: General

M14 – Business Administration: Corporate Culture; Diversity; Social Responsibility

## **Resumo**

O contexto competitivo da globalização está a gerar questões complexas para as empresas. Um dos principais problemas são as taxas de rotatividade altas, que estão a afetar negativamente os resultados das organizações. A intenção de permanecer numa empresa pode ser afetada por inúmeras variáveis e entender essas variáveis pode ser crucial para a sustentabilidade de qualquer negócio.

Esta pesquisa tem como objetivo analisar e medir a Intenção de Permanecer numa organização, entender se e o quanto esta intenção é influenciada pela cultura organizacional, especificamente por compromisso, felicidade, justiça e lealdade. Neste caso, o estudo foi realizado através da formulação e testagem de sete hipóteses de pesquisa.

Para o efeito aplicou-se um questionário, precedido de um pré-teste, a uma amostra composta por qualquer pessoa, atualmente empregada ou não, tendo-se obtido um total de 284 respostas válidas.

Os nossos resultados revelaram que a Intenção de Permanecer numa organização é positivamente afetada por Compromisso Organizacional, Felicidade Organizacional e Lealdade Organizacional.

Os resultados obtidos também indicam que, embora a Justiça Organizacional não afete diretamente a Intenção de Permanecer, atua como agente mediador nas outras três variáveis em estudo. Os resultados apontam para uma relação indireta entre Justiça Organizacional e Intenção de Permanecer numa organização, estabelecida através de Compromisso Organizacional, Felicidade Organizacional e Lealdade Organizacional.

**Palavras-chave:** Compromisso Organizacional; Felicidade Organizacional; Justiça Organizacional; Lealdade Organizacional; Intenção de Permanecer

### **JEL Classification System:**

M10 – Business Administration: General

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## **1. Introduction**

Business research have studied the relationship between turnover and organizational performance for decades (Revilla, Rodriguez-Prado, & Simón, 2020) and how this impact directly the results and performance of companies since “organizations with high employee retention rates enjoy excellence in service design and delivery which is imperative to attain the organizational sustainability goals” (Mannan & Kashif, 2019: 22).

Turnover intentions are directly influenced by the employee’s perception of the organization since “in a supportive work environment, employees are more likely to develop favourable attitudes toward the workplace and are less likely to quit their job” (Phungsoonthorn & Charoensukmongkol, 2019: 196).

The literature supports that the concept of willingness to stay within a company can be influenced by numerous factors such as work conditions, work-life balance, development opportunities, relationships with co-workers, performance, awards (Andrade & Westover, 2019) which gives this research important insights when predicting how some values, if practiced by companies, can have a positive impact on the turnover rates and, consequently, on the success of the organization as a whole.

The relation between a strong organizational culture and the desire of staying in a certain organization has been proved by numerous researches (Rao & Kunja, 2019), but the factors that contribute to development of organizational culture have not been explored enough in the literature. The present investigation emerges as an attempt to fulfil this gap and seeks to understand how much certain qualitative factors have on an employee’s perspective or desire to remain in the present organization.

In order to achieve this objective, we’ll start with a review of the existing literature regarding Organizational Commitment, Organizational Happiness, Organizational Justice, and Organizational Loyalty. The literature review will be the basis to enunciate some hypothesis and construct a questionnaire. After conducting the questionnaire, we’ll analyse the data obtained and cross the various variables. To finish, we’ll discuss the results, elaborate some conclusions regarding the findings, mentioning the limitations of the study and make suggestions for future studies as well.



## **2. Literature review**

In order to being able to provide a scientific and consistent conclusion to the research question, it's necessary to clarify the boundaries of the pillar concepts related with Willingness to Stay in an organization.

For the purpose of this investigation, the four factors chosen to determine willingness to stay are: Organizational Commitment; Organizational Happiness; Organizational Justice; and Organizational Loyalty.

### **2.1. Organizational Commitment**

The definition of organizational commitment evolved along with organizations to face technological developments, with direct implications on human capital management. Porter & Smith (1976) define organizational commitment as “relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization”. Deconstructing organizational commitment into three simpler factors: “(1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization’s goals and values; (2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization” (Mowday et al., 1979: 226).

By contrast, Stevens *et al.*, (1978) suggests that organizational commitment can be divided in two categories: (1) exchange approaches that “view commitment as an outcome of inducement/contribution transactions between the organization and member, with an explicit emphasis on the instrumentalities of membership as the primary determinant of the member's accrual of advantage or disadvantage in the ongoing process of exchange”; and (2) psychological approaches that describe “commitment as a more active and positive orientation toward the organization” (Morris & Sherman, 1981: 514).

According to the authors previously mentioned, the definition of organizational commitment is assumed as the phenomenon where “committed individuals tend to identify with the objectives and goals of their organizations and want to remain with their organizations”. Moreover, commitment in an organizational environment has also been associated with outcomes like satisfaction, performance, and reduced turnover (Hunt, Wood, & Chonko, 1989: 81).

Organizational commitment can also be considered as a three-dimensional concept: (1) the affective component of organizational commitment related to the employee's emotional attachment to the organization; (2) the continuance component refers to the costs when an employee leaves the organization; and (3) the normative component related to the feeling of obligation to remain with the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

When establishing a connection between organizational commitment and turnover, some contradicting conclusions have come up, resulting in two complete opposite arguments. According to Cavanaugh & Noe (1999), if an employee is committed, more career opportunities may arise and “as a result, stay a shorter period in the current organization” (Buhari, Yong, & Lee, 2020: 38). Yousaf et al. (2015) contradict this idea proving that a professional can be both committed to the organization and its own career and that don't implicate a lack of commitment towards the employer since “employees who are committed to the profession seek for opportunities in the current working place to further fulfil their professional goals; as a result, decision to leave the current organization is difficult” (Buhari et al., 2020: 39).

As individuals, career play a meaningful part regarding purpose and occupational meaning. Research suggest that “jobs with motivating characteristics, such as providing feedback and autonomy, would lead to autonomous work motivation” which implicates that motivated employees are correlated with higher levels of commitment (Ju, 2020: 5).

Employees that are engaged with their own work, consequently, develop a sense of commitment towards the organization. Khan (1990) defines work engagement as individuals that are “physically, cognitively, and emotionally invested in the work role” who tend to “experience more positive work affect and put forth greater effort, innovation, and creativity on behalf of the organization than their less engaged counterparts” (Weer & Greenhaus, 2020: 4). When an employee is engaged with the organization, its energy is focused on achieving the organization's goals.

Organizational commitment studies originated the concept of Affective Organizational Commitment (AOC) that “has been established as a consistent predictor of organizational outcomes such as job performance and turnover” (Tang & Vandenberghe, 2020: 3). The concept of AOC is relevant since it takes into account the emotional bond that an individual can establish with the organization which can result in a strong desire to contribute to the organization's achievements. Employees with high AOC embrace their responsibilities broadly and may get overwhelmed” (Tang & Vandenberghe, 2020b:).

Organizational commitment can also lead to intrapreneurial behaviour among individuals since “providing an entrepreneurial environment in companies strengthens organizational commitment” including the affective relationship that one can develop with the organization itself (Moghaddas, Tajafari, & Nowkarizi, 2020).

Management also plays an important role since the managers are the ones dealing with employees on a daily basis. How a company manages its own talent is fundamental to maintain the commitment feeling among employees since the relationship between the two parts impacts, not only on the compromise towards the organization, but also produces positives outcomes regarding innovation and performance (Meyers, 2020).

The bond of commitment is also developed through social pressure – both before and after an individual is hired by the organization. “After being hired by an organization, there is formal and informal socialization and pressure to bond to the organization” (Nalla, Akhtar, & Lambert, 2020: 3). When this phenomenon is happening, it’s possible that individual act in the organization’s best interest instead of their own due to a moral obligation that one might feel to repay the organization for the opportunity or the job itself (Nalla et al., 2020).

The concept of organizational commitment can be explained simply as “a way of accounting for people’s willingness to maintain organizational membership” (Husted, 2020: 5). It’s related with the personal identification of an individual towards the organization itself which implicates a social mechanism of control embedded in the value of commitment. (Husted, 2020).

In conclusion, commitment is a powerful way of manipulating the individual to the point of view of the organization, making it harder to leave (Salancik, 1977).

## **2.2. Organizational Happiness**

Management ideology has been defending that a happy employee is a productive employee since some researchers have reasons to believe that happiness and performance can be connected (Ledford Jr, 1999). Researchers were keen to accept this since it would “relieves us of any guilt we might feel for theory and research that otherwise would make us feel like an unwitting tool of either management or labour”. Although, the author defends that “it is pointless to try to make employees happier as a way of improving performance”, eliminating the arguments that increased happiness results in better performance (Ledford Jr, 1999: 27).

On the contrary, (Ramlall, 2008: 1582) defends “that the way people see their work is highly predictive of their own individual thriving and has positive implications for groups and organizations where they belong”. According to this author, organizational happiness should be one of the main concerns for leaders and managers at their own organizations.

Although, this idea has changed across time. Nowadays, one of the biggest concerns from managers and leaders regarding organizational culture is employees’ well-being since happy employees produce more and take fewer sick days. Organisations are now devoting “considerable organizational resources to enhancing employee well-being in various ways, from professional development and employee recognition practices to healthcare benefits” (Grant, Christianson, & Price, 2007).

Fisher (2010) defends that job satisfaction should be a happiness related variable. Other authors take a broader approach where organizational happiness has 3 dimensions: 1) work satisfaction is a set of attitudes instead of mere feeling towards the organization; 2) happiness at is not static since employees can be happy, sad or somewhere in between at work; 3) although happiness at a personal level can translate towards the organization, the contrary may not happen since organizational happiness depends on other factors (Ashkanasy, 2011).

Other researchers consider that happiness at work is crucial for employees’ well-being and organizations should promote positive feelings within the work hours since “the benefits for the organizations are highly significant” (Ramlall, 2008: 1583).

Organizational happiness is more important than one could imagine since it impacts directly both personal and company wise since happy people are more confident and willing to pursue goals (Teixeira & Vasque, 2020). Although, it can be hard for organizations to tackle all issues related with happiness since is “a predominantly subjective phenomenon, which tends to be more subordinated to psychological and sociocultural traits than to external factors (Teixeira & Vasque, 2020: 4) which means than happiness can be the overall perception of one’s life.

Employees with high levels of HAW (happiness at work) are capable of doing more in less time, which impacts directly the productivity which also implicates that a positive mindset at work is fundamental to establish sustainable work relationships, develop technical skills and increase the quality of communication between peers. “Happier employees are willing to give their best in an emotional state of passion and involvement, thus better exploiting their skills” (Salas-Vallina, Pozo-Hidalgo, & Gil-Monte, 2020: 3). These authors also reinforce the idea that organisations concerned with HAW should promote learning opportunities within the work

routine since it's important to invest in the development of employees' skills (Salas-Vallina et al., 2020).

The fact that the term 'happiness' has a philosophical essence increases the difficulty of defining what is, in fact, organizational happiness. The boundaries are fuzzy, and one might find it difficult to understand if the context is the right one. Psychological literature concludes that expressions such as (subjective) well-being, quality of life or satisfaction can be "considered to be loosely synonymous with happiness". Although, and taking into account that work is an occupational reality, "job satisfaction" seems to be a consensual equivalent to organizational happiness (Bednárová-Gibová, 2020: 4).

The main responsibility of the HAW lies on the managers or supervisors. "Managers now view themselves as having a 'responsibility for the wellbeing, and even happiness of workers, outside of the normal parameters of things like health and safety'" (Owler & Morrison, 2020: 136). Within quantitative research, fun at work promoted by organisations has been found to impact businesses, since the concept of 'fun' seems to be aligned with HAW since it affects positively both employee's productivity and wellbeing (Owler & Morrison, 2020).

Another aspect to consider regarding organizational happiness is the fact that managers can impact the happiness of each employee, so they need to maintain a balance between demanding effective productivity and asking for way too much tasks. Some authors alert that "a high level of job demands decreased employee happiness, which subsequently decreased employees' organizational commitment, task performance, and contextual performance, while increasing turnover intentions and counterproductive work behaviours" (Thompson & Bruk-Lee, 2020: 1).

HAW includes both pleasant judgements and experiences while spending time at the organizations. Some authors defend that the affective component is a balance between positive and negative effects in the work context and both negative and positive experiences can have different levels of intensity. "When it comes to the cognitive component of happiness at work, it reflects a person's appraisal of one's job in general evaluative judgments and beliefs about various facets of his/her work" (Basinska & Rozkwitalska, 2020: 3). The conclusion of these authors is quite straightforward: an individual is committed to a job that brings him/her satisfaction and might quit a dissatisfying one.

Some researchers consider that happiness can be referred to as subjective well-being, including negative emotions not found in happiness such as anger and sadness, while other

researchers defend that happy individuals normally experience more success than less happy individuals, and vice-versa since successful individuals at work will be happier than unsuccessful ones. (Edmondson & Matthews, 2020).

The idea that a happy worker is a productive worker has been around since 1930s when it was highlighted the importance of groups since “the behaviour of individuals at work strongly contributed to the generalized belief that a happy worker is more productive” (García-Buades, Peiró, Montañez-Juan, Kozusznik, & Ortiz-Bonnín, 2020: 1). Although, some authors are now considering this correlation as weak since the performance can also be affected by commitment, engagement or external factors. Satisfaction and performance can be an illusory correlation because unhappy workers can be productive and committed to the job while it’s possible that happy employees might not fulfil their tasks at their best.

### **2.3. Organizational Justice**

Organizational justice it's complex to define since it involves an abstract level of perception, and managers not always have been concerned with it. Lately, there has been an effort from managers to acknowledge justice issues within organizations since it has increased “the importance of the ideals of justice as a basic requirement for the effective functioning of organizations and the personal satisfaction of the individuals they employ” (Greenberg, 1990: 399).

However, acknowledging the broader sense of such a subjective concept involves diverse approaches. Greenberg (1990) presents a dual understanding of justice when he suggests distinguishing between two conceptualizations of justice: one that is focused on content like “the fairness of the end achieved with distributive justice approaches”; and another one focused on process like the fairness of the means used to achieve those ends, considered procedural justice approaches.

Although justice is commonly related with specific situations, it's often used in organizations' environment related issues, and correlates directly with the role of fairness towards employees. Moorman (1991: 845) states that “organizational justice is concerned with the ways in which employees determine if they have been treated fairly in their jobs and the ways in which those determinations influence other work-related variables”.

Most of times it's upon to employees to consider if the organization actions have been fair and, consequently, their attitudes and behaviours are heavily influenced by this perception. "Employees often rely on fairness perceptions to decide whether management is trustworthy, non-biased, and will treat them as legitimate members of the organization". Since this perception is built on personal experiences, these authors believe that "justice concerns are largely self-interested in that the pursuit of self-focused justice protects individuals' outcomes and provides evidence of their status and standing within the organization" (Rupp, Ganapathi, Aguilera, & Williams, 2006: 538).

Other authors defend that justice can be a subjective concept since it captures what individuals believe to be right, rather than an objective reality, and consider that "organizational justice is a personal evaluation about the ethical and moral standing of managerial conduct". In spite of that, these authors also claim that the act of producing justice within organizations requires that managers take into account the employee perspective (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007).

Recently, organizational justice is gaining importance since some researches defend that organizational justice is as crucial concept in modern organizations. Organizational justice concerns, not only employees, but also management and leadership since each individual has its own set of experiences and perceptions about what is going on within the organization, so it's important for both workers and organizations' wellbeing. "Improve organizational justice may have a direct and positive effect on the performance and sustainability of any organization" (Akram, Lei, Haider, & Hussain, 2020: 1).

Organizational justice needs to be perceived as "a multidimensional construct" that is impacted by everything from salary to treatment by managers or supervisors. It's much more than a simple process, it's a personal "judgment made by an employee about fairness of outcome distribution, processes in allocating outcomes and interpersonal relationships at the workplace" (Mengstie, 2020: 2).

While some authors consider organizational justice as crucial construct considered to shape people's willingness to cooperate, other emphasizes the fact that employees are becoming more aware about all the events going on within the organizations and that can have repercussions in their actions since employees react to "actions and decisions made by organizations every day" and "perceptions of unjust and unfair treatment can strongly influence individual behaviour" which impacts both individual behaviour and organizational performance (Demmke, 2020: 10).

Measures of organizational justice should be taken seriously by companies since the outcomes regarding productivity and commitment to the organization can depend on them. Some authors defend this idea that “when employees believe that performance appraisal systems are inaccurate or unfair, they are unlikely to take them seriously” and the consequences can be hurtful for the company itself since employees “effectiveness as a means of improving employee engagement and productivity are of limited value” (Gu, Nolan, & Rowley, 2020: 4).

Organizational justice can be divided into three dimensions: 1) distributive justice; 2) procedural justice, and 3) interactional justice.

Distributive justice is related to salaries, compensations and the “employees’ feeling that the organization that they are part of is treating them fairly in terms of its allocation of rewards such as wages, incentives, goods, and benefits”. Procedural justice is directly concerned with the perceived fairness of the procedures used in making decisions” which means that employees will develop a sense of fairness or unfairness regarding decisions taken within the company. Interactional justice is directly correlated with the quality of communication that goes along on the organization’s routines and “the employees’ perceptions of the quality of interpersonal treatment they receive during the enactment of organizational procedures” (Donglong, Taejun, Julie, & Sanghun, 2020).

Organizational justice is the concept of analysing and applying the classic prescripts of justice to an organization’s reality. It’s the manager duty to be fair in every situation, to avoid misunderstandings and don’t interfere with employees’ wellbeing or performance. “Employees regard performance appraisal results as unfair if they are perceived to be aimed at satisfying the supervisor’s personal preferences and concerns, rather than attempting to objectively evaluate employee performance”. Although, the perception can be quite different if one perceives “that the supervisor is using the appraisal to try to teach them or motivate them, then outcomes are generally considered to be fair (Graso, Camps, Strah, & Brebels, 2020: 4).

Decisions perceived as unfair can take a huge toll on both employees and organizations. These consequences are normally erratic behaviours that “may include any deliberate negative action and behaviour by employees that may threaten other organizational members and violate the norms and standards of the organization” (Haldorai, Kim, Chang, & Li, 2020: 2).

Concluding, organizational justice is the perceived fairness in the workplace by an employee that can provide long-term cognitive, emotional and behavioural positive outcomes



(Haldorai et al., 2020). It's a notion that shall be present and, preferably, as a natural process, in all the decisions made within organizations.

## **2.4. Organizational Loyalty**

Researchers have been defending for several years that a loyal worker is a good employee and contributes to the success of the organization (Jauch, Glueck, & Osborn, 1978). Normally, as a consequence of the loyalty shown to the company, these employees are more likely to be promoted since “loyalty in business organizations is a primary criterion for promotion to top management”. Although, this premise has been questioned lately since “recent findings about loyalty in research organizations raise a serious question of whether the relationship between organizational loyalty and other variables such as productivity is simple and linear” (Jauch et al., 1978: 85) or if there are other variables that need to be taken into account.

More recently, organizations have been paying more attention to organizational loyalty since researchers started noticing that organizational loyalty correlated with positive outcomes such as job satisfaction, low turnover, and high organizational commitment and (Salanova, Agut, & Peiró, 2005).

Hoffmann (2006: 2315) defends that organizational loyalty “has two components: an emotional/affective component and a goal allegiance component”. Both components are pertinent when generating commitment to the organization in a cost-benefit consequence, if the employee decides to leave. For Hirschman (1970), if an employee is unhappy with the current organization, has only two options: (1) exit: just leave the firm; or (2) voice it: express the dissatisfaction to the relevant authority and wait to see if the issue is handled.

Organizational loyalty is only benefic if promotes positive behaviours as a way of generating organizational change and/or growth. Graham (1991) defines organizational loyalty as a characteristic that can be attributed to all individuals working within the organization since they all should create identification with the organization leaders and the organization as a whole. This effect can be observed through behaviours such as “defending the organization against threats; contributing to its good reputation; and cooperating with others to serve the interests of the whole” (Whiting, Podsakoff, & Pierce, 2008: 4).

Increased competition and disruptive innovation are putting tremendous pressure in all organisations that have to move fast in order to adapt to all these changes. Although new

workplace opportunities are emerging, those are followed by other risks that were not taken into consideration until recently. These changes have made company engagement crucial topic when balancing the maximization of profits and employees' wellbeing. There is a growing need of understanding "how and why individuals become engaged in the workplace in order to drive both employee wellbeing and organisational outcomes" (Barreiro & Treglown, 2020: 1) to maintain a stable and loyal relationship.

It's expected that employees that are engaged with the organization show signs of loyalty and identification, and even build a psychological connection. When employees are connected "physically, cognitively, and emotionally with their work role, they are likely to identify with the organisation's goals and values and devote their time to accomplishing these goals" (Mitonga-Monga, 2019: 3).

Employees who are engaged with the company, dedicate themselves to tasks, contribute positively to a good environment within the company, and "feel proud to be associated with the organisation, develop self-esteem from the affective bond with the employer, and display productive behaviours". An engaged tends to feel valued, shows satisfaction with its job and is focused on maintaining the work relationship (Mitonga-Monga, 2019).

Employee engagement has direct impacts in performance "through increased productivity, job satisfaction and most importantly, organizational and industry loyalty" (George, Omuudu, & Francis, 2020: 2).

When an individual is not satisfied with its job, there are some behaviours that might start showing up such as miscommunication, neglection of the tasks, loyalty decrease and, or exit. Although, some of these individuals might opt to do nothing and still remain loyal to the company. There are employees who don't want to get in trouble or don't think it's worth speaking up so they "chose to remain silent if they are afraid that their managers might interpret their expressed concerns as negative or threatening or if they believed that taking action would not make a difference" (Lee & Varon, 2020: 5).

Organization loyalty also includes the willingness of an individual to wait for the organization to recognize and address objectionable conditions or decisions. Employees become more attached when they perceive that the company's values match their own, what instigating them to feel responsible for the organization. They will feel like they can't leave because they don't want to harm the company. When this happens, we say that the organizational loyalty bond is established which has a huge impact since "the organization will

be considered empowered and the employees will tend to move towards self-empowerment” (Moghaddas et al., 2020: 3).

According to some authors, organizational loyalty can be defined as “the positive attitude of personnel to company’s management, which supposes emotional and rational evaluation and aspiration to maximum result of working activity in this organization” (Syanevets & Sudakova, 2019: 1).

Loyalty is a working behaviour that can be developed, stimulated and oscillate in terms of commitment from the employee towards the organization. Although, can also be “characterized by law-abidingness and reliability, which is the basis for commitment to company’s values and goals” (Syanevets & Sudakova, 2019: 2) which means that the responsibility is not entirely on the organization – the individual also has to play its part and invest time and effort establishing a healthy connection with the company.

The importance of organizational loyalty cannot be stressed enough. Authors believe that employees engaged with the company, perform better, are happier and leave the organization less. “Employees who feel satisfied from their work environment have higher level of motivation and they use all their skills to contribute to the mission of their organizations” (Yildiz, Temur, Beskese, & Bozbura, 2020: 2). The loyalty culture within a company it’s important, both in an individual and collective perspective, since engaged employees will lead by example, promote innovation and it’s likely that they will perform better. Also, loyal employees, when emotionally bind to the organization, will contribute for lower rates of turnover.

### **3. Hypothesis Development**

Aligned with the topic of this research, which aims to, among others, establish a scientific relationship between willingness to stay and organizational commitment, organizational happiness, organizational justice, and organizational loyalty, it's essential to address the importance of our hypothesis. In order to validate this research question we purpose to evaluate the validity of the four proposed research questions, which are duly described in the proposed research model and are consequently theoretically framed in order to address its academic validity and relevance.

#### **3.1. Organizational Commitment and Willingness to Stay**

The actual context of gig economies and more flexible working models is threatening the relevance of organizational commitment (Paul, Budhwar, & Bamel, 2019) since employees now have more opportunities, some of them are not afraid of changing jobs and another ones really want to try different companies instead remaining on the same one for years. In spite of the number of researches stressing the importance generating organizational commitment within companies to diminish the levels of turnover, the numbers are still high in a lot of organizations (Albalawi, Naughton, Elayan, & Sleimi, 2019).

Previous searches concluded that organization commitment is generated through a social exchange between the employee and the organisation. "Individuals try to gain rewards such as social acceptance or economic gain, engage in actions that are likely to lead to future favours, trust that others will reciprocate, and respond positively to others (individuals and organizations) who treat them well" (Vora & Kostova, 2019: 88). One way to reciprocate these kind of actions is developing commitment towards the company, which means employees will stay if they feel rewarded in some instances.

Organizational commitment is one of the aspects to take into account when referring to the employee's perception of the organization and their willingness to stay within it. "Affective commitment mediates the positive relationship between high-performance HR practice perceptions and intent to remain with the organization" (Xiu, Dauner, & McIntosh, 2019: 285). Employees who perceive favourable the organizations, are more bonded and it's less likely that they will show intentions of leaving.

Thus, we hypothesize:

**H1:** Willingness to Stay is positively related with the degree of Organizational Commitment.

### **3.2. Organizational Happiness and Willingness to Stay**

Organizations should ensure that employees feel happy at work since it will increase the effectiveness of their tasks and promote a healthier environment between peers and managers. “Happy employees not only affect their own psychological aspects but also the organizational performance”. Also, when a company can promote happiness within the work force, the turnover rates will decrease. Adequate measures can be implemented since promoting organizational happiness “help improve their lifelong service expectancy in the organization” (Isa & Atim, 2019: 2).

Although organisations and “leaders cannot make anyone happy, yet they can champion human well-being by providing and supporting evidence-based, every day, self-care and lifestyle habits, and behavioural-health practices” (Wheaton, Gassmann, & O’Brien, 2019: 2), they can create and implement measures that produce happiness within the company. The effectiveness of these measures is proved, and a happy employee is a more productive employee. The success of any organisation is directly linked to the impact of a positive organizational happiness so “it is important for organizations to ensure that the employees are able to remain loyal and continue working in the organizations” (Isa, Tenah, Atim, & Jam, 2019: 1).

If employees believe that their efforts are not appreciated or the organization is not fulfilling its promises, they might start developing feelings of dissatisfaction that will, very likely, be shown through their performance or lack of interest on their daily tasks. These kind of “negative emotions, including dissatisfaction with the present job situation and concerns about their future with the organization” (De Clercq, Haq, & Azeem, 2019: 386) which means that an unhappy employee will leave the organisation easily.

Thus, we hypothesize:

**H2:** Willingness to Stay is positively related with the degree of Organizational Happiness.

### 3.3. Organizational Justice and Willingness to Stay

The way organizational justice is perceived by employees is crucial for the sustainability of every organisation that wants to thrive through the years. Organizational justice can be defined as one's "sense of the moral propriety on how they are treated" by one's employers. When employees perceive justice and fairness within the company, they will trust the managers and will be committed. On the contrary, organizational justice within any company "is like a corrosive solvent that can dissolve bonds within the community and is hurtful to individual and harmful to the organization" (Pérez-Rodríguez, Topa, & Beléndez, 2019: 1) and the employee will be more keen to leave the company and pursue a more fairer environment.

Organizational justice is crucial to "achieve organizational harmony and heightened productivity" (Bansal, 2019: 438) and it's quite important for a company since a unfair decision has the capacity to affect more than one person. If a measure is considered unjust by a group of workers, the disaffection can disseminate, and the company will be in trouble regarding commitment and performance. When employees feel they are treated fairly, they will show positive organizational attitudes like "respecting others and collaborating to resolve problems". This is also important since "interpersonal justice has been considered as a key component in enhancing performance, respect, and dignity" (Fernández-Salinero, Abal, & Topa, 2019: 2) which means that there's a sense of solidarity among peers and, one unfair decision, even if doesn't affect a group, can be taken as such and the whole company can be affected.

Employees' performance, whether in a conscious way or not, is influenced by the perception of each employee regarding organizational justice in terms of rewards, promotions, equity. This perception will be crucial when it's time to reciprocate. If employees believe that the organization is being fair, their enjoyment to the job will be higher. On the other side, "unfair decisions in any work environment negatively affect engagement and retention" and organizational injustice will generate "adverse outcomes like increased employee turnover" (Rai, Ghosh, & Dutta, 2019: 268).

Thus, we hypothesize:

**H3:** Willingness to Stay is positively related with the degree of Organizational Justice.

### 3.4. Organizational Loyalty and Willingness to Stay

The relationship established between employers and employees has been gaining more importance since companies realised that they need to keep their workers engaged and committed to avoid high rates of turnover and assure all the metrics regarding performance were being met. Commitment is important since employees will work more but so is loyalty because “employees who are highly engaged at work are less likely to take time off sick (absenteeism) or to look for work elsewhere (retention)”. Loyal employees are important because they are “committed to contributing towards their organization’s success and who believe that working for their current organization is their best option” (Al-Omar et al., 2019: 1045).

Organizational loyalty is essential to any company that wants to succeed because loyal employees “empathize with their management or the company as a whole” so they start looking at the business “their own and may even (to some extent) place the needs of the business above their own” (Shvetsova, 2016: 2014). Also, the turnover rates will decrease while productivity will rise. Although, organizational loyalty has to be developed from both parts, which means that, at some extent, employee shall put the interests of the company before their own. Some authors defend the idea of organizational loyalty as a win-win situation, claiming that “best form of loyalty is when both the company and its employees have mutual benefits” (Vuong, Tung, Tushar, Quan, & Giao, 2021: 204).

Building employee loyalty is a process that every organization should invest since it can be extremely rewarding in the end. Happy and committed employees become loyal employees and these can be extremely helpful since there is a “direct relationship between employee loyalty and a company’s growth and profitability” (Rishipal, 2019: 430).

Thus, we hypothesize:

**H4:** Willingness to Stay is positively related with the degree of Organizational Loyalty.

**H5a:** Organizational Commitment mediates the relationship between Willingness to Stay and Organizational Justice.

**H5b:** Organizational Happiness mediates the relationship between Willingness to Stay and Organizational Justice.

**H5c:** Organizational Loyalty mediates the relationship between Willingness to Stay and Organizational Justice.

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1. Data collection and sample**

Theoretical based propositions regarding a certain sample are the bases for academic research. The most recurrent method regarding business research are questionnaires, considered the greatest option in terms of cost reduction, treatment of data and error level (Vilelas, 2009) since they extract a lot of information on pertinent issues.

On this questionnaire, we used a non-probabilistic sample and the questionnaire was distributed through its publication in social networks. The questionnaire was built and answered on the Google Forms platform.

The target for the questionnaire was any person – currently employed or not – in Portugal, since the goal of the research was to be based on the Portuguese experience. Since the main language of the respondents is Portuguese, the questionnaire was distributed in the portuguese language. The questionnaire was totally anonymous and can be consulted in Appendix I (English version) or in Appendix II (Portuguese version).

After questionnaire was built, we applied the pre-test validation. The pretesting purpose “is the use of a questionnaire in a small pilot study to ascertain how well the questionnaire works”. It’s crucial to present to questionnaire to a small group of people before publishing it since it needs validation and calibration. The feedback from the respondents of the pre-test is necessary since “no amount of intellectual exercise can substitute for testing an instrument designed to communicate with ordinary people" (Hunt, Sparkman, & Wilcox, 1982: 1).

According to some authors, “pretesting refers to testing the questionnaire on a small sample of respondents” and aims to identify aspects of the questionnaire that might rise doubts such as: instructions, ambiguous questions, wording. Based on feedback obtained, to potential problems “should be edited and the identified problems corrected” (Grover & Vriens, 2006: 91).

The purposed questionnaire was applied to a sample of 5 participants with different academic and professional backgrounds and, different ages. This pre-test was sent directly to the participants email, who were given 72 hours to answer and provide feedback. From their risen problems, the questionnaire suffered some alterations such as:



The statement “The procedures are consistent and do not vary” was not clear regarding what procedures should be considered and what was the comparison made, so it was reformulated to “The internal procedures are consistent and do not vary according to the person concerned”.

The statement “The results are distributed equally” was lacking an example, so it was reformulated to “The results (profits, for example) are distributed equally”.

The statement “I am happy with the values of my organization” was considered ambiguous, so it was reformulated to “I am happy with the values that my organization stands for”.

The statement ““I feel the need to defend the organization where I work” was not clear enough, so it reformulated to “I feel the need to defend the organization where I work from comments or harmful acts by others”.

The statement “I am looking for leaving the organization” was not clear regarding the intention, so it was reformulated to “I am actively looking for other opportunities to leave my current organization”.

Between 18th August and 1st September were received 284 valid responses to the questionnaire. Regarding Sociodemographic data, these are the characteristics of the sample:

Table 1. Sociodemographic data.

Questionnaires (n=284)					
Gender			Age		
Male	81%		20-29 years old		22,2%
Female	18,3%		30-39 years old		10,2%
Rather not answer	0,7%		40-49 years old		33,31%
			50-59 years old		31%
			Over 60 years old		3,5%
Literary Abilities (completed of finished)			Seniority in company		
High School	29,2%		Less than 6 months		6,3%
Bachelor Degree	39,8%		6 months-2 years		19%
Master degree	30,6%		2-5 years		14,1%
Doctoral Degree	0,4%		Over 5 years		60,6%

- **Regarding the professional sector:** the three most represented areas were Education (24,6%); Health and social services (20,4%); and Information Technologies (9,5%). After those three, came Financial activities & insurances (8,8%); Commerce (5,3%); and Manufacturing industries (3,5%); Accommodation and restaurants (1,8%) and Transport and storage (1,8%); Construction (1,1%),

Electricity, gas and water (1,1%), Agriculture, animal production, hunting, forestry and fishing (1,1%).

- **Regarding function:** 29,9% were Technician; 18,7% were Administrative: Commercials (8,5%) and Director (8,5%) while 6,7% were Managers. The remain people had different functions such as professors, educators, journalists, drivers, trainees, consultants, member of police forces, waiters, etc,

#### **4.2. Instrument and Variables**

The questionnaire had six different groups: four groups for each variable as in the Literature Review (Organizational Commitment, Organizational Happiness, Organizational Justice and Organizational Loyalty), a fifth one with questions regarding the Willingness to Stay, and the last one with the Sociodemographic data. Each group had 6 questions, which resulted in a total of 36 questions through the all questionnaire.

The Organizational Commitment group was based in the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) created by Allen and Myer in 1990 who uses a three-component model to measure organizational commitment. Using this tool and inspired by Naqvi and Bashir's (2015) own questionnaire created by these authors when they were studying retention through organizational commitment, we came up with a total of six statements regarding commitment, necessity, and feeling of belonging within the organization.

The Organizational Happiness group was inspired by the authors present in the literature review in section 2.2. and, taking into account the work of Wesarat, Sharif, & Majid (2015) that created a matrix which helped them building a conceptual framework to measure happiness at the workplace This group had a total of six statements regarding tasks, salary, work peers, management, function and the organisation itself.

The Organizational Justice group was inspired by the authors present in the literature review in section 2.3. and, taking into account the work of authors like Cropanzano, Ambrose, Colquitt, & Rodell (2015) that came up with a table regarding justice rules within organisations while measuring justice and fairness within companies. This group had a total of six statements about internal procedures, decisions, ethics, and perception of results.

The Organizational Loyalty group was inspired by the authors present in the literature review in section 2.4. and, taking into account the work of authors like Murali, Poddar, & Poddar (2017) who developed a critical survey to evaluate employee loyalty towards an organisation taking performance into account. The six statements of this group are about loyalty, salary, performance and necessity of defending the organization.

The Willingness to Stay group was based on the Turnover Intention Scale developed by Bothma & Roodt (2013) and, the questions were adapted taking into account what we intended to measure with our dependent variables. Some of the questions were inspired by the work of Cho & Lewis (2012) who aimed to study turnover intention and turnover behaviour taking into account the conclusions obtained by Nazim (2008) when this author studied the factors affecting job satisfaction and turnover. The six statements of this group contemplate career perspective, intention to stay in the organization, happiness and emotional connection.

The statements presented in the questionnaire were evaluated by using an odd-numbered Likert scale to measure attitude. The concept of Likert appeared when researchers felt the need to measure attitude in a scientifically accepted and validated manner” (Joshi, Kale, Chandel, & Pal, 2015). An attitude is defined as a preferential way of behaving/reacting to a specific circumstance. To measure our variables, we used the standard format of a Likert scale that “consists of a series of statements to which a respondent is to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement using the following options: strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree” (Albaum, 1997). Given this, we established a 5-point Likert-scale that ranged from 1 (disagree a lot) to 5 (agree a lot).

### **4.3. Results**

When deciding how to test our conceptual model, we opted to use a structural equation modelling (SEM). Specifically, we used a partial least squares (PLS), a variance-based structural equation modelling technique, by means of SmartPLS 3 software (Sarstedt, Hair, Cheah, Becker, & Ringle, 2019).

The analysis and interpretation of the results followed a two-stage approach: 1) Evaluation of the reliability and validity of the measurement model; 2) Assessment of the structural model. The assess the quality of the measurement model, the individual indicators of reliability,

convergent validity, internal consistency reliability, and discriminant validity were examined (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017).

The results showed that the standardized factor loadings of all items were above 0.6 (with a minimum value of 0,66) and were all significant at  $p < 0.001$ , which provided evidence for the individual indicator reliability (Hair et al., 2017). Internal consistency reliability was confirmed because for all constructs Cronbach's alphas and composite reliability (CR) values surpassed the cut-off of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 2. Composite reliability, average variance extracted, correlations, and discriminant validity checks.

Latent Variables	A	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5
<b>(1) Organizational Commitment</b>	0.814	0.870	0.572	<b>0,756</b>	0.669	0.770	0.596	0.941
<b>(2) Organizational Happiness</b>	0.819	0.874	0.582	0.561	<b>0,763</b>	0.923	0.817	0.742
<b>(3) Organizational Loyalty</b>	0.687	0.827	0.616	0.577	0.701	<b>0,785</b>	0.750	0.813
<b>(4) Organizational Justice</b>	0.931	0.947	0.749	0.524	0.729	0.603	<b>0,865</b>	0.586
<b>(5) Willingness to Stay</b>	0.745	0.855	0.663	0.741	0.589	0.583	0.489	<b>0,814</b>

**Note:**  $\alpha$  - Cronbach Alpha; CR - Composite reliability; AVE - Average variance extracted. Bolded numbers are the square roots of AVE. Below the diagonal elements are the correlations between the constructs. Above the diagonal elements are the HTMT ratios.

Convergent validity was also confirmed for three key reasons. 1) All items loaded positively and significantly on their respective constructs; 2) All constructs had composite reliability (CR) values higher than 0.7; 3) As shown on Table 2, the average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs exceed the threshold of 0.50 (Bagozzi, Yi & Phillips: 1988).

The discriminant validity was validated using two approaches.

1) Using the Fornell and Larcker criterion that requires that a construct's square root of AVE (the bold values presented on the diagonal of Table 2) is larger than its biggest correlation with any construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As shown on Table 2, this criterion is satisfied for all constructs.

2) Using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) criterion which indicates that values should be under the threshold of 0.85 (Buffa & Martini, 2020). As shown on Table 2, all HMTR ratios

are below the value of 0.85 so this criterion is satisfied. They provide additional evidence of discriminant validity.

The structural model was assessed using the sign, magnitude, and significance of the structural path coefficients; the magnitude of R<sup>2</sup> value for each endogenous variable as a measure of the model's predictive accuracy; and the Stone Stone-Geisser's Q<sup>2</sup> values as a measure of the model's predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2017).

We also checked for collinearity before evaluating the structural model (Hair et al., 2017). The VIF values ranged from 1.00 to 2.88, which was below the indicative critical value of 5 (Hair et al., 2017). These values indicated no collinearity.

The coefficient of the determination R<sup>2</sup> for the variables of Organizational Commitment, Organizational Happiness, Organizational Loyalty, Willingness to Stay are 27.4%, 53%, 36.1%, and 59.1%, respectively. These values surpass the threshold value of 10% (Falk & Miller, 1992).

The Q<sup>2</sup> values for all endogenous variables (0.08, 0.29, 0.20, and 0.35 respectively) were above zero that indicated the predictive relevance of the model. We used bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples to evaluate the significance of the parameter estimates (Hair et al., 2017).

#### **4.4. Quantitative Results**

The results in Table 3 show that Organizational Commitment ( $\beta = 0.559$ ,  $\rho = 0.000$ ) has a significantly direct positive effect on Willingness to Stay. These results provide support for **H1**.

The results in Table 3 show that Organizational Happiness ( $\beta = 0.215$ ,  $\rho < 0.01$ ) has a significantly direct positive effect on Willingness to Stay. These results provide support for **H2**.

The results in Table 3 show that Organizational Justice ( $\beta = -0.046$ ,  $\rho = 0.474$ ) has a negative direct effect on Willingness to Stay. These results don't support **H3**.

The results in Table 3 show that Organizational Loyalty ( $\beta = 0.141$ ,  $\rho < 0.05$ ) has a significantly direct positive effect on Willingness to Stay. These results provide support for **H4**.

Table 3. Structural Model Assessment.

Path	Path Coefficient	Standard Errors	t statistics	ρ values
Organizational Commitment -> Willingness to Stay	0.559	0.043	13 089	0.000
Organizational Happiness -> Willingness to Stay	0.215	0.063	3 406	0.001
Organizational Loyalty -> Willingness to Stay	0.141	0.058	2 433	0.015
Organizational Justice -> Organizational Commitment	0.526	0.041	12 869	0.000
Organizational Justice -> Organizational Happiness	0.729	0.026	27 703	0.000
Organizational Justice -> Organizational Loyalty	0.603	0.039	15 503	0.000
Organizational Justice -> Willingness to Stay	-0.046	0.065	0.716	0.474

The results of Table 3 provide support for Willingness to Stay being positively affected by Organizational Commitment, Organizational Happiness and Organizational Loyalty but also show that Organizational Justice doesn't affect positively Willingness to Stay.

Although, the results of Table 4 provide support for Organizational Justice being positively affected by Organizational Commitment, Organizational Happiness and Organizational Loyalty, making Organizational Justice a mediator variable.

The results in Table 4 provide support for Organizational Justice, when acting as a mediator for Organizational Commitment, having a direct positive effect ( $\beta = 0.294$ ,  $\rho = 0.000$ ) on Willingness to Stay. These results provide support for **H5a**.

The results in Table 4 provide support for Organizational Justice, when acting as a mediator for Organizational Happiness, having a direct positive effect ( $\beta = 0.157$ ,  $\rho < 0.01$ ) on Willingness to Stay. These results provide support for **H5b**.

The results in Table 4 provide support for Organizational Justice, when acting as a mediator for Organizational Loyalty, having a direct positive effect ( $\beta = 0.085$ ,  $\rho < 0.05$ ) on Willingness to Stay. These results provide support for **H5c**.

The results of Table 4 show Organizational Justice having an indirect effect on Willingness to Stay through the other variables (Organizational Commitment, Organizational Happiness and Organizational Loyalty).

Table 4. Bootstrap results for indirect effects.

<b>Path</b>	<b>Path Coefficient</b>	<b>Standard Errors</b>	<b>t statistics</b>	<b><math>\rho</math> values</b>
Organizational Justice -> Organizational Commitment - > Willingness to Stay	0.294	0.034	8 561	0.000
Organizational Justice Organizational Happiness -> Willingness to Stay	0.157	0.047	3 372	0.001
Organizational Justice -> Organizational Loyalty -> Willingness to Stay	0.085	0.035	2 428	0.015

Table 3. Bootstrap results for indirect effects.

## 5. Discussion

According to theory, Organizational Commitment is the bond created between employees and their organizations through time. Organizations that promote commitment are more likely to have better employee satisfaction, higher rates of performance, flexibility on employees' side and lower turnover will rates. Also, engaged workers are physically and emotionally invested in the company and will work better towards the company goals. This relation was tested in H1 and the results proved that exists a positive and significant relation between Organizational Commitment and Willingness to Stay, which reinforces the idea that perceptions from employees are "positively associated with organizational commitment" (Lambert, Qureshi, Klahm, Smith, & Frank, 2017: 3). Companies who are able to instigate the sense of belong among their workers not only have better performers but, most important, will have the capacity to retain people in the organization.

A happy employee is a productive one, according to theory, which puts Organizational Happiness as one of the main concerns of organizations that want to assure the best performance possible. However, this concern is now shifting from performance to retainment since a happy employee would be less keen to leave the company. In H2 we tested this relation and it was proved that Willingness to Stay is positively influenced by Organizational Justice, which means that companies should promote measures that promote happiness at work. We are aware of the complexity of defining boundaries regard happiness since it's such a complex concept but, it's on the best interest of organizations to pay attention to this variable since it's "a powerful strategy to not only attract, motivate and retain top talent" (Olckers, George, & van Zyl, 2017: 255). Happy employers take fewer sick days, contribute to a happier work-environment, are more committed, therefore don't leave the organization easily.

Theory defends that Organizational Loyalty is benefic for both employees and companies since it generates affective commitment that reflects in performance and disposition to accept changes. Loyal employees will defend the organization against exterior or internal threats, cooperate more with peers and managers and contribute to the company's reputation. Also, when engaged with the organization, employees develop a sense of identification that, ultimately, makes them stay in the organization, even in times of adversity. This relation was tested in H4 and the results prove that Organizational Loyalty influences positively Willingness to Stay so organizations should invest in measures that promote high levels of loyalty since they



lead to “increased job satisfaction, higher performance, lower levels of absenteeism and, finally, turnover” (Mohsin, Lengler, & Aguzzoli, 2015: 39).

Organizational Justice can be hard to define, even for researchers, due to the complexity of the justice concept itself. Although, within organizations, it’s easier to evaluate since it can be measure by the employees’ perception of the decisions made by managers. Justice inside companies is quite important since it determines how people will behave in a work-context. If a decision is considered unfair, that can precipitate events harmful to the company. In spite of that, our results proved that Organizational Justice is not positively correlated with Willingness to Stay. H3 was proven incorrect which means that Organizational Justice doesn’t influence the workers’ intention of staying in the organizations.

Although, some authors defend that “justice is associated with beneficial work-related outcomes such as increased productivity and greater organizational commitment among employees” (Nix & Wolfe, 2016: 12) which means that, despite the fact that Organizational Justice doesn’t influence directly the intention of staying in a company, can affect other variables like Organizational Commitment. The results we got when measuring the relation between Organizational Justice and the other variables (Organizational Commitment, Organizational Happiness and Organizational Loyalty) were substantial. The three variables are positively affected by Organizational Justice and the results obtained validated H5a, H5b and H5c.

“Organizational justice is a fundamental value and virtue, and the main ethical concern of employees” (Halbusi et al., 2019: 2) and our results are aligned with that idea. Although Organizational Justice don’t have a direct influence on the Willingness to Stay in an organization, we can observe its strong correlation with the other three variables that affect directly Willingness to Stay.

A new contribute to the theory is the direct effect that Organizational Justice has on Organizational Commitment, Organizational Happiness and Organizational Loyalty. The presence of Organizational Justice within any organization will have a positive impact in organizational values like commitment, engagement, happiness, job satisfaction, loyalty. The presence of these values implicates low turnover rates and a stronger willingness to stay within the company. This variable has proved to be an efficient mediator agent to the other variables.

## **6. Conclusion**

### **6.1. Theoretical conclusions**

The present study sought to understand if Willingness to Stay is directly affected by Organizational values like Commitment, Happiness, Justice and Loyalty and, if organizations would benefit (or not) from it. To address this topic, we defined Organizational Commitment, Organizational Happiness, Organizational Justice and Organizational Loyalty, taking into account insights from previous studies on these topics in order to sustain empirically our own research.

Extensive literature points to highly significant relationship between intention to stay in organizations and a strong organizational culture regarding these variables. Through our questionnaire, we obtained results that allowed us to establish some connections between these variables. Our findings pointed towards a positive relation between Organizational Commitment, Happiness and Loyalty, which permitted us to validate H1, H2 and H5.

Although, our findings also showed us that Organizational Justice was not positively correlated with Willingness to Stay and, therefore, H3 wasn't validated. However, we had some interesting results relatively Organizational Justice. In spite of not being directly correlated with Willingness to Stay, our results showed us that this variable has a positive impact on the other variables of this study, which allowed us to validate H4, H5 and H5.

This finding is a new contribute to the literature because it shows Organizational Justice acting as a mediator agent to Willingness to Stay, which allowed us to validate H8. Concluding, Organizational Justice affects positively Organizational Commitment, Organizational Happiness and Organizational Loyalty that, then are positively correlated with Willingness to Stay. According to our results, Organizational Justice doesn't impact directly Willingness to Stay but has the capacity to affect positively other variables and, consequently, impact indirectly Willingness to Stay.

## **6.2. Managerial Implications**

The objective of any scientific phenomenon in the business field is to be able of provide valuable insights to improve businesses in some way (McGahan, 2007). We believe this research has achieved that goal.

Firstly, we address the expectable outcome of this research that is expressing and raising awareness of the importance of variables like Organizational Commitment, Organizational Happiness, Organizational Justice and Organizational Loyalty on the concept of Willingness to Stay in a company. All organizations should ensure that these values are well implemented in the organizational cultural to assure high performances, good reputation and low turnover rates. The literature seems to be in an agreement regarding the importance of retaining talent within organisation and, it has been proved that these variables affect positively the employees' desire of staying in the companies.

In addition to a theoretical contribution, the current investigation also concludes some practical implications that appear to be relevant to be considered in the organizations' culture in order to face the current challenge of the sector under analysis, namely the high turnover rates. The most interesting finding in regard to contribution to management field is the fact that, although Organizational Justice doesn't affect directly Willingness to Stay, which could reduce its importance in the organizational context, strongly affects the other variables under analysis, making Organizational Justice an important variable that should be taken into account when managers and leadership are taking measures to improve organizational culture.

In summary, the present study highlights the need for continuous research for the development organizational culture and how it can be affected by these variables. Managers who seek to achieve high levels of organizational performance shall understand and address organizational culture, while being aware of the mediating effect that Organizational Justice has on the Willingness to Stay. It's crucial that organizations invest time to address issues that might come up, and assure these values are developing a strong organizational culture, not only to cultivate on the work force the desire of staying, but also to improve procedures and assure the sustainability of the organization itself.

### **6.3. Research**

Although the present study provides a new vision and contribution to research regarding organizational culture, we must take into account some limitations that delimit this study and its results previously presented.

A factor presented as a limitation of this study is the fact that the analysis of content has not been subject to validation by an independent researcher, in order to guarantee objectivity and distance from the analysis of the results.

The sample size was a limitation since the questionnaire was only conducted in people working, or that have worked, in Portugal. Our sample is a convenience sample, which does not allow this research to address the general existent population and therefore be considered as representative. For a future research, we recommend a wider distribution to assure more accurate results. In an increasingly globalized society, an international sample would make possible an analysis between several countries, not only to verify trends but also establish comparisons between countries.

The questionnaire can also be considered as a limitation factor since the questions were created with basis on the literature review. A more complete or in depth systematic review could have originated answer and, in that case, the answers and results would be different. Also, this questionnaire didn't discriminate people from "making-decisions" positions from the employees themselves. For a future research, we suggest interviews with both employees' and managers/leaders. The comparison between perceptions from both sides would enrich the research and could validate (or not) the results obtained through the questionnaire.

It's also important to mention that this research was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic. This situation is generating a lot of struggles to the world economy, unemployment rates are rising so the answers to the some of the questions regarding commitment such as "I feel that I have few options if I want to leave my current organization" or "I am actively looking for other opportunities to leave my current organization" could be biased since during times of uncertainty, people tend to stay in the organizations and not risking staying without a job.

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## 8. Appendixes

### Appendix I - Questionnaire in English language

#### Perception of Values and the Impact on Organizations

This questionnaire is part of an investigation within the scope of the Master's thesis in Business Administration at ISCTE-IBS, with the objective of studying the perception of the values within organizations on the workers' side and the impact of these on staying in the organization.

If you are currently unemployed, please answer based on your last work experience.

The results obtained will be used only for academic purposes. The questionnaire is completely anonymous, and the expected response time is 5 minutes.

Thanks for the collaboration!

#### **Group 1: Commitment**

The organization where I work has a personal importance to me.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Disagree a lot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree a lot

I feel indebted to the organization where I work.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Disagree a lot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree a lot

I feel the organization's problems like my own.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Disagree a lot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree a lot

It was going to be difficult for me to leave the organization where I work.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Disagree a lot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree a lot

I would feel guilty if I left the organization.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Disagree a lot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree a lot

I feel an obligation to stay in the organization.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Disagree a lot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree a lot

**Grupo 2: Justice**

The internal procedures are consistent and do not vary according to the person concerned.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Disagree a lot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree a lot

Decisions are made in a neutral and fair manner.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Disagree a lot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree a lot

Internal procedures are fair and transparent.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Disagree a lot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree a lot

Internal procedures are ethically and morally correct.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Disagree a lot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree a lot

The results (profits, for example) are distributed equally.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Disagree a lot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree a lot

The explanations for the decisions made are clear and reasoned.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Disagree a lot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree a lot

**Grupo 3: Happiness**

I feel happy with the tasks I perform.

1 2 3 4 5  
Disagree a lot      Agree a lot

I feel happy with my salary.

1 2 3 4 5  
Disagree a lot      Agree a lot

I feel happy with my co-workers.

1 2 3 4 5  
Disagree a lot      Agree a lot

I feel happy with my boss/manager.

1 2 3 4 5  
Disagree a lot      Agree a lot

I am happy with the values that my organization stands for.

1 2 3 4 5  
Disagree a lot      Agree a lot

I feel that my role is important to the organization.

1 2 3 4 5  
Disagree a lot      Agree a lot

#### **Group 4: Loyalty**

I am loyal to the organization I work for.

1 2 3 4 5  
Disagree a lot      Agree a lot

My salary influences my loyalty to the organization.

1 2 3 4 5  
Disagree a lot      Agree a lot

I feel that my loyalty to the organization can bring me salary benefits.

1 2 3 4 5  
Disagree a lot      Agree a lot

My performance is influenced by my loyalty to the organization.

1 2 3 4 5  
Disagree a lot      Agree a lot

I feel comfortable talking about the organization in which I work with my friends / family.

1 2 3 4 5  
Disagree a lot      Agree a lot

I feel the need to defend the organization where I work from comments or harmful acts by others.

1 2 3 4 5  
Disagree a lot      Agree a lot

### Grupo 5: Intention of staying in the organization

I feel that I have few options if I want to leave my current organization.

1 2 3 4 5  
Disagree a lot      Agree a lot

Right now, staying in the organization is a matter of necessity.

1 2 3 4 5  
Disagree a lot      Agree a lot

I would be happy if the rest of my career was done in my current organization.

1 2 3 4 5  
Disagree a lot      Agree a lot

My emotional connection to the organization can prevent / postpone my leaving.

1 2 3 4 5  
Disagree a lot      Agree a lot

Even if it was to my advantage, I would not leave my current organization.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Disagree a lot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree a lot

I am actively looking for other opportunities to leave my current organization.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Disagree a lot	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree a lot

### Group 6: Sociodemographic data

#### Gender

- Female
- Male
- Rather not answer

#### Age

- < 20 years
- 30-39 years
- 40-49 years
- 50-59 years
- > 60 years

#### Education (completed or attending)

- Primary School
- High School
- Bachelor (or equivalent)
- Master (or equivalent)
- Doctorate

#### Professional Sector

- Agriculture, animal production, hunting, forestry and fishing
- Extractive industries
- Manufacturing industries
- Electricity, gas and water
- Construction
- Commerce
- Transport and storage
- Accomodation and restaurants
- Financial activities and insurances
- Real estate activities
- Education
- Health and social services
- Information Technologies
- Outra opção...

Function

- Technician
- Administrative
- Comerciais
- Manager
- Diretor
- Outra opção...

Seniority (in the current company or, if that's the case, in the previous company)

- < 6 months
- 6 months - 2 years
- 2 years - 5 years
- > de 5 years

Thank you for your participation!



## Appendix II - Questionnaire in Portuguese language

### Perceção de Valores e o Impacto nas Organizações

Este questionário enquadra-se numa investigação no âmbito da dissertação de Mestrado em Gestão de Empresas no ISCTE-IBS, tendo como objetivo estudar a perceção de valores das organizações por parte dos trabalhadores e o impacto desta na permanência na organização.

Se atualmente se encontra numa situação de desemprego, peço-lhe que responda com base na sua última experiência laboral.

Os resultados obtidos serão utilizados apenas para fins académicos. O questionário é totalmente anónimo e o tempo previsto de resposta são 5 minutos.

Obrigada pela colaboração!

### **Grupo 1: Compromisso**

A organização onde trabalho tem importância pessoal para mim.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo muito	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo muito

Sinto-me em dívida para com a organização onde trabalho.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo muito	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo muito

Sinto os problemas da organização como se fossem meus.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo muito	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo muito

É difícil para mim deixar a organização onde trabalho.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo muito	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo muito

É difícil para mim sentir-me culpado/a se deixasse a organização.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo muito	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo muito

Sinto obrigação de permanecer na organização.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo muito	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo muito

### Grupo 2: Justiça

Os procedimentos internos são consistentes e não variam de acordo com as pessoas em causa.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo muito	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo muito

As decisões são tomadas de forma neutra e justa.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo muito	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo muito

Os procedimentos internos são justos e transparentes.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo muito	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo muito

Os procedimentos internos são ética e moralmente corretos.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo muito	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo muito

Os resultados (lucros, por exemplo) são distribuídos de forma equitativa.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo muito	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo muito

As explicações para as tomadas de decisão são claras e fundamentadas.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo muito	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo muito

### Grupo 3: Felicidade

Sinto-me feliz com as tarefas que desempenho.

1 2 3 4 5  
Discordo muito      Concordo muito

Sinto-me feliz com o meu salário.

1 2 3 4 5  
Discordo muito      Concordo muito

Sinto-me feliz com os meus colegas de trabalho.

1 2 3 4 5  
Discordo muito      Concordo muito

Sinto-me feliz com a minha chefia.

1 2 3 4 5  
Discordo muito      Concordo muito

Sinto-me feliz com os valores que a minha organização defende.

1 2 3 4 5  
Discordo muito      Concordo muito

Sinto que a minha função é importante para a organização.

1 2 3 4 5  
Discordo muito      Concordo muito

#### **Grupo 4: Lealdade**

Sou leal à organização em que trabalho.

1 2 3 4 5  
Discordo muito      Concordo muito

A minha remuneração influencia a minha lealdade à organização.

1 2 3 4 5  
Discordo muito      Concordo muito

Sinto que a minha lealdade à organização me pode trazer benefícios salariais.

1 2 3 4 5  
Discordo muito      Concordo muito

A minha performance é influenciada pela minha lealdade à organização.

1 2 3 4 5  
Discordo muito      Concordo muito

Sinto-me confortável a falar da organização em que trabalho com os meus amigos/familiares.

1 2 3 4 5  
Discordo muito      Concordo muito

Sinto necessidade de defender a organização em que trabalho de comentários ou atos prejudiciais por parte de outros.

1 2 3 4 5  
Discordo muito      Concordo muito

### **Grupo 5: Intenção de permanecer na organização**

Sinto que tenho poucas opções se quiser deixar a minha organização atual.

1 2 3 4 5  
Discordo muito      Concordo muito

Neste momento, permanecer na organização é uma questão de necessidade.

1 2 3 4 5  
Discordo muito      Concordo muito

Ficaria feliz se o resto da minha carreira fosse feito na minha organização atual.

1 2 3 4 5  
Discordo muito      Concordo muito

A minha ligação emocional à organização pode evitar/adiar a minha saída.

1 2 3 4 5  
Discordo muito      Concordo muito

Mesmo que fosse vantajoso para mim, não sairia da minha organização atual.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo muito	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo muito

Estou ativamente à procura de outras oportunidades para deixar a minha organização atual.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Discordo muito	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Concordo muito

### **Grupo 6: Dados Sociodemográficos**

Género

- Feminino
- Masculino
- Prefiro não responder

Idade

- < 20 anos
- 20-29 anos
- 30-39 anos
- 40-49 anos
- 50-59 anos
- > 60 anos

Habilitações Literárias (concluído ou a frequentar)

- Escola Primária
- Escola Secundária
- Licenciatura (ou equivalente)
- Mestrado (ou equivalente)
- Doutoramento

**Setor Profissional**

- Agricultura, produção animal, caça, silvicultura e pesca
- Indústrias extrativas
- Indústrias transformadoras
- Eletricidade, gás e água
- Construção
- Comércio por grosso e a retalho
- Transporte e armazenagem
- Alojamento, restauração e similares
- Atividades financeiras e de seguros
- Atividades imobiliárias
- Educação
- Atividades de saúde humana e apoio social
- Tecnologias de informação
- Outra opção...

**Função**

- Técnico
- Administrativo
- Comercial
- Gestor
- Diretor
- Outra opção...

Antiguidade (na atual empresa ou, se for esse o caso, na empresa anterior)

- < 6 meses
- 6 meses - 2 anos
- 2 anos - 5 anos
- > de 5 anos

Obrigada pela participação!