

Article

Linking Psychological Capital to Organizational Commitment: The Moderating Role of Perceived Aversive Leadership of Employees in Angola

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Abstract: Organizational commitment is an indicator of organizational performance, regarding the attainment of competitive advantages. Knowing the factors that promote or inhibit organizational commitment fills a gap in the literature in the area of aversive leadership in Angola and reinforces the role of managers in promoting employees' organizational commitment. This study aimed to analyze the moderating role of perceived aversive leadership in the relationship between psychological capital and organizational commitment. Although recent studies have indicated the negative effects of aversive leadership on organizational outcomes, the role of perceived aversive leadership on employees' organizational commitment has not been tested. To this end, we applied a self-report questionnaire from 335 employees from different sectors of activity in Angola to examine this relationship. To analyze the results of the study, we used structural equation modeling. The results showed that the relevance of psychological capital in organizational commitment is highlighted when perceived aversive leadership is low. On the other hand, when perceived aversive leadership is high, employees will exhibit lower levels of organizational commitment. This study may influence the adoption of more sophisticated leadership selection techniques, based on behavioral and situational interviews, to ensure that professionals with aversive behaviors cannot hold positions of responsibility.

Keywords: psychological capital; perceived aversive leadership; affective commitment; normative commitment; continuance commitment; Angola



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1. Introduction

In the current environment full of changes and uncertainties, companies should consider their employees as valuable assets (Koç et al. 2022; Čulibrk et al. 2018). Recently, different researchers have paid great attention to the variables that affect organizational results (Farrukh et al. 2017; Meyer et al. 2012). According to Shahid and Azhar (2013), employee commitment is a crucial indicator of organizational performance, considering that high organizational commitment contributes to achieving competitive advantages. Therefore, identifying the level of employee commitment is a key point for improving organizational results (Herrera and De Las Heras-Rosas 2021; Arage et al. 2022).

Organizational commitment is a critical factor in improving organizational performance, as it positively influences employee behavior, especially when the company has difficulties providing extrinsic rewards adjusted to the needs of its employees (Otoo 2022). For Mujajati et al. (2024), in the African continent companies have faced great difficulties in promoting the commitment of their employees due to the lack of stimulating organizational

environments combined with the financial problems of these companies. Moreover, studies run in the African environment evidence the weaknesses in the organization of work that have led to job dissatisfaction and a low level of organizational commitment (Obedgiu et al. 2017). Angola is one of the African countries where employees have shown low organizational commitment (Geremias et al. 2024).

Achieving organizational goals even in challenging and uncertain environments requires committed employees who can fulfill their responsibilities (Imamoglu et al. 2019). Therefore, employees with high organizational commitment tend to have high job satisfaction, low intentions to leave and reduced stress levels (Ahmad 2018). According to Lin et al. (2024), studies on organizational commitment essentially focused on analyzing the level of employees' commitment in different sectors of activity and verifying the implications of a low level of commitment in increasing turnover and burnout rates. Therefore, psychological capital (PsyCap) can be an important predictor of employees' organizational commitment, as it allows a more comprehensive understanding of levels of organizational commitment in different contexts (Geremias et al. 2024; Huynh and Hua 2020).

For Luthans and Youssef-Morgan (2017), psychological capital is a second-order construct composed of four subdimensions: self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience. From this perspective, psychological capital has been broadly defined as state-like positive organizational behavior which aims to improve organizational performance (Luthans and Broad 2022; Dawkins et al. 2018; Madrid et al. 2017). On the other hand, organizational commitment allows employees to overcome different barriers to achieving success; however, for this process to happen they should develop certain psychological capabilities (Luthans et al. 2007, 2014; Avey et al. 2011).

In the African context, there have only been a few attempts to run studies that would analyze the relationship between psychological capital and the organizational commitment of employees in different sectors of activity. Despite this, there is evidence of the influence of psychological capital on the affective commitment of healthcare professionals in Angola (Geremias et al. 2024). Therefore, it is crucial to analyze the relationship between psychological capital and the organizational commitment of different employees in Angola, as it will allow us to investigate deficiencies in obtaining positive organizational results, which have been reported in previous studies (e.g., Cunha et al. 2019).

For Bilgen and Elçi (2022), leadership is one of the most extensively analyzed concepts, due to its impact on achieving results in the organizational field. However, most studies on leadership in organizations have analyzed the positive effects of leadership on followers, ignoring the dark side of leadership (Alvesson and Einola 2019; Wisse and Sleebos 2016). Despite that, we identified studies reported in the literature on the dark side of leadership indicating that abusive supervision was the most studied, followed by close monitoring and narcissistic leadership (Mehraein et al. 2023). Therefore, we decided to shed some light on followers' perceptions of aversive leadership, as it is a construct on the dark side of leadership that has received little theoretical and empirical attention (Thoroughgood et al. 2018).

Aversive leadership has been considered as leadership behavior based on exercising coercive power, such as threats, reprimands and intimidation (Pearce and Sims 2002). It is argued that high perceptions of aversive leadership have negatively affected organizational outcomes, including employee commitment (Bligh et al. 2007). In contrast, the effects of low employee perception of aversive leadership on organizational outcomes such as commitment are still to be tested. Based on these allegations, different researchers have highlighted the strong need to analyze the effects of dark leadership styles on organizational results in different contexts (Schmid et al. 2018; Shahid and Azhar 2013).

Recently, a study by Fatima et al. (2018) suggested further research to analyze the effects of aversive leadership on organizational results. Although there is no clear evidence of studies that have analyzed employees' perceptions of aversive leadership in the African context, we note that there has been increased interest in analyzing the relationship between psychological capital and organizational commitment (Geremias et al. 2024). Therefore, this

study aims to analyze the moderating role of perceived aversive leadership in the relationship between psychological capital and organizational commitment. Thus, it is expected that psychological capital will exert a stronger influence on organizational commitment for a low perceived aversive leadership.

By testing the moderating role of perceived aversive leadership in the relationship between psychological capital and organizational commitment, the present study contributes to improving theoretical and practical understanding of the effects of the dark side of leadership on employees' results. We further argue that this study may have relevant theoretical and practical implications for improving employees' organizational commitment in the African environment. The present study also presents contributions to the practice of leadership by increasing managers' awareness of the relevance of their actions to increase employees' organizational commitment.

The remaining part of this article is structured as follows. First, we present the definitions of the main variables under study, namely psychological capital, organizational commitment and perceived aversive leadership, followed by the hypotheses delineations. Second, we present the methodological procedures and the main results of the hypothesis testing. Third, we present and discuss the main results and outline the theoretical and practical implications of the study. Finally, we present the concluding remarks.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

2.1. Psychological Capital

Psychological capital (PsyCap) is a higher-order construct included in the Positive Organizational Behavior (POB) framework, which has been identified as a positive psychological state of individual development composed of the psychological capabilities of self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism (Avey 2014; Luthans et al. 2007). According to Dawkins et al. (2013), psychological capital is based on four psychological capabilities of hope, self-efficacy, resilience and optimism, and their positive impact on different desirable results in the organizational environment. Therefore, the interaction of these four psychological capabilities creates a synergistic motivational effect that allows achieving success in the organizational environment (Huang and Luthans 2014; Russo and Stoykova 2015).

Self-efficacy refers to individual confidence that allows the mobilization of cognitive resources to achieve high performance in challenging tasks (Newman et al. 2014; Liao and Liu 2016). Hope consists of the sense of agency that individuals are motivated to achieve success and have directional plans in defining alternative paths to achieve success (Snyder et al. 2002; Avey 2014). Optimism consists of fostering positive expectations to achieve success (Datu et al. 2016; Luthans et al. 2006). Resilience is the psychological capability that allows an individual to face or adjust positively to obstacles and uncertainties (Luthans et al. 2018; Geremias et al. 2021).

For Luthans and Youssef-Morgan (2017), there is almost a consensus in previous studies on the conceptualization of psychological capital as a higher-order construct composed of the four dimensions of self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism. However, in recent years, there has been a discussion about the inclusion in the psychological capital framework of other nomological constructs such as forgiveness, gratitude, humor and well-being (Nolzen 2018; Datu et al. 2016). For Dawkins et al. (2013), including additional constructs in the psychological capital framework needs to be accompanied by a robust theoretical foundation; otherwise, it may lead to confusion about the conceptualization of the construct.

Previous studies have shown a positive relationship between psychological capital and well-being (e.g., Youssef-Morgan and Luthans 2015), work engagement and job performance (e.g., Alessandri et al. 2018), innovation (e.g., Hu et al. 2023) and employee creativity (e.g., Yu et al. 2019). On the other hand, psychological capital may neutralize certain undesirable behaviors, namely turnover intention (e.g., Zambrano-Chumo and Guevara 2024), stress and job insecurity (e.g., Patnaik et al. 2022) and abusive supervision (e.g., Li et al. 2016). However, the relationship between psychological capital and the

organizational commitment of employees from different sectors of activity in Angola still needs to be tested.

2.2. Organizational Commitment

Studies on organizational commitment have gained new momentum in the recent years, due to the need for organizations to hire employees who identify with their values, principles and objectives (García-Cruz and Valle-Cabrera 2021; Ahmad 2018). According to Tran (2024), the study of organizational commitment allows organizations to analyze the employee's intention to maintain their employment relationship, as well as the nature of this employment relationship. Therefore, organizational commitment has been conceptualized in the literature as a psychological bond that maintains the relationship between the employee and the organization (Arage et al. 2022; Herrera and De Las Heras-Rosas 2021).

Meyer and Allen (1991) highlighted that there seems to be a consensus regarding the conceptualization of organizational commitment, which consists of three fundamental aspects: (1) the employee's permanence in the organization due to an emotional connection; (2) the employee's connection to the organization motivated by a feeling of obligation; and (3) employee retention due to perceived high costs associated with leaving the organization. For Meyer, Becker and Vandenberghe (Meyer et al. 2004), the conceptualization of organizational commitment should be based on a three-component model that encompasses affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment.

Organizational commitment constituted by the three-component model is highlighted as the relative strength that allows the employee to identify with the organization's objectives, policies and values (Choi et al. 2015; Moreira et al. 2024). Although different studies have pointed out flaws related to the consistency in the empirical results of the organizational commitment three-component model, the use of this model continues to be dominant in empirical studies in different contexts (Ng 2015; Imamoglu et al. 2019). Therefore, different empirical studies have emphasized that organizational commitment is based on a three-component model consisting of affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment (Solinger et al. 2008).

Affective commitment is a psychological state that allows an emotional connection between the employee and his organization; therefore, the employee's remaining in the organization presupposes identification with the organization's objectives and values (Meyer and Herscovitch 2001; Moreira et al. 2024; Silva et al. 2022). Normative commitment presupposes that the employee remains attached to the organization due to a feeling of moral duty or moral pressure (Afshari and Gibson 2016). On the other hand, continuance commitment implies that the employee remains in the organization when there are high costs associated with leaving the organization, or when the employee has no alternative options to the organization (Meyer et al. 2004).

In the African context, previous studies have shown a positive relationship between organizational commitment and resilience (e.g., Mujajati et al. 2024), job security (e.g., Maleka et al. 2019), performance (e.g., Naidoo and Govender 2022), transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles (e.g., Donkor and Zhou 2020), perceived transformational leadership (e.g., Geremias et al. 2024) and extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (e.g., Inegbedion 2022). On the other hand, different authors have highlighted that organizational commitment may contribute to discouraging negative results, such as intent to turnover (Ramalho Luz et al. 2018; Tetteh et al. 2020) and burnout (e.g., Dubale et al. 2019). However, little is known about the employee's level of organizational commitment in Angola.

2.3. Perceived Aversive Leadership

Pearce and Sims (2002) conceptualized aversive leadership as coercive power manifested through intimidation, threats and constant abuse of power. For Thoroughgood, Hunter and Sawyer (Thoroughgood et al. 2011), the leader is perceived as aversive when he is part of a "toxic triangle" based on intimidation, inadequate self-esteem and the inclination towards abusive supervision when exercising power. Although aversive leadership

and abusive supervision share common behaviors, it is important to note that there are differences related to the leader's intention and the frequency of resorting to negative behavior, verbally and non-verbally (Fatima et al. 2018).

According to Schyns and Schilling (2013), the distinction between abusive supervision and aversive leadership consists of the involvement of abusive supervision in repeated hostile behaviors, verbal and non-verbal forms, such as public ridicule, but excludes physical contact, while aversive leadership includes restrictive practices such as threats, intimidation and reprimands (Bligh et al. 2007). For Zhao (2018) the aversive leader constantly resorts to threats and intimidation to achieve behaviors and results according to their convenience. Among the intimidation strategies used by aversive leaders are constant shouting to reprimand undesirable behavior and the use of vulgar language to threaten their followers (Thoroughgood et al. 2018).

Aversive leadership has been integrated into dark leadership styles due to its negative impact on organizational outcomes, such as increased emotional exhaustion, organizational deviance, job stress and turnover intention (Fatima et al. 2018; Pearce and Sims 2002). For Schyns and Schilling (2013), the differences between the dark side of leadership styles are essentially related to the perception of followers, the leader's intention and the leader's propensity to resort to negative behaviors verbally and non-verbally. Therefore, studies on the dark side of leadership include aversive leadership, abusive supervision, destructive leadership, despotic leadership, narcissistic leadership and tyranny (Mehraein et al. 2023; Bligh et al. 2007).

Over the years, different researchers have analyzed the distinctive characteristics of aversive leadership compared to other leadership styles with the same negative connotation (Saeed et al. 2017; Sims et al. 2009; Thoroughgood et al. 2011). For Fatima, Majeed and Shah (Fatima et al. 2018), the distinctive characteristics of aversive leadership are related to the inclination towards verbal reprimand and the adoption of punitive measures for followers. In the other leadership styles that integrate the dark side of leadership, especially abusive supervision, despotic leadership and tyranny, leaders are more tolerant in realizing their selfish interests (Bligh et al. 2007).

2.4. Psychological Capital and Organizational Commitment

Psychological capital has been considered a driving force that allows employees to implement changes and overcome challenges to achieve organizational success (Shah et al. 2023; Alessandri et al. 2018). The positive relationship between psychological capital and organizational commitment has been identified in the literature in different previous studies (Sahoo and Sia 2015; Ribeiro et al. 2021). For example, Owais, Khan and Khan (Owais et al. 2023) performed a study with 335 professors from seven public universities in Pakistan using a simple random sampling technique, and the findings demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between psychological capital and organizational commitment.

In the African context, an empirical study using a cross-sectional research design with a sample of 106 call center employees from a South African organization can be highlighted, demonstrating a significant positive relationship between psychological capital and the three components of commitment organizational commitment, namely: affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment (Simons and Buitendach 2013). However, a study performed in Angola with a sample of 342 healthcare employees only found evidence of a positive relationship between psychological capital and two dimensions of organizational commitment: affective and normative (Geremias et al. 2024). According to Luthans and Youssef-Morgan (2017), a high level of psychological capital may contribute to greater employee organizational commitment.

When looking at the relationship between psychological capital and organizational commitment, and considering the approach of Sahoo and Sia (2015), it appears that psychological capital tends to contribute to increasing the level of organizational commitment of employees, which could point to an undisputed positive relationship between psychological capital and all dimensions of organizational commitment. However, when reviewing

the studies that mention the relationship between psychological capital and organizational commitment, we found that they did not consider the perception of employees from different sectors of activity. For this reason, we believe that a study that includes a sample of employees from different sectors of activity may be relevant to present robust evidence on the relationship between psychological capital and organizational commitment. As such, we formulated the following hypotheses:

H1. *Psychological capital is positively related to organizational commitment.*

H1a. *Psychological capital is positively related to affective commitment.*

H1b. *Psychological capital is positively related to normative commitment.*

H1c. *Psychological capital is positively related to continuance commitment.*

2.5. Moderating Role of Perceived Aversive Leadership

Previous studies have shown that perceived aversive leadership negatively influences organizational results such as job satisfaction and employee motivation (Liao et al. 2020). Employees with a high level of perceived aversive leadership are more likely to exhibit negative behaviors (Mehraein et al. 2023). According to Fatima, Majeed and Shah (Fatima et al. 2018), a longitudinal study performed in Pakistan with 321 employees from different organizations in the service sector such as telecommunications, banks and universities, the perception of aversive leadership affected job performance negatively. Further mentioned in the literature was the strong association between perceived aversive leadership and increased stress as well as turnover intention (Bligh et al. 2007).

The destructive role of perceived aversive leadership is reported in the theoretical investigations presented in previous studies (Mehraein et al. 2023; Krasikova et al. 2013). A high level of perceived aversive leadership affects employee commitment, thus harming the execution of tasks and the organization's objectives (Du et al. 2022; Bligh et al. 2007). On the other hand, a low level of perceived aversive leadership can contribute to improving organizational results, such as organizational commitment; however, as far as we know, there is no empirical evidence on these results. According to Mackey et al. (2021), a destructive leader negatively affects the professional performance of his followers, thus damaging effective organizational functioning in a lasting way.

Based on previous research, we argue that employees who develop the psychological capabilities that form psychological capital, which are self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience, tend to be more committed to the organization when they have a low perception of aversive leadership, considering that they are away from stressful situations caused by negative effects of the aversive leader. On the other hand, employees with a high perception of aversive leadership tend to reduce their organizational commitment, contributing to increased turnover intention, as noted by Pearce and Sims (2002). Given this kind of previous findings, we hypothesized that:

H2. *Perceived aversive leadership moderates the relationship between psychological capital and organizational commitment such that the relationship will be stronger in the case of low perceived aversive leadership and weaker in the case of high perceived aversive leadership.*

H2a. *Perceived aversive leadership moderates the relationship between psychological capital and affective commitment such that the relationship will be stronger in the case of low perceived aversive leadership and weaker in the case of high perceived aversive leadership.*

H2b. *Perceived aversive leadership moderates the relationship between psychological capital and normative commitment such that the relationship will be stronger in the case of low perceived aversive leadership and weaker in the case of high perceived aversive leadership.*

H2c. *Perceived aversive leadership moderates the relationship between psychological capital and continuance commitment such that the relationship will be stronger in the case of low perceived aversive leadership and weaker in the case of high perceived aversive leadership.*

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model of the moderating role of perceived aversive leadership in the relationship between psychological capital and organizational commitment.

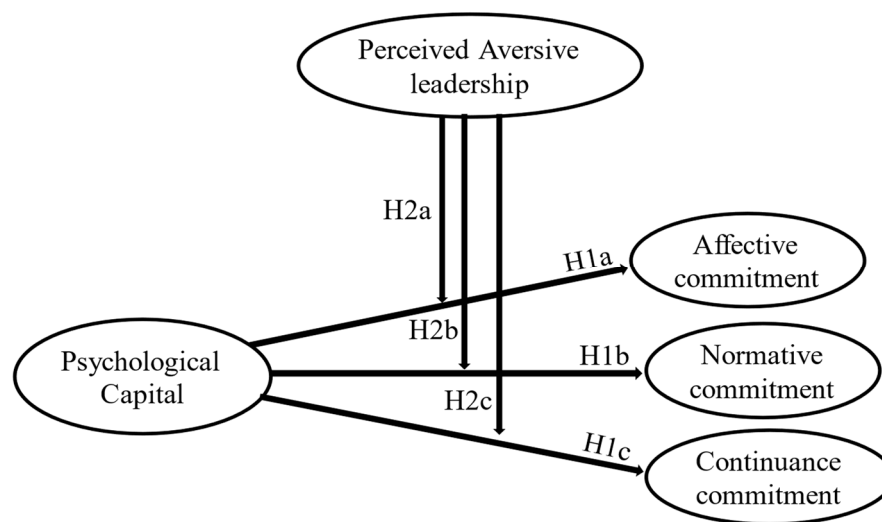


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Participants and Procedure

To test the hypotheses under study we used quantitative methodology with a descriptive and correlational design that allowed us to analyze the relationships established between the variables. Therefore, we ran a cross-sectional study using surveys. Participants were selected using a non-probabilistic convenience technique, in which those selected were professionals from different sectors of activity in Angola with a minimum of two years of experience in the workplace. All participants were part of work teams of around 9 to 20 employees, each with a direct supervisor.

To obtain permission to run the study, we contacted all those directly responsible for the employees to obtain authorization. Authorization was granted with the sole recommendation that the authors need to share the results obtained, at the end of the study. To this end, all employees voluntarily completed the questionnaire available on the online platform and gave their informed consent before starting the survey. It is important to mention that all employees were informed that the commitment to confidentiality would be maintained in the collection and processing of data, reinforcing that the questionnaires were anonymous; therefore, there would be no conditions that would allow the participants to be individually identified. Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that the participants' written informed consent is the only ethical statement imposed on individual researchers in Angola for running the study.

The participants were employees from different public and private corporations located in three large cities in Angola, specifically Luanda, Benguela and Huíla. These cities have a higher population density and relevant economic activity, criteria that were selected in the study performed in the Angolan context by Geremias, Lopes and Sotomayor (Geremias et al. 2024). During January 2024, specific links were made available on the online platform, with the expectation of reaching 700 employees. The acceptance rate of return was 48% (335 valid questionnaires). Respondents were from 30 corporations belonging to 11 areas of activity (ranging from 9 to 14 employees per institution).

Regarding the participants, we highlight that 50.4% were men, and the average age was 34 years (SD = 5.32). For educational qualifications, it was found that 70% of participants

have a bachelor's degree, 19% have a master's degree and 11% have completed a PhD program. The most significant areas of activity were education 23%, healthcare 16%, financial institutions 11% and police 9.3%. Regarding seniority, it is important to highlight that 33% had 5 years of work in the organization, 25% had worked for 6 years and 12% met the requirement of having worked a minimum of 2 years for the organization. Regarding marital status, 49% of participants were single, 48% married and 3% divorced.

3.2. Measures

Psychological capital. We used the 24-item questionnaire developed by [Luthans et al. \(2007\)](#) and validated in the Angolan context in previous studies (e.g., [Geremias et al. 2020](#)). The scale includes four subscales with six items each, respectively, optimism (e.g., "I work with the conviction that every setback has a positive side"); hope (e.g., "Right now I see myself as a successful person at work"); self-efficacy (e.g., "I feel able to help define goals/objectives for my institution"); and resilience (e.g., "One way or another, I can well manage difficulties at work"). Responses were given on a six-point Likert scale, (1) "Strongly disagree" to (6) "Strongly agree". The 24-item psychological capital questionnaire has a Cronbach's α value of 0.89, which was reported in the reference literature.

Organizational commitment. We used the scale developed by [Meyer and Allen \(1991\)](#), and validated in the Angolan context by [Geremias, Lopes and Sotomayor \(2024\)](#), composed of 19 items distributed in 3 subscales, specifically: affective commitment with 6 items (for example: "This company has great personal meaning for me"); the Cronbach's alpha coefficient presented by the authors is 0.90. The normative commitment has 6 items (for example: "I would feel guilty if I left this company now"), and the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient mentioned by the authors is 0.89. The continuance commitment consists of 7 items (for example: "I believe that there are very few alternatives to be able to think about leaving this company"); the Cronbach's alpha coefficient indicated by the authors is 0.90. Responses were given on a 7-point Likert scale, in which (1) corresponds to "Totally Disagree" and (7) "Totally Agree".

Perceived aversive leadership. We used the questionnaire by [Pearce and Sims \(2002\)](#), which was validated for Portuguese by [Esteves et al. \(2018\)](#). This questionnaire consists of 6 items (for example: "I feel intimidated by my boss's behavior"), and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient value is 0.92. The response scale used is a five-point Likert type, from (1) "Totally Disagree" to (5) "Totally Agree".

3.3. Data Analysis

The analysis followed different phases. SPSS software (v.29) was used to examine the descriptive statistics of the constructs under study, followed by confirmatory factor analysis using Amos (v.29) to verify the factor structure of psychological capital, organizational commitment and perceived aversive leadership. The model adjustment analysis considered the following acceptability parameters, suggested by [Hair, Babin and Anderson \(2019\)](#), chi-square (χ^2): p -value ≤ 0.05 ; comparative fit index (CFI): ≥ 0.90 ; Tucker-Lewis index (TLI): ≥ 0.90 ; goodness-of-fit Index (GFI): ≥ 0.90 ; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA): ≤ 0.08 ; and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR): ≤ 0.08 . Furthermore, we used the SPSS software to perform the internal consistency analysis. Finally, the Amos software was used to test the study hypotheses.

3.4. Measurement Validity

We performed separate confirmatory factor analyses with AMOS for each variable to analyze the convergent and discriminant validity of the scales under study. This procedure allowed us to verify that the items converge significantly to the respective scale with the values recorded for each factor loading being above 0.3. Confirmatory factor analysis was also used to validate the factorial structure of the constructs under study. We performed small correlations of errors within the items to obtain good model fit indices following the suggestions presented by the modification indices. Table 1 presents the confirmatory factor analysis results.

Table 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results.

Measurement Model	(χ^2)	DF	<i>p</i>	CFI	GFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Psychological capital	294.391	229	<0.001	0.918	0.935	0.922	0.029	0.049
Affective commitment	30.733	229	<0.001	0.926	0.919	0.901	0.039	0.039
Normative commitment	9.034	4	<0.001	0.993	0.991	0.973	0.061	0.049
Continuance commitment	22.732	7	<0.001	0.988	0.981	0.964	0.079	0.029
Perceived aversive leadership	17.147	5	<0.001	0.982	0.984	0.947	0.079	0.030

3.5. Assessing Common Method Bias

According to Podsakoff, MacKenzie and Podsakoff (Podsakoff et al. 2012), a cross-sectional study using a single data collection source may increase the potential problem of common method bias. To this end, statistical “remedies” have been alternative paths used in previous studies to minimize this problem (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Therefore, we performed the common method factor to evaluate the influence of common method bias on this study’s results. The results obtained showed that the value of the common method factor was 13 percent, which is below the cutoff value of 25 percent suggested by Williams and McGonagle (2015). Therefore, we argue that common method bias does not affect the study findings’ reliability.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations and Cronbach’s alpha values, as well as the results of the Pearson correlations of different constructs. The results demonstrate that psychological capital has a positive correlation with organizational commitment. Furthermore, as expected, it was found that perceived aversive leadership is negatively correlated with psychological capital and organizational commitment. On the other hand, in general, the results demonstrated adequate Cronbach’s alpha values. However, it is important to highlight that the perceived aversive leadership scale presents a Cronbach’s alpha lower than the cutoff value of 0.70. However, according to Pallant (2020), alpha values between 0.60 and 0.70 can be considered acceptable.

The structural model was analyzed within the Amos software package (v.29). The results demonstrated that the model was adjusted for the 335 study participants. The structural model presents acceptable fit indices (χ^2 (3) = 91.077, $p < 0.001$; TLI = 0.945; CFI = 0.943; GFI = 0.911; SRMR = 0.031; and RMSEA = 0.052).

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and correlations between variables.

Study Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Psychological Capital	4.22	1.32	(0.72)					
2. Organizational commitment	4.31	0.93	0.421 **	(0.87)				
3. Affective commitment	4.01	1.55	0.348 **	0.788 **	(0.89)			
4. Normative commitment	3.72	1.48	0.458 **	0.787 **	0.567 **	(0.79)		
5. Continuance commitment	4.15	1.51	0.104	0.583 **	0.122 *	0.139 *	(0.89)	
6. Perceived aversive leadership	2.68	1.18	−0.074	−0.207 **	−0.133 *	−0.147 **	−0.167 **	(0.62)

N = 335. Cronbach’s α s (in parentheses). * The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). ** The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4.2. Hypotheses Testing

The results indicate that psychological capital was positively related to affective commitment ($\beta = 0.49$; $p < 0.001$), supporting hypothesis H1a. The positive relationship between psychological capital and normative commitment was supported ($\beta = 0.61$; $p < 0.001$), confirming hypothesis H1b. Additionally, there was a positive relationship between positive

psychological capital and continuance commitment; therefore, the hypothesis H1c was also confirmed ($\beta = 0.23; p = 0.002$).

The second phase of the hypotheses testing consisted of testing the moderating role of perceived aversive leadership. The results of the moderation effect PsyCap*Perceived Aversive leadership and affective commitment were $\beta = -0.033; p = 0.004$. The results of the moderation effect PsyCap*Perceived Aversive leadership and normative commitment were $\beta = -0.037; p = 0.009$. Finally, the results of the moderation effect PsyCap*Perceived Aversive leadership and continuance commitment were $\beta = -0.046; p = 0.005$. Therefore, the results confirmed hypotheses H2a, H2b and H2c. Figure 2 presents a summary of the hypotheses testing results.

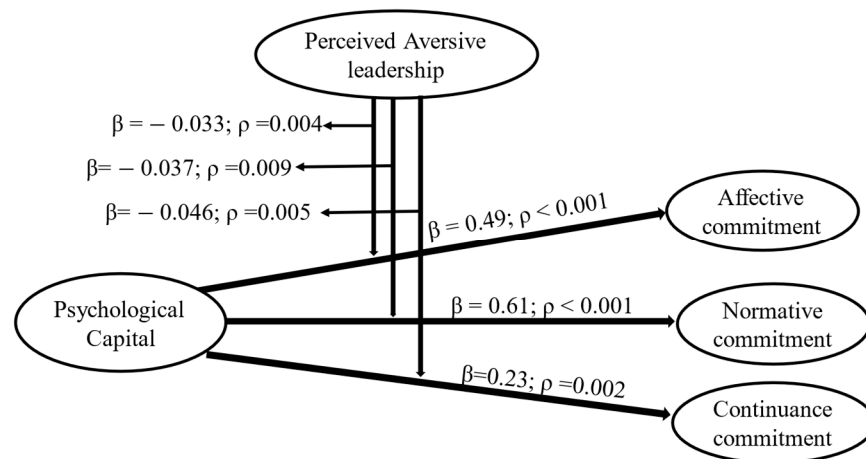


Figure 2. Final Model.

The results presented in Figures 3–5 demonstrate that the highest levels of organizational commitment (affective, normative and continuance) were verified when the level of perceived aversive leadership was low. The relevance of psychological capital in organizational commitment is highlighted when the perceived aversive leadership is low. On the other hand, when perceived aversive leadership is high, employees will exhibit lower levels of organizational commitment depending on the low level of psychological capital.

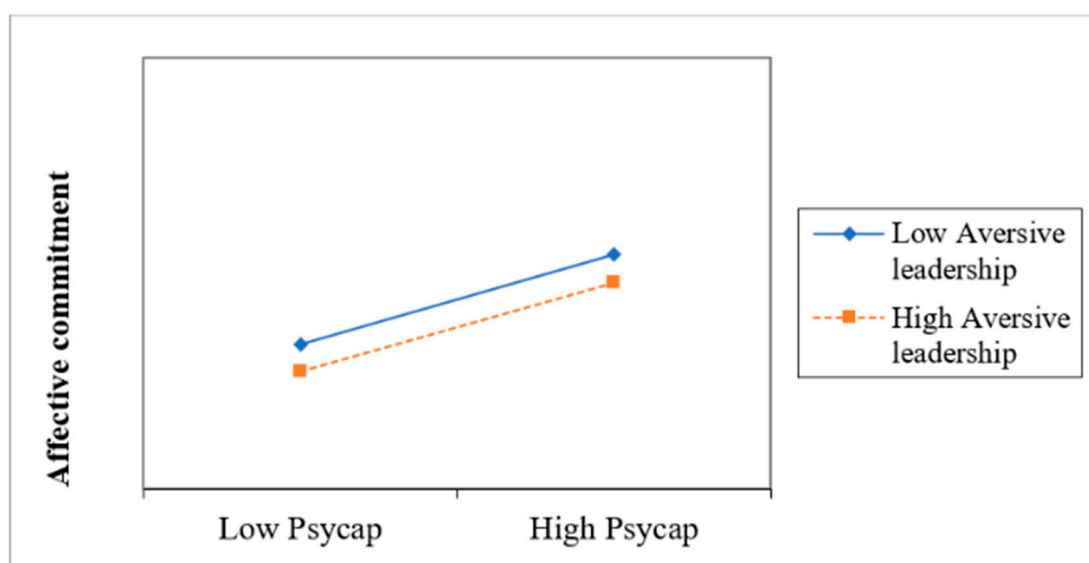


Figure 3. Interaction between psychological capital and perceived aversive leadership in influencing affective commitment.

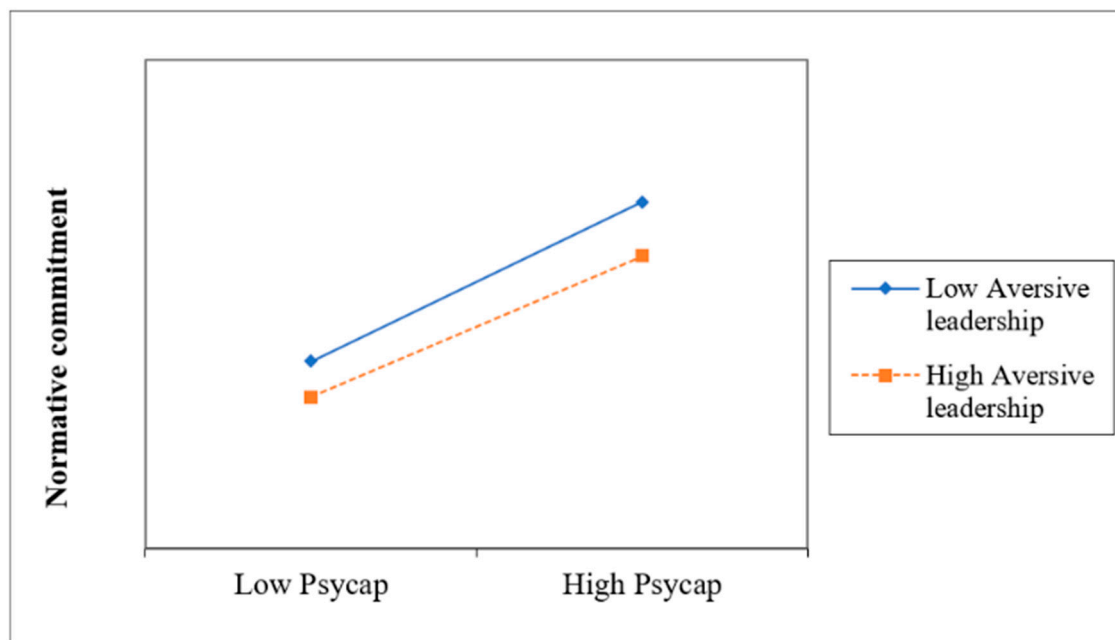


Figure 4. Interaction between psychological capital and perceived aversive leadership in influencing normative commitment.

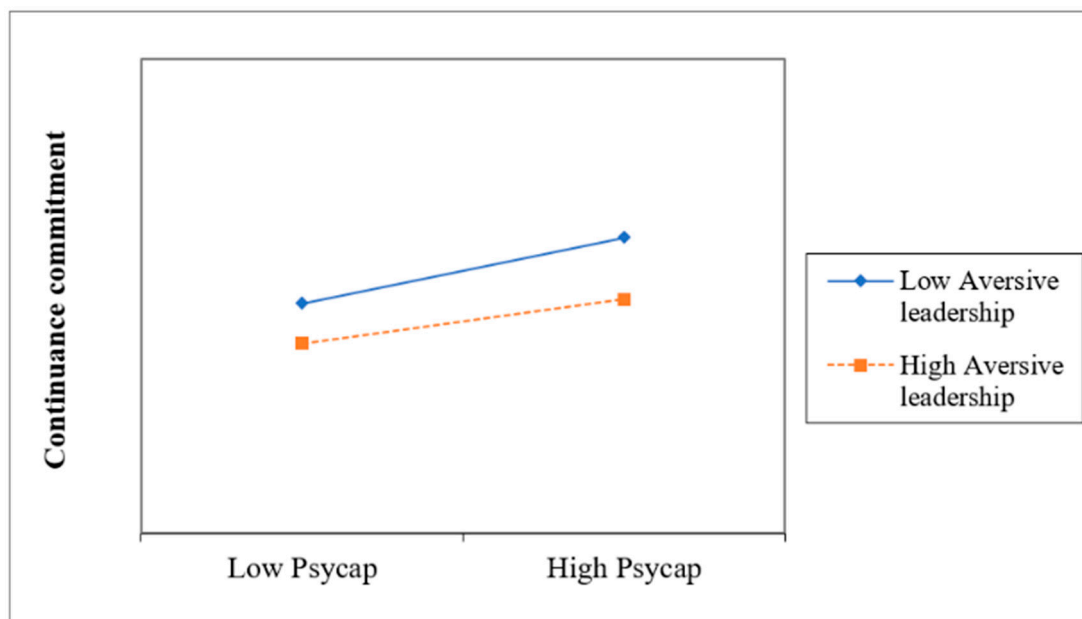


Figure 5. Interaction between psychological capital and perceived aversive leadership in influencing continuance commitment.

5. Discussion

The main purpose was to analyze the moderating role of perceived aversive leadership in the relationship between psychological capital and organizational commitment. The results confirmed the positive relationship between psychological capital and affective commitment (H1a). This result assumes that psychological capital may help employees develop an emotional connection to the organization. This conclusion is aligned with previous studies that indicate that a high level of employees' psychological capital occurs because the organization provides the necessary support that allows employees to invest in

the development and maintenance of their personal resources, thus enhancing an emotional connection to the organization (Huynh and Hua 2020; Ribeiro et al. 2021).

Grözinger et al. (2021) highlighted that in environments of great uncertainty due to financial difficulties, psychological capital becomes crucial for achieving different positive results in the organizational environment, such as employees' commitment development. Other hypotheses regarding the relationship between psychological capital and the two remaining dimensions of organizational commitment (normative and continuance) were also confirmed (H1b and H1c). This seems to happen because employees with high levels of psychological capital usually face adverse situations and seek alternative ways to solve problems, even if their remaining in the organization is motivated by a lack of work alternatives or derived from a feeling of moral duty to the organization (Tang et al. 2019).

This study, by confirming the hypotheses related to the negative interaction between psychological capital and high perceived aversive leadership on organizational commitment (H2), filled a gap in the literature identified by researchers in previous studies (e.g., Fatima et al. 2018). The moderation analysis showed that the development of psychological capital in employees' organizational commitment was relevant when perceived aversive leadership was low. In contrast, employees with high perceived aversive leadership presented low organizational commitment even with the development of psychological capital. This finding corroborates previous studies that mention the negative effect of perceived aversive leadership on organizational results (Mehraein et al. 2023; Bligh et al. 2007).

The research on the "dark side" of leadership did not present evidence of the effect of perceived aversive leadership on organizational commitment, considering that aversive leadership was identified as the least-studied construct in leadership styles. According to Thoroughgood, Sawyer and Padilla (Thoroughgood et al. 2018), the negative results of perceived aversive leadership on organizational commitment seem to occur when the leader resorts to reprimanding and intimidating behaviors that interfere with workers' capabilities to perform the necessary tasks to achieve the expected objectives. For Fatima, Majeed and Shah (Fatima et al. 2018), high perceived aversive leadership creates unfavorable conditions in the workplace, therefore the employee's commitment will depend on psychological capital development.

Finally, it is relevant to discuss the challenges related to the sustainability of organizational commitment in countries with emerging economies, as highlighted by Inegbedion (2022). According to Afshari and Gibson (2016), the sustainability of employees' organizational commitment can be related to the permanent distribution of extrinsic rewards in exchange for the work performed. Therefore, in contexts of great uncertainty caused by economic difficulties, employee commitment may be conditioned by other external factors to the employee, such as the active stimulation provided by financial rewards (Arage et al. 2022; Maleka et al. 2019).

5.1. Limitations and Future Directions

We highlight some limitations. The present study analyzed aversive leadership considering the follower's perception, which does not permit a counter-perspective from the leader's vision. According to Esteves et al. (2018), follower perception of the leader's behavior can be limited and biased. Therefore, future studies should choose to collect the perceptions of leaders, or the use of dyads could be interesting to analyze both sides of this relation.

Another limitation is the option of using the cross-section design, which does not allow attributing the causality of the relationships between the variables and increases the potential common method variance problem (Podsakoff et al. 2003; Geremias et al. 2022) despite the application of statistical "remedies" to verify the reliability of the results presented. Future studies should choose a longitudinal design to address the reported issues.

Finally, as perceived aversive leadership is the least studied topic on the dark side of leadership, it would be interesting to use different data collection and analysis methods. According to Heale and Forbes (2013), mixed methodologies can improve our understand-

ing of a phenomenon. For example, interviews with different employees to explore the factors that lead to low or high perceived aversive leadership. Therefore, further studies are necessary to explore this alternative path.

5.2. Theoretical and Practical Implications

The present study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, we present evidence that psychological capital is related to the three dimensions of organizational commitment differently. In particular, normative commitment is the dimension that presents a stronger relation with psychological capital, and continuance commitment is the dimension that presents a weaker relation with psychological capital. Therefore, this study suggests that policymakers and managers interested in improving employees' levels of organizational commitment should have different approaches to each dimension of organizational commitment.

Second, the results indicate that low perceived aversive leadership leads to greater organizational commitment, as opposed to high perceived aversive leadership. This information reinforces the active contribution of the leader to the follower's professional success (Esteves et al. 2018). This information suggests that leaders can be considered partially responsible for the organizational commitment of their followers. Therefore, we argue that this finding fills a relevant gap in the field of the dark side of leadership and is in line with the calls by Fatima, Majeed and Shah (Fatima et al. 2018) related to the lack of studies that allow us to understand the effects of aversive leadership on different organizational outcomes.

Finally, the results of this study may influence the adoption of more sophisticated manager selection techniques, based on behavioral and situational interviews to ensure that professionals with aversive behaviors cannot hold positions of responsibility. On the other hand, the results of this study may reinforce the need for continuous performance evaluation to identify managers who resort to practices such as threats and intimidation of employees.

6. Conclusions

The main goal of this study was to analyze the moderating role of perceived aversive leadership in the relationship between psychological capital and organizational commitment. Knowing more about the factors that can boost or inhibit the organizational commitment of employees from different sectors in Angola is relevant, considering that organizational commitment is an indicator of organizational performance (Geremias et al. 2024).

The study results demonstrated that psychological capital is positively related to employees' organizational commitment. Furthermore, we present evidence that low perceived aversive leadership contributes to greater organizational commitment, to the detriment of high perceived aversive leadership. Therefore, the present study reinforces the importance of analyzing the factors that increase the levels of organizational commitment. In particular, the development of psychological capital should not be underestimated by managers when preparing annual employee training programs.

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