

Incidence of Employer Brand on Organizational Commitment Factors in University Professors

Flor de Meliza Ccorisapra-Quintana¹, Sonia Gladys Gutierrez-Monzón², Christian Karlos Moscoso-Caro³, Alonso Portocarrero-Rivera⁴, James Jaír Delgado-Talavera⁵ and Rafael Romero-Carazas⁶

Abstract

In competitive environments, the implementation of human management strategies strengthens organizational commitment. This paper analyses the impact of the employer branding on the factors of organizational commitment. The elements of the study were 369 university professors from private and public institutions in Arequipa, and Smart PLS 4.0 software was used for the statistical contrast. The results explain that the employer brand experience has a positive impact on the affective factors, identification with objectives-values and morale. Furthermore, it contributes to the understanding of the theoretical links between the consequences of employer branding and the determinants of organizational commitment factors, both of which are relevant to human resource management in the dynamic environment.

Keywords: Organizational Commitment Factors, Employer Brand, Professors, University.

INTRODUCTION

The competitive intensity among universities requires having the best professionals within their teaching staff to ensure the quality of education (Montenegro, 2020). The competitive intensity among universities requires that they have a teaching profile with thematic, methodological, scientific and ethical competencies. Faced with these demands, universities develop various strategies to attract and retain the competitive teaching professional (Hurtado-Palomino et al., 2021).. In this sense, it is interesting to analyze the benefits of employer branding through the experience in the commitment to the institution of university professors. Also, it has been highlighted the need to further explore the consequences of employer branding in the field of academic organizations (Špoljarić & Ozretić Došen, 2023).

In reviewing previous studies on employer branding, it has been identified that this new emerging theory stems from the combination of strategic marketing and strategic management in the organizational setting (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Traditionally, it has been conceptualized as a strategy used by companies to attract potential employees and to retain current collaborators (Alves et al., 2020). In turn, Salameh et al. (2022) conceptualizes it as the strategic actions developed by the organization to favor its sensory, intellectual and emotional experience to retain employees. Likewise, the construct has been evaluated through the sensory, intellectual and emotional experience (Fernández-Lores et al., 2016). In terms of sensory experience, it is understood as the worker's perception of the characteristics of the physical space where he/she works and the company (Hurtado-Palomino et al., 2021); intellectual experience is the worker's internalization of the values of the organization of which he/she is a part; and emotional experience is the worker's perception of his/her work environment and his/her enjoyment of it due to the pleasure he/she has with his/her work life (Gavilán et al., 2013).

¹ Technological University of Peru. E-mail: c21383@utp.edu.pe, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6225-7296>

² Catholic University of Santa María, Peru. E-mail: sgutierrez@ucsm.edu.pe, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6474-762X>

³ National University of San Agustín de Arequipa. E-mail: cmoscoso@unsa.edu.pe, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7560-5766>

⁴ La Salle University, Peru. Email: aportocarrero@ulasalle.edu.pe, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6430-5765>

⁵ National University of San Agustín De Arequipa. E-mail: jdeldgota@unsa.edu.pe, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2400-6349>

⁶ University National of Moquegua, Peru. E-mail: romeroc@unam.edu.pe, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8909-7782>

The brand development strategies focused on the worker, not only applies internally but also externally, becoming a strategic asset against market competitors (Fernández-Lores et al., 2014; Easa and Bazzi, 2020; Neme-Chaves and López-Rodríguez, 2021).. Likewise, several studies have highlighted the benefits in identification with the organization (Salameh et al., 2022); recruitment results (Kuchеров et al., 2022); employee attitude (Kuchеров et al., 2022) employee attitude (Ertz et al., 2022) (Ertz et al., 2022); employee attitude (Ertz et al., 2022); employee retention (Ertz et al., 2022); human talent retention (Matongolo et al., 2022) (Matongolo et al., 2018) and others. Therefore, it is important to examine the employer brand in new organizational realities (Neme-Chaves & López-Rodríguez, 2021).. In addition, research on employer branding in the education sector is limited (Hurtado-Palomino et al., 2021). Therefore, it is suggested to deepen the antecedents and consequences of employer branding in the education sector (Hurtado-Palomino et al., 2021). (Hadi & Ahmed, 2018; Biswas & Suar, 2016). This research paper covers the need to explain the consequences of employer branding on organizational commitment factors.

On the other hand, organizational commitment has gained notoriety in the literature with the studies conducted by Mowday et al. (1979) and Meyer & Allen (1996), since then it has been studied in different economic contexts. Likewise, Fonseca et al. (2019) consider that organizational commitment is the positive attitude of belonging presented by the workers of an organization towards it. In addition, they propose to characterize organizational commitment with three factors: affective, identification with objectives-values and morale. The affective factor considers the emotional elements of the workers linked to the organization (Meyer et al., 2002). On the other hand, the identification with objectives-values factor is the worker's attachment to institutional norms (Fonseca et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the moral factor refers to the worker's loyalty to the institution (Betanzos-Díaz et al., 2017).

Reviewing prior knowledge has found a set of benefits for the organization (Obeng & Ugboro, 2019; Nurjannah & Hamzah, 2018). For example, university teachers can increase their productivity and performance in the institution; they can consider intrinsic values and norms for their individual performance; moreover, multiple identities of teachers allow observing the level of commitment; also, teacher's academic tenure and spirituality measures their commitment (Weiherl & Frost, 2016; Meyer et al., 2006; Mousa & Chaouali, 2021). On the other hand, there are some approaches in the purpose of understanding the theoretical connections of employer brand and affective commitment (Fernandez-Lores et al., 2016). In addition, Khajuria & Khan (2021) conduct a literature review, identifying that studies should focus on organizational or personal characteristics that lead to greater organizational commitment. Following these recommendations, the implications of employer brand as the main determinant construct of greater engagement of university teachers have been explored.

From the above background, it is inferred that there is a need to expand studies in the university context, in order to consolidate the theoretical connections in detail between the constructs in question. Considering these arguments, the following study questions are formulated:

Q1: What is the impact of the employer brand on the affective factor of university professors?

Q2: What is the impact of the employer brand on the identification with objectives-values factor of university professors?

Q3: What is the impact of the employer brand on the morale factor of university professors?

To answer these questions, the following objectives have been formulated: 1) to examine the impact of employer branding on the affective factor; 2) to analyze the impact of employer branding on the identification with goals-values; 3) to determine the impact of employer branding on the moral factor of university professors. In addition, it is important to highlight that the education sector is considered one of the largest service industries in the world; therefore, the theoretical contribution of the study helps to consolidate the current knowledge on the impact of employer branding analyzed in detail on the factors of organizational commitment. Likewise, the practical assessment is justified because the results of the research contribute to business decisions oriented towards the strategic direction of key human resources in private and public universities.

Employer Brand and Affective Factor

Based on previous studies, it has been shown that the employer brand favors the development of affective commitment, as long as the employee has had a positive experience; in this sense, organizations should promote internal communication strategies to improve the work experience (Fernández-Lores et al., 2016). Also, a positive association of emotional, sensory and intellectual experience with affective commitment was demonstrated, gaining notoriety when the individual is involved and identifies with the organization (Alves et al., 2020). On the other hand, women and older workers show greater affective commitment compared to younger ones; likewise, it was demonstrated that affective commitment is present to a greater degree in service companies (Vaijayanthi et al., 2011). The above background has allowed us to formulate the following study hypothesis.

H1: Employer branding positively affects the affective factor of university professors.

Employer Branding and Identification with Objectives-Values

Workers who identify with the organization strive to achieve strategic objectives and make a difference with respect to others; in addition, the good practices they develop in strategic human resources management must be consistent with the employer's brand (Benraïss-Noailles and Viot, 2021). In this sense, the support between colleagues and managers allows the achievement of their functions, in addition, if the company cares about the family and personal environment of the worker increases their identification and productivity in the workplace (Arasanmi and Krishna, 2019; Botella-Carrubi et al., 2021). On the other hand, fostering and reinforcing job security in the worker through professional development enhances their experience with the employer brand and creates a sense of identity with their work environment (Sharma et al., 2019). Moreover, to the best of our knowledge there is no study that analyzes the linkage between these two variables. However, the arguments allow us to hypothesize the following.

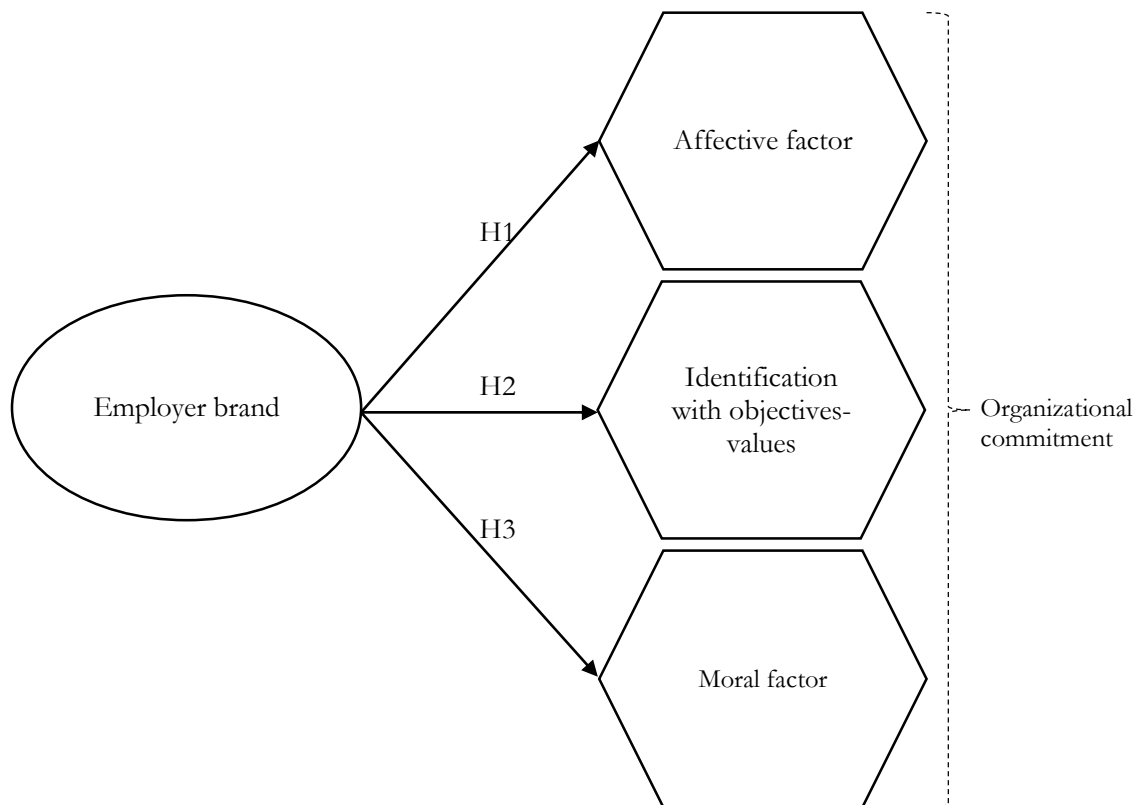
H2: The employer brand has a positive impact on the identification with objectives-values factor of university professors.

Employer Brand and Moral Commitment

In the interrelationships between the employer brand and the moral factor, it is argued that at the level of management positions there is a greater moral commitment to the organization (Vaijayanthi et al., 2011); likewise, the support given by the company to the employee has an effect on their attitudes and loyalty (Arasanmi and Krishna, 2019). In addition, the intrinsic components of the employer brand show a positive effect on the moral commitment of employees as opposed to the extrinsic ones, due to their interest in work-life balance and culture (Vaijayanthi et al., 2011); then, the actions taken by the company to improve the work environment, job security and accessibility, contribute to moral commitment (Botella-Carrubi et al., 2021). Likewise, the value of the employer's brand developed internally has an impact on employee retention; therefore, the coherence in its internal actions towards human resources and external actions for potential candidates has an impact on the loyalty of its employees and increases well-being and decreases attrition (Benraïss-Noailles & Viot, 2021). The above allows us to formulate the following hypothesis.

H3: Employer brand positively affects the morale factor of university professors.

Figure 1 graphically presents the proposed theoretical model of the study. In it, H1 explains the theoretical connections of the employer brand with the affective factor. H2 explains the theoretical connections of the employer brand with the goal-value identification factor. Finally, H3 explains the theoretical connections of the employer brand to the moral factor.



Source: Own elaboration

Figure 1. Theoretical proposal of the research

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Regarding the methodological approach of this research, it follows the quantitative route for the contrast of the hypotheses; likewise, the design is non-experimental, because the information has been collected without any manipulation; furthermore, it is cross-sectional, because it has been collected at a single given moment. Also, the information obtained is retrospective, that is, facts that university teachers have experienced. Finally, the scope of the research is explanatory, due to the fact that it analyzes the incidence of the behavior of the employer brand construct on the factors of organizational commitment.

The population considered in this work are the university professors of Arequipa, for this purpose the report of the National Superintendence of Higher University Education (2021) has been taken, where as of 2019 there were 74260 teachers between hired and appointed at national level, likewise, the university professors of the department of Arequipa of the licensed universities between public and private are approximately 3098, considering that the teachers can work in two or more universities. For the research, 369 valid surveys have been obtained and have been applied virtually and physically, which represents 11.91% of the total population, in addition, the sampling error is 4.79%.

Likewise, the data collection process was carried out through the online survey (SurveyMonkey©) and in a complementary manner with interviews to university teachers with voluntary participation. In addition, the questionnaires used in the research were validated and used in previous research. Likewise, each item was rated with a Likert scale, rated up to 5 points, where, 1 is rated as "strongly disagree" and 5 is rated as "strongly agree".

Employer brand experience is characterized by the experience that the worker has with the employer brand in their daily work, in addition, we have taken the data collection instrument proposed by GavilGavilán et al. (2013) was

taken, being measured as a second-order variable, valued through the sensory (4 items), intellectual (7 items) and emotional (3 items) experience.

Organizational commitment factors are understood as the positive attitudes that workers have towards the company or institution to which they belong. Likewise, Fonseca et al. (2019), suggests examining the variable through the affective factor, assessed with 4 items; identification with objectives-values factor, assessed with 3 items and the moral factor has been assessed with 4 items. In addition, the items were adapted from the scale validated by Fonseca et al. (2019) of course, the instrument was widely used in subsequent studies.

Control variables, the age of the respondents and seniority, measured by the number of years in the university institution, have been considered for the research.

The statistical technique used in the study is partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), in addition, Smart PLS 4.0.8 software, which is highly regarded in the field of business science, was used (Kono and Sato, 2022). The statistical results under this technique have several strengths compared to other statistical techniques (Hair et al., 2019).

RESULTS

Table 1 explains the descriptive results as the mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (σ). In addition, it is shown that the factor identification with goals-values, is the variable that has a higher mean ($\bar{X} = 4.0860$) in relation to the other variables. While the moral factor has a lower mean ($\bar{X} = 3.2696$), but is higher than the scale average (2.5). The standard deviation in all constructs is less than 1, which explains a low mean dispersion of the variables.

Table 1. Descriptive and correlational results

Constructs	\bar{X}	σ	1	2	3	4
Employer brand	3.9572	0.58959	1			
2. Affective factor	3.6484	0.75147	0.765**	1		
3. Identification with objectives - values	4.0860	0.66083	0.794**	0.706**	1	
4. Moral factor	3.2696	0.86079	0.446**	0.556**	0.447**	1

** Significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

Source: Own elaboration

Also, the association between the constructs has been analyzed through Pearson's coefficient, after typing the mean of the constructs. Table 1 shows that the employer brand is positively associated with the affective factor ($R=0.765^{**}$). Likewise, the employer brand is favorably associated with the factor identification with objectives - values ($R= 0.794^{**}$), showing a high correlation compared to the other relationships. Finally, there is a positive association between the employer brand and the morale factor ($R=0.446^{**}$), this correlation is the lowest compared to the other relationships. In general, it is inferred that employer branding strategies implemented in companies are positively associated with organizational commitment factors.

Table 2 explains the measurement model through the internal consistency of the research constructs, Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.7 at the variable and dimension level. The composite reliability is greater than 0.70 and less than 0.95. (Hair et al., 2019). On the other hand, the convergent validity assessed with the average variance extracted (AVE), where the constructs have indices greater than 0.5, meeting the accepted statistical criteria (Henseler et al., 2015)..

Table 2. Reliability, convergent validity and collinearity assessment

Constructs	Reliability		Convergent validity	Collinearity
	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE	VIF
	> 0.7	> 0.7	> 0.5	< 5
Employer brand	0.946	0.952	0.587	
Affective factor	0.858	0.904	0.702	1.001
Factor identification with objectives-values	0.885	0.929	0.813	1.001
Moral factor	0.865	0.917	0.788	1.001

In addition, Table 3 presents the discriminant validity evaluated through the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) that assesses the relationships between the variables in question, the results evidence that the values are lower than the threshold of 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2015).. Likewise, cross-loadings have been assessed by means of the Fornell and Larker (1981) criterion, the results comply with this discriminant validity criterion.

Table 3. Assessment of discriminant validity

Constructs	Fornell-Larker Criterion / Heterotrait-monotrait ratio			
	1	2	3	4
1. Employer brand experience	0.766	0.851	0.868	0.488
2. Affective factor	0.771	0.838	0.818	0.629
3. Factor identification with objectives and values	0.801	0.713	0.902	0.508
4. Moral factor	0.448	0.543	0.449	0.887

On the other hand, the collinearity statistics (VIF) at the indicator level have been analyzed. Table 4 explains that all the items of the constructs have external loadings greater than 0.70, meeting the minimum threshold required. However, item ME 2 has a value of 0.690, slightly below the threshold, but this item has been kept because the debugging does not increase the internal consistency of the model (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 4. Collinearity statistics per item

Variables	items	External loads	VIF
Employer brand (EM)	ME 1	0.718	2.536
	ME 2	0.690	2.582
	ME 3	0.749	3.291
	ME 4	0.716	2.241
	ME 5	0.757	2.546
	ME 6	0.773	2.899
	ME 7	0.805	3.388
	ME 8	0.771	3.619
	ME 9	0.777	4.296
	ME 10	0.803	4.882
	ME 11	0.800	4.375
	ME 12	0.818	3.283
	ME 13	0.735	2.727
	ME 14	0.798	2.902
Affective factor	Affective 1	0.836	1.965
	Affective 2	0.838	2.086
	Affective 3	0.871	2.355
	Affective 4	0.804	1.884
Factor identification with objectives and values	Objectives 5	0.871	2.151
	Objectives 7	0.928	3.187

	Objectives 8	0.905	2.74
Moral factor	Moral 9	0.849	1.971
	Moral 10	0.914	2.634
	Moral 11	0.898	2.374

Also, Table 4 presents the variance inflation factor (VIF) of the items of the constructs are less than 5 (Hair et al., 2019). However, the items Objectives 6 and Moral 12 have been eliminated, because the VIF values are greater than 5, not recommended in the measurement models with PLS-SEM.

Table 5 shows the results of the structural model, where the direct incidence of the constructs studied is analyzed. In the first model, it is explained that the employer brand has a positive influence on the affective factor with a path coefficient (β) of 0.771***, in addition, the incidence of age has been examined with a $\beta = 0.016^{ns}$ and seniority with a $\beta = -0.031^{ns}$. Likewise, the adjusted R² coefficient of determination is 0.593; that is, it influences affective commitment by 59.3%.

In the second model, it is explained that the employer brand has a positive influence on the factor identification with objectives - values, its path coefficient is 0.802***; in addition, age has a $\beta = -0.001^{ns}$ and seniority has a $\beta = 0.048^{ns}$, in both cases they are not significant. The coefficient of determination is an adjusted R² of 0.641; that is, it has a 64.1% influence on the factor of identification with objectives - values (see Table 5).

Table 5. Summary of the structural model

	Hypothesis 1	Hypothesis 2	Hypothesis 3
Employer brand → Affective factor	0.771***		
Employer brand → Factor identification with objectives and values.		0.802***	
Employer brand → Morale factor			0.454***
Age	0.016	-0.001	0.100
Seniority	-0.031	0.048	0.133
Adjusted R ²	0.593	0.641	0.234

Note: Path =* p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Source: Own elaboration

In the third model, it is explained that the employer brand has an influence on the morale factor, with a path coefficient of 0.454***; while age has a $\beta = 0.100^{ns}$ and seniority has a $\beta = 0.133^{ns}$, not significant in both control variables. Likewise, the coefficient of determination shows an adjusted R² of 0.254; that is, it has an influence of 25.4% on the moral factor. These influences show that the employer brand has a greater impact on two factors of organizational commitment, while it has a lower impact on the moral factor (see Table 5).

Figure 2 plots the summary of the model studied through a Smart PLS 4.0 nomogram. It can be seen that age and seniority have no significant impact.

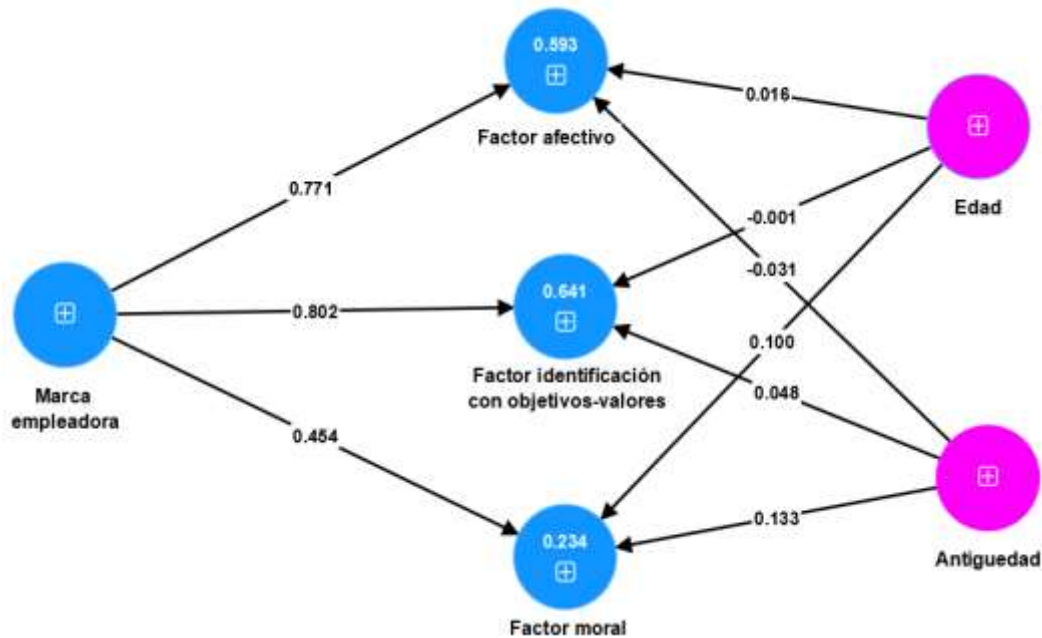


Figure 2. Summary of the study model with Smart PLS 4.0.

Note. Developed by the researchers

DISCUSSION

Research has examined the impact of employer branding on factors of organizational commitment as demand response in the literature (Špoljarić & Ozretić Došen, 2023; Neme-Chaves & López-Rodríguez, 2021).. That is, how the employer brand favors the behavior of organizational commitment factors in the teaching staff of the Universities of Arequipa (public and private).

First, it is concluded that the employer brand has a positive impact on the affective factor. These results are close to the conclusions obtained by Fernández-Lores et al. (2016) who consider that a positive experience of the employer brand has an impact on the development of affection on the part of employees. Second, it has been found that the employer brand has a positive impact on the factor identification with the objectives-values, resembling the work of Sharma et al. (2019) where it is recommended to encourage and reinforce employee security through professional development by improving their experience with the employer brand and creates a sense of identity with their work environment. Third, employer brand has been found to favor the morale factor. The result shows similarity with the conclusions found by Vaijayanthi et al. (2011) where he explains that the intrinsic elements of the employer brand show a positive effect on the moral commitment of workers as opposed to the extrinsic ones.

The main theoretical contribution of the research is to consolidate the current knowledge on the effects of employer branding on organizational commitment factors by analyzing them in detail. As for the practical implications of the study, they will be very useful in organizations. Specifically, the results of the research are a key input for the strategic decision-making process in human resource management in private and public universities, benefiting their competitiveness and sustainability.

CONCLUSION

The research has some limitations, as in all research. First, the data collection process was carried out in a cross-sectional manner; it is recommended that longitudinal research be conducted. Second, the study elements were university teachers from a single geographical context, limiting its application in a national context. In this sense, it is recommended that the data collection process be extended to the country level. Third, the results are likely to be used in regions with similar economic situations.

As for future research, it is recommended to explore the antecedents and consequences of employer branding and organizational commitment in a broader context; likewise, the direct and indirect effects with other variables such as employee retention, individual job performance, personal competencies, employee loyalty and others should be analyzed.

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