

**BETTING ON A WORK-FAMILY CULTURE AND LEAVING  
PREGNANCY DISCRIMINATION BEHIND**

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**Dissertation submitted as partial requirement for the conferral of**

**Master in Human Resources Management**

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April 2014

**ABSTRACT**

This research deals with the influence of the organizational work-family culture on women's perceived pregnancy discrimination and its affective commitment consequences. It was investigated (a) the effect of work-family culture on the perceptions of pregnancy discrimination that (b) in turn should influence the affective commitment of the working women. A total of 126 working women provided data on their perceptions of pregnancy discrimination, the organizational work-family culture and the affective commitment towards their workplace. The proposed model was tested using structural equation modeling (SEM) procedures and, overall, support a full mediation model in which organizational work-family culture is related to the perceptions of the pregnancy discrimination, which negatively impact the affective commitment towards their organization ( $\chi^2 (269) = 439.18$ ; RMSEA = .071 ; CFI = .98; TLI = .98; WRMR = .93). These results make valuable contributions to the literature of pregnancy discrimination at the workplace, and to the organizational work-family culture as a decisive influence factor on pregnancy discrimination and consequently on the workers' affective commitment.

*Keywords:* pregnancy discrimination, work-family culture, affective commitment.

## RESUMO

Este estudo analisa a influência de uma cultura organizacional laboral e familiar nas percepções de discriminação de grávidas por parte de mulheres trabalhadoras, e o consequente impacto no compromisso afectivo destas mulheres em relação ao seu local de trabalho. Foi investigado (a) o efeito da cultura laboral e familiar nas percepções de discriminação que (b) consequentemente deve influenciar o compromisso afectivo das mulheres trabalhadoras. O modelo proposto foi testado utilizando os procedimentos de um modelo de equação estrutural (SEM) e, no geral, suportando um modelo de total mediação no qual a cultura laboral e familiar está relacionada com as percepções de discriminação de grávidas, que influencia negativamente o compromisso afectivo em relação à organização ( $\chi^2 (269) = 439.18$ ; RMSEA = .071 ; CFI = .98; TLI = .98; WRMR = .93). Estes resultados são uma contribuição valiosa para a literatura da discriminação de grávidas no local de trabalho, e para a cultura organizacional laboral e familiar, como um factor decisivo e influente na discriminação de grávidas e consequentemente no compromisso afectivo das colaboradoras.

*Palavras-chave:* discriminação de grávidas, cultura laboral e familiar, compromisso afectivo.

J13 Fertility • Family Planning • Child Care • Children • Youth

J71 Discrimination

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## INTRODUCTION

«Working women today are trying to achieve in the work world what men have achieved all along - but men have always had the help of a woman at home who took care of all the other details of living! Today the working woman is also that woman at home, and without support services in the workplace and a respect for the work women do within and outside the home, the attempt to do both is taking its toll--on women, on men, and on our children.» Jeanne Elum and Don Elum (1994).

In recent decades, men and women have been discriminated for having family responsibilities (Still, 2006). In particular, many studies found out that women are disadvantaged in their working life due to pregnancy, motherhood or even potential motherhood (Ainsworth & Cutcher, 2008; Charlesworth & Macdonald, 2007; Gatrell, 2005; Kugelberg, 2006; Masser, Grass & Nestic, 2007). Being a mother is an important step for most women, however the fertility rate in Portugal has been decreasing in the past years and it is one of the lowest in Europe, being 1.28 children by woman in 2012 (Inquérito à Fecundidade –INE, 2013). This fertility rate is much lower than the minimum required to ensure the replacement of generations, and the sustainability of health, pensions and social insurance services. Portugal has now the challenge to face the insufficient number of births that affects the development of a balanced population structure that is increasingly marked by the demographic aging (Cruz, 2011).

In a similar vein, the increase of women in the labor force has led to the new challenges for man and women to unify family and work commitments (Grzywacz, 2000), and to the need to develop organizational policies that protect women, especially during pregnancy (Salihu, Myers, & August, 2012). It is found that almost half of all working women in western countries have experienced many kinds of discrimination after the announcement of pregnancy, such as criticism of their appearance or performance, changes to job descriptions, dismissal without good reason and reduced working hours (Adams, McAndrew & Winterbotham, 2005; Davis, Neathey, Regan & Willison., 2005; Gregory, 2001; McDonald, Dear & Backstrom, 2008). One critical factor is that pregnancy discrimination can risk the health of the pregnant women and her baby, and it is also linked to negative consequences such as depression, psychological distress and anxiety (Feagin & McKinney, 2003; Keith, Lincoln, Taylor

& Jackson, 2010; Kessler, Michelson & Williams et.al.1999; Klonoff, Landrine, & Ullman, 1999; Noh & Kaspar, 2003).

Consequently, this research deepens our understanding on the influence of the organizational work family culture on women's perceptions of pregnancy discrimination at work. In doing so, this study has two main goals. The first is to consider whether the organizational work-family culture has an influence on the perceptions of pregnancy discrimination of working women. The second aim is to consider whether those perceptions of pregnancy discrimination have a negative impact on the affective commitment of those women towards their organizations.

### **Work-family balance: The role of organizational culture**

With the changes in today's diverse workforce, many organizations are implementing programs and policies designed to help the needs to balance the work-family roles (Lobel & Kossek, 1996). These programs and policies are commonly referred to as "family-friendly benefits". In that sense, those benefits are designed to alleviate the employee to manage and coordinate the occupational and family roles, and give the organizations the competitive advantage of raising morale, attract and retain the best talents (Allen, 2001). Although the organization's efforts to address employee concerns regarding the balance of the work-family roles, these practices will not be enough to do it unless they are also accompanied by a change in the culture of the organization (Lobel & Kossek, 1996). In that sense, considering that Greenhaus, Collins and Shaw (2003) defined work-family balance as "the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in – and equally satisfied with – his or her work and family role"; work-family culture refers to "an organization that supports and values the integration of employees' work and family lives" (Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness, 1999; p.394). According to these researchers the organizational culture regarding work-life balance is a multi-dimensional construct defined by three components: (a) *negative career consequences*: the perception of negative impacts on one's career if it's invested time and effort on the personal life or on the work-family benefits; (b) *supervisory or managerial support*: the perception of management sensitivity and support regarding the balance between work and family life; and (c) *organizational time demands*: the perception that employees should prioritize work over their families by spending long

hours at work, with the negative consequence of disrupting the balance between work and family life (see also Beléndez-Vázquez, Martín-Llaguno & Hernández-Ruiz, 2013).

### **Work-family organizational culture and affective commitment**

Meyer and Allen (1997) developed the three-component model of commitment that proposes that organizational commitment is about a three simultaneous mindsets encompassing normative, continuance and affective organizational commitment. These authors argued that the commitment is the “result of the experiences that satisfy employees’ needs” (p. 70). In this study, I focus on the dimension *affective commitment*, which is defined as the “employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization” (Meyer, & Allen, 1991; p. 67). Indeed, affective commitment refers to positive feelings of the employee towards its company instead of being the result of perceived economic and psychological benefits of being in a relationship (continuance commitment), which can be more influenced by the current financial crisis that Portuguese organizations are facing with. In addition, some authors have indicated that “affective commitment and normative commitment have not been as empirically differentiated as theoretically expected” (for a review, see Bergman, 2006; p. 645). Moreover, in a meta-analysis of the antecedents and consequences of the three dimensions of organizational commitment, affective commitment showed the strongest correlations with relevant outcomes such as attendance, performance or employee stress (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002).

According to the social exchange theory, perceptions of a supportive and fair exchange relationship between the organization and their members is a necessary precondition for the development of high levels of affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Shore & Wayne, 1993; Kunze Boehm & Bruch, 2011). Furthermore, Allen (2001) found that “employees who perceived that the organization was less family-supportive experienced more work–family conflict, less job satisfaction, less organizational commitment, and greater turnover intentions than did employees who perceived that the organization was more family-supportive”. Moreover, some researchers found that work–family conflict have adverse effects such as lower life satisfaction, greater psychological burnout, and more psychosomatic symptoms on individual well-being (e.g., Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Aryee, Luk, Leung, & Lo, 1999; Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Pleck, Staines, &

Lang, 1980; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Therefore, I hypothesize that work-family culture will have a positive impact on the organizational affective commitment of the employees.

**Hypothesis 1.** A supportive organizational work-family culture will be positively associated to affective commitment

### **The mediating role of pregnancy discrimination**

The beginning of research on work-life balance can be traced back to studies of women having multiple roles (Rantanen, Kinnunen, Mauno & Tillemann, 2010), such as being a worker and a mother at the same time. A work-life balance is important for the employee's psychological well-being, and it is generally agreed that satisfaction, high self-esteem and overall sense of harmony in life can be indicators of a successful balance between work and family roles (Clark, 2000; Clarke, Koch & Hill, 2004; Marks & MacDermid, 1996). It is critical for companies the social support of pregnant women, as women who perceive social support at the workplace are more likely to return to work after the childbirth, reducing the risk of loss in skills and training for employers (Equal Opportunity Commission, 2004; Salihu et al., 2012). Furthermore, workplaces that plan and proactively support pregnancy show lower rates of turnover and better ease of pregnant women of shifting workloads, which decreases losses and increases productivity (Equal Opportunity Commission, 2004; Salihu et al., 2012). Some researchers found that through an organizational culture and family-friendly practices, women could be less likely to view pregnancy as a crisis that affects their job or career plans (Russel & Banks, 2011). Similarly, Redmond, Valiulis and Drew (2006) found that a crisis pregnancy is strongly related to work-life balance policies of the organization. Taking this, it is expected that work-family culture will be negatively associated to pregnancy discrimination, which “involves treating a woman (an applicant or employee) unfavorably because of pregnancy, childbirth, or a medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth” according to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

**Hypothesis 2.** Work-family culture will be negatively associated to pregnancy discrimination



Unfortunately, there is extensive evidence that pregnancy is seen as a burden to organizations (Chester & Kleiner, 2001; Gueutal & Taylor, 1991; James, 2004; Kugelberg, 2006). What can be really concerning for working women when they get pregnant are the problems caused by others in the workplace after the announcement of the pregnancy (Buzzanell & Liu, 2007; Gross & Pattison, 2007). The way women are treated at the workplace during their pregnancy and leave of absence is found to impact their decisions regarding the return to the workplace, the resumption of their career in general (Buzzanell & Liu, 2007; Houston & Marks, 2003; Judiesch & Lyness, 1999), and the return to either a full-time or part-time work (Buzzanell & Liu, 2007; Houston & Marks, 2003). Women's perceptions of pregnancy discrimination are a contravention of an equitable give-and-take relationship between the employee and the workplace, so it would probably affect negatively their emotional attachment towards their workplace as the affective commitment of women was found to be strongly related to work experiences (Meyer et al., 2002). Thus, perceptions of pregnancy discrimination may influence the affective commitment of women towards their workplace, the highest the pregnancy discrimination perceptions the lowest the affective commitment.

**Hypothesis 3.** Pregnancy discrimination will be negatively associated to affective commitment

Finally, as previous literature have shown, an organizational culture that supports women and pregnancy can lead to reduce discrimination perceptions, which, in turn, alleviate negative consequences in the organizations and promote positive emotions in workers that will enhance their retention into the workforce (Equal Opportunity Commission, 2004; Greenberg, Ladge, & Clair, 2009; Salihu et al., 2012; Redmond, Valiulis, & Drew, 2006; Russel & Banks, 2011). Indeed, affective commitment is seen as a negative indicator of turnover (Allen, 1990). Thus, derived from the previous hypotheses based on previous empirical evidence, it is expected that pregnancy discrimination has a mediating role on the relationship between work-family culture and affective commitment of working women.

**Hypothesis 4.** Pregnancy discrimination will mediate the relationship between work-family culture and affective commitment

## METHODOLOGY

### Procedure and participants

Data was gathered by online surveys following a snowball sampling technique (chain sampling), which is a non-probability sampling technique where participants recruit subsequent participants through their social networks who meet the eligibility criteria and could potentially contribute to our study. In that sense, the eligibility criteria was being a woman between 18 and 50 years old currently working in Portugal.

The questionnaire was published online using the survey software Qualtrics® on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2014, and it was closed on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2014. After that period, 261 questionnaires were submitted. However, 135 (51.7%) questionnaires were removed because were either incomplete or did not meet the eligibility criteria.

Thus, according to the selected eligibility criteria, all the participants (N = 126 fully completed questionnaires that were included in the analysis) were female with an age ranging from 22 to 58 years old ( $M = 34.68$ ;  $SD = 7.41$ ). As can be seen in Table 1, most the participants was married or living with their partner (62.3%) and had university education (90.4%). In addition, most of the participants reported having at least one child (59.8% vs. 40.2% without any children) and being employed in the same organization for more than 7 years.

### Instruments

The questionnaire was composed by 5 different scales translated into Portuguese by following a standard back-translation procedure.

*Socio-demographical variables.* Some socio-demographical variables were collected and treated as control variables in data analysis. In this study respondents need to give data about their gender, age (in years), civil status, number of children, education or academic qualifications and job seniority (in months).

*Parental Role.* This measure was included to control the family role salience of the participants (i.e., how important participants perceive that their family role is in their lives). According to Allen and Ortlepp (2002, p.7), “an awareness of the importance of work and careers within employees’ lives may contribute a great deal to our

understanding of employee behaviors and attitudes”. Indeed, the value an individual places on the work and family roles plays an important role on work-family balance perceptions (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000). Therefore, the dimension *parental role reward value* included in the Life Role Salience Scales (LRSS: Amatea et al., 1986) was used in this study. The scale is composed by 5 items scored in a 5-points Likert scale (e.g., “If I chose not to have children, I would regret it”, “It is important to me to feel I am (will be) an effective parent”). Internal consistency of the scale in this study was .701 (Cronbach’s alpha).

Table 1

*Participants’ socio-demographic data (N = 126).*

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	%
Age (in years)	34.68	7.41	
Civil Status			
Single			31.1
Married/Living with partner			62.3
Divorced/Widow			6.6
Education			
High school			6.6
Degree/Bachelor			57.1
Post-graduation			33.3
No. children			
0			40.2
1			23.8
2			26.2
3 or more			9.8
Seniority (in months)	91.30	71.40	

*Work-Family Organizational Culture.* This variable was measured by using the three dimensions of the *Spanish version* (Belendez-Vazquez et al., 2013) of the *Work-Family Culture Scale* (WFCS: Thompson et al., 1999): Managerial support (e.g., “In the event of a conflict, managers are understanding when employees have to put their family first”), Negative career consequences (e.g., “Employees are resentful when women take extended leaves to care for children”), and Organizational time demands (e.g., “Employees are expected to take work home at night and/or on weekends”). The

scale was composed by a total of 11 items. The items were scored on a seven-point scale (1 -strongly disagree; 2 - disagree; 3 - slightly disagree; 4 - neutral; 5 - slightly agree; 6 - agree; 7 - strongly agree). Internal consistency of both dimensions ( $\alpha$  managerial support = .922;  $\alpha$  negative career consequences = .857;  $\alpha$  time demands = .855) and the whole scale in the current study were satisfactory ( $\alpha$  = .904).

*Affective Commitment.* Affective commitment was measured using such dimension of the Commitment Scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990). Thus, respondents reported their affective commitment through 6 items (e.g., “I perceive the problems of the organization as my own problems”) scored on a seven-point Likert scale (1 -strongly disagree; 2 - disagree; 3 - slightly disagree; 4 - neutral; 5 - slightly agree; 6 - agree; 7 - strongly agree). Internal consistency of the scale in the current study was satisfactory ( $\alpha$  = .856).

*Pregnancy Discrimination.* Perceptions of pregnancy discrimination at work was measured using 11 five-point Likert-scale items (1 -strongly disagree; 2 - disagree; 3 - neutral; 4 - agree 5 - strongly agree) adapted from the Chronic Work Discrimination and Harassment Scale (CWDH: see Williams, Yu, Jackson, & Anderson, 1997; Williams et al., 2012). The CWDH was developed for the YES Health Study (for more information of such study, see Oyserman, Uskul, Yoder, Nesse, & Williams, 2007; Rooks, Xu, Holliman, & Williams, 2011) to assess employment discrimination (e.g., unfairly fired, not hired, passed over for a raise, denied a promotion) because of race or national origin. In this study, the heading of the questionnaire was changed from “Here are some situations that can arise at work. Please tell me *how often you have experienced them during the last 12 months*” to “Here are some situations that can arise at work. Please tell me *if a woman gets pregnant in your workplace will probably experience the following situations*” (see Annex). Internal consistency of the scale in the current study was satisfactory ( $\alpha$  = .947).

## Data analysis

First, descriptive analyses were carried out using SPSS 20.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL), in which an initial examination of the correlations between the main variables was addressed. Second, after checking that initial conditions for performing regression analyses were met (see Annex), hypotheses 1 to 3 were tested by means of hierarchical linear regression where all predictors were mean centered prior to the analyses (Aiken & West, 1991). Control variables (i.e., socio-demographics and parental role) were included in the first step, whereas main independent variables (i.e., work-family culture / pregnancy discrimination) were included in the second step to determine their contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable (affective commitment / pregnancy discrimination) beyond the control variables.

Finally, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to prove the validity of the measures was performed using Mplus (Muthen & Muthen, 1998-2011). Then, the proposed mediation model in which the effect of the organizational work-family culture on affective commitment is mediated by perceptions of pregnancy discrimination was tested by performing a structural equation modeling (SEM) using Mplus. Criteria to evaluate the goodness of fit of the models (for CFA and SEM) included (a) the comparative fit index (CFI, which value should be close to or greater than 0.95); (b) the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI, which value should be close to or greater than 0.95); (c) the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA, which value should be 0.08 or lower) and (d) the weighted root mean square residual (WRMR, which value should be lower than 1) (see Muthen & Muthen, 1998-2011).

## RESULTS

### Descriptive analyses

As can be seen in Table 2, the dimensions of work-family organizational culture were significantly related to pregnancy discrimination. However, only the dimensions managerial support and negative career consequences were associated with affective commitment. In addition, results revealed a significant negative relation between pregnancy discrimination and affective commitment ( $r = -.36, p \leq 0.01$ ).

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations*

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Managerial support (MS)	4.931	1.484	–				
2. Time demands (TD)	3.355	1.807	-.359**	–			
3. Career Consequences (CC)	3.972	1.546	-.558**	.539**	–		
4. Pregnancy discrimination (PD)	1.543	0.717	-.570**	.348**	.537**	–	
5. Affective commitment (AC)	4.787	1.343	.205*	-.075	-.222*	-.363**	–

Note.  $N = 126$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

**Hypotheses testing**

After verifying that all assumptions for performing multiple regression models were met (see Annex), different hierarchical regression models were estimated. Hypothesis 1 predicted that the work-family culture will be positively associated with affective commitment. Results revealed that control variables did not significantly contribute to the prediction of affective commitment (see Table 3). With regard to work-family organizational culture dimensions, results revealed that only career consequences was marginally associated with affective commitment. Adding the work-family organizational culture dimensions increased the explained variance to 12% ( $\Delta R^2 = .07$ ;  $p < .05$ ).

Regarding hypothesis 2, which predicted a negative relationship between work-family culture and pregnancy discrimination, results revealed that control variables did not significantly contribute to the prediction of pregnancy discrimination (see Table 4). With regard to work-family organizational culture dimensions, results revealed that both managerial support and career consequences were significantly associated with pregnancy discrimination. Adding the work-family organizational culture dimensions increased the explained variance to 36% ( $\Delta R^2 = .35$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

Table 3. Affective commitment regressed on work-family culture.

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized	
		Coefficients		Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	4.39	1.42		3.09**
2	(Constant)	3.49	1.69		2.06*
	WFC-MS	.13	.10	.15	1.34
	WFC-CC	-.18	.11	-.21	-1.73 <sup>+</sup>
	WFC-TD	.04	.08	.06	.56

*Note:*<sup>a</sup>“Marital Status” was dummy coded (0 = married/living with a partner; 1 = other); +  $p = .06$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Control variables are not included because there were not significantly correlated with affective commitment.

Table 4. Pregnancy discrimination regressed on work-family culture.

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized	
		Coefficients		Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	.54	.75		.72
2	(Constant)	2.00	.74		2.71**
	WFC-MS	-.18	.04	-.37	-4.10***
	WFC-CC	.13	.05	.29	2.90**
	WFC-TD	.03	.03	.07	.81

*Note:*<sup>a</sup>“Marital Status” was dummy coded (0 = married/living with a partner; 1 = other); +  $p = .06$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Control variables are not included because there were not significantly correlated with affective commitment.

Then, the hypothesis 3, which stated that pregnancy discrimination would be negatively related to the affective commitment, was also supported. Control variables did not significantly contribute to the prediction of affective commitment (see Table 5); whereas results evidence that pregnancy discrimination significantly explain the affective commitment (increased the explained variance to 16%;  $\Delta R^2 = .15$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

Table 5. Affective commitment regressed on pregnancy discrimination.

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized	
		Coefficients		Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	4.39	1.42		3.09**
2	(Constant)	4.80	1.31		3.67***
	DISC	-.76	.16	-.40	-4.68***

Note:<sup>a</sup>“Marital Status” was dummy coded (0 = married/living with a partner; 1 = other); +  $p = .06$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Control variables are not included because there were not significantly correlated with affective commitment.

Taking together these results, it was observed that the dimension *time demands* does not contribute to the prediction of neither pregnancy discrimination nor affective commitment. Based on these results, the dimension “time demands” was excluded from future analyses. This decision was also based on the fact that the increase of unemployment occurred in the last years in Portugal due to the financial crisis of 2008 is influencing the working life of the ones that still have a job. This is visible on the recent portuguese “Employment Survey” from INE (2012), in which it was found that from 2011 until 2012 there was an increase in 5,9% of people that work more than 41 hours per week, being the legal limit of 40 hours per week. This is a critical factor because in 2011 the number of people that worked more than 41 hours per week was already approximately 1,1 million people, a quarter of the total people employed. Taking this into consideration, it could be that the dimension “time demands” has not the expected influence on pregnancy discrimination and affective commitment for



cultural reasons, and so it was decided to exclude it from future analysis. Also, there is evidence to affirm that time constraints does not explain the variance in a number of work-family outcomes (Burge et al., 1991; Carlson et al., 1995; Greenhaus et al., 1987; Pittman, 1994)

Consequently, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed in order to test whether four factors are present in our questionnaire: managerial support, career consequences, pregnancy discrimination and affective commitment. As can be seen in Table 6, results revealed a decent fit to the predicted four-factor structure; whereas alternative models (unidimensional and three-factor structure: work-family organizational culture, pregnancy discrimination and affective commitment) did not fit to data. Thus, the mediation model proposed was analyzed by including only participants' responses to each of the constructs identified in the CFA: managerial support, career consequences, pregnancy discrimination and affective commitment

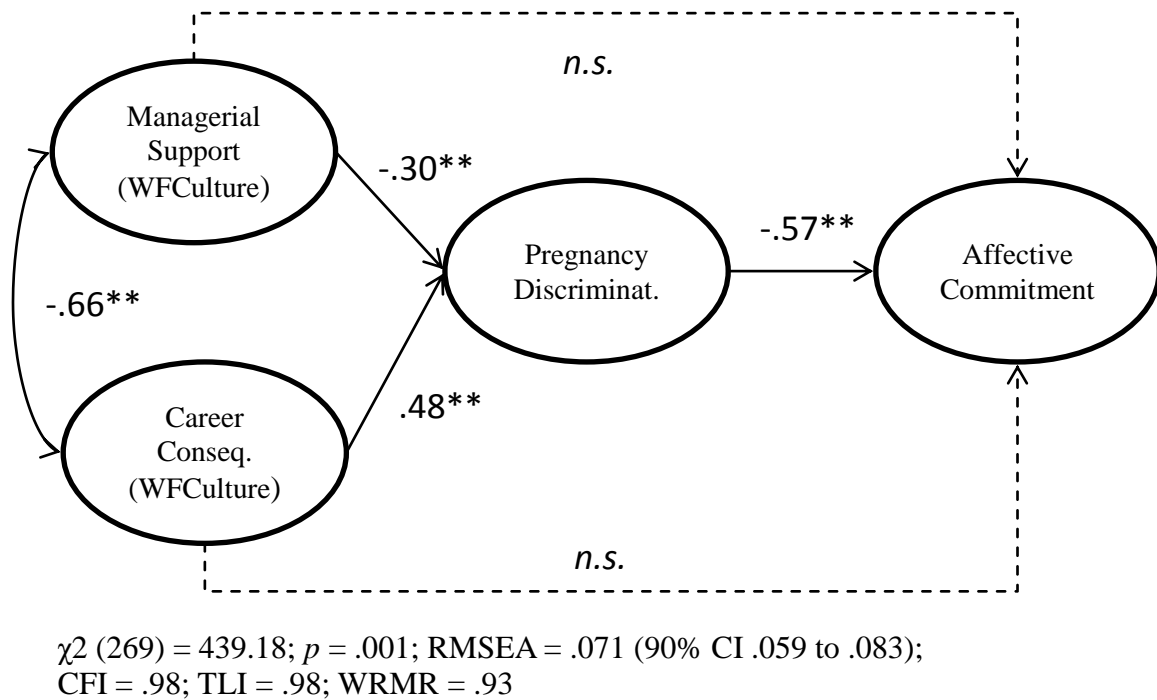
Table 6

*CFA Fit Indices*

Model	$\chi^2$	df	CFI	TLI	RMSEA (90% CI)	WRMR
Model 1 (unidimensional)	1510.7**	275	.87	.86	.190 (.18-.20)	2.53
Model 2 (three factors)	538.9**	272	.97	.97	.089 (.08-.10)	1.158
Model 3 (four factors)	439.2**	269	.98	.98	.070 (.06-.08)	.932

*Note.*  $N = 126$ . \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

Finally, the proposed structural model was tested. As shown in Figure 1, the hypothesized model displayed a good fit to the data:  $\chi^2(269) = 439.18$ ; RMSEA = .071; CFI = .98; TLI = .98; WRMR = .93. Additionally, all specified paths were significant except for the relationship between work-family culture and affective commitment, which provides support to hypotheses 2, 3 and 4.



**Figure 1.** Completely standardized path coefficients for the proposed model (\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Previous literature have highlighted the negative relationship between work-family culture and pregnancy discrimination (Salihu et al., 2012; Redmond, Valiulis, & Drew, 2006; Russel & Banks, 2011) as well as the harmful consequences of pregnancy discrimination for the company (Buzzanell & Liu, 2007; Houston & Marks, 2003; Judiesch & Lyness, 1999). Thus, the aim of this study was to address if pregnancy discrimination is a mediator between the work-family culture and the organizational affective commitment.

Our findings revealed that a supportive work-family culture is negatively related to pregnancy discrimination. Such result is in line with previous studies (Redmond, Valiulis & Drew, 2006; Russel & Banks, 2011; Salihu et al., 2012). Thus, women that work on an organization with a good work-family culture probably will not perceive pregnancy discrimination, and pregnancy discrimination is more likely to happen on workplaces that do not have a work-family culture. Moreover, the findings clearly

indicate that pregnancy discrimination at the workplace is negatively related to affective commitment. Thus, female employees that perceive pregnancy discrimination will probably have lower levels of affective commitment towards their workplace, and those who do not perceive pregnancy discrimination will probably have higher levels of affective commitment. Although there is evidence regarding the harmful consequences of pregnancy discrimination for organizations (Buzzanell & Liu, 2007; Chester & Kleiner, 2001; Gueutal & Taylor, 1991; Gross & Pattison, 2007; James, 2004; Kugelberg, 2006), there was not previous evidence regarding the decrease levels of women's affective commitment related to pregnancy discrimination. Furthermore, it was found that work-family culture was related to higher levels of affective commitment. This finding is generally supported by Allen's (2001) findings that employees who perceived a less family-supportive organization experience less organizational commitment.

One critical factor to be considered with these results is that the way pregnant women are treated at the workplace is found to impact their decision of returning to work, choosing to work on full-time or part-time or try a new start in another organization (Buzzanell & Liu, 2007; Houston & Marks, 2003; Judiesch & Lyness, 1999). This kind of decisions can harmfully impact the companies, as if a woman decides not to return to work, that company will have loss in skills and higher costs with hiring and training another employee. In contrast, workplaces that support pregnant women show lower rates of turnover and work-family conflict, and higher levels of productivity, job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Allen, 2001; Equal Opportunity Commission, 2004; Salihu et al., 2012), giving the companies the competitive advantage of attracting and retaining the best talents (Allen, 2001). Moreover, Kunze and colleagues (2011) found that organizations can experience poor performance if employees perceive discriminatory treatment. Indeed, when employees perceive a high organizational support they are more likely to engage in organizational citizenship behavior (Lynch, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 1999; Moorman et al., 1998).

In a similar vein, our analysis confirmed that pregnancy discrimination is a mediator between the two dimensions of work-family culture (managerial support and negative career consequences), and the organizational affective commitment. In other

words, work-family organizational culture has an indirect impact on affective commitment through pregnancy discrimination at work in Portuguese women.

However, this study is first and foremost about perceptions from the participants' perspectives, and thus gives only a partial view of employees from the feminine sex regarding pregnancy discrimination and the work-family culture from their companies. In addition, the cross-sectional and self-reported nature of the data can introduce some bias in the results and do not allow researchers to infer causality, and also self-report measures in survey research are known to be self-report measures in survey research are known to be lead to erroneous results (see Grzywacz et al., 2002). Furthermore, the sample used in this study was a small non-representative sample from different organizations, and through this procedure there is no way of verifying whether the sample is representative of the population (Black, 1999). Thus, the generalizability of the results is relatively weak. For last, the results regarding the mediating role of pregnancy discrimination between work-family culture and affective commitment, are only considering the two dimensions of the work-family culture, managerial support and negative career consequences.

These limitations need to be addressed in future studies. Also, for future research it could be valuable to consider whether the spouse/partner support have an effect in reducing perceptions of pregnancy discrimination, as it is known that spouse/partner support may buffering work-family conflict (Barnett, 1994; Burley, 1995; Stevens, Kiger, & Riley, 2001). It would be also valuable for future studies to examine the working male perceptions regarding pregnancy discrimination at the workplace and verify if there is an impact on the affective commitment of men as well. Thereby, although pregnancy discrimination affects directly the female employees, perhaps it negatively influences the female employees of the workplace. As we have seen that pregnancy discrimination can lower the affective commitment of women, and that consequently can have other negative impacts for the organizations, employers should know if pregnancy discrimination can have negative consequences for the company through the male employees as well.

Despite the above mentioned limitations, these findings have major implications for company managers and human resources professionals. First, they must be aware that, without a work-family culture, higher levels of perceived pregnancy discrimination

may occur, and consequently, lower levels of affective commitment. Second, the role that managers play in the work-family culture, as their support on the balance of the work-family is essential for a successful work-family culture (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Finally, human resources professionals should develop and maintain human resources practices that promote this organizational culture, and make their family-related practices transparent to all employees. Therefore, the development of human resources practices that promote a work-family culture will increase affective commitment that is related to an increase of employees' acceptance of organizational goals, their willingness to apply effort on behalf of their workplace, and their desire to remain in that workplace (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982).

In conclusion, these results contribute to the literature by extending prior findings in some ways. Concerning the pregnancy discrimination literature, this study is able to make a contribution regarding the link of pregnancy discrimination as a mediator for the relationship between work-family culture and affective commitment. Moreover, these results are a first attempt to establish a negative link between pregnancy discrimination and organizational affective commitment. In addition, this study supports the validity of the pregnancy discrimination scale as a valid and reliable measure for measuring this construct. As a consequence, findings highlight the importance of introducing HRM practices aimed at facilitating work-family balance and avoiding discrimination of women at work for maintaining high affective commitment levels, which, in turn, has been related to relevant (e.g., organizational performance and withdrawal behaviors: Meyer, Paunonen et al., 1989; Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004; Meyer, Becker, & Van Dick, 2006). Thus, the issue of pregnancy discrimination needs to be addressed proactively, and organizations should aim to be ethical workplaces that have respect and consideration about employees' work and employees' life outside the work.

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## ANNEX

### PREGNANCY DISCRIMINATION SCALE

Pregnancy Discrimination at Work – Adapted from Chronic Work Discrimination and Harassment (Williams 2012)

Please tell me *if a woman gets pregnant in your workplace will probably experience the following situations:*

1. Be treated with less courtesy than other people
2. Be treated with less respect than other people
3. Have her job threatened
4. Be called names or be insulted
5. Be unfairly denied a promotion
6. Be unfairly fired
7. Be unfairly given the jobs that no one else wants to do
8. At work not be asked for her opinion when different opinions would be helpful
9. Have to work twice as hard as others work
10. Be ignored or not taken seriously by her boss
11. Be unfairly humiliated in front of others at work

**VERIFICATION OF THE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE REGRESSION MODELS**

**MODEL 1. AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT REGRESSED ON WORK-FAMILY CULTURE.**

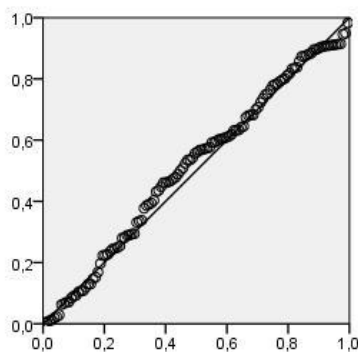
**LINEAR RELATIONS BETWEEN THE VARIABLES.**

The linear relationship between the variables is verified through the Pearson’s coefficient of linear correlation. As can be seen in Table 7, there is a strong linear relationship between the variables. In addition, it is also verified that the observed values are relatively near the line, so it suggests that there is in fact a linear relationship between the variables.

**Table 7.** Correlations

		AFCOM	WFCMS	WFCTD	WFCCC
Pearson Correlation	AFCOM	1,000	,205	-,075	-,222
	WFCMS	,205	1,000	-,359	-,558
	WFCTD	-,075	-,359	1,000	,539
	WFCCC	-,222	-,558	,539	1,000
Sig. (1-tailed)	AFCOM	.	,011	,201	,006
	WFCMS	,011	.	,000	,000
	WFCTD	,201	,000	.	,000
	WFCCC	,006	,000	,000	.
N	AFCOM	126	126	126	126
	WFCMS	126	126	126	126
	WFCTD	126	126	126	126
	WFCCC	126	126	126	126

**Figure 2.** Linearity of the relation



The linear relationship between the variables can be verified, as the observed values are relatively near the line, so it suggests that there is a linear relationship between the affective commitment and the work-family culture dimensions.

**NORMALITY OF RANDOM ERRORS.**

**Table 8.** Tests of Normality

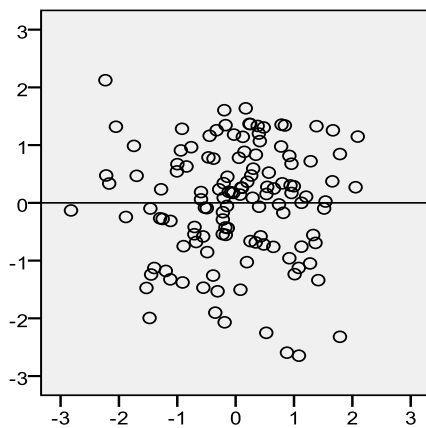
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Standardized Residual	,071	126	,189	,975	126	,019

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

As  $\text{sig} = 0,189 \leq \alpha = 0,05$ , the  $H_0$  is not rejected. This way, there is statistical evidence to affirm that the random errors don't follow a normal distribution ( $\text{KS}_{(126)} = 0,071$ ; p-value = 0,189), supporting the verification of the assumption that the random errors follow a normal distribution.

**CONSTANT VARIANCE OF THE RANDOM ERRORS (HOMOCEASTICITY OF THE RANDOM ERRORS).**

**Figure 3.** Homocedasticity of the random errors



The homocedasticity of the random errors can be assumed since the residuals are more or less randomly distributed around zero with similar distances. Thus, we can verify the assumption of constant variance of the random errors.

**NO CORRELATION BETWEEN THE RANDOM ERRORS.****Table 9.** Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,250 <sup>a</sup>	,063	,039	1,31628	2,012

a. Predictors: (Constant), WFCMS, WFCTD, WFCCC

b. Dependent Variable: AFCOM

This assumption is verified through the Durbin-Watson test, with the following hypotheses:

$H_0$ : the errors are not correlated, that is, they are independent

$H_a$ : the errors are correlated, that is, they are not independent

Decision: As the value of the Durbin-Watson test is proximate to 2 (DW=2,012), we do not reject  $H_0$ , that is, it is assumed that the random errors are independent, so the assumption is verified.

**RESIDUAL RANDOM VARIABLES WITH VALUE EXPECTED NULL  $E(EI) = 0$  (THE MEAN OF THE ERRORS IS 0).****Table 10.** Residuals Statistics

a

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	3,8394	5,4893	4,7868	,33576	126
Std. Predicted Value	-2,822	2,092	,000	1,000	126
Standard Error of Predicted Value	,120	,467	,226	,063	126
Adjusted Predicted Value	3,8119	5,5121	4,7839	,34224	126
Residual	-3,48417	2,79603	,00000	1,30038	126
Std. Residual	-2,647	2,124	,000	,988	126
Stud. Residual	-2,683	2,208	,001	1,003	126
Deleted Residual	-3,58057	3,02147	,00287	1,34133	126
Stud. Deleted Residual	-2,755	2,244	-,001	1,011	126
Mahal. Distance	,043	14,761	2,976	2,396	126
Cook's Distance	,000	,098	,008	,013	126
Centered Leverage Value	,000	,118	,024	,019	126

Dependent Variable: AFCOM



The statistics of the residuals, namely their expected value, allows us to verify that the mean of the residuals is null. Thus, as the mean of the residuals is zero, the assumption is verified.

### **NO COLINEARITY BETWEEN INDEPENDENT VARIABLES.**

The verification of the colinearity can be made through the analysis of the measures of tolerance and VIF, available on the Table 10.

**Table 11.** Coefficients

a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF	
1	(Constant)	4,712	,759		6,211	,000						
	WFCTD	,054	,078	,073	,695	,488	-,075	,063	,061	,705	1,419	
	WFCC	-,166	,102	-,192	-1,632	,105	-,222	-,146	-,143	,558	1,793	
	WFCMS	,113	,096	,124	1,173	,243	,205	,106	,103	,684	1,461	

Dependent Variable: AFCOM

Since the value of the VIF on the three variables is lower than 5 and the tolerance is always higher than 2, there are no problems of multicollinearity. Hence, the assumption is verified.

### **MODEL 2. PREGNANCY DISCRIMINATION REGRESSED ON WORK-FAMILY CULTURE.**

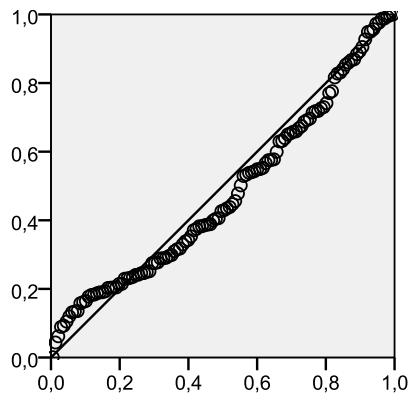
#### **LINEAR RELATIONS BETWEEN THE VARIABLES.**

The linear relationship between the variables is verified through the Pearson's coefficient of linear correlation. As can be seen in Table 11, there is a strong linear relationship between the variables. In addition, it is also verified that the observed values are relatively near the line, so it suggests that there is in fact a linear relationship between the variables.

**Table 12.** Correlations

		DISC	WFCMS	WFCTD	WFCCC
Pearson Correlation	DISC	1,000	-,570	,348	,537
	WFCMS	-,570	1,000	-,358	-,559
	WFCTD	,348	-,358	1,000	,537
	WFCCC	,537	-,559	,537	1,000
Sig. (1-tailed)	DISC	.	,000	,000	,000
	WFCMS	,000	.	,000	,000
	WFCTD	,000	,000	.	,000
	WFCCC	,000	,000	,000	.
N	DISC	124	124	124	124
	WFCMS	124	124	124	124
	WFCTD	124	124	124	124
	WFCCC	124	124	124	124

**Figure 4.** Linearity of the relation



The linear relationship between the variables can be verified, as the observed values are relatively near the line, so it suggests that there is a linear relationship between the affective commitment and the work-family culture dimensions.

**NORMALITY OF RANDOM ERRORS.**

**Table 13.** Tests of Normality

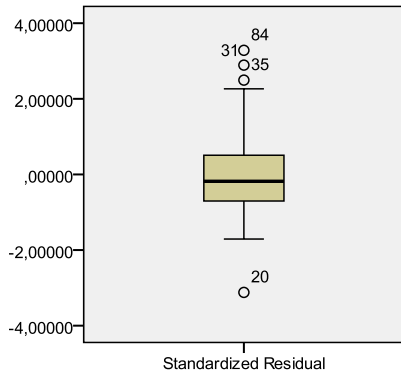
	Tests of Normality					
	a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Standardized Residual	,087	124	,022	,953	124	,000

Lilliefors Significance Correction

As  $\text{sig} = 0,022 \leq \alpha = 0,05$ , the  $H_0$  is rejected. This way, there is statistical evidence to affirm that the random errors don't follow a normal distribution ( $KS_{(124)} = 0,87$ ;  $p\text{-value} = 0,022$ ).

However, according to the TLC, it can be said that the distribution of the random errors follows an approximately normal distribution, considering that the violation of this assumption cannot put in cause the result of the test.

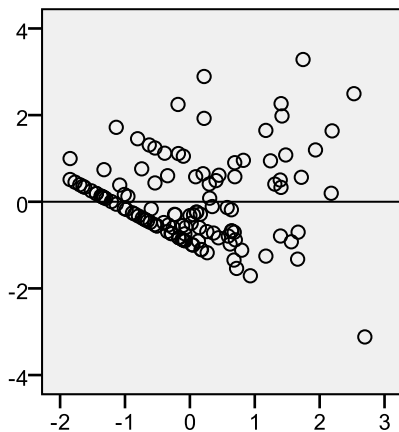
**Figure 5.** Distribution of the random errors



The figure shows that the distribution of the random errors is relatively normal distributed, supporting the verification of the assumption that the random errors follow a normal distribution.

**CONSTANT VARIANCE OF THE RANDOM ERRORS (HOMOCEASTICITY OF THE RANDOM ERRORS).**

**Figure 6.** Homocedasticity of the random errors



The homocedasticity of the random errors can be assumed since the residuals are more or less randomly distributed around zero with similar distances. Thus, we can verify the assumption of constant variance of the random errors.

**NO CORRELATION BETWEEN THE RANDOM ERRORS.****Table 14.** Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	,629 <sup>a</sup>	,396	,381	,56395	1,832

a. Predictors: (Constant), WFCMS, WFCTD, WFCCC

b. Dependent Variable: DISC

This assumption is verified through the Durbin-Watson test, with the following hypotheses:

$H_0$ : the errors are not correlated, that is, they are independent

$H_a$ : the errors are correlated, that is, they are not independent

Decision: As the value of the Durbin-Watson test is proximate to 2 ( $DW=1,832$ ), we do not reject  $H_0$ , that is, it is assumed that the random errors are independent, so the assumption is verified.

**RESIDUAL RANDOM VARIABLES WITH VALUE EXPECTED NULL  $E(EI) = 0$  (THE MEAN OF THE ERRORS IS 0).**

The statistics of the residuals on Table 15, namely their expected value, allows us to verify that the mean of the residuals is null. Thus, as the mean of the residuals is zero, the assumption is verified.

**Table 15.** Residuals Statistics

a

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	,7103	2,7597	1,5432	,45117	124
Std. Predicted Value	-1,846	2,696	,000	1,000	124
Standard Error of Predicted Value	,052	,202	,098	,027	124
Adjusted Predicted Value	,6872	2,9024	1,5417	,45189	124
Residual	-1,75969	1,85165	,00000	,55703	124
Std. Residual	-3,120	3,283	,000	,988	124
Stud. Residual	-3,244	3,351	,001	1,009	124
Deleted Residual	-1,90245	1,92914	,00153	,58172	124
Stud. Deleted Residual	-3,383	3,505	,004	1,024	124
Mahal. Distance	,041	14,736	2,976	2,386	124
Cook's Distance	,000	,213	,011	,030	124
Centered Leverage Value	,000	,120	,024	,019	124

Dependent Variable: DISC

**NO COLINEARITY BETWEEN INDEPENDENT VARIABLES.**

The verification of the colinearity can be made through the analysis of the measures of tolerance and VIF, available on the Coefficients table.

**Table 16.** Coefficients

a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1,859	,326		5,706	,000					
	WFCTD	,021	,033	,052	,618	,537	,348	,056	,044	,707	1,414
	WFCCC	,135	,044	,292	3,069	,003	,537	,270	,218	,558	1,794
	WFCMS	-,186	,041	-,388	-4,524	,000	-,570	-,382	-,321	,683	1,465

Dependent Variable: DISC

Since the value of the VIF on the three variables is lower than 5 and the tolerance is always higher than 2, there are no problems of multicollinearity. Hence, the assumption is verified.

**MODEL 3. AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT REGRESSED ON PREGNANCY DISCRIMINATION.**

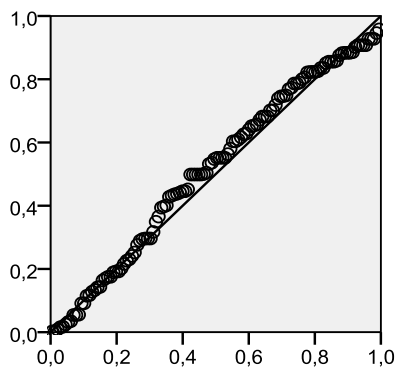
**LINEAR RELATIONS BETWEEN THE VARIABLES.**

The linear relationship between the variables is verified through the Pearson’s coefficient of linear correlation. As can be seen in Table 15, there is a strong linear relationship between the variables. In addition, it is also verified that the observed values are relatively near the line, so it suggests that there is in fact a linear relationship between the variables.

**Table 17.** Correlations

Correlations			
		AFCOM	DISC
Pearson Correlation	AFCOM	1,000	-,363
	DISC	-,363	1,000
Sig. (1-tailed)	AFCOM	.	,000
	DISC	,000	.
N	AFCOM	124	124
	DISC	124	124

**Figure 7.** Linear relation between the variables



It’s verified that the observed values are relatively near the line, so it suggests that there is in fact a linear relationship between the Perceptions of pregnancy discrimination with the Affective commitment.

**NORMALITY OF RANDOM ERRORS.**

**Table 18.** Tests of Normality

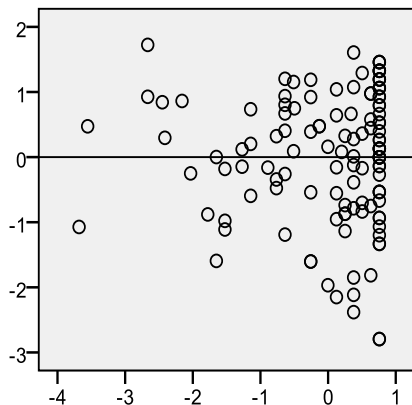
	a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Standardized Residual	,079	124	,053	,965	124	,002

Lilliefors Significance Correction

As  $\text{sig} = 0,053 \leq \alpha = 0,05$ , the  $H_0$  is not rejected. This way, there is statistical evidence to affirm that the random errors follow a normal distribution ( $KS_{(124)} = 0,079$ ;  $p\text{-value} = 0,053$ ), supporting the verification of the assumption that the random errors follow a normal distribution.

**CONSTANT VARIANCE OF THE RANDOM ERRORS.**

**Figure 8.** Homocedasticity of the random errors



The figure shows the variance homogeneity of the residuals, since they are approximately randomly distributed at the same distance from the zero line. So we can verify the assumption of constant variance of the random errors.

**NO CORRELATION BETWEEN THE RANDOM ERRORS.****Table 19.** Model Summary

b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	a	,132	,125	1,25383	1,925

Predictors: (Constant), DISC

Dependent Variable: AFCOM

This assumption is verified through the Durbin-Watson test, with the following hypotheses:

$H_0$ : the errors are not correlated, that is, they are independent

$H_a$ : the errors are correlated, that is, they are not independent

Decision: As the value of the Durbin-Watson test is proximate to 2 (DW=1,925), we do not reject  $H_0$ , that is, it is assumed that the random errors are independent, so the assumption is verified.